



**Multicultural narratives in Graphic Design teaching and learning for diverse audiences
at a University of Technology**

By

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree: Master of Technology in
Graphic Design for the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

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DECLARATION

I, Lindelihle Bhebhe, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.



12 November 2018

Signed

Date

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who made the production of this thesis possible.

Many thanks to my supervisor, Associate Professor Monwabisi Ralarala for the guidance, exposure and endless contribution to my growth in academia and ensuring I never gave up, even when giving up seemed the only certainty. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Dr Alettia Chisin for stepping in when she did to assist with the successful completion and submission of my thesis.

To Milia Lorraine Khoury, my friend and mentor, thank you for encouraging me to pursue post-graduate studies. I am forever grateful. To my wonderful sisters, thank you. I am particularly grateful to Zwe for always being my best friend and the most enthusiastic believer in my capabilities. Thanks also go to my late Grandad, Kind Pilime; and to Gogo Diana Pilime, Mama and Baba Mabhena. Thank you all for always pushing for nothing but the best. Many thanks to my husband and my children for inspiring me always to do better.

I thank Cape Peninsula University of Technology for affording me the opportunity to carry out this study. I would also like to thank the students and lecturers for their immeasurable contribution to this research. Finally, I would also like to extend my gratitude to the industry experts who offered their time and expertise to ensure the success of this thesis.

Abstract

This research is an investigation into how Graphic Design, a visual communication subject is taught and learnt at Cape Peninsula University of Technology in light of the dynamics that cultural semiotics present. There is a need to equip students with the cultural awareness to design communication that is sensitive to the varying needs of their consuming audiences. By its very nature, visual communication is vulnerable to an unintended array of misinterpretations because of the audiences' differing semiotic backgrounds. The pedagogic duty of academy is to equip communication students in this case Graphic Design students with adequate tools to facilitate the understanding of their audiences, the communicative purpose of their designs is compromised. Vygotsky's (1978) learning theory is therefore applied to examine the role of culture in the teaching and learning of culturally diverse students. Concepts from JoAnn Phillion's (2002) *Narrative Multiculturalism* are also used to understand how the narratives collected from the respondent students, lecturers and an industry expert in this study offered guidelines for the effective teaching of Graphic Design.

To investigate the teaching and learning of Graphic Design holistically the research employed a mini-ethnographic case study method. Data for this research were obtained through participant observations, semi-structured informal interviews of participants narratives and document analysis.

The findings point to a lack of a cohesive and coordinated approach to teaching and learning, which in turn reflects a lack of sensitivity to cultural diversity in the Graphic Design department at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. This is evidenced in the unreformed curriculum and a culturally unbalanced staff complement. Industry's lethargic participation also seems to have done nothing to ensure the standardisation of the curriculum to align with industry demands nor guide the career paths of students. As a result, the gap in these areas may leave some historically vulnerable students feeling excluded and despondent about both their academic and career prospects.

Key terms: Multiculturalism, culture, narratives, narrative, communication, semiotics, Graphic Design, Cultural semiotics, translanguaging

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Like all universities in metropolitan cities in South Africa, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology possesses a typical cosmopolitan flair. The institutional culture, cultural diversity of the students and staff, and dominant cultures at this university, as in any other tertiary institution, impact on the learning and teaching in the different areas of knowledge (Banks, 2001:58). The Graphic Design Department is not immune to these factors as it attracts a student body from a plethora of cultures whose diversity has a significant impact on how the course is taught. The challenge that diversity brings is directly linked to the reliance of the subject on the use of symbols, signs and sign systems which are culturally determined (Adams et al., 2013:117). As a communication subject, Graphic Design is more susceptible to the challenges associated with cultural diversity due to its reliance on cultural semiotics. The intention of this study was to investigate the best ways to facilitate an approach to teaching and learning that reflects and addresses the culturally diverse composition of a Graphic Design classroom as a microcosm of South African society, thereby considering the *semiotic challenge* that diversity introduces into learning communication design. The semiotic challenge arises in the form of misunderstandings between educator and student, as well as between students, as they grapple with each other's visual world views. The benefits of confronting such challenges during their studies could help raise the students' awareness of how to research their targeted audiences adequately before commencing a visual communication design. To challenge these issues there is a need to involve reforming the curriculum, and the learning and teaching techniques, to ensure that these are in line with the dynamic nature of the student body and audiences they serve. Moreover, there is a need to ensure that graduate students have developed their research competences and raised their insight into ethics that facilitate the production of communication relevant and sensitive to diverse cultures (Shaughnessy, 2008:321).

This is a multidisciplinary research study that encompasses, both as communication and as a visual language area of knowledge education, multicultural education issues, and Graphic Design. Thus, the literature review includes these different facets that informed the study.

As South Africa attempts to embrace the growing multicultural nature of university classrooms, it is imperative to address the diverse languages that this diversity introduces to ensure an equitable and inclusive education system (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:50).

The Graphic Design student body is diverse: it comprises black South Africans from different South African ethnic groups; Africans from Southern Africa and the rest of Africa; English speakers; white and coloured Afrikaans speakers; as well as people from diverse sexual orientations, different economic, social and religious backgrounds, among others. For this reason, there is a need to be mindful of what is taught and how it is taught to ensure that everyone enjoys fair representation and access to educational opportunities that are the symbol of a just society that the constitution seeks to redress. This is in line with the South African Constitution that lobbies for equality in the provision of education that is accessible to all students (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Despite this important consideration by the Constitution, there are still students whose access to fair education is elusive. For this reason, this study attempted to discover if the Graphic Design curriculum made provisions for multilingualism and multicultural to enable equal access by all learners in line with this constitutional demand.

Another important aspect of the study was to understand if the current curriculum is adequate in addressing the unique expertise required in the Graphic Design industry. Examples include skills required in advertising, desktop publishing (DTP), website design and product design, among others.

1.1 Background to the research

The research was prompted by a need to understand how students were empowered as effective visual communicators, considering the cultural diversity in the Graphic Design classroom. My interest in student learning was initiated by my own experience as an undergraduate student studying Graphic Design at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) a few years before. I was keen to investigate the motivations for the curriculum, the choice of teaching methods used, as well as the Department of Design policy and attitudes of lecturers towards diversity in the classroom setting. My interest in the issues deepened further during my subsequent experiences a few years later when I returned as an educator in the institution. The role shift from student to educator highlighted an interesting change in my view of the course and its demands. My sense of duty as an educator subsequently set me on a path of research in the field to understand how my experiences as a student had influenced the approaches I have

applied in my practice as an educator. Simultaneously, I decided to explore more closely how the Graphic Design curriculum is taught to culturally diverse students.

As a visual communicator, I have always been intrigued by how industry sometimes seems misaligned to the needs and nuanced cultural details of their audiences. Examples of these include, the “Diversity” campaign by Nando's for its xenophobic tone (Nando’s Diversity Ad, 2012) and the “Even Angels will fall” campaign by Axe for being religiously insensitive (Axe Excite, Even Angels Will Fall, 2012). The question is, if there is an awareness of the diverse cultures in South Africa, why is the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa (ASA) dealing with complaints of inappropriate or offensive advertising? ASA is a body that polices advertising standards using a Code of Ethical Standards that is “impartial and objective” (ASA Companies Act 71, 2008:5). It is their mandate to enforce a reasonable code of ethics that governs all advertising bodies. In upholding their duty, they also ensure that there is recourse for those that suffer any harm or prejudice because of irresponsible advertising (ASA Companies Act 71, 2008:5). If one of the roles of the advertising industry is to be an effective and responsive body of visual communicators, how is it that some communication has been deemed so inappropriate or offensive that it has had to be removed from public viewing spaces? If there is enough sound research done into target markets, why are audiences missing the messages in some advertisements? Finally, could there be a link between how students are taught at design institutions and how this teaching impacts on their subsequent practice? As a way of addressing some of these problems in industry, might we see different results if certain reforms were made at learning institutions? Could there be practices in industry that are not aligned to academy that make it difficult for new graduates to communicate with audiences? In instances where they can communicate successfully in the workplace, what forces are at play that enable their success (and therefore can those good practices be applied to advertising that fails)? These questions and more are answered in chapters 6 and the conclusion, which give an insight into operations of industry in relation to its interactions with academy.

To have an in-depth understanding of multicultural phenomena and the dynamics educators have to contend with in teaching Graphic Design, as well as those that students need in learning about the discipline, the research utilises narratives to allow for the voices of these students and educators. The voice of the industry expert serves as key informant for industry’s perspective on the topic.

1.2 Research questions

To reflect the full scale of the enquiry, the following research question and sub-questions have been compiled:

Main question

How can a narrative multicultural approach to research be used to explore creative ways to teach Graphic Design to a culturally diverse group of students at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology?

The following sub-questions arise from the main research question:

Sub-questions

1. What are the effects that diversity of languages and cultures of students has on teaching and learning in Graphic Design?
2. To what extent is the current curriculum adequate in preparing students to be effective communication design practitioners in multicultural South African and global contexts?
3. What is the role of industry in determining standards for design practice for students and, therefore, in influencing the curriculum and pedagogic needs of design institutions?

1.3 Aims of the study

The aim of the research is to investigate the feasibility of using *narrative multiculturalism* as a viable approach in exploring the teaching and learning of *semiotics* to culturally diverse groups of Graphic Design students. The Piercean definition of *semiotics* is outlined as, the study of how meaning is created through the interpretation of signs and symbols (Prentice, 1995:55). It is an important body of knowledge in visual communication because it deals with how people make meaning from language, signs and symbols in their day-to-day contexts.

Insights drawn from *narrative multiculturalism*, a concept synonymous with Phillion's (2002:108) studies on multicultural education, are used to interrogate Graphic Design teaching and learning in culturally diverse classroom settings (Brumberger & Northcut, 2013:186). Vygotsky's *socio-cultural theory* (1978) is used together with *narrative multiculturalism* in this study to gain an understanding into how issues of culture and socialisation impact on the way students learn in multicultural environments. It is important to apply both theoretical approaches in the study to facilitate an understanding of how Graphic Design pedagogy could be revised to produce responsive visual communicators. Addressing the problems that currently exist could ensure that students graduate to be competent and confident in dealing with the demands of culturally diverse contemporary South African – and global – target markets. This concept is discussed in detail in chapters 5 and 6 and in the conclusion too.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- To examine the effects that diversity of student languages and cultures have on teaching and learning Graphic Design at CPUT.
- To examine the extent of the adequacy of the current Graphic Design Department curriculum at CPUT in addressing the needs of a diverse linguistic and cultural mix of students and for preparing them to be effective communication design practitioners in a multicultural South African and global context.
- To examine the role of industry in creating and promoting a diverse working environment, and thus reinforcing potential Graphic Designers to immerse their knowledge and training in multicultural practices in the job market.

1.5 Research methodology

Graphic Design, as a learning area, largely relies on the experience of designers either to communicate with different people or decode visual language. The current study used a mini-ethnographic case study approach to investigate the experiences of learners, educators and industry experts in the environments that employ visual language for communication. Thus, to capture and document these experiences accurately, the research utilised a *narrative multicultural* approach, associated with JoAnne Phillion (2002). The role of Phillion's *narrative multiculturalism* was to provide multicultural researchers with an opportunity to

explore the potential of narratives and experiences in understanding issues in multicultural classrooms.

It was through the learning, the teaching and practical industry experience that I was able to map out three focal areas in Graphic Design education. The narratives of the students, lecturers and industry expert were collected through semi-structured interviews. The design briefs, teaching material and design rationales were needed for document analysis, while the observations provided a snapshot of the issues prevalent in the multicultural learning environment. The research also provided for an industry expert to comment on his insight into the industry's current interactions with the academy and to outline the outcomes of those interactions. Of importance too was obtaining some understanding on how industry and the Graphic Design academy could partner to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship that could advance the needs of both the students and industry.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) propose Dewey's theories on interaction to identify the four main facets of narrative enquiry, namely, *inward and outward* and *backward and forward*. Graphic Design relies on semiotics for generating and interpreting visual messages, thus the relevance of Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) notion. Their notion postulates that, in the narrative approach, there is value in assessing the personal and social perspectives (*inward and outward*) against the temporality of past, present and future (*backward and forward*) conditions of the respondents in the phenomenon under study.

1.6 Significance of the study

It is expected that the study is used to assist those involved in the design of the Graphic Design course(s) at tertiary institutions to consider how the dynamics of multicultural teaching and learning can impact on how students develop multicultural sensitivities. This consideration is especially important when designing for culturally diverse markets, such as those in South Africa as well as globally. It was the intention of the researcher to foster assimilation of the research results into practice. Part of the assimilation of the results would be to conscientise educators about the implications of multicultural classrooms for their teaching methods and materials. For this reason, it is hoped that there is significant interrogation of the course that considers the teaching and learning needs of a culturally diverse student body. It is an attempt

to ensure that students experience the curriculum in ways that both empower and enable them to develop their multicultural sensitivities when developing communication for their audiences. This is vital to ensuring that students feel a sense of inclusive participation and are able to reach their full potential through active engagement with the curriculum, co-designing learning and empathetically engaging in a goal common to all of them. Freire and Macedo (1995:137) propose problem-posing education as the successful alternative to traditional education. In this form of education, Freire (1970) posits education that is structured to encourage students to become critical thinkers. The teacher and the student enter into a partnership that encourages dialogue and that sees them jointly drawing conclusions about problems. Solutions are arrived at together during dialogue.

Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory was drawn on as the overarching theory to understand how backgrounds influence the world views of students, educators and industry role players. In addition, the Narrative Multicultural approach that deals specifically with the treatment of narratives in multicultural classrooms was found to provide a vital theoretical approach for framing the study. JoAnn Phillion's work provides an ethnographic approach for handling research in education settings comprising students from diverse cultures. According to Henning (2013: 68) ethnography is a qualitative research method that involves the study of people and cultures. The field notes reflect the knowledge and the system of meanings in the lives of a cultural group. The two approaches are complementary as they highlight the dynamics of teaching people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

1.7 Ethical considerations

Ethics are a fundamental part of any research. They are defined as “norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour” (Calfe & Sperling, 2010:104). In this study, what was acceptable was getting signed permission from the university, lecturers and students to conduct the research. Of importance, too, was ensuring that any data collected was used in the way the respondents had been informed it would be used. Ethical research conduct included not abusing my power as a researcher.

The respondents were clearly briefed on the parameters of the research before their participation was confirmed through their signing ethical clearance letters. The form highlighted that their participation was voluntary and that they had not been coerced or promised any payment, monetary or otherwise, for their participation. Most importantly, the form stated that the research process would not impinge on their rights or reveal anything of their private lives that they preferred to keep private. At every stage in the research process, I reminded the respondents of the oath I had undertaken to protect their identities and the information they had shared. I also reminded the respondents of the authority they had to withdraw from the research process at any point should they feel uncomfortable, without any negative consequences. I have appended a sample of the ethical clearance forms signed by the respondents as Appendix A.

The interviewees were assured that their participation and responses would be used for research purposes only. Where specific names were referred to in the final data coding, analysis and write up, they were withheld and replaced with pseudonyms to protect participants' identities (Henning, 2013:73).

1.8 Organisation of the thesis

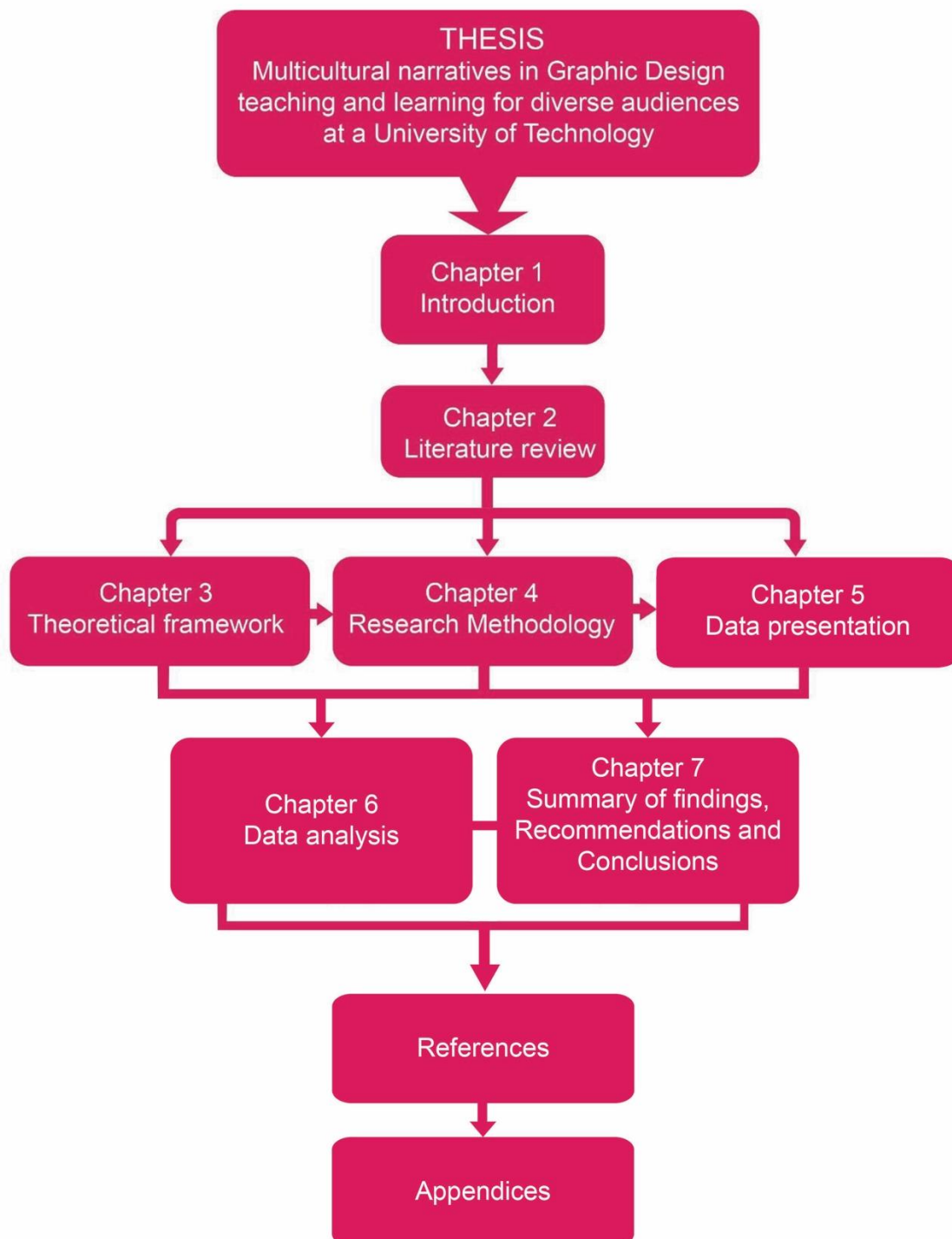


Figure 1: Organisation of the thesis

1.9 Glossary of terms

Communication	The transmission of information and meaning from one person or group to another. The operative word in the definition is <i>meaning</i> , because the crux of communicating is to convey meaning. The success of communication is achieved only when the receiver understands the idea as the sender intended (Brumberger & Northcut, 2013).
Culture	The incorporation of all socially acquired habits and knowledge. Culture is symbolic communication. Some of its symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions over time (Arvizu et al., 1994).
Cultural Semiotics	Is a subdiscipline of semiotics whose focus is on studying signs systems in a cultural context with respect to how they contribute to the culture. It also explores the experiential benefits or disadvantages that individuals suffer from being the members of a particular culture (Baldwin and Roberts, 2006)
Graphic Design	It is a field that is sometimes referred to as 'communication design'. It is the art and practice of planning and projecting ideas and experiences with images or text. Its undertaking is to communicate ideas (Roberts, 2006).
Multiculturalism	Denotes the way in which cultural and ethnic differentiation may be accommodated in social, political and economic arrangements. Diversity is celebrated, and recognition is afforded to all cultures (Kelly, 2002).
Narratives	Spoken or written accounts of events or experiences of people's lives. The focus of narratives in research is on how and what is

narrated. Narratives are investigated for the significance of the lived experiences (Henning, 2013).

Narrative Multiculturalism A term coined by JoAnne Phillion to describe a culturally sensitive study of teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms (Phillion, 2002).

Semiotics Study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation. Also known as a study of meaning making (Jensen, 2010).

Translanguaging Cen Williams first used the Welsh term *trawsieithu* in 1994 to refer to a pedagogical practice where students in bilingual Welsh/English classrooms are asked to alternate languages for the purposes of receptive or productive use. Contemporary scholars define it as the act of using one language to reinforce the other in order to increase understanding and augment the pupil's activity in both languages (Lewis, Jones and Baker 2012b).

Chapter 2: Literature review

The literature review takes an in-depth look at the theoretical framework and its relation to the study. Relevant topics relating to culture, education and multicultural education are explored to understand the phenomenon under study.

2.1 Knowledge construction

Social scientists assert that knowledge and the way the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives and biases within a discipline influence the way knowledge is constructed within a learning environment (Haarmann, 2007:19). Haarmann's view is that the educator's role is to propagate information in a way that helps students understand how knowledge is created and how it is influenced by racial, ethnic, social and economic positions of different social groups. This is important in developing positive attitudes towards various social groups and in reducing prejudice. If students view each group as having an impact on what is learnt, they may develop a respectful attitude towards groups that are negatively affected by prejudice. However, if views about one particular group seem dominant over others, students may perceive those other groups as inferior and non-beneficial to their learning. For example, a design curriculum that propagates the view that Western thinking, standards and even culture are superior and more legitimate, denigrates anything else as inferior and unimportant in the greater learning environment (Wertsch, 1985:34).

Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory helps in understanding the role that culture plays in multicultural classrooms (Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Wertsch, 1985:34). Vygotsky held that, as students participate in a broad range of joint activities and internalise the effects of working together, they acquire new strategies and knowledge of the world and culture. The benefit for this study also lies in how semiotics seem to play a vital role in human action, on both the social and individual fronts (Wertsch, 1985:58). Its focus on interaction (with the educator or more capable peers) as a gateway to learning ideally complements Phillion's (2002:110) narrative multiculturalism. Phillion's approach to educational research in multicultural classrooms prompts us to view the classroom setting as an active cultural hub through capturing the experiences of the educator, the multicultural students and her experiences as the researcher. Phillion's approach is that, because the research focuses on life, the researcher is not exempt

from the process as he/she goes on a journey of enquiry while the process of teaching and learning unfolds.

2.2 Culture and multiculturalism

In discussing multiculturalism, it is vital to define both culture and multiculturalism so that their contexts become apparent in understanding multicultural education. Two definitions are provided as an attempt to contextualise ‘culture’ within the research.

Lantolf (2000:89) defines culture as the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people over the course of generations, through individual and group striving. Lawton (2012:9) defines culture as consisting of patterns, explicit and implicit, and of practices acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values. Hall, Morley and Chen’s (1996:221) notion of culture is that culture ultimately consists of emotions, feelings, rituals and daily activities; and that sharing meaning, through language (amongst others) is the objective, facilitated by the same, or similar, conceptual framework.

Cultural systems may be considered as products of action enacted by cultural groups as they go about their daily activities. The two definitions seem to suggest that culture consists of shared experiences of a group or groups and that its values are inherited generationally, thus becoming the normative way of life for that group. The first socialisation through culture could be seen as the first educational experience to which all humans are exposed: this is where we learn to create ideas of who we are in the context of our existence as members of a racial, ethnic, linguistic and gender group (Appiah, 2005:105).

Within the context of addressing challenges relating to the teaching and learning of Graphic Design within a multicultural setting, it is vital that the term ‘multiculturalism’ is defined too. Inglis and Thorpe (2012:206) describe multiculturalism as a social or educational theory that recognises the existence and preservation of diverse cultures and cultural identities within a

unified society. The definition by Inglis and Thorpe (2012) is misleading in that it posits that multiculturalism occurs in “unified” societies. The definition does not consider that issues of cultural diversity exist despite the disparate views of the cultures that make up the multi-cultures within a society. However, a key term in the definition is ‘preservation’ because it suggests the need to protect all cultures equally without the suggestion of (a) ‘dominant culture (s).’ In this research, the term ‘multicultural’ is used to refer to cultural diversity and is also utilised interchangeably with ‘diversity’ to denote the cultural mix in the classroom or among consumer groups.

The benefits of using the two perspectives, socio-cultural theory and the narrative multicultural approach, are dealt with in detail in the following discussion.

2.3 Educational principles relevant to Graphic Design

Inherent in any field of knowledge there are generic learning and teaching principles, as well as multicultural learning and teaching principles. These are discussed in relation to Graphic Design as visual communication design.

2.3.1 Banking versus socio-cultural understandings of learning and teaching

According to Banks (2001:302), in many learning centres, teaching and learning are viewed as a process of transmitting (by the educator) and receiving (by the students) of information. Freire (1970:28) suggests that the most extreme manifestation of this theory is how knowledge is viewed as merely being deposited into students, the latter seen as empty vessels or *tabula rasa*, a concept used extensively by Locke (1989 [1693]) in his educational essays. Taylor (1993) terms this process, ‘Banking Education’. In dispelling this notion, he defines learning not as an act of consuming ideas but as an act of creating and recreating ideas. So rather than ‘bankers,’ educators need to see themselves as positive ‘reinforcers’ of the interactive relationship that students have with both their home and school environments (Taylor, 1993:30). In his assertion, educators need to be more than just transmitters of knowledge: they need to become instruments for provoking critical reflection and creativity, as well as for embarking on a self-journey of continuous experiential learning together with their students (Kelly, 2002:19). Phillion’s (2002:115) approach highlights the value of acknowledging that students have a worldview that they bring into the classroom. That acknowledgement translates into the

acceptance that students are culturally rich beings whose knowledge can enhance the learning process.

The educator not only has to teach but also to be able to learn from students, embracing the process of learning through trial and error and ensuring the learning 'journey' supersedes the success of what is produced (Taylor, 1993:32).

Nieto (2010:80) also rejects the minimalist 'banking' notion of teaching and learning that Taylor (1993:33) alludes to. She draws on socio-cultural and socio-political theories of learning that emphasise learning and teaching as not simply the transmission of knowledge but rather about encouraging students to reflect, theorise and create knowledge from the rich cultural contexts of their backgrounds.

Being a practical subject, Graphic Design requires practitioners to research the culture and demographics of their target market thoroughly and accurately to create visual communication that is not only relevant but clearly reflects an understanding of their cultural contexts (Shaughnessy, 2008:322). For this reason, students' backgrounds should be referenced not as impediments to learning new knowledge, but rather to help them understand how to create visual cues for diverse audiences. Wentzel and Miele (2009:145) corroborate this view by suggesting that the curriculum needs to reflect students' experiences outside of the classroom and that the learning institution needs to build on students' culturally grounded knowledge. Visual communication involves the use of images and text to derive meaning; its role is to find the best ways to communicate chunks of information in the shortest yet most efficient way possible. This could be achieved by any of the following processes: the use of colour and/or images to evoke an emotional response; font type and size and layout to draw the eye's attention; packaging shape, size and material type to call attention to interests and conjure nostalgia, or another reaction. Therefore, by understanding the culture of their audiences, designers can send out the right messages that appeal to their audiences and achieve the goal of their communication.

To corroborate this view, Vygotsky (1978:35) advocates teaching from the known to the unknown, using prior knowledge of what students can do unaided to conjure the ability and confidence to access the new knowledge and to achieve success independently. Vygotsky saw learning as a social activity rather than as an individual pursuit, hence his emphasis on

scaffolding and group activity as a tool to aid learning. Therefore, every interaction, regardless of where it occurs, should be viewed as an opportunity both to teach or learn for both educator and learner. In multicultural classrooms, group work fosters empathy and understanding of people from marginalised communities. It also helps to break down prejudices that diverse groups have about one another. In contexts such as the one that prevails in South Africa, where racist and xenophobic rhetoric have plagued the country, team-work is essential. If managed correctly, it can be used to break down stereotypical views about difference and foster positive views about people, among other things (Hewstone et al., 2008:122).

Vygotsky (1978) advocates group work as an invaluable form of teaching and learning. His view is that students learn better when they are learning from one another. As part of learning to manage group dynamics, students also learn the following skills:

- a; To respect the views of others
- b; To break complex tasks into parts and steps
- c; To plan and manage time
- d; To refine understanding through discussion and explanation
- e; To give and receive feedback
- f; To challenge assumptions
- f; To develop stronger communication skills

(Mannix & Neale, 2005:19; Caruso & Woolley, 2008).

In support of Vygotsky's view of collaborative or group learning, Astin (1993:53) suggests several benefits of group work. Students can tackle more complex problems than they could on their own; among themselves, they improve group dynamics by delegating roles and responsibilities; and they learn to share diverse perspectives on the same subject leading to exploration of various approaches before settling on one. In addition, they learn to:

- a; Pool knowledge and skills; everyone in the group can showcase their skills set.
- b; Hold one another (and be held) accountable.

- c; Receive social support and encouragement to take risks.
- d; Develop innovative approaches to resolving differences by being a member of the group.
- d; Establish a shared identity with other group members that transcends their own racial, cultural or ethnic identity.
- e; Develop friendships outside the comfort zones by developing new academically-driven relationships with like-minded members of the group.
- f; Find competent peers to emulate.
- g; Develop their own voice and perspectives about peers.

Shaughnessy's (2010) view is that all learning and teaching is situated in context, underpinned by everyday life. This understanding is critical, particularly in design education, where everyday situations are meant to aid students in their understanding of the diverse nature of the audiences for whom they have to create communication (Shaughnessy, 2010).

In a bid to make students more aware of the need to be culturally sensitive to their audiences, it is crucial that their own diversity be incorporated in teaching and learning. The acknowledgement of their own culturally diverse needs may have a snowball effect on how they view others. In addition, ensuring that every student has a sense of belonging in a multicultural classroom develops a sense of acceptance and membership in the group.

2.3.2 Problems associated with culturally diverse classrooms

The educator is at the heart of ensuring that everyone in the classroom feels a sense of acceptance in the classroom environment. The extent of the responsibility is emphasised in the research by Banks and McGee Banks (2009:134) which revealed that, in some multicultural learning centres, educators tend to use their prejudiced perceptions about students' backgrounds to discriminate against them. Banks and McGee Banks (2009) concluded that there was a need to dispel the notion by some educators that students from cultural and linguistic backgrounds other than that of the learning centre need to be provided with the 'basics' only. The reasoning is that students from 'minor' cultures are deemed to have neither the capability nor the experiential capacity of those that belong to 'dominant cultures'. 'Minor

culture' in this case refers to those cultures that do not exert any economic or political influence (Arvizu et al., 1994:235). Dominant culture is defined by Swartz (2013:134) as a culture that establishes itself through economic and political power and manages to impose its values, language and ways of behaving on "supposedly subordinate" cultures. This imposition may be through legal or political suppression of other cultures, using public forums such as the media. Because students are exposed to these negative views perpetuated by others and/or themselves in the media, they carry those beliefs and attitudes into classroom settings. Unfortunately, most learning institutions are run from these perspectives of 'dominant culture' and thus it is important to address this dominance in relation to how it impacts on all students, particularly those students from less dominant social groups (Swartz, 2013:134). The dominant culture syndrome often manifests in learning content that perpetuates the ideas and ideals of one cultural, restriction of the language of instruction in learning environments and benchmarks views and values of the dominant culture (Swartz, 2013). Students from less influential cultural groups may walk into classes that have a low perception of them and be confronted by peers and educators who have little or no tolerance or understanding of them, leaving them feeling isolated. Added to their discomfort is the fact that they should deal with a curriculum that often neither promotes nor acknowledges them and their world view (Banks, 2001:365).

In the South African context, this dominance has its roots in the colonisation and apartheid legacies that still plague public universities, including public institutions of higher learning such as colleges (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:62). The curriculum and, in some cases, the educators, seem to advocate teaching methods and attitudes that may alienate these students (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:62). To this effect, educators need to be conscious of their own activities that may seem to promote one culture over others, particularly if the culture in question is their own. The issue of favouritism comes into play, particularly in cases where the educator is seen to be advancing the needs of particular students over others.

Nelson (2016:89) states that, favouritism is like an insidious snake that wriggles unnoticed under classroom doors. His argument is that, if left unchecked, it begins to fester like a rot and affects morale, leaving in its wake demotivated, disinterested and sometimes defiant students. He further contends that it could make managing the class more challenging for the teacher because of the negative attitudes it tends to conjure in the students. His experience is that educators do not admit, even to themselves, that they play favourites, even where there is

evidence among students that this is so. Nelson (2016:90) views favouritism as an act that is often hidden by the teacher beneath a veil of justifications, leading to a denial of the facts, even more so if an accusation of favouritism identifies it as racially motivated. He identifies some effects that bias has on students.

2.3.2.1 How bias can create a feeling of exclusion

Students are often underestimated. They may have their shortcomings, as do all people, but they are more observant than they are given credit for. According to Nelson (2016:92), if an educator is biased and affording special privileges or attention for some and not others, they may notice it and subsequently develop resentment for both the educator and the students who are seen to be benefitting from the bias. According to Nelson (2016) it is normal for the students who are not beneficiaries of the educator's favours to project their disapproval of favouritism onto those that they deem be either the beneficiaries or towards the educator because of their expectation of his/her role as non-partisan in the classroom.

2.3.2.2 Impact of favouritism on self-confidence

According to Nelson (2016) when some individual students receive a lower level of attention over others, their self-confidence may be affected. This may be particularly so for those students that already feel marginalised. Favouritism can be especially damaging because it may cause some students to lose trust in the classroom authority, make them less inclined to participate, and less willing to take healthy social chances. In some cases, favouritism may be assigned to racial bias, particularly in cases where the educator and the student(s) who feel(s) disadvantaged belongs to a different racial from that of the educator.

2.3.2.3 Diverse socio-economic backgrounds

While favouritism is a distinct form of exclusion, students may have to deal with other types of exclusion that could easily be overlooked in multicultural environments, for example, finances. The burden of worrying about financial obligations has been linked to increased stress levels, depleted energy levels and failure to thrive in the classroom (Ary et al., 2002:145). This is because students preoccupy themselves with real fears of how they might cope with the

demands of their academic life on their limited financial resources. Constant worrying has been identified as a genuine barrier to success in a learning environment. Accommodation, food, transport, and upkeep costs should be factored into the already meagre budgets of students and their parents or guardians (Ary et al., 2002). Students who struggle with attendance (and therefore struggle with completing work on time) may suffer depleted confidence.

2.4 Tracking the role of a Graphic Designer in visual communication

When a visual message is created, there are targets that it needs to meet. People have been reading signs and symbols since the birth of ‘cuneiforms’ which preceded the early writings of the Egyptians by about a thousand years (Meggs, 2005:45). As the history of written communication documents shows, writing began as logographic prints which were literal representations and later developed into signs for phonetic sounds which heralded the earlier alphabet and developed into some of the signs we use today. However, Eastern scholars developed writing systems called ‘ideographs’, with each ideogram representing a concept, and only a small number of ideographs representing actual things (Meggs, 2005). Although the research focus here is not writing systems, it is necessary to understand the history of using signs and symbols as communication tools in Graphic Design because images have the capacity to convey very powerful and emotive messages. Figure 2.1 is an analysis by Kang (2015:60) of how an audience interacts with communication.

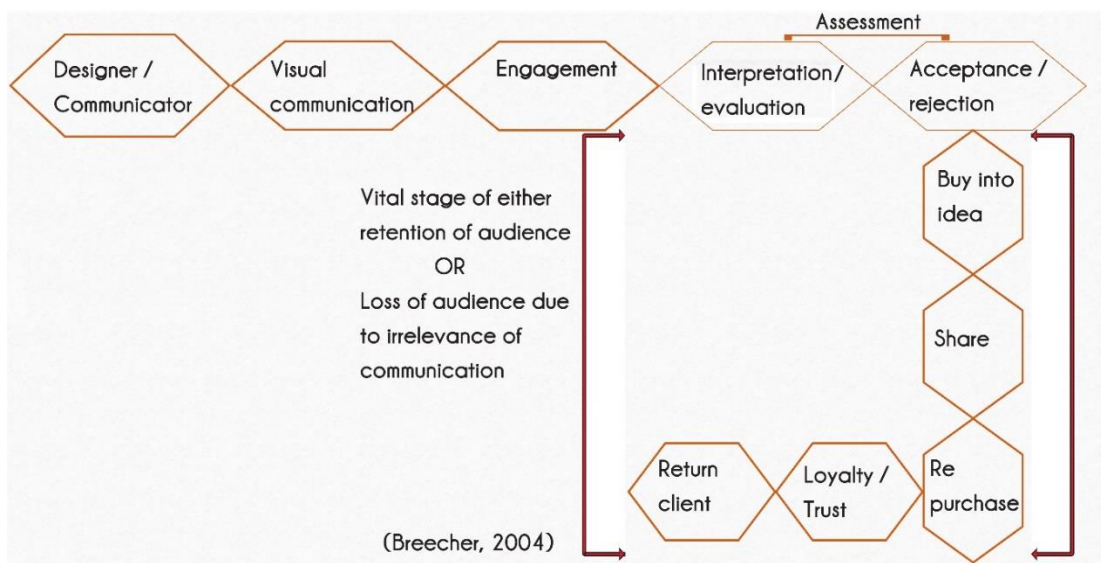


Figure 2.1: Analysis of how an audience interacts with visual communication, Kang (2015:60)

The illustration shows practices and trends when an audience is confronted with communication with which they must interact. In semiotics, Roland Barthes (1964) describes this as responses that are influenced by prior knowledge or a lack of it. He claims that our responses to semiotic triggers are affected by our previous experience with those triggers. For example, someone who has never had a negative encounter with dogs may have a positive perception of them. However, for someone who has had an unfortunate encounter, dogs may always be viewed with a level of trepidation, no matter how much that person is assured of the contrary. Similarly, what one culture perceives as reasonable, normal practices, another may view as an anomaly. It is evident, therefore, that in visual communication, meaning is as varied as the cultural perspectives of the audiences that interact with that communication. According to Barthes (1964), the reason for varied interpretations is that audiences use past experiences to make meaning of their world. Their past experiences inform their reactions to the new experiences that they encounter daily.

Graphic Design students require exposure to such variables in understanding the world of semiotics. They need to be taught how vast the world of communication is, and not be limited solely to cultures in their scope. For them to begin to grow their multicultural empathies, there needs to be active engagement with their immediate multicultural classroom environment. It is Vygotsky's (1978:98) assertion that active learning emulates social practices. That means that, in the same way students acquire their cultural nuances around language, dress, relationships and so on in the world, may translate to how they may learn in the classroom. This means that learning styles may be influenced by how students are socialised in the homes/societies that they come from. For this reason, the learning environment needs to enable learners with different learning needs. Thus, Astin's (1993:90) recommendation for teaching and learning through group work or pair activities because these activities encourage peers to learn from each other. Vygotsky (1978) encourages educators to create a learning environment that maximizes the learners' ability to interact with peers through discussion, collaboration, and feedback. According to Vygotsky (1978), because culture is our primary learning source for knowledge construction, learning also occurs through the same cultural lens. Thus learners learn better through interacting with others using socially determined rules.

To this effect, Cronbach and Suppes (1969:33) assert that students' cultures need to be used to enrich the way they learn to understand concepts. Their view is that the two worlds – culture based on primary socialisation; and the mainstream culture of the education institution – need to be made accessible to students as part of their learning experiences. The educator plays a pivotal role in merging these worlds while minimising any negative issues that may arise from the process. Some of the tensions that exist in the classroom are because of stereotypes that are broadcast through the media. Using these perceptions, there may be an opportunity for educators to use these stereotypes to teach about different people's perceptions of other as well as their experiences too.

2.5 How South Africa's history has shaped the current multicultural classroom

Historical perspectives help provide a context and help with understanding the contemporary status quo and discourses in multicultural education (Banks & McGee, 1995:37). For this reason, there is a need to integrate the curriculum with content drawn from the historical background of the country (Mkhwanazi-Twala, 2008:28). This is true for South Africa because, beyond the racial tensions that still exist, there needs to be an understanding of the different tribal as well as intra-tribal ethnic differences and tensions that were deliberately initiated by missionary education policies and later adopted and reinforced by policies of the apartheid era (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:56).

Most South African tertiary education institutions exist against the backdrop of a country emerging from the influences of apartheid education, where the scales were tipped against students who were 'non-European' (African, Coloured, Indian) and who received an 'inferior' university education (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

After 1994, South Africa was a country with possibility, rising from the woes of apartheid. Everyone wanted to bask in the beams of the bright, rising star that Nelson Mandela represented. The implications for South African universities were an increased African and international enrolment into its learning programmes. Education, therefore, had to transform and reform to make way for the 'new' South African classroom. This would be a classroom that was, according to Nelson Mandela, not motivated by racist, ethnic, sexist or cultural prejudice but that saw everyone as belonging equally and therefore privy to sharing the

resources the country had to offer (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:59). For this reason, there still is a need for an education system that caters for this diversity, rather than a system that tries to force people into a box and assume that everyone is the same and thus benefit from the same teaching approaches (Mkhwanazi-Twala, 2008:47). The education system can benefit from educators who, aware of the past that South Africa is still dealing with, strive to balance the scales of learning by acknowledging the differences that exist.

Educators who see themselves as agents of change need to refrain from the ‘colour blind’ approach to teaching so that they address the realities of the different students that make up their classrooms (Mkhwanazi-Twala, 2008:47). Mkhwanazi-Twala (2008) believes that a ‘colour blind’ approach, while seemingly noble, may unconsciously perpetuate racist and prejudicial practices that treat all students as if they are whatever race or tribe the educator chooses. Moreover, it may assume an assimilationist approach for students coming from a culture that differs from the culture of the educational institution. Unfortunately, assimilation is a disservice to students who are expected to adapt, because it renders their cultures unimportant to the dominant culture that they have to adopt (Chisholm, 2005:215). According to Mda (1997:115) the prevailing principle should be a culture that ensures that students can actively engage in knowledge construction in an environment that enables rather than impedes this through institutionalised exclusionary methods. These inclusionary methods could involve learning content that acknowledges the multicultural nature of the higher education classrooms.

The dominant culture syndrome is usually a product of an assimilationist approach to teaching in former white environments. These learning environments seem to continue with an attitude that suggests that they are open to accepting students that may historically not have been considered for the course. However, they have not adequately advanced the course and study materials to reflect this inclusion (Mda, 1997:115). This is because, despite the evolutionary nature of the political climate, certain fundamentals that underpin the dominant cultural expressions and tones still require interrogation and revision to suit the multicultural classrooms, namely:

- (i) Changes in the curriculum to reflect the diversity that exists in learning environments;
- (ii) Changes in the teaching materials to include material that accounts for the different racial and cultural groups in South Africa;

- (iii) Changes in teaching styles to accommodate learning styles of the different cultural groups; and
- (iv) Attitudes, perceptions, and practices of educators, including goals, norms and culture of the learning environment.

The narrative that relates to indigenisation of curricula is gaining traction in many quotas although this has not translated into tangible changes in the classrooms. This scrutiny into what is taught and learnt is not just an acknowledgement of the urgent changes required in education. It is an understanding that recognises that for as long as education perpetuates views other than those of those that consume it, it cannot be deemed relevant. Banks (2001) also maintains that multicultural education needs to be implemented to address the real issues that students from ‘minor’ cultures deal with. The ‘minor’ classification relates to political and economic power. Banks (2001) advocates an educational intervention which includes thorough research on the interaction of race, ethnicity, class, gender and uniqueness. His view is that a holistic study of each of these elements and their interaction is necessary, as a profound and dedicated understanding is required to ensure that delivery is efficient and free of obvious loopholes. If there is research to be done, there needs to be an acceptance that there is a problem and an accompanying willingness by stakeholders to address it. Banks’ (2001) advocates an approach to multicultural education that is transparent and does not hide institutionalised racism and discriminatory attitudes. He suggests the adoption of approaches that ensure that educational opportunities are structured to create opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class and cultural groups by acknowledging the differences that exist in people. His view is that people’s differences need to be articulated in order to address the ‘colour blind’ narrative that is in itself racist as it denies the issues inherent race related rhetoric.

Another school of thought challenges the superficial inclusion and unstructured compilation of a few things that are considered representative of the minority into various aspects of the learning environment. The view is that a commitment to educational reform takes into account all the aspects of life that address equal access to educational resources.

It is vital to view the curriculum as a key element that makes up the backbone of a healthy multicultural learning environment. Unfortunately, since the dawn of democracy in 1994, the challenge with creating all-inclusive curricula has been that reform has been plagued with superficial additions that do nothing to recognise all cultures equally and constructively (Fiske

& Ladd, 2004:61). Educators seem keen on a practice that Banks and McGee Banks (2009:214) call the 'contributionist' intervention, which involves accommodating aspects of the marginalised group's culture to create an inclusive environment. According to Mda and Mothata, (2000:78), the inclusion entails hosting events such as 'culture days' where a plethora of activities are strung together to portray acceptance of the 'new-comers'. Banks and McGee Banks (2009) advocate the removal of such events, describing them as a superfluous addition that usually does not reflect a genuine intention to include anyone and bring about real unity among a diverse group of people. The justification for Banks and McGee Banks's (2009) assessment is the fact that this 'inclusive' act ends with those small activities and never actually addresses the most important questions that pertain to needs of the multicultural environment. The issues that need answering pertain to the culture of the knowledge being promulgated and thus those whose culture is showcased in the quest to educate everyone. Therefore, the question must be asked how there can be an assumption of equal access when the people that relate to that knowledge own it? If the mandate is to provide an education that can empower students, there is a need for the curriculum content to reflect the diversity of the students it is designed to serve (Vandeyar, 2006:218). Bourdieu and Passeron (1990:74) posit that, if not addressed, education could be a vehicle used to perpetuate inequality in institutions of higher learning. His view is that *cultural capital* assumes central importance in perpetuating inequality of social reproduction because inequalities in cultural capital reflect inequalities in social class. To curtail these notions in students, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) maintain that the dialogues in classrooms need to empower students to think independently and to manage how they deal with challenging situations (ibid, 1990). Their view is that students need to reach points in their academic lives where they can question and critically position themselves in their worldviews. The proceeding discussion examines the challenges associated with the guiding philosophy in the Graphic Design curriculum at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and other universities of technology in South Africa.

2.6 Understanding gestalt principles in the Graphic Design curricula

The Graphic Design curricula at most urban universities of technology (including CPUT) in South Africa are based on early German design school principles of understanding visual communication (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2010:45). The governing principle is called *gestalt*, a

psychology principle that views people’s experiences in wholes and not fragments. These ‘wholes’ are called ‘*gestalts*’, a term coined by Max Wertheimer in 1933 (Rock, 1975:1). It is a theory of the mind and brain, proposing that the operational principle of the brain is “holistic, parallel and similar with self-organizing tendencies” (Perls, 1973:123). *Gestalt* principles are applauded as a useful tool in the teaching of visual communication subjects because of their ability to give communication a structure in a way that makes information easy to read (Jensen, 2010: 49). However, the principles have been challenged for focusing only on cognitive perception and treating the rest of the human brain as if it were devoid of all other functions (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2010:49). *Gestalt* proposes six principles that seek to explain how people read visual communication. These are:

2.6.1 Figure-ground segregation

A figure is a shape that is perceived as being in front and surrounded by a similar background. Therefore, objects can be discerned if they are separate in some way from their backgrounds, either by size or by contrast. This is an important consideration in layout design if the type and visual are to be in the same space. Typography needs to own its space within the visual make-up, or else may either be unreadable or difficult to decipher (Perls, 1973). Gestalts dictate that, colour contrast needs to be clear so that this conflict of figure-ground is corrected, as shown in Figure 2.2.

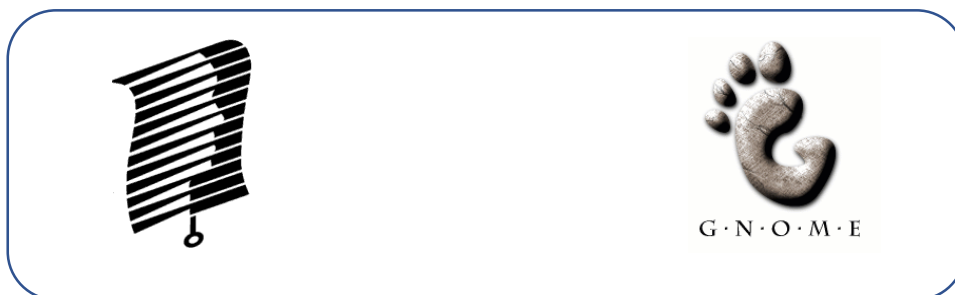


Figure 2.2: Illustrations of figure ground segregation, Perls (1973:124)

2.6.2 Symmetry (equilibrium)

According to White (2011:239), symmetry refers to the perception of balance in the size, shape, and relative position of parts on opposite sides of a dividing line. The lack of equilibrium makes

it difficult for a reader to focus on a document. Asymmetrical elements on a page seem unstable and therefore distract the audience from the message because readers expect equilibrium. The eye struggles to focus and interest is lost owing to the anxiety that the reader feels as s/he tries to find the best way to extract information. Balance allows the eye to follow the information in the order it should be best read (Moore & Fritz 1993:393). This is illustrated in Figure 2.3.

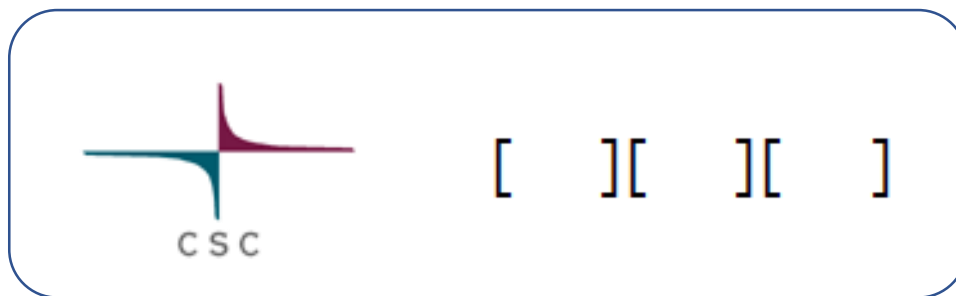


Figure 2.3: Illustrations of symmetry (equilibrium), Moore & Fritz (1993:393).

2.6.3 Closure

(Moore & Fritz, 1993:393), asserts that closed areas appear to be self-sustaining, stable and able to visually organise themselves. If an area is not closed, viewers try to find information within the visual that helps them close the gap so that the visual is organized and understood as complete or closed. Lack of closure causes instability to the document. Figure 2.4 shows the well-known IBM and WWF brand icons and illustrate the concept of closure clearly.

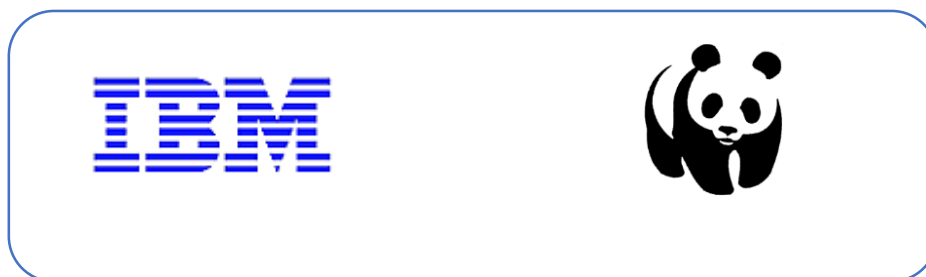


Figure 2.4: Illustrations of closure, Moore and Fritz (1993:393)

2.6.4 Proximity

Moore and Fritz (1993:395) suggest that proximity refers to instances when an area contains a few equal parts. Those among them which are in greater proximity may be visually organised to influence how the visual is subsequently interpreted. An improper proximity gives the wrong visual impression about how the information is to be interpreted. Use of a heading or a visual should be such that when one views it, it is clear to which image it relates. This is illustrated in Figure 2.5:



Figure 2.5: Illustrations of proximity, Moore and Fritz (1993:395)

2.6.5 Continuation

“Law of good continuation states that, other things being equal, human perception tends to continue a shape or form beyond its own terminal point” (Moore & Fritz, 1993:396). Moore and Fritz (1993:396) suggests that, “any curve” will proceed in its own natural way; a circle as a circle, an ellipse as an ellipse, and so on, as illustrated in Figure 2.6.

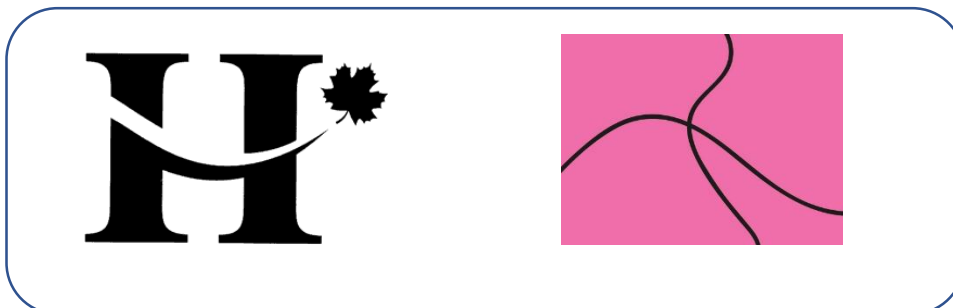


Figure 2.6: Illustrations of continuation, Moore and Fritz (1993:396)

2.6.6 Similarity

Moore and Fritz (1993:397) assert that, “The law of similarity says that the units which resemble each other in shape, size, colour or direction may be seen together as a homogeneous grouping”. For example, changes in typefaces, spaces or type size suggest a change in subject matter, emphasis or focus. However, confusion for the reader may arise if typefaces, size and spacing change but the subject matter remains the same. The opposite is also true: if the subject matter changes, but typefaces, sizes and spacing remain unchanged, confusion may arise. This confusion is what is called an anomaly, as illustrated in Figure 2.7.

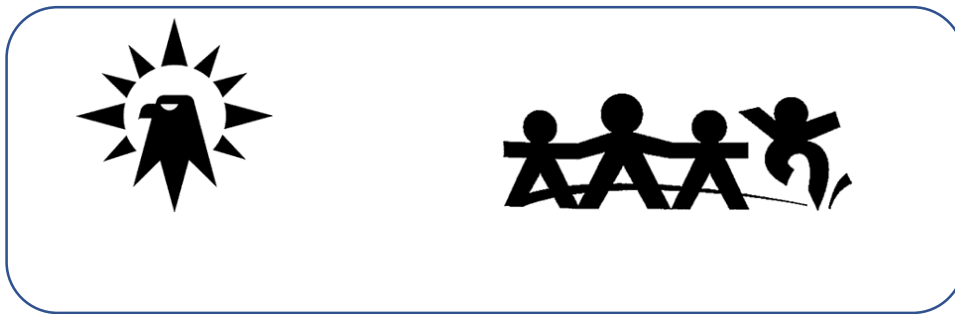


Figure 2.7: Illustrations of figure similarity, Moore and Fritz (1993:397)

Although the *gestalt* principles have merits in interpreting visual communication, they have been criticised for overlooking important culturally significant aspects that relate to how human beings interact with visuals. The following discussion provides details of this.

2.7 Challenges associated with *gestalt*

Moore and Fritz (1993:400) argue that the biggest challenge with *gestalt* principles lies in their inability to address the complex nature of the individual character of the visual communicator or his/her audience. In other words, the assumption seems to be that every designer sees the world in the same way, could apply the principles with the same understandings and that the audience is likely to decode the message the same way. Yet we know that each of us has different perceptions of the world around us (Crow 2003).

In Panofsky's view (1970:253), the application of *gestalts* seems to suggest that people do not engage emotionally with visuals. Yet one of the most important characteristics that make humans special is their capacity to create belief systems. It is clear that decisions that individuals make are often directly linked to the beliefs and perceptions of the community that influences their response/s to the demands of the world. It is these beliefs and values that create human emotional responses to interactions with visuals and the surrounding world. This is contrary to the *gestalt* view that sees the brain as operating like a machine, devoid of the emotional connections and cultural influences that may influence how people read signs and symbols.

While it is apparent that Graphic Design education is rooted in a seemingly well-meaning philosophy, its flaws need to be rectified. For advancing the ideals of Graphic Design education reform, there is a need to address the concerns around *gestalt* in relation to cultural *semiotics*. Semiotics is defined by Crow (2003:30) as a body of knowledge that is concerned with the study of signs, systems and symbols as elements of communication that diverse cultures use to make meaning of the world around them. The principles of perception therefore need to be understood not in isolation but in the context of the multicultural nature of the classroom.

There are cultures that can be flagged as forward thinking in their approach to design teaching. Their interesting methods are detailed in the following discussion.

2.8 Alternative approaches in Graphic Design education

The borders that once separated places in the world have been blurred by the widespread availability of the internet and other media sources that have made it easier for people to know and connect as at no other time in history. For this reason, companies and people in different countries can do business with people they may never have thought possible. This possibility has necessitated that the issue of culture and other disciplines be addressed so that Graphic Design students are equipped with skills that allow them to create communication that is relevant for clients previously perceived as being beyond their scope (Sooful, 2013:240).

The Indian approach to teaching Graphic Design has been praised and commended for the stance that it takes on design. This is because their methods of teaching offer a unique approach

to understanding how foreign perspectives can be assimilated into the curriculum without compromising on their own unique cultures. It is Balaram's assertion (2005:15) that Indian philosophy suggests that life and design education (visual expression) run on parallel planes and mirror each other in very peculiar ways. Design teaching in India principally reflects the vision and principles of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore who advocated freedom of learning and freedom of expression as an integral part of methods of learning and living. Their view was that design education was in a constant state of evolution to conform to the dynamics and altering states of the environment within which it exists. Although Indian design education has been accused of having Western influences, it has always been viewed as keeping true to the realities of its people. The advantage with the Indian approach is that the teaching and learning processes occur in their own languages alongside English. Gandhi and Tagor's vision gave room for the understanding that growth in Indian education would come because of their 'openness to assimilate other cultures' positive traits but never allowing themselves to get lost in those influences" (Balaram, 2005:17).

Another great exemplar to Graphic Design education reform is evident in the steps taken by Musashino Art University (MAU) in Japan (Cadle, 2011:213). Their philosophy is based on the successful balance between what both the educator and the students bring into the learning scenario as a confidence-building mechanism. The focus is on the students' capability to apply principles beyond their design knowledge and to come up with design solutions that are both relevant and far-reaching in their resourcefulness and scope (Wang, 2010:85). The benefits of this approach are that a designer is construed as not only creative, but also a critical thinker, objective, strategist and a social reformist (Wang, 2010:86). While the technical elements of training designers cannot be understated, a balance needs to be struck between mastery of technical design skills and the acquisition of other skills that are crucial in creating effective communication (Wang, 2010:86).

Semiotics plays an integral role in visual communication. For this reason, there is a need to understand the implications of semiotics in Graphic Design teaching and learning.

2.9 Graphic Design and the semiotic challenge

For Graphic Design education, the generic approach to using and reading signs poses a challenge in how semiotics is taught, considering that the meaning of signs is culturally determined. Semiotics is a body of knowledge whose foundations are associated with the work of Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) and Ferdinand Saussure (1857-1913), later developed by Roland Barthes (1964) and most recently Umberto Eco (1973). Saussure's semiology concerned itself chiefly with language. The work of Peirce, on the other hand, analysed the use of signs and symbols in relation to signification, representation, reference and meaning as communication tools. Barthes's semiology brought together the use of symbols and signs in collaboration with text. For this reason, Barthes' work helps to form the basis of the following discussion on understanding how semiotics are applied and used in Graphic Design teaching and learning. The reason being that visual language amongst others, one of the first languages that humans rely on to create associations of and experience the world around

Peirce's work is an offshoot of Saussure's studies on semiology and meaning making. Saussure's focus lay squarely on linguistics and how meaning is formed using structures in language, whereas Peirce's studies set out to understand visual meaning and how it is that we form meanings of the visual references in our environments. His analysis of semiotics is that the meanings given to things are closely linked to human experiences and therefore the justification that semiotics are not universal but subjective to individuals' unique circumstances (Jensen, 2010:207). The diagram below is an illustration of Charles Saunders Peirce's (1867) semiotics and shows the interpretation of signs and symbols and their function in visual communication.

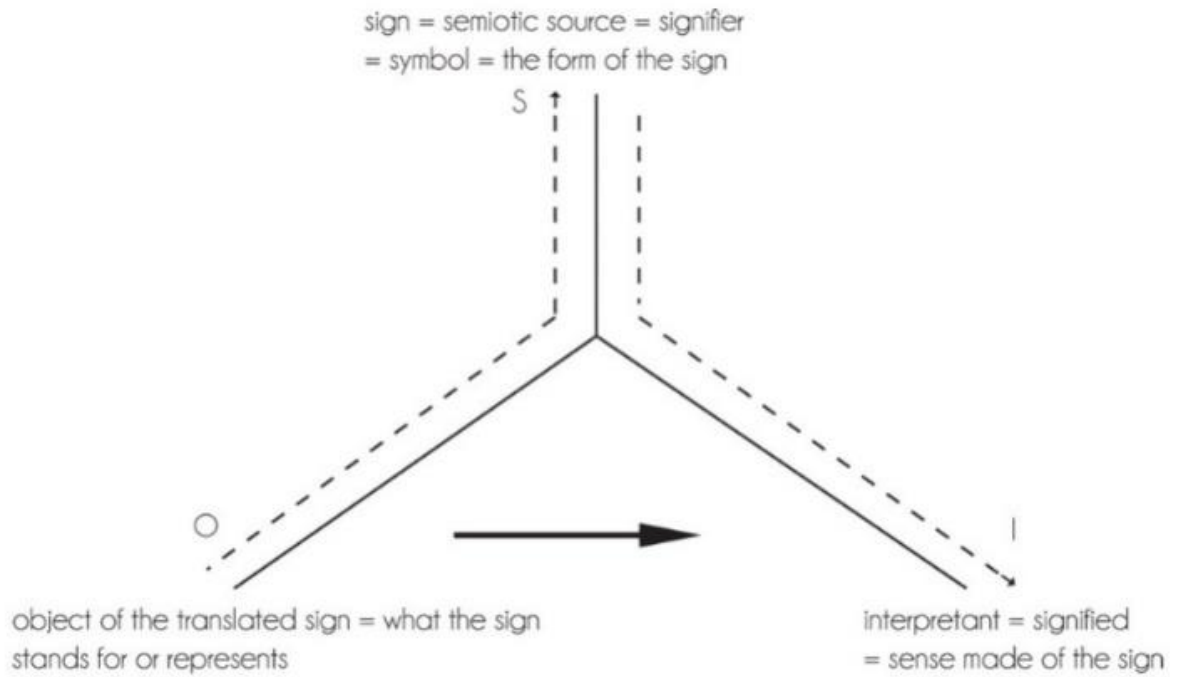


Figure 2.8: Pierce's semiology as interpreted by Jensen (2010:203)

To help us understand how we visually develop meaning as a way of making sense of the world around us, Pierce created a triad, as illustrated, to explain the relation between the *sign*, the user and the external reality of the *sign*. In Pierce's own words, the sign is:

... anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its Interpretant, that the latter is thereby immediately determined by the former (Pierce, 1877-1878 cited in Deledalle, 2000:23).

Pierce's claim is simple: a sign comprises three interrelated parts: a sign, an object, and an interpretant. To understand his thinking, we can view the role of the sign to be the signifier. For instance, it could be a written word or an utterance, or, to use Pierce's own example, seeing smoke as a sign for fire. On the other hand, the object is best explained as that which is signified, for example, the object to which the written or verbalised word refers, or, as in the above example, the fire which is signified by the smoke (Panofsky, 1970:256). His conviction

of the visual world is that our experiences are meaning creators. How we experience a ‘thing’ and the meaning we assign to it gives it the meaning and name that it subsequently inherits.

Hall and Hall (1990: xvii) introduced the idea of cultural semiotics in their research into how Americans did business with the Japanese in the late 1980s. The differences in approaches to business, as well as business etiquette, are demonstrative of cultural semiotics in action. These differences are a result of a lack of knowledge of the discourse and terms of reference of one culture by another. Discourse is defined as the variety of conventions and purposes of language for communication. In their research, Hall and Hall focused on the practical aspects of intercultural communication. The semiotics inherent in the Japanese culture are misinterpreted by outsiders who come into the Japanese world without equipping themselves with any knowledge of how Japanese business associates conduct themselves in business settings. Their ways of knowing, doing things, and the way they handle their relationships are all important to understand, as is their general outlook and their view of the world. Hall and Hall (1990:10) assert that what sets the cultures apart is information: “what culture is, what forms culture takes, how culture is handled”. By way of example, Hall and Hall (1990:15) highlight that Mexican Hispanics and Japanese hold the view that information should be shared by all. Therefore, these groups have a psychological makeup that conditions them to look for information and for ways of accessing it so that they are ‘in the know’ about everyone and everything. However, Americans and Northern Europeans believe in classifying information into what can be shared and what should remain concealed. This partially restrictive approach could therefore have dire consequences in situations where these cultural groups must work together, especially in situations where they have not equipped themselves with information about the other group. To highlight the challenges of cultural differences, Hall and Hall (1990) reflect on the experiences of an American company that had a branch in Japan. They tell the story of a successful thirty-year-old American man who was sent to head up the Japanese branch after the resignation of an older Japanese man. In his attempt to reorganise the structure of the company, he found himself dealing with practices and tendencies that he deemed unacceptable and unprofessional. He unfortunately shared his frustrations with the workers who felt demoralised and eventually a senior staff member resigned. The American businessman was recalled, and an older Japanese man was hired in his place. Hall and Hall’s (1990) assessment of the example highlighted a few key issues that are critical to intercultural relationships: firstly,

the company should have known that Japanese do not regard someone in their thirties as being sufficiently experienced enough to head up an organisation; secondly, the American man did not study the Japanese culture prior to travelling there; thirdly, the company should have known that the Japanese would experience aggressive, ambitious young people to be rambunctious, disruptive and not adding value to the cause (Hall & Hall, 1990:56). Clearly, from the example, neither the company nor the young man had tried to get to know their partners, with inevitable consequences.

While the example relates to experiences in the corporate world, the scenario mirrors multicultural classrooms in institutions of higher learning such as CPUT where the research was conducted. This is because it addresses a widespread practice in intercultural situations where a lack of knowledge about the nuances of individuals' cultures could have dire consequences for the affected parties. Because of the diversity of the student body, there is a significant chance of misunderstandings arising from cultural differences, hence Phillion's appeal for educators to be aware of who their students are so as to service their different cultural requirements in the learning environment (Phillion, 2002:113). She also alludes to the importance of treating students as individuals with diverse backgrounds and therefore with different ways of thinking about and viewing the world.

The implication for Graphic Design teaching is to instil in students the need to be empathetic visual communicators. It is also vital for students to understand that stereotypes about communities should be interrogated, and ultimately accepted or rejected on the merits of the degree of accuracy of representation of the communities. This to guarantee that communication intended for a specific community does not perpetuate negative views that are untrue, offensive or harmful.

Chapter 3 deals with the theories that were used to understand the multicultural teaching and learning of Graphic Design at CPUT. The chapter looks at critical issues in Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory in relation to the current study. It also critically assesses the application of both the Socio-cultural theory and Phillion's Narrative Multicultural theory in the research.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

The section begins with an in-depth look at the theoretical framework and its relation to this study. Important topics relating to culture, education and multicultural education are thereafter explored to examine the relationship between theory and the research study.

3.1 Socio-cultural learning theory and Graphic Design

The socio-cultural learning theory (SCT) is an integrative approach to human development and cognition (Vygotsky, 1978:36). Socio-cultural learning theory is built on the idea that a learner's environment is vital to their learning development. The theory explains the interdependent nature of the learning that occurs at home and in the formalised classroom setting. This theory is important to help understand teaching and learning, because it takes into consideration the significance that learners' peers and social activities have on how they access knowledge. For educators, the significance of this is in understanding the different learning practicess to enable them to formulate creative ways of structuring teaching that enhances the curriculum.

There are three key themes that underpin Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory: culture, language and what he terms the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD). The details of the theory and its relevance to the research are detailed in the following discussion.

3.2 Key themes in socio-cultural learning theory

(i) Culture

According to Vygotsky, humans form cultures using tools and symbols to distinguish themselves from other living things. This 'primary socialisation' occurs at home and is vital to identity formation and a unique understanding of the world. Learning occurs through day-to-day activities and speech. This learning is guided by the rules of the community and occurs through youngsters emulating elders, older siblings or other more capable members of the social group. Social interaction

becomes the source on which learners subsequently forms their views about the world around them.

Beyond this early socialisation, ‘secondary socialisation’ occurs as the school environment provides formalised learning activities. The learning environment imparts its own standardised view of socialisation with set rules that are intended to enhance the culture of the learning environment as well as the curriculum and its requirements. In both scenarios, the learners are expected to internalise the tools that are being imparted to enable them to respond appropriately to the demands of the specified culture. It is thus important for the educator to understand that learners have backgrounds that may impact how they respond to transfer of knowledge and that she/he may need to customise his/her teaching methods to cater for that diversity. For Vygotsky, it is vital to understand that learning is a social process. Therefore, success in learning can only be enhanced by emphasising and elevating the importance of interactions during the learning process. Socio-cultural theory also affects how cultural beliefs and attitudes influence how instruction and learning take place in the classroom. According to Vygotsky (1978), each culture provides what he referred to as “tools of intellectual adaptation” which enable different people to use their basic mental abilities in a way that is adaptive to the culture in which they live. This accounts for why different students bring diverse learning styles into the classroom environment. For this reason, students’ intellectual development is bound to be inevitably be different and unique to the culture from which they come. Thus, learning styles and their learning needs are bound to be determined by this uniqueness. Therefore, there is a need to use relevant yet diverse teaching styles to ensure accessibility to the learning resources.

(ii) Language

According to Vygotsky (1978), language is an offshoot of a culture’s semiotic resources. This is because language is acquired through a variety of social interactions and processes which form the basis of a culture’s existence. Culture is defined by Andrews (2003) as social behaviour and norms found in (human) societies. He further posits that culture is a central concept in anthropology and is transmitted through social learning in human societies. As such language is seen as

a social construct; a vehicle through which people are identified as members of a grouping of people. Thus, its acquisition is seen as validating the cultural group. Language acquisition goes through three stages where learners initially engage socially, also known as ‘social speech’. This is followed by ‘private speech’ which occurs when learners articulate their thoughts. Finally, there is ‘inner speech’ which is expressed through ideas and is responsible for the outward expression of actions or thoughts. The benefit of inner speech for learning outcomes is the ability by students to be self-critical. This ability in itself acknowledges students as creators of knowledge rather than as passive consumers.

(iii) Zone of Proximal Development

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a concept in socio-cultural learning theory that refers to the distance between a learner’s educational development which is determined through problem-solving activities, and that learner’s level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under an instructor’s guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. At this level, learners’ capabilities are compared to those of their peers based on that which they can do on their own without assistance and that which they can only do with assistance. In essence, this zone allows educators to learn what different students are not capable of doing or have not yet learned to do, but can be taught, using appropriate instruction. Essentially, it includes all the knowledge and skills that learners cannot yet understand or perform on their own yet but are capable of learning with guidance. Through observing someone who is slightly more advanced than themselves, learners may be able to stretch their skills and knowledge and progressively extend this zone of proximal development (Shaffer, 2009:133).

The significance of the construct to teaching and learning Graphic Design is in the application of the socio-cultural learning theory to successfully unlock the individual potential and voices of students in multicultural learning environments. To this effect, therefore, in the development phase, a student can deploy semiotic symbols and signs with which he/she is familiar, as dictated by how he/she perceives their relevance to the project required. This allows students to experience

greater confidence when choosing layouts, colours, image selection and other semiotic tools, because the proper scaffolding tools have been utilised to develop them to that level. Because students submit a rationale that explains their design choices, educators are able to assess their various levels of proficiency in the application of semiotics within the different facets of the discipline. Once students' work has been assessed, those that struggle with applying concepts are assisted either by their peers or by the lecturer. The significance of the ZPD is its ability to recognise that any learning starts from assessing what an individual can do independently, rather than assuming the position of any student (Shaffer, 2009:133).

It is important to understand that the socio-cultural learning theory also considers how learners are affected in their acquisition of knowledge, both by their peers and social scenarios. Thus, educators need to be cognisant of how learners may indirectly impact one another, as well as understand how their cultural backgrounds influence their learning practices.

According to Vygotsky (1978), critical thinking is promoted by a developed language competence because it supports such capabilities such as reading and writing. Thus, learners are bound to benefit more from pedagogic strategies that promote these competencies in knowledge construction. Moreover, the learning environment needs to provide a rich and enabling environment for critical interactions where issues about their learning are engaged. Of significance is ability by students to engage in group activities, as a way of knowledge sharing and independent learning endeavours. Vygotsky views these interactions as beneficial in promoting understanding of respect among peers but also as a peer guided learning. His assertion is that, this type of learning promotes deeper understanding and confidence in their own views.

3.3 Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory and its application in the research

Vygotsky's assertion is that learning should be dealt with as a social process, where the origin of human intelligence is anchored in society or culture wherein it emerges (Wertsch, 1985:60). This assertion helps to understand why the researcher has adopted socio-cultural learning theory to show how semiotics includes both the tools that facilitate the re-production of

knowledge and the means that are co-opted to facilitate future independent problem-solving activity.

Vygotsky was not only interested in what more knowledgeable others brought to an interaction, but also in what the learner brought to the interaction; he also focused on how the broader cultural and historical setting shaped that interaction. For this reason, the research explored how these disparate backgrounds are incorporated in the learning space in two ways: firstly, to understand each individual learner as a member of the multicultural classroom; and secondly, to acknowledge their contribution to the learning process through their own tenacity to share themselves with the other students. Understanding this important facet of individual students is crucial in establishing how they fit into their multicultural environment. The process of their growth and development in this culturally active environment is an important task in understanding who they are and who they may subsequently be. Vygotsky explains the importance of the interdependence of an individual's learning and his/her development as follows:

To study something historically means to study it in the process of change; that is the dialectical method's basic demand. To encompass in research, the process of a given thing's development in all its phases and changes—from birth to death—fundamentally means to discover its nature, its essence, for it is only in movement that a body shows what it is. Thus, the historical study of human action is not an auxiliary aspect of theoretical study, but rather forms its very base (Vygotsky, 1978:39-40).

Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory asserts that "learning awakens internal developmental processes that are able to operate when a learner interacts with others" (Vygotsky, 1978). To support this view, Vygotsky introduced a construct that he called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which explained how learning should be matched with the developmental level of the learner, as discussed earlier.

Lev Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Learning Theory

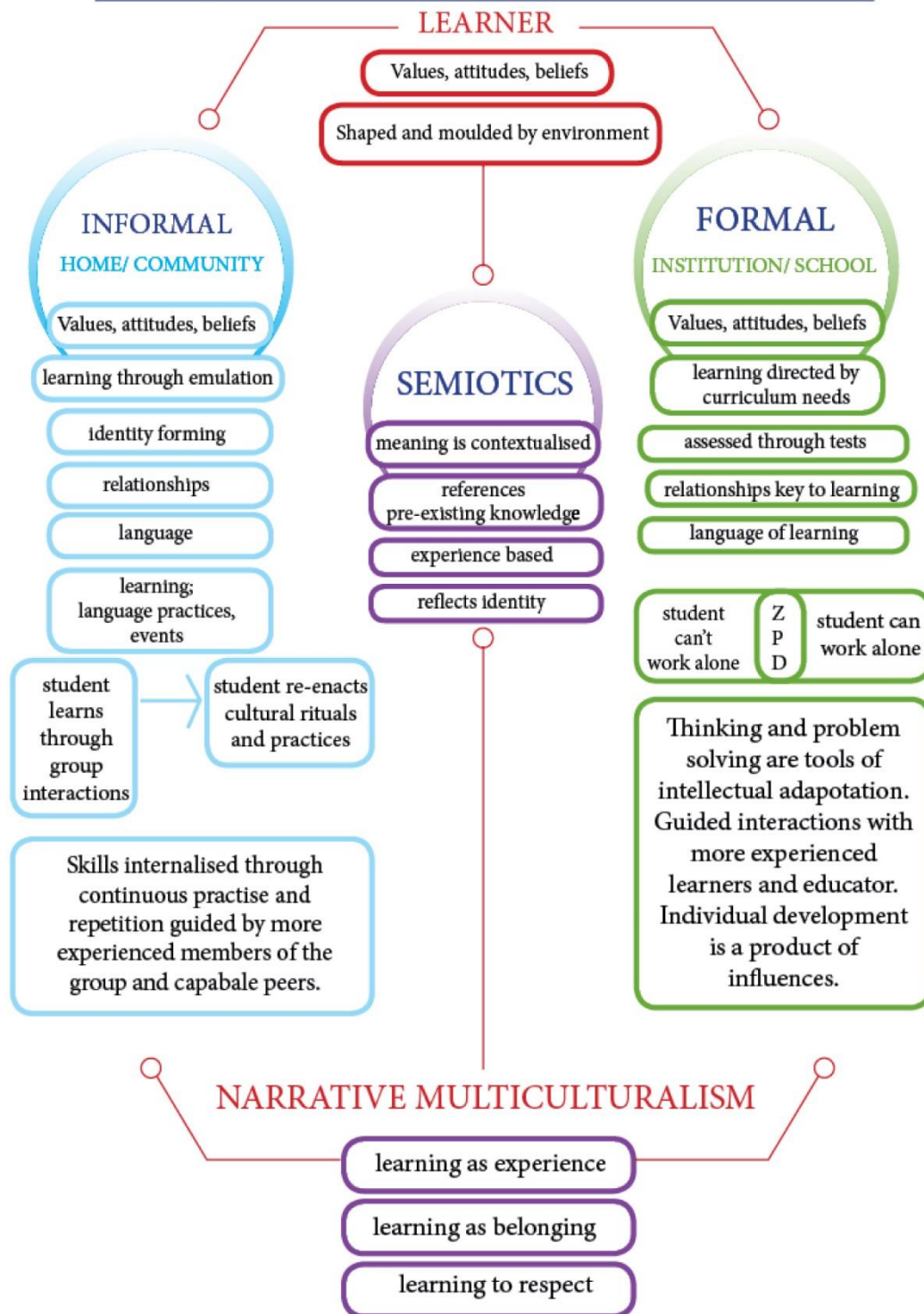


Figure 3.1: Visual interpretation of application of Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory, by Lindelihle Bhebhe, 2015

Nieto (2010), also drawing on a socio-cultural learning framework, argues for broadening the notion of good teaching practices from the simple methods of specific instructional practices. She proposes one critical dimension that she values: validation and respect for students, as these form the foundation for effective classroom teaching and learning. She contends that teachers utilising socio-cultural learning theory to enhance their teaching in multicultural classrooms should validate each learner's background to cultivate respect by learners for one another's views. Her rationale is that it is easier for peers who know about each other's communities easier to relate to one another and be accommodating of one another's differences. The importance of openly discussing the differences and similarities that exist among cultures can spark curiosity and interest that has a ripple effect on how students begin to understand one another's unique usage of cultural semiotics. This understanding is particularly important in visual expressions used in Graphic Design. A typical example is the symbolic use of colour in different cultures. The same colour has different meanings to people of different cultural backgrounds. An example is the colour white; to some people it is considered sacred because it represents the spirit world, whereas in other cultures it represents purity and used to celebrate life and "new beginnings".

It follows that the learning materials and approaches to teaching and learning need to be responsive to, and reflect the possibilities of, the diverse make-up of students in the learning space.

While academic success takes many forms, the important outcome that the different researchers seem to highlight is the need for the educator and the curriculum to be geared towards ensuring that, whatever learning or teaching methods are implemented, they serve to develop confidence in the students (Adams et al., 2013:123). This is vital in the development of independence and the ability to take charge of their own learning, as advocated by Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory. The implication for the current study is the importance of students' experiences in finding solutions for their academic struggles which stem from their attempt to marry the new knowledge with what is known from past experiences.

3.4 Implications of socio-cultural learning theory for Graphic Design teaching

Rather than work on the premise that learners only learn effectively by being taught everything, as if they were *tabula rasa*, the socio-cultural learning theory premises that, if a teacher establishes a student's ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development), he/she can assist the learner appropriately to achieve academic success. In this regard, the teacher curtails the premature assumption that students are not ready for work that is more advanced and challenging. According to Adams et al. (2013:125), this approach to teaching and learning allows students the responsibility to take charge of their learning. The method not only develops learners' confidence in their abilities, but also validates the knowledge that they bring into the learning environment.

Graphic Design students are constantly developing communication for audiences from all walks of life. For this reason, it is important that their own uniqueness is validated as a way of raising their own awareness of their audiences' diversity. It is therefore important that the educator recognises his/her role in instilling this awareness in students through actively engaging with issues of cultural difference, intercultural and multicultural communication.

Historically, teaching has been widely viewed as a process of transferring knowledge from a source (mainly the teacher) to the learners. However, it has become apparent that most learning disciplines such as Graphic Design are rapidly moving towards a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning. This approach views learning as a process that is driven by the learner and whose learning outcomes are directed by the learner's own development. The educator's contribution therefore shifts from that of the infallible expert to that of mediator in a learning environment that contextualises teaching and learning to benefit all the learners. Collins and O'Brien (2003:56) define learner-centred learning or student-centred instruction as:

an instructional approach in which students influence the content, activities, materials, and pace of learning. This learning model places the student (learner) in the centre of the learning process. The instructor provides students with opportunities to learn independently and from one another and coaches them in the skills they need to do so effectively. The SCI approach includes such techniques as substituting active learning experiences for lectures, assigning open-ended problems and problems requiring

critical or creative thinking that cannot be solved by following text examples, involving students in simulations and role plays, and using self-paced and/or cooperative (team-based) learning. Properly implemented SCI can lead to increased motivation to learn, greater retention of knowledge, deeper understanding, and more positive attitudes towards the subject being taught.

The learner-centred approach to teaching and learning reflects the ideals of socio-cultural learning theory because of its emphasis on taking care of the learner's needs. Socio-cultural learning theory recognises the impact that learners' experiences inside and outside the learning environment have on their ability learn (Huba & Freed, 2000:122). The learner-centred approach recognises experiences as potential guides to how educators could successfully teach learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. This is particularly important for Graphic Design teaching and learning because experiences are an important part of how Graphic Design students use semiotics to create visual communication. The narrative multicultural approach to understanding teaching of culturally different students is an integral part to the research because of its focus on understanding the holistic experience of multicultural teaching and learning environments. The narrative multicultural approach is now discussed in detail.

3.5 Relevance of narrative multiculturalism to the research

Semiotics are a fundamental part of teaching Graphic Design because images and their deployment are profoundly reliant on how individuals make meaning of their environment. (Phillion, 2002:116) clarifies the concept of narrative multiculturalism by emphasising the importance of considering individual experiences as the crux of understanding educational needs in a multicultural learning environment.

To understand narrative multiculturalism, it is important to define the *narrative* approach in qualitative research. It emerged as a field in qualitative research in the 20th century that used field texts (such as stories, autobiography, journals, conversations, interviews, family stories, photos and other artefacts that reflect the life experiences of people) as the units of analysis in research to explain how people create meaning in their lives (Henning, 2013). These units became what are referred to as narratives. Narratives, therefore, are about people's lives, how they experience them in their interactions, and how they shape and are shaped by contexts in

which they exist. Clandinin and Connelly (2000:178) propose a view that defines narrative enquiry as a study of experiences. Their view is that life experiences and education are interwoven into a symbiotic unit. Their argument uses Dewey's (1938) theory of experience. Similarly, Phillion and He (2005:302) argue that, in its "profound and elemental" form, narrative is a study of life. Their view is that a narrative researcher needs to account for every occurrence as part of understanding what happens in life. For this reason, narrative multiculturalism has been used together with socio-cultural learning theory to shed some light on the dynamics of teaching and learning of Graphic Design at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

Narrative multiculturalism is the product of merging multiculturalism (which, according to Phillion, highlights the need to elevate the significance of social life and its attempt to promote a democratic attitude towards thinking about it) and narrative because of its focus on experience as a means of exploring democratic ways of understanding life. Phillion (2002:118) recognised a harmony between the two concepts that, when merged, was compelling. She felt that this union was complete because it concerned itself with the human stories of experiences in the teaching and learning process within a multicultural setting. It is a passionate, intensive, personal and interactive participation in the lives of the participants who are often diverse in their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds (Chim Ho Yeung, 2014:11).

Phillion's approach to narrative research takes place over an extended period because it is dependent on close relationships that are built with participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:47). The narrative multicultural approach values these interactions and interchanges, because it is at this point that knowledge is shared and co-created. The relevance of Phillion's narrative multiculturalism to this study is its focus on individual life stories that impact on teaching and learning in multicultural educational environments. The suggestion is that teaching should be informed by the students' own experiences within the multicultural learning space, as well as the educator's reflections on his/her teaching styles and practices within the same space. In her argument, Phillion (2002:123) asserts that educators can only address the issues that multicultural classrooms pose by investigating how different students experience their learning. Their experiences are explained through reflecting on how past experiences have impacted their current dispositions and how that could have a ripple effect on future experiences, either in the classroom or during work experience. The value of Phillion's research

is its ability to show how, through introducing the background of the participants in her research and contextualising her research, she makes the narratives of multicultural teaching and learning relatable.

Phillion's narrative multiculturalism emphasises that experiences are not theoretical but lived occurrences that are documented through the analysis of linguistic, cultural and even ethnic backgrounds of participants. Information is obtained by the researcher immersing her/himself in the lives of the people whose narratives form the core of the research process. According to Phillion (2002:123), the 'interaction' aspect should not be underestimated in narrative multicultural research. To emphasise the value of interaction, Phillion and He (2005:123) refer to the work of Clandinin and Connelly (2000:49), which draws on Dewey's theories on interaction. They suggest an analytic framework that puts forward four main facets, namely, "inward and outward" and "backward and forward". *Inward* reiterates internal conditions such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions; *outward* is explained as dispositions towards existential conditions, that is, the environment. *Backward* and *forward* refer to temporality, past, present and future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:50). They argue that the narrative enquiry should seek to assess the phenomenon simultaneously from the subject's personal and social perspectives (*inward* and *outward*) as well as to enquire on the present state in relation to past and future influences. This approach is important for the current study because the issues relating to multicultural teaching and learning of Graphic Design require the researcher constantly to check current practices, dispositions and even attitudes against lived experiences that are influenced by external issues (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:51). According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), past experiences are an important link between current and future dispositions. In Graphic Design education, past, present and future social and environmental influences have a bearing on how students communicate effectively with their audiences. Students are able to share a glimpse of their views on different issues through the work that they produce.

Phillion (2002) curtails the 'perceived bias' that surrounds *narrative* research by employing an approach that is objective, distant and triangulates the data to minimise this predisposition. Her argument is clearly defined as she objectively navigates her own feelings and views about the practices in the classroom. Of importance to Phillion in her research in 'Pam's classroom', was the need to acknowledge the values, beliefs and even motivations for the different teaching

practices that were employed. The importance of this approach for Phillion was establishing Pam's values and determining her role as a teacher to children from diverse backgrounds. Phillion highlights Pam's role and emphasises the role of the educator in the multicultural learning environment (Phillion, 2002).

As in Phillion's (2002) research in Pam's classroom, the current study is geared towards understanding how the Graphic Design educators at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology manage the teaching and learning that occurs in their culturally diverse classrooms. Phillion's (2002) study is thus important in understanding how relationships that exist in a multicultural classroom benefit research on multicultural education. These relationships include that between the educator and the learners; those among learners themselves; and those outside the classroom (that involve families, guardians and significant others of the learners). For Pam, getting to know the significant others of the learners is vital to understanding them better, because knowing her learners' significant others helps her understand some of her learners' character traits. For Pam, it is an invaluable exercise to observe members of the families, groups or communities in active and non-scripted interactions. Pam also believes that these observations shed some light on some of the learners' dispositions, beliefs and attitudes about certain aspects of the teaching and learning environment.

Phillion (2002) also notes that, in narrative multicultural research, the relationship that exists between the researcher and the researched is vital in ensuring which information is shared. Immersing oneself in the lives of the respondents may allow the researcher to make accurate meaning of their experiences. In immersing herself in the lives of the respondents, made it possible for Phillion to constantly review her data in line with the shifts that occurred in the relationships she shared with her respondents, particularly the teacher, Pam.

For Nieto (2010:88), narratives are an important part of understanding the significance of individual students' experiences. This surfaced in her research on how migrant students coped with literacy within the American education system. Her research was motivated by her own experiences as a migrant learner in America. The crux of her research was to assess the importance of cultural identities in explaining students' responses to academic instruction. In her research, she reflected on how the nuances of Spanish culture impacted on migrant students and their ability to learn in a pro-Anglo learning environment. The core of her research revealed that, if educators used the strengths of pupils' backgrounds in helping them develop linguistic

skills, it was easier for them to deal with the demands of their school work. Her findings led to the conclusion that it was possible to reduce the high school dropout rate in Hispanic communities through using the knowledge of students' backgrounds to enhance their learning experiences as a way of motivating them to learn. This was a direct result of observing how students found it easier to learn new material if their prior knowledge (skills acquired from home or native languages) was incorporated into their learning.

Nieto's approach concurs with Phillion's (2002) belief that the educator is at the core of the teaching and thus an important part of the teaching and learning process. For Nieto, the success of an educator is in the ability to make learners see the value of their backgrounds by successfully linking these to what is learnt and also how it is learnt. Like Phillion, Nieto believes that foregrounding students' experiences helps cement their membership in the classroom, as well as acknowledging the educator's presence in their lives. In Phillion's research, Pam treated her students as individuals with backgrounds, valuable ways of thinking and as capable of achieving beyond the educational challenges confronting them.

To cement views by Phillion and Nieto, Ramirez's (1989:98) research on Mexican-American learners was pivotal in understanding why culture plays a significant role in teaching learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. His research uses narratives of learners from Mexican-American communities to understand multicultural teaching and learning from two delineations: *field independent* and *field sensitive* learning styles. The outcomes from his field studies revealed that Mexican students tended towards a *field sensitive* approach to learning (these are students who are motivated by teacher intervention and often rely on team work to complete tasks), whereas the school emphasised a *field independent* approach (which relates to students who can work independently and can intrinsically motivate themselves in the learning environment). The school approach favoured Anglo students. For this reason, he concluded that educators needed to allow students to express views drawn from their home backgrounds as a way of empowering them and to aid the educator in teaching complex or abstract sections of their subjects. He noted that new knowledge would be easily understood and internalised if it had a relationship with what was already known (Ramirez, 1989:98).

Making relationships and connections between what is learnt in the school and what exists in students' home backgrounds is vital so that new knowledge is not rejected because of its assumed complexity. Understanding students' backgrounds empowers educators to make

informed decisions about the teaching styles they need to adopt with the different students to ensure that all students receive equal opportunities for their academic success. It also lessens the chances of anyone feeling excluded by their race, religion, culture or any significant difference they may have, compared to the other students. Ramirez's (1989:90) research points to the value of validation among students, particularly those from communities that feel marginalised in any way.

Below is an organogram of the narrative multicultural process. It is followed by a detailed discussion of the research methodology in Chapter 4.

NARRATIVE MULTICULTURALISM



Figure 3.2: Visual interpretation of narrative multiculturalism by Lindelihle Bhebhe, 2015

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Research falls into three paradigms, namely qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The research types are set apart by the fundamental differences in their underlying philosophies. The choice of which one to use is therefore influenced by the nature of the data that is required to investigate the issue under study.

The current study is qualitative in nature. Through people's narratives, attempts are made to understand how Graphic Design is taught and learnt in a culturally diverse classroom. The primary purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of the respondent students, lecturers and industry expert in the context of Graphic Design as a career path. The free and natural character of qualitative variables is empowering because, in some cases, the data explain the relationships of variables in a phenomenon (Kumar, 2011:20).

4.1 Research approach

This qualitative research uses a case study that utilises an ethnographic approach which uses narrative methods to collect and analyse the data. I decided to give my account in the first person to discuss this section because I wanted to maintain the personal nature of the narratives conducted. The approach blends mini-ethnography and qualitative case study methods to enable the researcher to generate rich data of the phenomenon as it occurs (Fields and Kafai, 2009: 924). Fields and Kafai (2009) describe a mini-ethnographic study as a focused study that is usually carried out where there are money and time constraints. As a result of the study being constrained by my study timetable as well as the timetable of the student respondents, it was imperative that a mini-ethnography was used in collaboration with the qualitative case study. Yin (2004:78), describes a qualitative case study as a research approach that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context, using a variety of data sources. Yin's guidelines for using the case study method ensure that the issue is explored through a range of lenses which allow for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. Because the research sought to investigate the teaching and learning of Graphic Design in a holistic and in-depth manner, it was important to blend the mini- ethnography and case study methods. The focused and intensive nature of the research justified the blended the approach.

This qualitative mini-ethnography case study, therefore, sought to investigate thoroughly not just what was taught and how it was taught, but also to understand and describe the relationships between educators and students, among students and, finally, the interplay between the students and the work that was assigned to them. The most significant benefit of applying the narrative multicultural approach in the case study was its potential to unearth valuable information on salient topics that could have a major bearing on the research findings.

In using narratives, I ensured that, at every stage of the research, I reflected on my position of either comfort or discomfort, questioning my practice and any views that I had of the situation. In this way, I kept subjectivity in check. From time to time, I had to disengage from the research process so that I could evaluate both my influence and engagement with research process. I realised early in the investigation process, as an educator carrying out research in my field, that I was bound to self-evaluate as a response to my experiences in the classroom practices being observed. Because of the level of involvement of the researcher in the narratives of other people's lives, Phillion (2002:124) recommends that the researcher's journey in the multicultural learning space be documented and discussed with respondents (at crucial points) and engaging with his or her research questions. Phillion acknowledges the role of three main players in narrative multicultural research: the educator, the students and the researcher. She recognises the importance of the researcher's presence in the field and of addressing her/his biases and feelings in trying to understand the interchange in the learning environment. For this reason, I kept a diary where I noted all the activities that I was engaged with during the research process. It was important to note the development of my own views and perceptions of the study at every stage. As a result of the diary entries I was able to track any deviations and developments in the research process.

Phillion also highlights the importance of thinking narratively as a way of curtailing bias in the narrative account. That means that the researcher exists in the moment with the educator, rather than from the perspective of multiculturalism 'expert' or the one who 'critiques' and judges while observing. Her definition of thinking narratively is accepting that "life in its broadest was now in the foreground and multiculturalism in the background" (Phillion, 2002:124). This assertion, she explains, stems from an understanding that the narrative enquiry of the multicultural classroom begins amidst a process in motion, rather than in a situation waiting to

happen. “The enquiry hops on the teaching and learning train while it is in motion and so everything that is observed is seen in its raw and pure form” (Phillion, 2002:125).

Following Phillion’s lead, I became a part of the learning context to ensure that my participation kept me within the moment of the research. In certain instances, I was asked to share my experiences and insights into projects that the students were engaging in. Some of the classes got very busy and I was only able to document my experiences concerning the activities of the day after hours. Diligently carrying out this process helps to manage pre-emptive conclusions and judgments by offering an appreciation of the roles that everyone plays in a learning environment. At every point, it is important to put things in perspective and assess the situation from the standpoints of the learner, the educator, and the observer. I immersed myself in the daily activities in the classrooms as documented and analysed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

An interpretivist approach to research is a qualitative method of enquiry that posits that “our knowledge of reality including the domain of human action is a social construction by human actors and that this applies equally to researchers” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:51). While I admit that an interpretive approach is very subjective to one’s own worldview, there is an appreciation that comes with being a designer that foregrounds worldviews as an essential part of being human. Therefore, I do not attempt to make prescriptive evaluations from my interpretation of the data but seek to highlight the issues that make Graphic Design a unique learning area. For this reason, I have tried to ensure that the data gives meaning to the practices and reasoning that are showcased by stories of the lives of the participants in the multicultural Graphic Design sphere. The research is an enquiry into how students and educators interact with knowledge and one another in the learning space. Amid these two groups is the necessary inclusion of someone from the advertising industry who adds an important dimension in assessing the role of industry in curriculum design and pedagogic matters. All their stories are told through my interpretation as a researcher who has experienced all three roles: Graphic Design student, designer and educator.

4.1.1 Interpretivist paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm in which this research is located has its origins in different disciplines. It has been linked to phenomenology/sociology by Schutz et al. (1964) and to

anthropology by Malinowski (1920). In the social sciences, it emerged out of a critique of positivism. This study is relativist in nature, as it assumes that reality as we know it is constructed inter-subjectively through meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially (Reeves & Hedberg, 2003:32). The epistemological grounding of this research is subjectivist in nature in it claims that people cannot be separated from the realities of how they make sense of the world in which they exist as active participants in its complex dynamics. Therefore, the research is built on that understanding: that the interconnectedness of people influences who we are, how we make sense of our world and determine our understanding of ourselves, others and our world. This thinking supports Phillion's (2002:128) view that the narrative multicultural researcher becomes an integral part of how the multicultural space is investigated and is subsequently portrayed. This is because the roles of researcher and the multicultural players become intertwined in their interactions, with all perspectives critical, up to the final written narrative which becomes rich in views.

The researcher's values – my values – are inherent in all phases of the research, and these become apparent in the presentation of the data. However, at no point does my position denote an ultimate truth. Instead, my position is an attempt to set into motion possibilities for discussions that challenge ways of seeing and doing things in creative arts education. Thus, what I might deem as noteworthy is made no more prominent than that which I might not value. Instead of assuming the role of the expert in the field and therefore judging the situations that I have encountered, I have, at times, taken a step back to allow the story to develop and unfold organically as it would have without my influence. The withdrawal happened at points in the research where I started questioning either the teaching process or the activities that the students were engaged in. I documented the whole process in a diary that I read and updated often. The diary helped to remind me of my role in the research process. I checked in with my supervisor for advice on some of the challenges that I was encountering so that I could be advised on how to proceed. Phillion (2002:128) recommends withdrawing at opportune times during the research process with the understanding that the phenomenon under investigation does not begin at the inception and conclusion of a research process. She advises the researcher to realise that the phenomenon under study continues as it was before the research began. For this reason, it is important to examine the phenomenon objectively and not attempt to reach hasty conclusions from the perspective of the knower.

Phillion (2002) encourages constant engagement with the respondents during the research as an invaluable tool for checking information and assessing their ever-changing positions. It is also a valuable tool for ensuring the respondents' various concerns are addressed. In studies such as this, where students speak openly about their learning concerns and about members of staff, they need to be constantly assured that their privacy is guaranteed. It is therefore important to check in with them constantly and reassure them of the confidentiality of all interactions. This assurance was also captured in the consent forms that the respondents had to sign.

Interpretive approaches are heavily reliant on naturalistic methods such as interviews, observation, and document analysis. In this study, classroom observations and analysis of former and current design briefs (that reflect the aims of the curriculum) and design rationales

(that reveal the thought processes of the students' design journey with specific projects) were conducted. These methods yield an adequate dialogue between researchers and their respondents to construct collaboratively a meaningful reality (Angen, 2000:46).

4.2 Narratives

The narrative enquiry for the research has its setting in the Graphic Design Department in first, second and third year studios at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The intention for the research was to explore the relationships between educators and students during briefing sessions, one-on-one progress meetings and in feedback sessions after marking of projects. It was also important to observe what happened between students in discussions relating to concept building and project development; and finally, the researcher would explore the interplay between the students and the work assigned to them within the multicultural learning environment.

The investigation focused on analysing the stories that were shared during conversations with the respondents. The informal nature in which the interviews were conducted ensured that the information was shared in a relaxed and non-threatening way. This approach is favoured by Rule and John (2011:65) because it ensures that the narratives emulate the relaxed nature of day to day conversations. The interviews were conversational and devoid of the question-and-

answer technique of formal interviews. Therefore, for the discussion sessions, I did not carry a notepad with questions but rather prepared to discuss a few key issues at a time so that the first question set the tone for the ones that followed. Even then, the conversations were dominated by interchanges among the students, and I merely spurred on the discussion with non-verbal responses such as a nod, a smile, or a brief enquiry to probe key details. The research table is outlined here:

Table 4.3: Depiction of data collection process

Sub-questions	Objectives	Methods
<p>1. What are the effects that diversity of languages and cultures of students has on teaching and learning in Graphic Design?</p>	<p>To investigate how Graphic Design (a semiotically determined area of knowledge) is taught to a culturally diverse group of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Document analysis -Semi-structured interviews -Participant observation -Through use of field notes using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -journal entries -photographs -videography -audio recordings
<p>2. To what extent is the current curriculum adequate in preparing students to be effective communication design practitioners in multicultural South</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To probe how students are prepared to become effective visual communicators -To assess the viability of the current curriculum for the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Document analysis, e.g., briefs and design rationales - analysing design briefs -interviews with students -interviews with lecturers

African and global contexts?	needs of a multicultural classroom	
3. What is the role of industry in determining standards for design practice for students and, therefore, in influencing the curriculum and pedagogic needs of design institutions?	To ascertain to what extent industry influences the teaching of Graphic Design at design institutions so that it remains current and therefore contextually relevant	-Semi-structured informal interviews with industry expert from the advertising field as key informant

4.3 Sampling

The student sample was drawn purposively from a pool of first, second and third year classes. The initial idea was to select students that could represent the cultural diversity of the three classrooms. So, from each class the students that would have been chosen would be representational of the cultural mix that exists in the South Africa. However, this method proved very limiting to the possibilities that using flexible criteria could provide. I was therefore compelled to change the criteria for selecting the sample from one that limited the results to South African students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Instead, I chose to allow the stories, the actions and sometimes the students' contributions to class activities to help me begin to identify potential respondents. The process was aided by further discussion of distinct aspects of either the classroom activities or the make-up of the class. Therefore, finally, students selected were those who presented with interesting stories of their backgrounds and varied perspectives of life in the graphic design classroom at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. For example, these included students who were from cities outside of Cape Town,

students who were repeating their year of study, to mention a few variables. The decision to change the selection criteria of the participants would consequently prove insightful.

In the second-year class, while still purposively selecting the respondents, I used a short questionnaire that would help narrow the pool (see sample questionnaire, Appendix A). The questionnaire streamlined the process by selecting students whose responses about their lives gave a lot of detail rather than short uninformative responses. The second-year class comprised forty-eight students in total. The initial sample yielded eight respondents; and further investigation through detailed discussions with the students decreased the number to four, then later three.

Finally, the third years were selected as they worked on individual unsupervised projects. Their selection was based on their availability at the time when the data collection process started. Of the five that were working in the classroom on the day I arrived, only two could participate in the research. The rest would be leaving for home before the end of the study period, so there were only two remaining candidates. In research, it is important to highlight any conflict of interest particularly where the researcher does their research in familiar environments or with research respondents that known to him/her. Making this information salient enables the research to deal with some 'perceived' bias that may

Because this was a study on teaching and learning, it was vital to include the lecturers in the interview and observation sample. It was important to use the same lecturers for both the observation and interviews so that I could probe some issues that came up during the observations. Their inclusion was vital in gaining insights into teaching Graphic Design in a multicultural environment, as well as to understand their role as the custodians of the curriculum. One of the lecturers subsequently also served as a key informant due to her long service in the department. I felt that she could offer invaluable insights about the curriculum, its development over the years, the diversity of the student body and many other teaching and learning activities.

Finally, a key role player from the advertising division of the design industry was included in the research. His inclusion was essential to answering questions on the role that industry plays in Graphic Design teaching and learning; how activities in industry impact on what is taught; and how what is taught affects industry standards.

4.4 Data collection methods

Information required in this qualitative research study was gathered from numerous sources.

Techniques included:

- Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Observations
- Documents and records

The choice of which technique to use was dependent on the kind of information required to answer the research questions. It was imperative to apply methods that would enhance the narrative process.

4.4.1 Interviews in the study

Interviews are discussions that involve asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study. There are three main types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Calfee & Sperling, 2010:105). These methods provide with data that is rich qualitative data because of non-restrictive questions. They help the researcher to determine the respondent's understanding of the phenomenon being discussed. Because of the informal nature of interactions in Graphic Design learning (unlike other learning areas where the lecturer stands in front of a class and delivers learning material), in-depth, semi-structured interviews were used as the basis for enquiry into the importance of how Graphic Design is taught and learnt. The in-depth qualitative interviews were deliberately informal. The nature of the interview is relaxed thus assures the researcher of data that is rich in context and depth. This is because the respondents are not necessarily involved in a question and answer session where they may feel restricted to the questions asked. Henning (2013:57) views this type of interview style as using "talk as a social action" and it therefore allows the researcher the potential to acquire in-depth detail of the information provided. Moreover, the nature of the interview involves many non-verbal cues to suggest interest, even to signal the emotional connection and attentiveness of the students to the point being narrated. I believe that this

method allows richer data, because the alternative, a formal approach, can give the respondents the impression that only the information contained in the questions is vital and anything else outside of the line of questioning is irrelevant (Calfee & Sperling, 2010:105). Another disadvantage of using a formal interview style of questioning is that it conditions the mind to wait for the next question after the details of the first are completed, and in the process, much important detail may be left out (Calfee & Sperling 2010:106). Although informal in approach, the semi-structured and informal interview helps the researcher to ensure that key questions are addressed by linking the questions with the respondents' responses. The conversational nature of the interview tries to ensure that respondents relaxed and at ease to participate in the interview. The hope is that they feel comfortable enough to speak without feeling that they might in some way incriminate themselves through their responses. The regular interactions with them after the discussion sessions also contributed towards building trust and confidence that all the information that had been shared remained confidential.

I prepared for and arrived at all the interview sessions with an interview schedule, which had a flexible format which I could adapt, depending on the mood of the respondent. To ensure a conversational mode of questioning, I memorised most of the questions and had a small piece of paper with keywords to prompt me. I also used a voice recorder to record the conversations and obtained permission to use it before the sessions began. I also ensured that its placement was so discreet that, by the end of the discussion, we both had almost forgotten its existence (Henning, 2013:57).

To make sure that questioning remained on track, it was vital to keep a question structure that encapsulated the broader thought processes underpinning the interviews. The method proved to be an invaluable tool because, in conversational discussions, the respondents tended to digress from the main subject because they had interesting, similar stories that they wanted to share. However, even in the information that appeared irrelevant initially, there were units of information that gave insight into the character and sometimes worldviews of the respondents. For this reason, the data was collected and analysed with the understanding that the narratives themselves would be used as units of analysis to understand how the respondents interacted with the world around them. For this reason, I probed the data *inward and outward* and *backward and forward* in order to understand the varying worldviews of the different respondents.

The interviews were used to address sub-questions 1 and 2 of the study which relate to how teaching and learning are conducted in a multicultural classroom. Student participants were interviewed to establish how they viewed their roles in their culturally diverse classrooms. Their opinions about the nature of the work, their progress meetings, marks and critique sessions were also discussed at length during the interviews. The discussions with the lecturers dealt with the curriculum whose demands are articulated through the design briefs. Through the interviews, I was keen to identify key areas in the curriculum that were geared for the multicultural Graphic Design classroom. I also used the information obtained about the curriculum to assess how the curriculum had been translated into the different briefs and other teaching materials, as well as how they had perhaps influenced the educator's teaching methods.

4.4.1.1 Interviews with lecturers

Two lecturers were interviewed to answer research sub-questions 1 and 2. One of them served as a key informant because of her extensive period of work in the Graphic Design Department.

The participation of these lecturers in the research was vital in gaining an understanding of their teaching practice: their approaches, teaching styles, reflective practices, their understanding of their students' needs, as well as their interpretation of the curriculum for the design briefs produced for learning. The educators were also enlisted to clarify the relationship of the department with industry concerning the kinds of briefs that are designed for students' learning.

The meetings with lecturers followed a conversational approach, although there were times when they assumed a question-and-answer approach because of the kind of information required. The choice of using conversation in research is discussed by Warren (2002:86) as a metaphorical journey that the interviewee takes with the interviewer. It therefore, becomes the prerogative of an intuitive researcher to design the journey that best captures the phenomenon under study. In choosing to pursue narrative research, I learnt that Phillion (2002) was correct in her assertion that a linear approach does not work because of the unexpected twists that exist in multicultural research. The multicultural subject that was researched was laden with twists and diversions that would not fare well using a standardised approach, because it would not

yield accurate or richly descriptive results. There was a need, therefore, to yield to the natural process and be flexible to the twists and turns that unfolded. Phillion's claim is that it is all too easy to force the studied phenomenon into a box by prescribing rules and ways of approaching it, when it is easier to allow the events being researched to guide the investigation (Phillion, 2002:131).

Because it was a process on the move, there was a need to regularly stop and ask questions and find the detours and red lights and probe them for their role in answering the central research question. According to Assmussen and Cresswell (1995:119) it is important to allow the phenomenon to guide the research rather than following a rigid structure of how the process needs to unfold. I therefore, allowed the process to direct me to where I needed to probe to allow for the journey to follow its course. The sample interview questions are appended as Appendix C.

4.4.1.2 Interviews with students

While interviews with the lecturers were based on technical aspects of learning, the curriculum, and the learning styles, the students provided a background for who they (the students) were and their ways of learning and participation in multicultural classrooms. Their role was to reflect on the learning environment that included the interpersonal relationships among students, their relationship with the lecturers, their response to the learning material and, finally their views on their development as designers.

The participation of the students was vital as they provided the motivation for conducting this research study into understanding multicultural Graphic Design education. They were the ones that were impacted by policies, staff quality, the relevance of curriculum material and, most importantly, they were being prepared to become industry players who had the potential to influence the direction of the Graphic Design industry.

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000:51), the experiences of students in multicultural classrooms form the basis of multicultural education. They make up the central unit of analysis, because it is their experiences of the diverse learning space that needs to be investigated to understand the dynamics inherent in those learning situations.

Three samples of the interviews with first, second and third year students are appended as Appendix D, E and F, respectively.

The details are captured in the stories that are documented in Chapter 5.

4.4.1.3 Interview with industry expert

The research was prompted by my desire to understand why Graphic Designers in the industry are frequently prone to delivering offensive, irrelevant or inappropriate messaging as ruled on by the advertising watch dog Advertising Standard Authority (ASA). I needed to know if the problem lay with the way students were taught design. If not, I needed to identify and understand the cause. The following interview questions were compiled to guide the semi-structured interviews:

- What is the motivation behind the use of material that is deemed to be of poor taste by the consuming public and other interest groups, e.g., by feminists, child services, and human rights advocates?
- What is the nature of the research that is used to inform the communication choices that are ultimately broadcast in the media?
- What is the role of the clients that commission communication jobs in the final products that get broadcast?
- What lessons are drawn from successful visual communication?
- Are there follow-up processes that are created to understand why particular communication is not successful in getting audiences to respond to a call to action?

It was important to understand the perspectives of the industry so that as designers we understand where communication that is addressed at audiences fails or succeeds in order to understand the gaps that the Graphic Design curriculum could fill to address these shortfalls. The inclusion of an industry expert helped to shed some light on the dynamics inherent in creating visual communication. Industry's inclusion also served to inform the researcher on the modus operandi of industry during the recruitment of design institution graduates. Additionally, the contribution of an industry expert in the study was vital in understanding their influence, if any, on design education.

The industry expert provided valuable insights into industry perceptions on the current standards of design education, as well of their role in shaping design curriculum and pedagogy. Of importance, too, was their role in assisting the development of designers as interns (those who are currently studying in design institutions). Their knowledge is vital in guiding design institutions towards a curriculum that is sensitive to the diverse experiences brought by the students into the classroom, as well as the linguistically and culturally diverse society in which they practice beyond their study.

The structure of the interview questions is appended as Appendix G.

4.4.2 Participant observation in narratives

Observation is the precise description of events, behaviours and artefacts in social science studies (Yin, 2004:79). Observation enabled the research to be described using the five human senses, as a way of providing a “written photograph” of the multicultural teaching and learning being investigated (Erlandson et al., 1993:200). More than just compiling notes on all the activities, this study used participant observation, because it allowed the researcher to observe and participate in the everyday learning scenarios of the multicultural Graphic Design classroom. De Walt and De Walt (2002:91) suggest participant observation for a researcher who is keen on collecting data while actively engaging in the process of learning through exposure to, or involvement in, the routine activities of participants in the research setting. Playing an active role in the learning environment allows a researcher to interact with the respondents, to immerse her/himself in their world and to understand the meaning of what is happening in the research context (Henning, 2013:58).

The observations were conducted to answer the first sub-question of the research which looks at the effects that students’ linguistic and cultural diversity have on the teaching and learning of Graphic Design, because I needed to understand how this diversity was used or incorporated into the learning to enable students’ capabilities. It was important to observe the classes and see how students engaged with the learning material. It was imperative to see how the curriculum was enacted in the interactions between the students and the interactions between the students and the lecturers.

According to Yin, (2004:81). It is important that all the activities in the learning process are carefully observed through the researcher taking comprehensive and descriptive notes of what is happening. Participant observation enables the researcher to interact with the respondents to gather information in real time without the need for too many formalised interview sessions. The role of both observer and participant ensures that the multicultural experience is holistic and allows, if there is a need, for a review of positions (and even activities) where reality contradicts perceptions (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000:53). The interpretive nature of the research denotes that it is imperative that the researcher regularly revisits initial assumptions and adapts them to the ever-changing dynamics of the research (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

The observation sessions were conducted in line with narrative multicultural standards that suggest the following when teaching culturally diverse students:

- For educators to become aware of the socio-cultural and socio-political discourses that are prevalent in that place and time and even those that govern the educational policies;
- For educators to be cognisant of the potential of bringing about educational equity through adopting positive multicultural advances in the teaching of culturally diverse people.

This approach to understanding multicultural learning is reinforced by Vygotsky's reasoning around how we view multicultural classrooms. One of the rationales for conceptualising education in terms of socio-cultural learning theory is to build foundations for an academically equitable society. By adjusting how educators view students and how they learn, educators are inadvertently accepting that, if they change the way they teach to accommodate everyone, they also increase the opportunities for knowledge attainment for everyone.

The observations in both the first and second year classrooms were motivated by the need to investigate what practices were employed in the multicultural classrooms, as well as to ascertain whether those methods catered to the needs of all the students in the multicultural learning environment.

The observations took place over a period of nine weeks. The first week and a day in the second week were spent in the first year studio, while the remaining seven weeks were allocated to second and third year students respectively. Although the third years were not observed in a learning environment because they were working on independently run projects, I could

observe them working on the final year project. The ninth week was spent collating information on the students' marks and preparing for the marking of the second year students' projects.

Observations were carried out daily during the nine-week period of observations. As stated earlier, in creative learning contexts such as Graphic Design, the planning of work for every day is different. Students arrived daily prepared to progress through each stage of the design process, so it was vital that I attended daily. I needed to experience the development of the project from the point of initial ideas to where the idea became a tangible product. In design, the process is as important as the final product, because each stage informs the rationale behind every decision that is made to create what eventually becomes the product that is sold to an audience. The observations were all different for the three groups that were observed.

4.4.3 Document analysis

Along with observations and interviews, document analysis is a key element of narratives. It is central to uncovering those elements in the curriculum that recognise the multicultural classroom. These documents included: design briefs that reflected the aims of the curriculum; performance records (in the form of commentary on individual students' performance); and rationales scripted by students to explain their work. These documents were critical to the analysis, as they shed light on the nature of the teaching material that was prepared for the students, as well the lecturers' methods of assessing students' work. Three samples of first and second-year briefs have been appended as Appendices H, I and J to illustrate what a typical design brief entails and looks like.

Other documentation, such as visual diaries and journals which Graphic Design students are required to have, were not available. I learnt that visual diaries were not a mandatory requirement anymore, hence their unavailability. These would have been key to understanding the students' visual learning journeys as they reveal the "raw", "unadulterated" view of students' visual world (Darby, 2009:45). Visual diaries are not guided by specifications or briefs or limited to what is being learnt in the classroom, because they are a documentation of how the students view and represent the world as they see it.

The inclusion of other personal records about students' performance and even selection criteria of the respondents helped me to review the documentation that reflected what the curriculum entailed educators' teaching methods, a review of the lecturers' personal work and that of the students, too. It was also important to take note of how the lecturer acknowledged the cultural diversity of the classroom as reflected through the work that was prepared for students and through the brief presentation sessions.

Students' design rationales were a crucial element in the document analysis, because these rationales served as explanatory notes of the choices that were made in creating the visual communication. To understand why a design rationale is vital in Graphic Design learning, definitions are provided:

Design rationale is the reasoning and argument that leads to the final decision of how the design intent is achieved. Design intent is the 'expected' effect or behaviour that the designer intended the design object should achieve to fulfil the required function (Carroll, 2013).

Design rationales include not only the reasons behind a design decision but also the justification for it, the other alternatives considered, the trade-offs evaluated, and the argumentation that led to the decision (Lee, 1997:75).

While all the definitions highlight the importance of the design rationale, Lee's (1997:75) definition most clearly states the content and purpose of design rationale. His definition outlines the reasoning behind choice of medium, imagery, concept development and how the final work justifies the concept as the most appropriate response from a pool of other possibilities. The rationale validates that the correct design choices were made. It serves to satisfy the client (in this case, the client is the lecturer) that the outcome represents a well-considered and systematic process that provides the best solution to the brief requirements. It also reflects on the other possible choices that were considered and why they did not offer the best solution in the current situation. Pre-empting questions about why other decisions were not made also tell the lecturer why the chosen solution is the best from a list of other possible outcomes (Lee, 1997:78). A sample of the second-year design rationale is appended as Appendix G.

4.5 Data analysis

In analysing the data, I sought to understand and present narratives of the respondents in a way that would shed some light on who they were and how they related to the teaching and learning environments. Moreover, it was important to understand the influences from their past that were responsible for their worldviews in relation to the multicultural teaching and learning environments. The interviews, although conversational in nature, were guided by questions that would be used to ascertain some important information required to start off the conversations with the respondents. It was imperative that the questions remained flexible enough to the respondents freely give detail that would help answer pertinent questions in the research.

In analysing the data, it was important to ensure that the stories accurately represented the respondents. More than that, it was vital that, in representing the data, I accounted for the past activities, that could be used to understand present events in the respondents' lives. It was also important to understand how the future could be affected by both those past and present events in their lives. I was guided by Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) *inward and outward* and *backward and forward* approach to analysing narratives. In applying Clandinin and Connelly's approach I could understand the narratives of the respondents within the context of how their experiences had informed their worldviews up to the point of my investigation of their lives. Being an interpretative investigation, it was also important to contextualise the respondents' stories so that I could give a balanced and objective account of their stories.

Phillion's (2002) approach in data analysis also helped to inform my approach. In her narrative multicultural approach, she accounted not only for the respondents' experiences but constantly reviewed her own experiences with the research context. She understood not only how she was influencing the respondents' in her interactions with them but also how her views were impacted. Phillion (2002) took care not take on the position of the infallible multicultural expert in her attempt to interpret the narratives in the research classroom. She was cognisant of how she could easily question the practices that occurred in the multicultural classroom if she did not constantly remind herself of her role as an investigator within the classroom. For this reason, I also took care to ensure that my views on what I believed to be best teaching practices did not interfere with how I interpreted the stories of the respondents. Furthermore, I had to

ensure that being black and middle class did not influence how I interpreted the respondents' accounts because I could not divorce myself from the details of my own background.

The sensitive nature of the topics discussed with the respondents put a lot of responsibility on my shoulders as a researcher. This is because by opening up about their experiences, the respondents assign a lot of responsibility to the researcher to handle their sensitively because for some talking about their experiences has a therapeutic effect, as I witnessed with some of my student respondents.

Allowing the respondents to talk about their history leading up to where they were at the point of the research allowed me to track some of the views that they held about their current situation. This method focused on the ways in which the respondents constructed their narratives about their experiences and relationships with others in the multicultural environment they operated in. They had internalised the views that they believed other people held of them and thus in telling their stories, projected some of these views.

In choosing to use a social constructionist approach in the research, I sought to understand how the respondents viewed their own role in the multicultural spaces they operated in. Moreover, I sought to establish how the participants also viewed others. I sought to establish how their past experiences had impacted their current views and interactions as well to understand how their future could ultimately be impacted. In my pursuit to understand the experiences that the participants narrated, I was able to make connections in the data that informed the emerging themes. It was on the basis of these themes that I was able to structure the layout of the narratives. There were common elements in the emerging themes, although the detail and understanding of the themes differed from individual to individual.

In applying the social constructionist approach, I recognised that the narratives would have to be analysed through the lenses of race, culture, social class and ethnicity. The social constructions of the latter would give context to the narratives of the respondents' experiences.

Chapter 5 presents the data and some analysis from eleven respondents: eight students, namely, R1 to R8 two lecturers, referred to here as T1 and T2 and finally, an industry expert referred to as E1.

Chapter 5: Data presentation and analysis

This chapter has three sections. The first section presents the multicultural narratives from the classroom observations and interviews with the first, second and third year students. Each of the narratives is presented as an account of each student's experience in the multicultural classroom. The second section documents the accounts of two educators, one of whom served as a key informant for the curriculum. Finally, the third and last account is the narrative of a Graphic Design industry expert who served as a key source of information for industry-related matters.

5.1 Structure of the observation process

The observations and interviews of the eight students, two lecturers and an advertising industry expert were conducted over the nine-week period towards the end of the students' academic year. The first year group, comprising three respondents, were working on their last lecturer-assisted project before the end of year assessment assignment. The second year group also comprised three students. This group was observed on their largest and final project of the year which harnessed all the skills that they had acquired throughout the year. Finally, two students made up the third year group. They were interviewed and observed while completing their portfolio project which, like that of the second year group, was the last project for the year. For both third year respondents, this was their final project at the institution before pursuing employment opportunities.

The students and lecturers were observed during class sessions, consultations and critique sessions. These observations occurred daily, from the commencement of classes through to their interactions during consultations until the students were released to go and work on their own. The first year group was observed over a period of a week, including an extra day when they had a critique session. The second year group was observed over a seven week period: during the briefing sessions, presentations, progress meetings and individual work periods. I also spent a week with the third year students as they worked on branding for their university-leaving portfolios.

The interviews with the individual student respondents were conducted concurrently.

5.2 Multicultural narratives from the students

5.2.1 In studio with the first year students

The week spent observing the first year group involved sitting in during class activities that included briefing, group discussions, consultations, research, final renderings, lunch time discussions about the project, handing in of completed work and, finally, the critique session. The students sat at tables in small clusters grouped into either six or four tables and chairs randomly arranged. During the briefing, at the lecturer's request, the students formed a cluster closer to the lecturer so that she would not have to raise her voice too loudly to be heard. Only after the presentation of the brief did the students move to the tables that later formed the diverse groups' 'permanent' seating positions.

The preliminary interviews were also carried out during this period after the formal class sessions were over. At this point, students would either be working in their groups or conducting research on the project. The interviews also continued as students worked through their lunch breaks. The week-long project entailed interviewing of significant others at home and presenting that information to their groups, so that the groups could decide on an overarching concept for the projects. The group project had to be realised in individually created pieces of work that the students had to tackle in groups.

The observations began from the first day of the project and continued till completion and hand in. I spoke to the students to get a sense of their comprehension of the requirements of the project. From the short discussions that they were having, I noticed groups that were very excited about having resolved the whole project. Others were a little less enthusiastic but were working on the discussions nonetheless. Interestingly, I saw students that were completing projects assigned in other modules which supposedly had a looming deadline. Their excuse was that there was not enough time between the projects, therefore they were forced to complete old projects while attempting to do new ones. This excuse was later dismissed by the lecturer in an interview. She highlighted poor time management as the reason for failure by students to hand in on time. Her experience was that students failed to complete work on time and then asked for weekend extensions which they never utilised because the work would still not be completed and handed in on time. The only leeway that she gave them was handing in

after-hours, but still on the same hand-in date. However, she reported that she did not let the students know this information ahead of time, otherwise they would procrastinate and still hand in late. The relevance of this detail is discussed later in the conversation with the industry expert where he spoke about the importance of internships and deadlines.

During my time with the students I learnt a lot about how the groups were formed, as well as the dynamics that kept those groups going. These included such things as the fact that members in a group shared the same racial, cultural or religious background. In other cases, groups were formed based on how comfortable the group members were with one another's company, even though they might not have shared the same cultural, racial or even ethnic roots.

I eventually got to a group that had earlier declined to participate in a class discussion when they had been nominated by the lecturer to do so. The group comprised two black males and a black female student. I finally managed to address the issue of their refusal to present their work to the class. What I thought would be a brief discussion led to what is documented as R1, R2 and R3's accounts (the conversations prompted their selection for inclusion in the research study). Their account is discussed in detail in the following section.

5.2.1.1 Structure of the group presentations and consultations

The project progressed with individual groups coming to present their discussions with the educator at her table in front of the class. In some instances, students did not seem to have understood the brief, as they were constantly taken to task about pursuing concepts that had been rejected because they did not address the requirements of the brief. The response from some of those students whose work had been corrected was that they did not understand what the lecturer expected of them. Those students were sent away to redo the assignment so that they could catch up with the rest of the class. The question that arose from this confusion was whether the brief had been clearly understood by those students who had joined the class days after the briefing session. My sense was that many students would struggle to meet the demands and eventually carelessly and thoughtlessly respond to the brief just so that they could hand in, without much being learnt from the experience. I sensed despair in those students that had concluded their concept and now were being asked to redo their groundwork for the project. However, the educator was unwavering in her requirements because of the stance that she had

taken with the first class to which she had given the project a week before. This first class had occurred a week before the research observations commenced. The lecturer's justification was that she would run the project the same way she had done with her previous class to maintain uniformity of expectations across both classes. She could not be seen to be more lenient with one class over another. The lecturer maintained a very firm approach with the students regarding project details and deadlines.

The days were characterised by one-on-one status meetings with the groups; and with the lecturer approving and assisting groups to move on with the project. While there seemed to be an emphasis on the groups consulting as often as they could, I noted that there was a lot of assistance for students who were struggling. Students were given suggestions on how they could potentially improve their projects. The question I had regarding this approach was at what point the students felt like they 'owned' their projects with the extensive assistance they received from their lecturer. In some of the observations, students seemed to absolve themselves of the responsibility of finding the solutions and expect that of the lecturer. Being one of the last projects of the first year of study, I was also curious about the overdependence on the lecturer for problem solving. This project preceded an upcoming final project which was normally designed to test students' independence and art direction without the usual consultations to which they are accustomed. Moreover, the final project was designed to prepare students for second year work which, for the most part, is more challenging and requires much independent thinking.

I witnessed students that had been absent for the first two days of the briefing appearing on the third and fourth days. Even though some gave what sounded like valid excuses for their absence from class, the deadline was not adjusted to accommodate them. They needed to make up a group with those members of the class who were also lagging behind and meet requirements for the new brief. Although the lecturer maintained a friendly demeanour, she remained firm and resolute in her decisions. I admired her resolve in ensuring that everyone knew what the rules were with deadlines because, in industry, delivery is never flexible unless initiated by the client.

On hand-in day, there were students that had handed in both their completed project as well as the rationale that had to accompany it. As the day ended, more and more projects made their

way onto the display tables. While some of the work revealed rushed and shoddy workmanship, all the projects were submitted to the final table. However, there were instances where individual or group design rationales were missing. The design rationale is an integral part of the design process, because it is a write-up that outlines the design process and decisions made regarding the practical work (Lee, 1997). It helps to give insight into the choices that the designer makes in his/her journey with the design brief. The choices made may relate to colour palette choices, materials used, the design style, image references and other decisions that are made as part of the design process. Simply put, the design rationale justifies the design solution to a brief (Lee, 1997). In a multicultural learning environment, the importance of the design rationale is even greater, because it explains some choices that may be viewed as culturally specific values or decisions that may not be easily understood at face value. These could be the choice of colour palette, choice of imagery, or even selection of font or choice of copy or text.

Teaching Graphic Design to a culturally diverse class makes the need for design rationales even more vital because of the varying worldviews and semiotic resources and references of the students. Vygotsky's (1978) conviction is that we are shaped by the backgrounds and communities from which we come, because they are our primary sources of learning. For this reason, it is inevitable that our visual references are influenced by that background knowledge. It is, therefore, the prerogative of the educator in a multicultural classroom to realise that, because of differences in ways of seeing the world, there is a need for a comprehensive design rationale to be handed in with every design work created. While educators rely heavily on the effectiveness of a rubric, a rubric is not complete if it does not consider some of those salient and unique issues that only a multicultural learning environment provides.

The hand-in process was followed by feedback sessions called critiques, abbreviated to 'crits'. In the critique sessions, students congregated to respond to another's work and to receive feedback from the lecturers. The two first year groups (a group that first undertook the project and a group that was observed) came together in the display studio to do the critique together. The critiques were conducted in the groups where the work was done. It was interesting to see that some students could point out the flaws in the work of others more easily than they were able to accept criticism of their own work. I witnessed the discomfort that some students experienced in having their work criticised, such that they did not even try to defend their work when asked to do so. While some students quietly acknowledged the critique of their work,

others were quick to point out that, due to time constraints, their projects had suffered immensely and therefore did not reflect their best work nor their capabilities. They attributed their failure to manage their time to time wasted while trying to resolve the group concepts that would make their work feel like various parts of a unit, as per the requirement of the brief.

5.2.2 Account 1: Background information on R1

R1 was a white female student in the first-year class. She was twenty years old. She reported that she had always known she had a creative flair, but after matriculating, she was uncertain about what she wanted to do. For that reason, she took a ‘gap year’ to discover what she wanted to do with her life. She asserted that she loved Graphic Design because it allowed her to be expressive and be herself.

She felt that sometimes her self-expression was limited by the need to fulfil the demands of a lecturer’s art direction. However, she felt that, for the most part, she has been allowed some level of freedom to tell her story in the case of most of the work she had done.

I try to sneak in the things I enjoy most about design into my work. I don’t always succeed because sometimes a lecturer will tell you that the image you have chosen doesn’t work or even the treatment of the work doesn’t work. And I know that’s what I’m trying to express. So, I try to convince them to see things my way. Sometimes I win and other times I don’t and just have to change. She rolls her eyes and shrugs. It’s very frustrating but I suppose they know best what works and what doesn’t! (Interview with R1, 2015)

I sensed her frustration with the methods used to get her to concede to a lecturer’s view because, from her perspective, if she believed in a certain expression, she felt that she should have the licence to use it if she could defend it.

Researcher: If you feel so strongly about the design choices you make why don’t you just stick to your guns and then provide a rationale for your work?

R1: Believe me if that were possible I would but we don’t always have to do a rationale. Sometimes we just hand in our work and you get to know during a crit what the lecturer

thinks of your work. I just change the stuff that they want me to change because I don't want to get a bad mark. (Interview with R1, 2016.)

I found it very unfortunate that design rationales were not utilised more often in multicultural classrooms, because their exclusion is a lost opportunity for students who would benefit from explaining their work. Cardinal and Aitken (2006:29) explain the purpose of design rationales to highlight their importance:

A well-written design rationale can be invaluable in explaining how your design solution satisfies the brief. Choices that you have made, even those not immediately obvious to the client, can be explained, helping to show the clarity of your thinking, the benefits of your solution, and ultimately to help sell your idea.

I acknowledge that a lot of students who deploy semiotic references that the lecturer deems as either ill-fitting for the brief, or when they make design choices that they feel respond to the brief, need the design rationale to motivate for their choices. Allowing students to own the decisions for their work gives them responsibility over their choices as a form of learning. My encounter with R1 was very brief, as she hurriedly worked through her project and completed it within the first three days of the brief as she was rushing to attend a popular music festival that would be starting on Thursday and ending on Sunday. Her work was completed and handed in, together with her design rationale, by a friend in her group for the current project.

5.2.3 Background information on R2, R3 and R4

Respondents R2, R3, and R4 respectively formed a group of three black students. R2 and R4 were two males living in two different Cape Town townships with their older siblings, but they were originally from the Eastern Cape in South Africa. R3 was a female student currently living in the suburbs in Cape Town but of Central African descent. The group had an easy relationship. I sensed that the female student in the group was very dominant as she was the most vocal of the three. The male students seemed to take their cue from her as she briefed me on who they were and how they had come to be in the group together. I named them R2, R3 and R4 in order of their level of responsiveness. Between R2 and R3 there was a fair amount of interaction as they were more forthcoming and actively involved in the discussions. R4 was

very quiet but acknowledged what was said by occasionally nodding, smiling or shaking his head. His group members also attested to his very quiet and demure nature.

After reintroducing myself and going through the formalities of how I would proceed, I got straight into the events of the morning regarding when two members of the group had declined to present their research to the rest of the class. My question was met with a ‘knowing’ smile, quick glances between members and a carefree response that suggested that they were expecting my question. R2 responded first.

5.2.4 Account 2: R2 explains the misconceptions around his character

R2 spoke very quietly but did not exhibit traits of someone who was shy. He broke the ice by letting me know that he was never keen on speaking in public for two reasons. Firstly, he was by nature very reserved, thus did not feel comfortable talking to an audience. Secondly, he was very conscious of errors in pronouncing words. I was very intrigued by this statement and therefore asked him to explain himself:

I don't understand these people, so I just sit back and keep quiet. (Interview with R2, 2015.)

I probed this response with a question that sought clarity on what he meant. His response was very calmly expressed, although I could tell he was still frustrated. He carried looking in my direction, but avoiding direct eye contact, so I nodded gently to let him know he had my attention.

You see when you are black like me, there are words that I say, and they are wrong. So I don't want to speak because people hear and then laugh at you (Interview with R2, 2015.)

In probing further, I learned that the awareness of his accent stemmed from an incident where he was jeered at by peers in a class very early in the year. Since then, he had developed an aversion to speaking in classroom situations. As he recounted the incident, he giggled as if to suggest that, while it was a painful memory, he would try not to let it ‘get to’ him. I asked him what his feelings were about that and he explained that it was very “bad and not cool” (sic).

From the first day, I saw that people got to know each other and they just walked in front me without even looking at me or even saying hi. (Giggles and looks at his friends). (Interview with R2, 2015.)

He continued to relate his position with the classmates and to explain that the other reason for his discomfort with speaking in class emanated from his dislike of being in the spotlight. He explained how he felt vulnerable when he talked openly in front of his classmates, until R3 interjected and added that she thought R2 was very interesting and outspoken but did not like sharing that side of himself with anyone. R2 recalled the incident where he was laughed at and stated that, apart from that, he had never been a keen public speaker. In his defence, in response to R3's suggestion that he is reluctant to open himself to other people, R2 conceded that he was happy to open himself up to R3 and R4, because they had taken to him, regardless of his nature. He also explained that they shared an introverted character. He was quick to explain that his resolve to keep his distance from people was driven by reading people's attitudes towards him. He was also aware that being Xhosa-speaking and black had a bearing on how people perceived him:

You know being black and my language is isiXhosa ... and usually the tone ... (R2 giggles). Yah it's the tone, its different so ... you can tell when someone is interested or not and I won't force myself on nobody. Come close if you want to come close. (Interview with R2, 2015.)

In a well-coordinated multicultural classroom, fear of participating in learning as a result of superficial human traits such as accents should not exist. The role of the educator in that environment should be to use scenarios such as this as a learning point and teaching tool for tolerance and empathy. The students need to understand that, to be effective communicators, they should master the skill of looking beyond their prejudiced views about people.

Encountering these three students was very eye opening, because their perspectives challenged how I had dealt with similar instances as an educator. This discussion forced me to reflect on my own teaching styles and methods of eliciting information from students without them feeling uncomfortable about the exercise.

The discussion turned to the how students chose the people that they sat with in class.

5.2.4.1 Insight into seating arrangements

The composition of the groups was explained by R2 as cliques that developed in the class almost organically from the first day. How students related to each other was ultimately left up to them because of the understanding that different people would create friendships based on their comfort levels. In a multicultural learning environment, managing group dynamics is important as both a teaching method and as a tool to teach students to value and respect the opinions of others (Caruso & Woolley, 2008:248).

R2 explained to me how, from the first day of the academic year, he had felt invisible. He explained how everyone else seemed keen on getting to know one another, but not him. Unfortunately, this feeling did nothing to make him feel like a member in a class where he already felt like an intruder.

As discussed earlier, perceptions may be detrimental to confidence building and ultimately affect the will to actively participate in learning scenarios (Caruso & Woolley, 2008:248). A typical example is R2's scenario where he was teased for being different. He felt that, as a Xhosa-speaker, he was not acceptable to students of other races and that the others felt there was something wrong with his isiXhosa accent. For this reason, his active participation in class was hindered. Whether the negative self-perception of the student was perceived or real, it meant that the chances were real that he might never ask questions or give an answer in the classroom. I subsequently attempted to unearth the story behind his story by engaging in an in-depth discussion:

Researcher: So, you say no one seemed keen on talking to you. How is that so?

R2: You know what. (He stops to giggle a little and, as he does so, he shakes his head as if to respond to a memory of what he is talking about). You feel the vibe from people if they don't like you or like you. Like, first day, I went to that group (signals the group in question with a head gesture) to borrow a ruler, and they said they didn't have but it was there in front of them. So, it's like that! Shrugs his shoulders.

Researcher: So, is it from just that incident that you believe that people don't like you?

R2: No, there are many things that people do. So, I've just decided to sit and mind my own business. If people want to know me, they will come to me. If they don't want, I won't trouble nobody. (Interview with R2, 2015.)

We continued talking about his feelings of being an outsider. As he explained, I decide to dig deeper into who he was so that I could better understand some of his rationale about situations. I traced his background to where he grew up and went to school and how he came to study at the institution. This background information was important in understanding him and how he fitted into a multicultural class. Clandinin and Connelly (2000:55) affirm that it is important for the researcher to determine how far to probe into the past or future of the respondents to get enough information to make a valid claim. I believed that the enquiry would be incomplete if I had not traced his story back to his past as a way of understanding the views that he held about the world around him.

The conversation led me into an interesting discussion about his struggles with fitting into situations like his current learning environment. R2 was born in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa where he competed for resources with his five siblings. His older brother left for Cape Town after he had matriculated to try and find work. He could secure contracts in construction and he lived on that for a few years. R2's parents decided that he would have to move to Cape Town so that he could be supported by his brother. Thus, after Grade 7, he moved to Cape Town and attended school at a local secondary school. R2 soon realised that his brother struggled financially and that he (R2) would have to work very hard to enable him to assist his older brother take care of the family. After he matriculated, he decided to improve his prospects by enrolling for higher education studies. R2 knew it would not be easy for his older brother to finance his studies, but he was hopeful that, after he graduated, he would be able to assist with taking care of family members back home.

R2's story reflects the lives of many young black South Africans today who come from underprivileged backgrounds. Their motivation for getting a good education is to assist their families to emerge out of poverty. According to Chisholm (2005), while there is much pressure to succeed, for many students there is pride associated with carrying a responsibility of that magnitude (Tikly & Barret, 2013:204). The discussion with R2 highlighted how the pressure to succeed could add to the anxieties that he had about his ability to complete the course. He was doubtful about his prospects, considering what felt to be the norm by some lecturers in the

department to undermine the feelings of black students. The discussion was significant in understanding how such pressure to succeed experienced by some students could have adverse effects that may be misconstrued by some lecturers as an inability to manage academic demands. Staff knowledge of the challenges that students face is important in determining the kind of support that different students need to alleviate any anxieties that may lead to poor performance. These kinds of considerations are also pertinent in understanding why some students seem to thrive better than others.

5.2.4.2 A supportive learning environment

The environment in a multicultural classroom could positively benefit students by providing a platform for students to learn about cultures outside their own. This is particularly important in Graphic Design because students can be taught about the importance of cultural sensitivity using their classroom environment as context. However, the same culturally diverse environment, if not managed properly through fostering positive attitudes, could see some students feeling like outsiders (Banks & McGee Banks, 2009:320). Some conditions that could potentially hinder students' ability to thrive in a multicultural learning environment include some of the following;

(i) Money matters

R2 admitted to his financial struggles having an impact on how he viewed himself and ultimately how he felt he was perceived. His belief was that his inability to pay fees on time, pay for learning materials, and take care of meals, added to the anxiety he felt about his potential to succeed. The burden of worrying about financial obligations has been linked to increased stress levels, depleted energy levels and failure to thrive in the classroom (Ary et al., 2002).

(ii) Accommodation and transport

Many students in R2's position admitted to struggling to pay for accommodation closer to the university so that they could access learning resources. They therefore opted to stay in townships far from the university campus. Therefore, transport costs had to be factored into already meagre budgets (Daniel, Southall, & Lutchman, 2005) R2 explained the difficulties that he had to contend with because of living far

from the university. He had to ensure that he had enough money to cover transport for the week before he could even begin to save up for the projects that he should do in class. He explained that sometimes he did not have money either to buy materials or to pay for colour printing as per the requirements of the projects. For this reason, he was always anxious about the prospect of either failing or not having his work assessed.

One time we had to do a project with Y (name of lecturer withheld) and I went to tell him that I couldn't pay for printing and he told me to make a plan. So, I said to him I can't make a plan now so can I go and look for money on Saturday and hand in on Monday and he said no. I wanted an extension. So, I couldn't complain, and I handed in a black 'n white because we print from that printer in the corridor. On Monday he told me I got a zero because I handed in a black 'n white and I tried to give him the colour one that I printed that weekend and he said if I hand that one in it will be a late hand in. So, I just went back to class feeling bad. (Interview with R2, 2015.)*

This quote is a clear indication of a lecturer who would not make concessions for a student who approached him with a genuine financial problem and a solution for that problem.

R2 revealed how sometimes students were unable to attend classes because of service delivery protests, boycotts or 'go slows' initiated by different transport providers. In these situations, students were forced by their unfortunate circumstances to miss classes and sometimes fell behind with their work. Even though some lecturers were aware of these, issues they tended to ignore students' pleas to catch up on the work that their peers had done. R2 felt that was a default excuse that some lecturers used when they did not want to deal with student issues. They resorted to telling students to 'make a plan' rather than trying to understand what the underlying issues were. Apparently, lecturers would ask students why some of their peers from their locale could make it and they did not. The different cases were not assessed individually on their merits. The students as a group were therefore expected to respond to situations similarly. One student confirmed how, in cases where students had siblings or younger children at home, the parents expected the older child to babysit. This took away from their study time.

R2's frustrations even led him to believe that he was ill-suited for the course because of the plethora of challenges that he had to deal with in trying to meet his academic obligations. The

discussion progressed with R2 revealing how this frustration validated his belief that design might not be for him, nor even for other 'black people' (sic) because of his observation that they seemed to be in the majority of students that generally performed badly in the projects.

I mean, you see yourself and other black students are struggling with this thing and you start to think, ja my parents won't be happy because I am here wasting their money failing everything. That's why for me I think that this design thing is not for us black people. We are all failing, I can say a lot of us are doing badly so (he shrugs and slumps his shoulders in a defeated pose). I mean these other guys, I mean white, they are always passing. I think they understand what they are doing.

Researcher: Are you the only ones that fail the projects though?

No, but mostly it's us. Because it's always the same names. I don't fail all the subjects but there are some lecturers that I know if I do their project I will fail. So now I don't know if they think I'm not good or if they just don't like me. But you see, the other thing is that those lecturers don't want to help some of us when we go to them but you can hear them telling other people what to do. And then when it's you they just say don't be lazy, just go and scamp more. But you just think I don't even know if what I showed him is ok because he just tells you go and scamp more. Maybe I'm wrong but I don't think they like us (smiles and shakes his head).

There clearly was a lot of disgruntlement with the status quo that forced R2 to draw the kinds of conclusions he was arriving at about his perceived lack of skill and thus his deficient performance.

5.2.4.3 Cultural differences

R2 reported being raised and growing up in a predominantly Xhosa culture and environment. In his later life, he had left the village and attended a local secondary school with learners from a similar cultural background and he had not left his township until he had to consider a university qualification. The university environment was his first encounter with the pool of races that inhabit it. He was, for the first time, having to learn with people from a much more diverse pool of cultures and races, both among the students and the educators. He admitted

that, although he had been a little apprehensive about the prospects of this happening, he had not been intimidated by it. However, he admitted that the environment was very different from what he was accustomed to.

The biggest challenge he had faced was challenging lecturers on things that he felt were unfair. He referred to an incident with the lecturer from the previous scenario. He admitted that he could have fought harder to get through to the lecturer, but he saw it as defiance towards an adult and he could not bring himself to go through with it. He had discussed his predicament with his friends R3 and R4 and, although R4 told him to let the situation go, R3 had felt that he could have fought harder to make his point. He had, however, explained to them that his biggest fear was being treated like an insolent student and risked being targeted by other lecturers for his behaviour. He attested to having seen white students and some coloured students bravely fight their cases with lecturers and eventually getting their way. He admitted that, even though he wished he had defended his case, it was not in his nature to fight like that. The lecturer had allegedly shrugged off the incident and told R2 he would look into the matter, which R2 had interpreted as a dismissal of the issue. When R2 did not hear from the lecturer on the matter, he concluded that the lecturer did not consider it worth any consideration.

This situation questions the emotional support that students receive to enhance their academic achievement. Emotional support is therefore discussed next.

5.2.4.4 Importance of emotional support in multicultural classrooms

R2 relied on his brother, who also served as his guardian, for emotional and financial support. However, on campus his closest friends, R3 and R4, provided much needed solace, especially when they were faced with academic stress. His friends provided advice and peer support in the same way he did when they needed him.

Although this support may seem sufficient, there were times when the students needed guidance and assurance more from their lecturers. These incidents were, as R2 recounted, situations when they were struggling to meet deadlines because they did not have the required learning materials, because they could not afford to buy those materials, or when they struggled with inter-personal relationships with lecturers. In some cases, students needed to know that

they could go to a staff member who would be there to mediate for them when they were unable to do so because of such intricacies as cultural etiquette. They needed to trust that their complaints would not turn them into victims of targeted bullying (for example, through unfair marking tendencies) by lecturers.

The faculty offers year coordinators who are also lecturers and they play the role of guardian for students in that year. For example, there are first, second and third year coordinators. The coordinators are there to offer moral, emotional and academic support and ensure that students faced with difficulties are supported by the relevant individuals provided for by the institution. For example, there is a language department that assists students who struggle with English in their written work, therapists who are available for various emotional and related issues and, in some cases, tutors for academic support. However, this information seemed new to R2. Although this information is made readily available on the university website and on orientation days, students coming from areas outside Cape Town are usually preoccupied with accommodation issues initially and, in some cases, are not too familiar with accessing information from the website. This information is helpful, especially in conflict resolutions and for provision of support for students like R2 needing financial assistance for learning materials. R2 claimed that he was not aware of the value-added services that were made freely available to students that needed them. I concluded that, if that information was not known by those it should serve, then the service system needed to be improved. In a multicultural environment, access to information is very valuable for the following reasons:

- Lack of access to information may be a result of not having understood what resources exist to assist students (Banks & McGee Banks, 2009:260). R2 was intimidated by the unfamiliar learning environment in the Graphic Design studios and felt he could not go to anyone for assistance.
- The personality of the student may hinder a student from admitting that he needs assistance because of the negative perception that asking for help might create (Banks & McGee Banks, 2009:261). For a student like R2 who was introverted and had expressed that he was not getting sufficient support for his academic struggles, this fear of asking for help may have been so demotivating that such a student may contemplate dropping out of a course altogether.

You see, I know that there is a year coordinator, but I didn't know that I can go to them when I have a problem. I just thought that they were there, né, but I really didn't know that they can help me. Maybe I wasn't listening when we were told that stuff. (He giggles and looks away.) (Interview with R2, 2015.)

5.2.5 Account 3: Background information on R3

R3 had a very warm and bubbly personality. Her justification for being part of this group of three was that she felt comfortable working with her group mates. She also mentioned the fact she was 'foreign' (sic) – from a country in Central Africa – and she found it easy to associate with just about anyone from her class. However, she reiterated R2's view that she could sense where she was wanted, and she had sensed from her classmates that she was not welcome in any other group but the one she had chosen to work with:

You see I'm foreign hey, so it's like, I kinda relate to them, and certain people in the class, but it depends! Like he said, you can pick up on a person's vibe and whether they want to know you or dislike you (smiles and giggles). (Interview with R3, 2015.)

This declaration about R3's foreign status gave an insight into how she perceived her status, both in the country and in the classroom scenario.

5.2.5.1 Lack of lecturer support

The discussion with the group returned to the project at hand and R3 confessed that there were aspects of the project that she still did not understand. She explained that there was a likelihood that she struggled with developing a concept for her work. However, there were terms that she found confusing, too. Speaking to R3, I could tell she had an idea of the expectation for the project, but that she did not have a clear understanding of what she needed to do. Her group mates were also unable to explain to her because they are also unsure. While they claimed to be comfortable with the lecturer, they were reluctant to ask her for assistance. When I asked her to explain why she was reluctant to ask for assistance she dismissed the issue and claimed that she would figure it out at some point.

R3 explained how her current experience was not unique to the current brief but reflected that she struggled with understanding most briefs. In the past, she had interpreted the briefs in her own way and had not received favourable feedback for her work. Her reasoning for not seeking assistance was that, even though she had alluded to her language issues as being a hindrance to understanding the briefs, she had been turned away by some of her lecturers. She claimed that she had been told to go and do more *scamps*, even though she did not understand what she needed to scamp. (A scamp is a preliminary or draft layout of design work, usually created after a briefing session.) In critique sessions, the lecturers in question had told her that they did not understand her work because it did not answer their briefs. For her this was a real frustration because they had not tried to assist her to unpack what she needed to do to fulfil the brief:

Like, argh (frustrated expression), I am fine but there are just things that I don't understand, like words. Sometimes I think I understand what's going on in the briefs but the execution of it (sighs and giggles). Then the lecturer tells you, they don't understand it and it's like argh! (frustration and she shrugs her shoulders) (Interview with R3, 2015.)

R3's story reiterates what happens when lecturers have reservations about accommodating the differences that exist among students. Thus, I probed further by asking about design rationales that should serve as an important accompaniment to visual communication. R3 and her group explained that they were not always required to provide design rationales. However, on those occasions when they were asked to submit rationales with their design projects, the questions posed by the lecturers seemed to suggest that the rationales had not been read. For this reason, the purpose of these rationales was questionable. The group felt that the rationales were just another add-on that increased the workload unnecessarily.

R2 interjected by referring to a project that was currently on display on their walls and mentioned how frustrating that project had been because of a lecturer that was not prepared to listen to the students. R2 used their experience with that lecturer as a case that reflected their frustration very well. He alleged that, rather than to guide the students clearly regarding what she expected from the brief, she incessantly asked the students to go away and refine their processes. In doing so, she was not prepared to listen and evaluate individual problems and to offer clear direction as to what needed to be refined and why. The frustration for the students was that only after the hand-in did they learn that their work did not meet the expected quality.

What this did was breed a sense of self-doubt and second guessing and the students started losing trust in the lecturer's interest in assisting them to succeed with the given work.

5.2.5.2 Frustration with expensive course material

While it was clear that R1, R2 and R3 were frustrated by the lack of support from some of their educators, they also began to weigh up the financial demands that the course imposed on them:

I can say that maybe it's my fault that I fail but sometimes, it's some other personal things, you know like, how especially in this class (pauses and smiles), we yah! (Props himself up in his seat), sometimes we are lazy and there are some other personal problems that you cannot help yourself with. Like we all don't work when we are here but the other students go home and work and the rest of us can't because we just don't have laptops and computers at home. Sometimes we like, have to buy material for the different projects and you know that you don't have the money but the lecturer will tell you if you don't hand in you get a zero. (Interview with R3, 2015.)

They reported that when they could not afford the materials, they improvised, which could sometimes be the cause of their demise. R3 expressed that their collective financial struggles could be the reason why they had contemplated deregistering from the course. She worried that she would not be able to deal with the barrage of issues surrounding her academic work and would be forced to drop out.

The discussion with R3 suggested a possible lack of support by their lecturers that led to frustrations with a system that supposedly seemed to recognise and favour some students over others. While she initially held back her true feelings about why this was happening, she eventually conceded to attributing this favouritism to subtle racism. R3 admitted that coming from an environment (her country of origin) which was predominantly black, she had never imagined that her race could determine her academic performance. She alluded to conversations that she had had with R2 and R4 about the prevalence of racism in higher education institutions. She admitted that her worst fears were realised when she failed a project in which she believed she should have done very well. The project had appealed to her best skills and, during the critique session, her work had been classified as good. However, when

she got her results, she had failed. After appealing, the lecturer, re-marked her work, but her marks still did not reflect what she felt she deserved. She admitted that the whole incident had had a negative impact on her because of the way the matter was handled. It was then that she resolved not to pay attention to the marks or even appeal because of the pointlessness of the exercise. Her view was that if the work was not fairly assessed, she would not fight for recognition lest she be labelled a ‘bad apple’ and get targeted with bad marks.

Now I just do the work and don't worry about the marks, I'm not lazy really. I've just lost interest. Even if I do put effort I am still going to get a bad mark! So! (She shrugs and looks down quietly). (Interview with R3, 2015.)

Throughout the time I was speaking to the group, they were upbeat; even as they shared painful moments in their journeys, they kept the mood light. However, for the first time the group was not smiling or making light of the situation. They were uncharacteristically quiet and seemed defeated. Their shoulders were slumped and all of them seem very preoccupied with their thoughts as they looked down at their hands or fidgeted with their pens. I could almost sense the defeat and I ended the discussion, promising to come back just to watch them work on the project. I congratulated their group spirit and advised them to discuss the various aspects of their project, as I felt they had some promising ideas as a group. I smiled, shook their hands, thanked them and promised to get back to them if I had any further questions, adding that I would love to see their finished projects.

Following the week with the first years, I began observations in the second year studio. The full discussion follows in 5.2.6.

5.2.6 In studio with the second year students

The second year class was observed the week after the first year hand in. Contrary to the first year group, the second year group was bigger, because the two second year classes were combined. The project they were undertaking would be their final project for the year, and therefore the duration longer than the usual one week allocated for projects. The planned time for project completion was six weeks because of the multi-faceted nature of the project. Also, because of the size of the group, there were two educators overseeing the project. Two more came on board further into the project as specialist lecturers for photography. The observation

process was carried out mainly with the lecturer that is referred to as T2 here. T2 was the regular lecturer of the two classes and was being assisted by someone often contracted by the department when they ran advertising projects because of her extensive experience in industry.

The structure of this second-year project was very different in set up because, unlike the first year class, the second years were expected to be more independent in their research skills, concept development skills, presentation techniques and their management of group dynamics. The process was also different in that marks were scored for each stage of the project, including presentations at consultations.

To the second year class, I was a familiar face, as I had previously taught at the institution. I introduced myself to them, explained why I was there and gave a brief overview of my study. The register was taken, and the project was explained by one of the lecturers running the project. The first of the three briefs were handed out by both lecturers. The students were paired through a selection process and then they were further grouped into larger groups that represented topics that would be covered in the first part of the brief. The selection process worked as follows: topics were written on pieces of paper that equalled the number of students in the studio; these were then placed in a box and the students had to pick a random paper that revealed a topic for their project focus. The themes were duplicated so that students who picked the same theme were paired. Then the pairs that picked topics that had a similar theme were grouped into groups of six members (i.e., there were three pairs). The rationale for this group selection criteria was to ensure that students did not pick their friends but partnered with members of the class that they would not have otherwise selected. The motive was to introduce students to how people were partnered in industry, where people do not choose on what jobs they want to work and with whom they are comfortable working. The focus was on delivery and forcing students to learn to break away from comfort zones.

The schedule and timeline detailing how the project would be run, together with the assessment criteria for the group and pair work requirements, were also explained to the class during the briefing session to ensure that students prepared adequately for every phase in the project. The discussion of the timeline was important in assisting the students with time management, considering the multitude of deliverables that were linked to the progress-based marking system.

Students were advised by T2 to contribute equally to the workload given, as well as to manage their working relations, to ensure that their marks were not compromised. The lecturers warned the students against the common practice of breaking away from a group or pair and opting to work independently because of a breakdown in interpersonal relations within the pair or group. The lecturers also explained that this was because the results and responsibilities would be shouldered by both parties, regardless who had done the actual work. This was a stern lesson in motivation, learning to depend on others, plus being dependable. The anxiety was palpable, particularly among those students that felt they had not been matched fairly. This apprehension, as the lecturer later explained to me, was a result of the lack of trust among the students, because they had not been exposed to working outside of their social groups. These social groups had become their comfort zone, hence their discomfort with working in unfamiliar groups.

On the first day, the discussion focused on explaining to students the importance of working with people that they had not worked with in the past, as a way of introducing them to standards they would be exposed to in industry. T2 explained the importance of managing relations in group and pair work. He also outlined their (his and T3's) expectations regarding attendance, quality of work and the coherence of the groups and pairs at each project progress presentation. T2 also explained how they as lecturers expected the first brief to be tackled in the various stages and how the outcomes of those would be assessed and marks allocated.

The first week commenced with a few glitches relating to misunderstandings in the groups and pairs. The grumblings were a result of students alleging that they had been assigned to groups or paired with students who had a record of poor or non-attendance and students with a bad work ethic. The students used these excuses to validate a need for the grouping and pairing system to be reviewed. They cited a fear of failure that would be brought on by those they deemed dead weights in their groups or pairs. However, they soon realised that the lecturers were unwavering in their approach, and they conceded defeat and accepted their 'impending bad marks'. T2, with the backing of T3, explained to the students that the project was one of many that they would encounter during their studies that were created to aid students with developing their understanding of how the Graphic Design industry operated. One of those lessons was learning to work in teams that the students had not chosen and learning to manage their relationships with the main goal being to meet deadlines while presenting their best work. T2 emphasised the importance of working towards deadlines agreed on with the clients who,

at the end of the day, did not care about what happened in the background but concerned themselves solely with the final delivery of an agreed product or service. Talking to the different students undertaking the project, I got a sense that they understood how important the project was and thus the need to adjust to the new working arrangements. T3 was a former Graphic Design business owner and, for this reason, the students seemed to accept the legitimacy of the demands for the project and their binding effect on them.

I took the opportunity to hand out the questionnaires that I had prepared to assist in selecting respondents for this part of the research. A sample questionnaire is appended as Annexure B.

The questionnaire was a guide to the potential respondents for the interviews that I subsequently conducted. Ten respondents were selected initially from a group of about fifty-four students. These respondents were selected on the responses they gave in the pilot questionnaire. The selection criteria were based on the diversified responses about their personal, academic and professional lives. However, with continued engagements with the students, I realised that, because of the inconsistencies in attendance, the group would not be reliable as respondents. The pool of respondents was therefore trimmed from ten to six. These six respondents were later further reduced to three when three more students excused themselves, citing work commitments as a hindrance to their full participation. Having the number trimmed down significantly created more time with the other three respondents, as well as time with the first year group.

In the coming weeks, there were no formal classes and the student pairs began to present their work before the two lecturers. I sat in on the presentations and continued to visit the studios to catch up with those students who preferred to work in the studios.

The level and quality of the presentations was in stark contrast to those of the first year students, as there was more structure and in-depth enquiry and a much higher level of expectation of what the students could offer. Students wrote down their names on the list on the wall to book their timeslots for their meetings with the lecturers. According to T2, at second year level, students were expected to be more independent in their research and delivery of information. While the lecturers were very accommodating in their assistance, the students were expected to manage the art direction independently. They were also expected to rationalise their every decision and take responsibility for the pair-work and pair relations themselves with little

intervention from the lecturers. This hard-line approach was initially worrying because I wondered if the lecturers had factored in how the students' cultural differences might affect how they dealt with managing their differences and the conflicts that could stem from these differences. For example, I wondered how they would deal with situations where students who came from backgrounds in which they were accustomed to being dominated (and thus not able to adequately participate and air their views) were paired with students who were strong willed, confident and assertive to ensure that their demands were met. My concern was averted by the role that T2 assumed as a mediator in the groups. He handled all the conflicts and ensured that the students understood their roles in the pair, considering their important contribution to the success of the final hand-in. In certain instances, he used code switching (the use of more than one language in a single conversation) to accommodate some of the black students whom he believed could benefit from his using their mother tongue to verbalise their views, grievances and ideas clearly and accurately. In the interventions, he translated in English to a student who did not speak isiXhosa or isiZulu what he had said to the Zulu -speaking or Xhosa-speaking student to ensure that both students shared an equal understanding about the discussion. He also explained to both students that he needed to code switch to ensure that none of the students felt that the discussions were biased towards certain students over others. This is an insert from one such discussion:

T2: So, guys what seems to be the major issue in this partnership?

English-speaking student: There's really no problem except that we don't have the same work schedules. So, when I'm here he's not and that's frustrating because I seem to be doing all the work and he's not ... well I don't know if he has because I haven't seen anything!

Xhosa-speaking student: I'm always here but I can't find him anywhere.

English-speaking student: Broe (brother) where have you looked for me and I wasn't there? ... This guy!

T2: Okay, listen guys, there's an easy way of solving this. Let me hear from him what his story is (T2 nods towards the black student). Right ke mfokaBawo ithi le outi awufumaneki apha ekampasini? On two occasions ndimgxothile apha because he wanted to consult without his partner ndamxelela uk'ba, you guys know the rules, you

come in pairs or don't come at all and lose out on valuable progress marks. Uyayibona ingxaki yakhe?

Xhosa-speaking student: Ndiyayazi lonto yok'ba asikwazi ukukhonsalta individually but le out yoh, iyadika because yena xa engekho andikhompleyni. But its fine ndizaw'za. Ndiyayibona uk'ba I need to be here. It's just that ndiyaspana and ndifika late endlini so andikwazi ukuvuka eli kusasa. But I will try my best.

T2: (translates) Okay, Mr X, I need to put you in the picture of what we are saying. Basically, I have asked him why it is that he's never here because the rule is clear! No one consults alone because this is pair work. Report back is done together, regardless what your working arrangement is. Mr Y's response is that it's not that he doesn't want to work but that his work schedule is hectic, and he gets home late from work and is too tired to come to campus too early in the morning. But it's simple guys ... you are guys, talk about these things and make an arrangement that works for both of you. Just make sure that in your arrangement you consider that you have to at least present once a day to D (the lecturer, name withheld) and myself so that we know how you are progressing and if there are any problems we assist before you guys go too far in your work. Are we all happy? (T2 smiles and students nod and get on with their presentation). (Observation of discussion between second year pair and T2, 2015.)

The situation seemed to be resolved because, in the following sessions, the pair attended together and seemed to have developed good rapport. According to Hewstone et al., (2008:118) while it may be argued that such interventions may not necessarily lead to students choosing to work outside of their comfort zones, it is a positive step towards building understanding, trust and respect among class members. While students may never socialise in the same social circles, this 'forced integration' provides students with a glimpse into the realities of the working world where differences are put aside in the interests of delivering to a client.

5.2.6.1 Selection of second year respondents

I received the questionnaires back from the pilot study and, based on the responses, I assessed which students would be suitable for my second year observations/interviews. However, during the informal discussions to confirm their participation as respondents, it became apparent that there were students that I had selected as respondents whose availability was scanty and

therefore could not be relied upon. The reasons for this ranged from out of university employment and their commitment to lift club schedules. I therefore decided to move ahead with four students who made up two pairs. However, one of these four students turned out to be unreliable as she was often away, was reluctant to participate in the research and her partner was struggling to keep up with her due to her poor communication. For example, on some occasions she was unavailable for the consultations and her partner had to present to the lecturers alone. While there were set rules on individual presentations, the lecturers had to make an exception in this case, because the absconding student was not answering any calls or emails that the T2 had sent in an attempt to find her and ascertain what was occurring with her. For this reason, the number of respondents I had at my disposal dropped to three. I decided not to substitute the fourth student because of time constraints and the need to make progress with the research. The stories of the second years are documented in 5.5.

Below are the first of the two accounts that were documented with the second year respondents with students that are referred to as R4 and R5 respectively. They were female students aged between twenty and twenty-five. They made up one of the pairs into which the class had been divided. Coincidentally, they were both coloured and came from similar home backgrounds. Their selection was based on the interesting insights that came up from their pilot study responses. The different students' accounts are documented as separate accounts one after the other.

5.2.7 Account 4: Background information on R4

R4 was an upbeat (though calm), spirited young lady who openly talked about her financial struggles that had forced her to drop out of university for two years. She believed that the two years spent working had helped her to mature and develop a decent work ethic. She also asserted that being more mature had made her aware of her own strengths and weaknesses as a designer. For her, the ability to accept whomever she was paired with comes from exposure in the working world. She also explained how her maturity had impacted on her positive attitude as a returning student.

5.2.7.1 R4's perception of group work

Honestly, I could have worked with just about anyone I was paired with. I wasn't fazed when E (lecturer name withheld) told us that we couldn't work in our usual groups. I think I'm used to work where you are just told you are working with this person and you just do it! I know I would have been pretty annoyed if I had to work with someone that just doesn't work though! (Interview with R4, 2015.)

This statement generally summed up R4's attitude towards situations. She came across as being very studious. She attributed her attitude to her maturity and exposure to working to earn a living rather than for sheer pleasure. However, she was relieved that she got on very well with her partner who seemed to share the same values towards life and her university studies. She admitted, though, that they did have moments where they saw things differently but appreciated the differences because these differences allowed them to explore multiple perspectives before settling on a solution. The differences in their ages and approaches seemed to work to both their advantage because they seemed to feed off each other's differences. Because the project was not assisted by the lecturers, it was a true attestation of Vygotsky's (1978) assertion on how learners learn better when they learn from each other.

The students seemed also to have learned a valuable lesson in trust in each other's abilities. This is evident in R4's testament:

For me, these group projects are frustrating when you don't really know the people you are working with. At least with my classmates, I have an idea of their work and sometimes their work ethic. I'm happy though that I got this partner because we clicked from the get go because she has the same work ethic like me. I like the way she thinks too. We allow each other to express our views about things. (Interview with R4, 2015.)

5.2.7.2 The value of lecturer assistance

R4 was happy that the project gave them the opportunity to be independent and showcase their capabilities with a project that was unaided. She commented that the problem with the assistance offered by some lecturers for the other projects they had undertaken was that, at times, the lecturers tended to 'hijack' (sic) the project and in the process alienated students,

who would lose ownership of the project. In her case, she tended to view the lecturer as the client and therefore was cautious about sticking to her original idea and rather chose to adjust her project to the lecturer's suggestions for fear of getting a bad mark if she did not:

You want to please them because they are like the client in this instance, but you also want some artistic freedom. I mean, I find it easier to listen to art direction but not to completely latch on to it because if you do a complete change of your idea and they don't like the end product, you can't tell them ... it was your idea (Interview with R4, 2015.)

It was clear that this student was torn between self-expression and attaining good marks. This was cause for concern, because it suggests that some students fear expressing themselves regarding their work for fear of getting poor marks if they do not follow the lecturers' suggestions. For this reason, there was a need to understand how this exercise by lecturers could impact students positively without affecting their confidence in their own abilities. Students needed to know that they were able to conceptualise and develop ideas independently. For students that were confident in their abilities and open to using their ingenuity to resolve problems, this teaching approach could be very disempowering.

They should tell us if it's bad and that it's not working so that you are able to develop the idea yourself. It helps to be told the idea doesn't work so that the bad idea doesn't affect all your other designs. (Interview with R4, 2015.)

R4 believed that the current approach seemed to serve only those students that were favourites of certain lecturers. Her experience was that, on a few occasions, she had witnessed and had been a recipient of some lecturers' vague and unsubstantiated critique of hers and others' work. Her belief was that sometimes some lecturers' behaviours were influenced by a lack of interest in a student or his/her work, hence their indifference when they dealt with them. Her view was supported by her observation of different lecturers' behaviours towards their favourite students. She cited a project that was seemingly problematic for all the students and how she and other students had observed how the lecturer assisted and aided some students but not others. She further conceded that the students in question admitted to having been assisted with the work. Subsequently, these students attained very high marks for that project. She claimed that the motivation for the lecturers' behaviour could have been racial bias:

R4: So, you wonder, was it because they are white or that they wanted to maintain that view that they are good students, so their marks have to always be good!

R5: You know what, I am one of those of those people that thrives on criticism because I view my peers as my target market. So, I go around and ask people for their opinion of my work and then I fix the things that they say are a problem. And when I go to the lecturer and he has nothing but praises for the work I hope to see that in my mark. So, we go for the critique and everyone says positive things about the work and I'm already thinking I've this one in the bag. But now the marks come back, and I think, how can this be? I mean I hope you can understand my frustration.

R4: Ja, it's true hey! Everyone commented about how her work fit the brief so well during the crit but I think everyone was also shocked by her mark because some of the guys came to ask her why she had got such a low mark because even the lecturer said she had done well.

R5: Then now some of the other students that we didn't even think their work deserved to pass got very high marks. And you see some of them were even told what to do because they were struggling. So, you just sit there and think, is it because I am not white that I can't pass better than those other people? It can really be frustrating sometimes especially if you know you've worked hard and the lecturer even tell you that your work is the best.

R4: For me I see this all the time because I'm here working until late and I can see people getting more assistance than others. You can tell man that it's all because of who they are, and lecturers want to maintain this thing that certain people are the best in the class even when their work isn't all that. (Interview with R4, 2015.)

At this point, she was visibly upset but comforted herself with the positivity with which T2's project seemed to maintain fairness across the board. Her relief was that he was black and therefore gave her a feeling that he was one of their own:

Trust me, I like that he is black because it makes me feel he understands some of the issues that we have at home that affects our schoolwork. He's cool because he doesn't play favourites. In his eyes, we are all the same and he treats us the same ... I like him for that. (Interview with R4, 2015.)

This conversation created for me a curiosity about two things about the dynamics in this culturally diverse Graphic Design classroom. I was curious about whether this alleged favouritism that was observed by R4 may have been motivated by racial bias or a culture of unwittingly disempowering students to assist them with the art direction of their work. These two problems are key in a multicultural classroom, because they highlight how South Africa's apartheid past may influence how people perceive situations that are seemingly unfair as being racially motivated. The effect of this is a lack of trust in lecturers whose role is supposed to be fair, impartial and supportive of all students, regardless of their abilities, race or other differences (Soudien & Sayed, 2004:112). The importance of keeping these suspicions in check is that it allows everyone in the classroom to feel a sense of belonging so that these feelings of exclusion could be curbed. The role of the lecturer as a facilitator of learning should not overwhelm the students' own knowledge base and ability to succeed through trial and error. Vygotsky advocates a learning environment that empowers students to develop self-initiated problem-solving skills before an educator steps in to assist. He emphasises that students are not *tabula rasa* (blank slates), but rather as people with wells of knowledge that, if tapped into properly, could make for a strong learning foundation for new knowledge. To that end, students need to be assisted to access that knowledge so that new material can be taught, using what is known as the basis for understanding (Vygotsky, 1978:45).

The views held by R4 were shared by R5, her partner for the current project. R5's account follows.

5.2.8 Account 5: Background information on R5

Like R4, R5 was coloured, but a few years younger than R4. She was, however, in R5's words, "quite mature" in her work ethic. She attributed her work ethic to fear of failure and consequently repeating the year. This fear of failure was motivated by the fact that her parents would not be able to afford to pay for an extra year in her academic life. She indicated that she was happy with her partner, although she had never worked on any projects with her because they were in different classes:

I really would not mind if I got anyone, but I would have been really, really stressed if I had paired up with a lazy person who doesn't even show up for class. Yoh! I'm one of

those people that would literally break down if something like that happened to me.
(Interview with R5, 2015.)

She added that she was satisfied with how the project was being run. R5's view of the project was that it was an opportunity for her to get to know her partner well enough to appreciate the wisdom that she brought to the partnership. She was quick to mention that, while the students from the two second-year classes might not have been good friends before the project, they had shared a civil relationship. For this reason, she would have been happy working with just about anyone provided that that student had a decent work ethic.

Her view on group work or pair work, such as the one in which they were involved, was that one tended to work more diligently than when working with friends because there was a need to give a good impression of one's abilities and be seen to be reliable. This was important for future tasks because it set a good precedent about the work ethic of the student.

People talk, and you don't want to be that girl that is known for lazy habits because when you fail or do badly in projects people will always refer to a time when they worked with you and you didn't perform. You always want to keep a good record with the classmates. (Interview with R5, 2015).

She also pointed out that the advantage of working with unfamiliar people was that it helped her get a unique perspective on issues. She conceded that if one worked with friends too often, there was a tendency to take things for granted and assume there was no other way of generating and seeing solutions. For her, the project was good preparation for the coming year when they would learn to work more independently.

5.2.8.1 R5's views on lecturer assistance

It was impressive that the students enjoyed working independently because it meant that they recognised the need to be able to guide their own learning. Like R4, R5 was grateful for the opportunity to work independently to showcase what she could do as a designer. She liked the fact that T2, unlike some of their other lecturers, seemed impartial and forced them to think about their work. She admitted that T2's teaching approaches could make it difficult for

students who were used to the teaching styles of the other lecturers who insisted on micro managing the projects.

I like that he wants you to think about what you are doing, but sometimes I get frustrated because the other lecturers are not like that. They tell you what to do to a point that you don't feel like you own your own work. And then the shocking thing is that when the marks come, you are like average, and I go ... what? After all that this is what I get? Yah, it gets confusing! (Interview with R5, 2015.)

Students were clearly frustrated with the intervention of other lecturers outside of the current project. From the students' perspective, if they were going to be told how to execute a project, the mark that they got would have to reflect the extensive input of the lecturer. R5 believed that, if a lecturer owned most of the thinking and art direction behind the work, it was imperative that the marks revealed this, because the project was then the lecturer's brain child.

In their presentations, the synergy between R4 and R5 was strongly evident. Their presentations were designed to accommodate each other's strengths; and when questioned about certain decisions they had made, they relied on each other's strengths and used that to their advantage. T2 and his assistant lecturer also commented on the good working relationship of the two students:

T2: You guys are very clever, you've figured out each other's strengths and are using them very well. The way you answer our questions is as if you knew what I'd ask even before I do. Are you two psychics?

R4: No, T2 (name withheld), we just know you so well. We try to imagine what you will say so we make those corrections ahead of time. You ask tough questions, we like think, what's T2 (name withheld) gonna say about this? (Everyone chuckles.)

T2: You are clever, you know me, I want to understand every detail of your project so that when I mark I know what your thinking was about every element in your project. That's why I'm asking you guys, why this colour palette for this particular brand? If you can justify right now and I'm satisfied with your answer, I won't hassle you. But, but, if you can't explain, you know I will haunt you till I get answer that I am satisfied with.

R5: *Yeah, we know that only too well. (R4 and R5 chuckle.)*

Alone, R4 and R5 acknowledged T2's thoroughness with understanding the decisions that they were making for the project and agreed that they would quiz themselves on every aspect of the project that they felt was unclear.

My next discussion was with R6 who was in a pair made up of two black students, one female and one male. As stated earlier, although the arrangement had been to interview him with his partner, her consistent absence from class made it difficult to pursue any meaningful engagements with her. Thus, I resorted to interviewing him alone.

5.2.9 Account 6: Background information on R6

R6 was a male student between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. He was a soft-spoken Xhosa-speaking young man. His partner was also Xhosa-speaking which made it easy for them to discuss the project details with each other in the best way possible for them to understand (whenever she made contact telephonically, or when she made rare appearances at the campus). The potential disadvantage of their pairing was that both of them had financial struggles, which R6 described as a possible obstacle to the successful completion of their project because the project and all its components required a substantial amount of financial resourcing. This issue of finances was dealt with in detail in the following discussion with R6.

5.2.9.1 The value of lecturer assistance

As stated earlier, R6 was concerned that his pairing could potentially lead to their struggle to properly complete the project as expected. His main concern was that he and his partner were not able to support each other financially when they needed finances to carry out the project:

You see I don't even have anyone here to ask for money and she's working because she doesn't have enough money and she has to help at home also. So, I'm worried that we have to print a lot of things, but we don't have the money. When we were presenting to you guys, T2 said we must go on the red bus so that we understand our project. But now we can't even buy a single ticket.

The projects were all designed to be experienced by the students so that they could immerse themselves in the experiences that they were trying to sell to their target markets. The effects of financial disadvantage came up often in R6's presentation to T2. On many occasions, R6 failed to convince T2 and T3 of the practicality of his concept because of his lack of understanding of the brand he was working with. R6's task was to create a campaign to promote the Hop-on Hop-off tour bus to people of a specified age and demographic profile. He had never been on the tour bus and therefore had no understanding of the details of the brand and what it entailed. For this reason, there was a need (according to T2 and T3) for first-hand experience so that he could develop a concept that was the result of an informed user of the tour bus. T2's assertion was that the experience would give him the urge to create a campaign that was convincing for people that had never been on the tour bus. Although T3 was perplexed at R6's failure to raise the R60 required to pay for a ticket to get on the 'Hop-on & Hop-off' tour bus, T2 was more sympathetic and provided ideas around which R6 could still take the trip without having to make a payment. One of the ideas offered was to take the brief to the Tourism council offices and explain what he needed to achieve for the brief and see if they could accommodate him on a single trip for free. R6 was eventually accommodated on a free ticket on the tour bus. Although the problem of experiencing the bus had been resolved, R6 still had concerns about how he would finance the printing of the different components of the project considering his partner's constant absence from university. In the following weeks, he struggled with the concept for the project because his partner was barely ever at university. He had to present his work alone and could not account for his partner.

She phones sometimes to give me suggestions for the project, but I wish she was here all the time because being grilled by the lecturers alone is not nice. I'm trying but kunzima (it's hard), especially when you know you are supposed to be working with someone. She's not here most of the time and when she comes we try to do more work. I just wish she can come because I'm just here alone and it's not nice. (Interview with R6, 2015.)

Sometimes he was reluctant to attend the presentations because he had not made the changes suggested by T2 and T3. His explanation to me was that sometimes he was confused about what he needed to change or that he simply could not come up with current ideas that could substitute the ones that had been rejected by the lecturers. T2 would spot R6 in the building

and invite him to discuss some ideas that R6 had so that he could assist him to make some progress with his work. T2's level of assistance (even though he had told the students to manage their partnerships) was motivated by the fact that R6's (and their) attempts to locate his partner, had been futile. This intervention seemed to help greatly to ease R6's anxieties because he became more confident about presenting freshly conceptualised ideas.

Even as he grew in confidence, R6 worried that his partner might not be available to assist him with any printing costs that would be incurred. His partner could come through with her share of the printing money, albeit R6 would have to locate her for the money. He admitted that this had been the most difficult project for him because he had to work alone for the greater part of the project, was subjected to making decisions alone and, most of all, worrying about how he would finance the project alone.

5.2.9.2 The key role of lecturer as a support system

The discussion with R6 unearthed the importance of role models to motivate students. He mentioned that he looked up to T2 as a young black lecturer because he made him realise that, as a black student, he could achieve his goals. He explained how T2 always pushed them to be and do better if they had the tenacity and drive to achieve. He recalled how, in all his discussions with T2, he had been made to feel that he was capable of success. R6 held the view that having a black lecturer was encouraging, particularly for black students, because it dispelled the thinking that design may not be for black people (sic). The comment below is a view that R6 has of T2:

Researcher: So, what's your view of T2 and this project?

R6: Uright! (He's alright) (T2), he's confident ... he knows his stuff. I want to be that kind of designer. He forces us to come up with more than one solution because he says that the first idea that you have is just what anybody can think of. So, now I know that there's no wrong or right answer because if I can defend it and tell him how it works, that's what he wants.

For R6, this being his final project of the year, it was important that he did well in it and, for this reason, he was happy that T2 was the lecturer in charge. This was because, he felt that T2

afforded everyone a fair chance of doing well in the project. The fact that he could ask for clarification in isiXhosa made T2's presence invaluable for the projects. This being a multi-faceted project, T2 acknowledged the possibility of a great deal of confusion for the students and therefore felt the need for extensive consultations with all the students. Although initially reluctant to attend all meetings with T2, R6 appreciated his direction. He cited the fact that he could consult T2 in isiXhosa as an added advantage because of the tendency of getting confused with the project because of its size.

R6's relief with having T2 on the project stemmed from the difficulties he had had about admitting to some white lecturers that he did not understand a brief. From his experience, some lecturers could be insensitive and condescending to his admission, forcing him to pretend that he understood the requirements of the project and the art direction from the lecturers. He chose to stumble through the process alone rather than feel humiliated for asking or even admitting that he was lost in a process. For this reason, R6's feeling was that the inclusion of a black lecturer in their year was a life-line for those students like himself who were benefitting from his presence. They could go to him and ask for clarification of the brief and he would happily explain it in isiXhosa. For the R6, the value of having someone who spoke their language, placed him on par with their English- and Afrikaans-speaking peers who had the benefit of speaking the same language as the lecturers (that were either Afrikaans- or English-speaking).

While T2 did not spoon feed them with ideas or hold their hands through the projects, R6 felt that his approach to teaching was more supportive than that of lecturers who told them what to do for their projects:

R6: I think I prefer to do a project alone with a lecturer who will say 'tell me why you decided to this and that instead of that', a lecturer who will say 'why don't you do this and use that image?' and then when the marks come I discover that my mark is still not good. But T2 will ask you 'why are you using this image, why are you using that font?' He wants you to explain to him why you are choosing those things and then if you ask him, if they work, he will ask you to explain why they work. He makes you think of everything yourself so that you can't blame him if you do badly. I like that because he helps you to become independent. (Interview with R6, 2015.)

As I spoke to R6 I noticed in his smile and body language that he had an admiration for T2 and his style of teaching. He seemed to understand that he needed to take responsibility for his learning and thus agreed with T2's teaching style that forced students to take charge of the outcomes of the work they did.

I continued to observe the second year students as they worked to complete their work. Towards the end of the project, fewer and fewer students were in attendance as most of them busied themselves taking onsite photographs of their projects. R6 was also away for most of the time, except when he attended consultations. I was able to talk about the progress of his work and he indicated that, although the photography section of their project was being run by a different set of lecturers, T2 was also available on request for face-to-face consultations and for consultations via email. Some students, including R6, utilised this method of communication rather than coming onto campus.

After the photography project, the students busied themselves with the submission of their final work. They were expected to print their work and prepare PowerPoint presentations that would assist them to talk through their work. These presentations did not happen because they were disrupted by the '#FeesMustFall' protests that affected universities around the country. Students were therefore advised via email to hand in printouts of their work as well PowerPoint presentations and that these would be assessed once the university campus was accessible to the lecturers.

5.2.10 In studio with third year students

Third year is the final year in a three-year diploma course. At this level, students were expected to predominantly work independently with very little supervision. However, students could still have consultations with their lecturers. The consultations were to assist them with putting together their portfolios and managing the final project which represented a personal identity of all their work. The final project thus encapsulates a summarised version of the student's perception of their own design identity. The portfolio of their work guides potential employers and sometimes clients (if students undertake freelance work) regarding the strengths and interests of the students. The portfolio also helps to showcase the student's strengths as a visual communicator.

For the study, it is important to review the nature of the work that students in the three-year course undertake because there is a need to understand the relevance of the work to the multicultural nature of the classroom under study. The portfolio that the third-year students had to prepare was also a glimpse into the curriculum that is designed to equip students with the skills that they need to possess in their final year of study.

5.2.10.1 Selection of third year respondents

Having taught the third year group in the previous year made it easy to identify participants with whom I could work. The disadvantage with the third year group was that most of them preferred to work away from the studio because they were also preparing their portfolios for an upcoming exhibition, leaving me with only a small pool of potential participants from which to select. However, the two that could spare some time for the research process turned out to be invaluable.

5.2.10.2 Final year of the three-year diploma programme: a final year student's perspective

R7 and R8 were third year students who were interviewed and observed over a period of a week. Within that week, I could observe them work and conduct semi-structured interviews with them. Because, I had taught the two students in the previous year there was an issue of bias that I had to confront. I applied suggestions by Denzin, (2012) on the questioning techniques to be applied. A suggestion was to avoid questions posed that were direct because these tend to direct respondents to an answer that they think is expected of them. He also posits that it is important to acknowledge that the participant's own answers may be inaccurate and therefore may need clarification from a different source. Although I did not tell the lecturers that some information I was asking was to verify information given by the students, I checked some information in my discussion with them. All the questions were open-ended to allow for the students to give an answer that explore multiple facets of the questions posed. I also made sure that the respondents did not feel like there was a correct response to any of the questions posed.

The two students could not have been more different. R7 was very reserved with a very quiet demeanour. He was a repeat student that had, over time, developed much confidence but had retained his quiet nature. I had known him for two years and, in that period, he had always preferred to address me in his home language, IsiZulu. He had also always called me 'sisi', an endearing term meaning 'sister'. During our conversations, he addressed me with a lot of respect and maintained very little eye contact, choosing instead to look at his hands.

By contrast, R8 was a bubbly white female who was free-spirited and very sociable. Although easy-going, she was very hard working. I found her assertive and her goals about future employment were very clear. She had secured a job through a cousin, so she did not have the pressures that the other students had. She had had the privilege of doing a few internships with the company who would be employing her. She did odd jobs for them in the first year of her studies; and, in the second semester of second year, she was offered an internship that she pursued during the semester breaks. Thus, she enjoyed a lot of industry experience and also developed her confidence in both her work and the working world. She admitted to being nervous about being a paid employee because the expectations would be much higher. She explained that now that she was not an intern, her area of specialisation would have to be utilised accordingly.

The accounts of both R7 and R8 are detailed in the following discussion under 5.2.11 and 5.2.12.

5.2.11 Account 7: Background information on R7

As indicated in the introduction, R7 was a Zulu-speaking, quiet spoken young man. Unfortunately, because of challenges relating to finances, which led to substantial absenteeism, R7 found himself repeating second year. He explained that having to travel home to KwaZulu Natal every semester break took its toll on his guardian's finances. While he had managed to secure work in Cape Town, the remuneration was inadequate to cater for his daily upkeep, his university residence fees, as well as cover his travel expenses to and from home. Nevertheless, he did not allow this to deter him and he remained focused on attaining the diploma that he saw as his ticket out of his disadvantaged position. However, in the second semester of his second year, he struggled to return to university after a semester break. He missed out on much

academic work and, when he eventually returned, he realised that he had missed too much work to catch up. Even though some of his lecturers tried to give him some reprieve, there was just too much work to be completed, particularly in the theory modules. Thus, he failed the year and had to return the following year to repeat the modules in which he had not done well.

R7's journey is detailed under specific headings in the proceeding discussion.

5.2.11.1 R7's view about the discomforts of being different

As stated earlier, R7 struggled to find his place in his new environment. For him, the city was no new wonder; however, a city as robust and active as Cape Town was enough to make him wonder about where and how he belonged. The university, while diverse, seemed to reflect the same hive of activity that he had encountered in the city, with people going about their business too busy to notice anyone and anything around them. He found his department even more intimidating with its very compact structure that seemed to force people to notice each other because of the nature of the briefs and close working conditions that under which the students were expected to work. Like the rest of the university, though, people seemed to belong to cliques. He reported that, unlike everyone else there, he felt alone and somehow vulnerable. For the first time, he was expected to communicate entirely in English all the time. He was also expected to know and understand concepts about things that were not familiar to him, such as the history of design and current Graphic Design trendsetters of whom he had never heard. He was very far away from home and if he lacked for anything, he had no one to tell. He explained that, for these reasons, he became a recluse and his classmates and lecturers concluded that he was shy:

R7: Ungabuza anyone ongaziyo from Ethekwini, angiyena muntu onamahloni, but kulendawo, ngiyayibuza ukuthi ngabe abantu bacabangani ngami?

Translation: If you ask anyone who knows me from Durban, I am not known as a shy person but at this place you wonder what people think of you.

As we spoke, I wondered if R7's situation did not echo the experiences of other students like him who came to metropolises, such as Cape Town, from different backgrounds where most

people in an area speak predominantly the same language and share the same or similar cultural values. When I asked him if, over the years, he had been able to make any friends, he admitted that he had and that all of them were black and either Xhosa- or Zulu-speaking. He admitted to finding solace in people like himself that spoke a Nguni language because of the nostalgic memories of home. Nguni languages include isiZulu, isiXhosa, SiSwati and isiNdebele. While he spoke fairly fluent English, he admitted to lacking confidence in speaking it, especially in classroom situations.

I referred to some written assignments that he had done in the past that I had marked, and we reflected on how well he wrote those in English. He assured me that his written English was not as weak as his spoken English, because he read through the work and therefore had an opportunity to correct spelling and grammatical errors. R7 revealed that the insistence on his competence in English was not propelled by a need to belong, but more by a feeling of being an outsider and therefore not wanting to say anything that could offend those around him. He seemed to carry the burden of being different and he used this difference to judge himself harshly against what he deemed to be a higher standard of his learning environment. I asked him to rationalise his feelings in relation to how those students with either prominently Afrikaans or foreign accents dealt with this 'impediment' in their associations with others in the classroom. He admitted that his interpretation of what people thought of his distinct accent might have been an irrational conclusion on his part. However, the fact that I had highlighted that there were other students who had distinct accents because of their mother tongue did not seem to convince him, even though he did admit there was a case to my rationalisation.

Researcher: So, I hear that you are uncomfortable with using the English language because your accent may be viewed with suspicion because you feel you are, mispronouncing certain words? Do you think you think those students with very prominent Afrikaans or French, or even Portuguese accents have the same worries?

R7: No uyabona njani, Sisi, it's just that ezinye izinto mazisenzeka uye ubone sengathi lento esemqondweni wakho yiqiniso kanti cha. May be bona abayiboni inkinga, kodwa mina, ngiye ngibone sengathi abantu bangimamele and bahlekisa ngami nje. Kodwa ngiyayizwa lento oyishoyo sengiyabona ukuthi yonke lento iimicabango yami.

Translation: You see sister, it's just that the way things happen is that you tend to believe that which is your head even though there may not be any truth in it. Maybe they don't see the problem, but I am conscious of people hearing and making fun of me. But I hear what you are saying and realise it's all in my head.

(Interview with R7, 2015.)

However, R7 quickly added that, for Afrikaans speakers, it seems acceptable to other people that they would naturally have a discernible accent or make speaking errors, yet as a “black African, even black people like yourself make fun of you”.

R7: There are times when I want to say something in class because I know the answer but, yoh, that thing inside just says, don't open your mouth, and I just sit there quietly. Sometimes the lecturer will say 'tell us what you think', and I just smile and I can't talk.

Researcher: What's your biggest fear with talking and giving an answer, especially if you have been selected to speak?

R7: Honestly, for me I don't know what's the problem because I can feel that my answer is right but, yoh, making it come out is difficult. I think I just think too much about these things sometimes.

Researcher: Do you think that maybe you over-think things and assume people will judge you and then you miss an opportunity to be heard making a valuable contribution?

R7: Maybe, but I think sometimes it's better to just be quiet so that you don't embarrass yourself and say the wrong thing. Not the wrong thing but you say it in a wrong way then people laugh.

Researcher: Do you actively participate in group work, though?

R7: If I'm with my friends I talk a lot but if it's other people I just do what the group wants. (Interview with R7, 2015.)

This conversation highlighted the dilemma of feeling like a minority in an environment that, according to the students' perceptions, does not seem to do much to prepare them for the diverse cultures that they encounter in the classroom. My assessment is that students who are

already feeling vulnerable may struggle with the concept of being culturally sensitive towards others when they have not experienced the same courtesy and accommodating spirit.

5.2.11.2 Importance of understanding cultural differences

From R7, I learnt a few salient things about identity and finding one's place and one's voice in an environment that could be as challenging as it is intimidating: the university. Coming from a province with a different dynamic from that found in Cape Town, R7 found that the general atmosphere in the Graphic Design department did nothing to help him ease into his unique environment. He explained that, from the time of his arrival at the department, he felt overwhelmed by the number of white students and lecturers in the building. He feared he would not fit in and started wondering if he had made the right move:

You see I was just quiet, and I was also smiling so that she didn't think that I wasn't listening. But eish bengi warid (eish I was worried) because I couldn't remember anything that she told me about the things there. But zange ngimtshela ngoba bengisaba ukuthi uzocabanga ukuthi angilaleli if ngiyamtshela ukuthi ngilibele yonke lento angitshela yona. (But I didn't tell her because I feared that she'd think that I did not pay attention if I told her that I had forgotten everything that she had just told me.) You know ukuthi abanye abantu banjani nje. (You know what some people are like.)

As he related his story, he was smiling and sometimes chuckled at the memories conjured in him by the discussion. Throughout, he did not make direct eye contact with me, but I did not question that because, coming from a similar background, I understood that it was etiquette because he regarded me as an older sister. It would have been a sign of disrespect if he had looked me straight in the eye.

What this situation underscored was the importance of understanding the nuances in people's cultures. If I had not understood R7's background and the nuances of his culture, I would have probably concluded that he was insolent and not very keen on talking to me. R7 attributed his second year struggles that led to him failing certain subjects to his tendency to avoid asking or confirming his understanding of concepts with his lecturers. He admitted that he tended to be very polite towards older people because he did not want to offend them by seeming to be too

impetuous. He admitted that this was a trait that he had adopted over the years because of the expectation by elders in his own family and community. He admitted that it was a cultural issue because it was widespread practice in most areas that he had been to in his home town.

5.2.11.3 Lecturer assistance seen as impediment to creativity

R7 believed that the four years at the institution had challenged him to learn new skills and use programmes that were invaluable to his career as a designer. However, his only concern was that the projects were micro managed to a point where he could not truly identify with his work. He admitted that, in his four years at the institution, he had got a sense from some of his lecturers that the students that did very well in projects were those that closely relied on the lecturers' art direction. Although he understood the need for consultations with the lecturers, his assessment was that this approach only benefitted those students who were happy to agree with everything that lecturers suggested. He felt that the heavy dependence on the lecturers' input stifled his own creativity and ability to think independently. Moreover, he felt that the approach immensely disadvantaged him, because in those moments when he struggled to articulate his own ideas, he was perceived to be struggling with the work itself:

It's not ukuthi ngiyasaba ukukhuluma, angisabi, it's just that, eish I wouldn't do this at home so why kufanele ngiqale lana? If this person is a good teacher uzokwazi that what he is doing is unfair. I know that my work isn't, like, always good but sometimes you know you've done your best and even people tell you that your work is good but imark ibuya ibheda nje!

Translation: It's not that I'm fearful (of speaking out), I'm not, it's just that eish (expression of resignation) I wouldn't do that home so why should I start here? If the person (lecturer) is a good lecturer, he/she will know that what he is doing is unfair. I know that my work isn't, like, always good but sometimes you know you've done your best and even people tell you that your work is good, yet the final mark is just bad. (Interview with R8, 2015.)

He admitted that he had entertained the idea of discussing his problem with the lecturers but was not able to because of fear of reprisal or of creating tension between him and them.

Furthermore, he believed that, because he viewed them as elders, he would never have been comfortable with openly expressing discontent with the way they did things.

5.2.12 Account 8: Background information on R8

R8 was a ‘twenty-something’ Afrikaans woman. She was very studious and very confident in her views about life as a student and prospects for the future. She was interesting to talk to because she challenged stereotypical views about what people should be. For instance, she commented on how she had been told that she was not a typical Afrikaans woman because of her ‘radical beliefs and her liberal personality’.

The discussion with R8 began with pleasantries about her work and her relief with the project being her last in the programme, at that point. She indicated that she was excited about beginning her professional career, although a little apprehensive about the change from being an intern and earning an allowance to a salaried employee. She was, however, grateful that, unlike her peers, she did not have to worry about job hunting. Nevertheless, she was quick to clarify that her prospective employer had requested that she hand in a portfolio of her work to fulfil a requirement by all their new employees. For this reason, she felt that she had to work even harder to produce a very good portfolio of her work to assure her employer that she was the right person for the job, despite the fact that she had already worked there. She admitted that she liked the professional approach that the company had maintained because it gave her the confidence that she had been hired for her skills rather than because her cousin had known the company owner.

I am carefree, design loving and South African! So many times, I have been told that I am fake and that I try too hard. I don't know what that means but I know that I love life and that I do me. (Interview with R8, 2015.)

The young bubbly personality of R8 was infectious. She admitted to being “strong willed and sometimes being very free spirited, was a problem for some people”. She was raised in a strict Afrikaans family but credited her mother for allowing her to follow her own path and not try to fit in. She was always mistaken for a ‘hippy’ because of her quirky dress sense and choice to walk around barefoot. Thus, people sometimes mistook her for a rebel.

5.2.12.1 Industry experience as an essential part of confidence building

R8 explained how her impatience with restrictions drove her to study Graphic Design which, she believed, would allow her the freedom to express herself. However, she soon realised that she would have to follow the lecturers' direction:

My work is very eclectic because I am inspired by a lot of things. I believe my work is an extension and expression of my free spirit. I am not rigid in my colour palette, but I get very frustrated if I am asked to do things by the book because that's not my style. But I suppose if the lecturer as the client is not happy I don't have a choice but to change to meet their requirements. It can be very annoying to hand in work that feels like it's not yours. (Interview with R8, 2015.)

R8 felt that at third year level they could do more 'live briefs' to help them prepare for the 'real world'. She confessed to feeling fortunate that she had the internship that had not only broadened her understanding of the working world but also assisted in developing her confidence in her design skills. Although she was not dealing with very important clients yet, she was happy with the fact that she understood the real-world challenges, such as deadlines and dealing with client needs, because that knowledge had improved her work ethic.

Course deadlines were not an issue for her because she had experienced much stricter and non-negotiable work deadlines. However, she did admit to being prone to excessive stress because of the nature of the work, and because of the need to balance her university work, internship and social life (which she maintained was minimal, as most of her time was spent working towards deadlines).

She explained that her internship experience, although it had compromised her social life, had ensured that she had minimal dependence on her parents for pocket money and course material requirements.

She reported that her experiences had not only equipped her with the knowledge about the various clients, but also the nature of jobs that a designer would service in his/her career. This was invaluable information in understanding the kinds of skill set a Graphic Designer needed to be effective in his/her job.

It was R8's conviction, because of the lessons and insights she had learned from being an intern, that it should be mandatory for students to go through internships as it prepared students for those things that are not learned on the diploma course but can only be acquired in the workplace. Her justification for her view was that some of her peers seemed to have the illusion that the world of work was as relaxed and negotiable as the university environment:

I think as students, well, I've seen this with people in my class, there's a misconception that when you start working there is a lot of free time for all sorts of things. Someone was saying how all their weekends will be spent partying with his friends (as she said this she chuckled and rolled her eyes in disbelief). Most people have stars in their eyes, all they see is the salary at the end of the month, but no one is really asking what it is really like to do the work. I was lucky to learn very early on that you work very hard, sometimes even during weekends and the reward is seeing your work out there. Honestly, if only they knew that the pressure doesn't ease off once one starts working. (Interview with R8, 2015.)

R8 revealed that she had fallen in love with that sort of life, where she was running between projects. She enjoyed the adrenalin of the environment and could not see her life in any other way.

She admitted that her positive attitude was propelled by the knowledge that she had made the right decisions about taking on the internship because it had built up her confidence in her skills. She also believed that her professionalism had been improved and this improvement had even translated to how she approached her work. However, she was sometimes frustrated by some lecturers' excessive involvement in students' projects. The excessive assistance offered by lecturers as described here highlights Vygotsky's view on students being allowed to be in charge of their learning. The confidence building aspect of learning from one's own experiments is compromised by the teaching practice described by R8.

5.2.12.2 Lecturer assistance restricts freedom of expression

R8 believed that students needed more freedom to work independently, while she acknowledged the role of the lecturers as art directors for students' work. Her belief was that, at first and second year, students needed extensive guidance because of the number of skills

that, as a student, she believed she had gained at that stage in her studies. However, she believed that, at third year, there needed to be leeway given to students to find their own voice through their work. She believed that, as a third year student, she felt confident with reading and answering a brief with very little guidance. Her view was guided by the fact that some students graduated believing that the working environment would be lenient towards them because they were fresh out of university. From talking to some of her work colleagues, R8 had learnt that some of them were ‘thrown into the deep end’ and expected to learn very fast how to deal with deadlines, expectations of clients and art directors’ and they had felt that they had not been adequately prepared for this reality. Thus, she had taken the advice of her work colleagues to learn things quickly and manage herself so that she did not struggle with the same things they did when they first started working:

I think I'm just frustrated by how much consultation I have to do with the work. I mean I know I'm still a student and learning new stuff, but sometimes I just feel like my freedom to express myself is restricted, just a little. Maybe it's because where I intern I'm given a task to do and the only time I really consult is when I want my art director's opinion or if there is something I don't get. When I first started, I used to work very closely with a designer and I would have to check in with them often, but as soon as I gained confidence I started getting jobs that the seasoned designers wouldn't do. I gained a lot from that. Okay so maybe I have been spoilt by the freedom that I enjoy at work, I suppose I shouldn't complain much because it was the knowledge that I gained here that got me the internship (she giggles when she says this). I think I just enjoy the responsibility of working independently and not being constantly monitored, it's cool though! (Interview with R8, 2015.)

It was for this reason that she believed she had developed an independence with managing her work that was making it difficult for her to be micro managed by her lecturers. She recognised that that was the process that her lecturers believed to be beneficial to students’ learning.

R8’s energy was infectious and made me wonder how many students would benefit from experiences such as hers as a way of preparing them, not only for the world of work, but even empowering them to make positive contributions through visual communication. R8 made me question the level of interaction that existed between design institutions and industry. It was

evident from R8 how her overall view of her capabilities and her confidence in joining industry had been shaped significantly by her internship.

The following discussion focuses on the experiences of two Graphic Design lecturers from the same department and campus as the students.

5.3 Multicultural narratives of lecturers

Teaching people from different walks of life can be a very daunting task, especially for visual communication subjects such as Graphic Design where communication is reliant on cultural semiotics. Barthes's (1963:88) argument is that semiotics is not adaptable to different situations because of the variety of culturally developed backgrounds. What may be acceptable in one community may be taboo in another, and this stems from how symbols and signs are used to aid communication. This study therefore sought to investigate how educators of Graphic Design taught this semiotically subjective discipline to students who were as diverse as the world views that they brought into the learning environment.

For this phase of the study, I worked with two lecturers, one who taught first and second year classes and another who taught second and third year classes. Their experiences with all three classes were vital for the research to trace the developmental milestones of the students through all three years of the diploma programme.

In the discussion, the lecturers are referred to as T1 and T2 respectively. First, my engagement with T1 is discussed.

5.3.1 Account 9: The dynamic shift of my relationship with T1

T1 was a female lecturer who taught first and second year classes. She taught a design techniques course and had been at the institution for over fifteen years. She was a favourite among the students because of her cheerful and helpful nature.

When I returned to the department as a Graphic Design lecturer, it was not easy to view the people that had taught me as anything else other than my lecturers. For this reason, it was

rewarding to get to know them from an unfamiliar perspective: that of colleague and informant for the research study that I was now undertaking. While I had views of what kind of educator T1 was from my experience as a former student, it was important for the purposes of the research to get to know her through a lens that I had never viewed her. I needed to find out what her teaching principles were and how she managed the multicultural nature of her classrooms. Our discussions ranged from her teaching style, her teaching strategies, management of relationships with her students, assessment and finally to conflicts arising among students, and between her and the students.

5.3.1.1 The curriculum as translated in the briefs

T1 explained that the briefs that students tackled for their projects were designed to develop their competencies gradually in the different modules. First year students were introduced to basic design principles, such as communication, through colour, words (also known as copy), imagery, hand-crafted design artefacts and fonts. These basic courses were designed to acquaint students with the principles that govern design as applied in computer-generated work. The importance of hand-rendered work was to ensure that students understood the principles of design by doing, rather than being taught about them in a lecture-style class. The courses were also designed to develop an understanding of materials and media in communication. A sample of the first year brief is appended as Appendix 1. T1 communicated as follows:

As you know from experience, the students are taken through a week-long team project that we use to get the students acquainted with each other. Group members are usually randomly placed, except for students who already know each and are happy to form groups. The objective here is to get some form of rapport going among ourselves as their lecturers and among the students too. Another thing that we try to do is to introduce students to the different materials that are contained in their start-up kit which they are all requested to bring at the beginning of the course. It is important that students familiarise themselves with those tools of the trade, if I may call them that, because right through the course they will be making decisions on choice of mediums, media, material and all those things that affect their visual language and messages. We

also introduce their first brief ever and students are guided on how to read and answer a brief. (Interview with T1, 2015.)

We went on to discuss briefs in general and how they progressed through the year. T1 explained how briefs in the first and second semesters taught students about the basics in all the modules. In the third semester, students were expected to have some level of competence with choices that effectively communicate their messages. Finally, the fourth and final semester in first year is used to prepare students for a final ‘exam-type’ project which assesses a variety of competences in communication design.

The discussion turned to the project that she would be briefing the class on at the time when the research was being carried out. She explained that the project was supposed to help students to make confident decisions that affect the outcome of a project. Moreover, it was expected that, through the project, students would practise their skills of selecting materials that best served them to communicate their message without relying on text. T1 was hopeful that the students would perform well as the project was an off-shoot of a previous one that was purely focused on choosing materials that were specific to a design message:

At every stage of the design briefs that we prepare for the students, there are specific aims and outcomes that we are trying to meet. There are skills that we have to impart that tie in with the expectations of the curriculum. That is why we use the continuous assessment method because we want to keep track of the course outcomes so that we can assess how we can add or change certain elements in the briefs to achieve the goals of the curriculum. So, we chop what doesn't work and add what we think will help us achieve the same results but better. (Interview with T1, 2015.)

The skills described by T1 above were design specific skills such as choosing the best materials for design projects, selecting the appropriate treatments for those materials to ensure that the outcomes of the project displayed an appropriate grasp of the skills being imparted.

5.3.1.2 Dynamics of group projects

T1 asserted that, although there was a lot of consultation at first year level, students were expected to exercise some level of independence, especially at the stage of formulating ideas and concepts. Students were encouraged to bounce ideas off each other, as well as their lecturer, to assist them with developing those ideas. In some cases, students were required to form groups in which they brainstormed and shared ideas. These were usually helpful for developing social ties with like-minded people. However, as T1 admitted, students could pick their own groups and they tended to retain the same groups every time they were required to do group work. T1 observed that groups usually formed along racial and language lines. She never questioned these groupings because, for her, students or people in general tended to gravitate towards people that shared similar traits with them. T1 explained that she preferred that students worked in groups in which they felt comfortable to avoid complaints that, from her experience, usually arose because of the group lacking shared views. She also believed that students were more progress-driven if they chose their own team members. Her observation was that hardworking students tended to gravitate naturally towards each other and similarly for the 'slackers'. This meant that the diligent students were not dragged behind by the 'slackers' and this helped her with managing the students better.

Researcher: What you are saying does make sense, all things being equal. Have you ever wondered, though, how beneficial it would be to have the students mingle and work with people they have never worked with before?

T1: Listen I have never really wanted to waste time with forcing groups because students bicker a lot and they start complaining about how this person doesn't work and that one is never around. It gets really tiring, so now I just say okay, choose your groups and let's focus on the work.

Researcher: In light of the fact that students have views (some untrue and even prejudiced) about different racial and ethnic groups, do you not think they would benefit from working with different people and learning about each other's backgrounds to help them dispel those untrue views?

T1: I never thought about it that way but now that you say it I could actually try that out (she giggles). It's just that student dynamics change every year. When I am just getting to know them well, they are off to second year and I have to start with a new group of faces all over again. It doesn't stop! One year you get students that get along and don't mind working in whatever group and the next year it all changes and you find yourself working with students that operate in cliques.

Researcher: It is in those cliques sometimes that perceptions about others are formed or cemented and in a multicultural learning environment for a subject such as Graphic Design, is it important that students are made to realise that the cliques are a comfort zone that does not help in their understanding of other cultures?

T1: I suppose with issues of perceptions, you can never tell where and when those perceptions develop. But I think it is safe to assume that they could be brought to life in the group settings and the importance of making students aware of that is important. But you see when you try to teach something as delicate as integration of any kind, one has to take care not to antagonise the very same people you are trying to convert. It is important to make them aware of its importance without forcing the idea so that its acceptance is natural. I would love to try it with my groups, maybe next year, and see what happens, could be interesting. (Interview with T1, 2015.)

I drew the T1's attention to make up of the students' working groups. The intention of this discussion was to understand if the lecturer believed that some of their classes were divided and to find out how they strove to ensure that students got along (if they did). T1's response revealed that, she had not considered the make-up of the groups with much concern until I highlighted my observation (about the homogeneous nature of some of the groups).

On the issue of students who did not actively participate in class activities, she admitted to knowing that there were students that would not generally speak up in class but had never assigned the reason to their fear of being ridiculed for anything, especially not for the way they pronounced (or mispronounced) English words. She felt bad that any student would feel so vulnerable to a point where their learning could be affected in the way that I had described. She

also conceded to the fact that her own background could be a reason why she might have missed some of these traits in some of the students. She also explained that the limited time she spent with any given class (because of the nature of her classes) could have been the reason why she could easily have missed some of the issues that I was describing. In each semester, she could teach only two or three projects to the same class. The projects were staggered in such a way that it was difficult sometimes to pick up on the students who had problems that were not a result of academic struggles.

The students that she tended to assist were those whose issues were discerned by different lecturers in their respective teaching modules. She tended to call those kinds of students in to try and ascertain the nature of their problems. However, she agreed that students never admitted to having problems, usually citing misunderstandings as the reason for their academic difficulties. Asked if there was no other method of assisting students without making the process of admitting a problem too blatant, she confirmed that she had never tried anything different because of the introverted nature in which students sometimes conducted themselves.

Our discussion about interventions for students progressed to talking about the racial, linguistic and cultural make-up of the classrooms and how it impacted those students who felt like a minority. The dynamics of the conversation follows.

5.3.1.3 Selection criteria of students into the Graphic Design course

There were some standards that the institution used to ensure that they evened the playing field for all students that wished to undertake the Graphic Design course. T1 revealed that the new criteria were introduced in opposition to the psychometric tests that every student applying to study Graphic Design had to take, over and above submitting a portfolio of their work. My discussion with T1 revealed that some administrators at the institution viewed the psychometric entrance test as a biased tool that was geared towards advancing privileged students and restrictive against students who were coming from poorly resourced schools because of the language and style of the test. Psychometric tests are by definition 'standard' scientific methods used to measure individuals' mental capabilities and behavioural styles to ascertain suitability

for a role based on specific personality characteristics and aptitude (cognitive abilities) (Cripps, 2017:5).

While T1 acknowledged that the test may have been withdrawn because of the view that it was seemingly elitist, her assertion was that test had the advantage of assisting with understanding the students' capabilities better. T1 believed that the test helped the selection team to classify students based on their creative skills needs as well as their strengths. Therefore, without the psychometric test, the selection process had proven a little difficult. The consequence of scrapping the test had resulted in the use of an improvised and less reliable method of selection which did little to inform them of the students' strengths and needs. The consequence was that students who might not have been suitably qualified to study the course were accepted and the department subsequently experienced dropouts by those students. Although students were not followed up to find out their reasons for dropping out, one of the speculations was that they discovered they were not well-matched with the course and its expectations of them.

Name	Portfolio	Academic	Aps	Gender	R.	W.
[redacted]	6	D	✓	F	B	16
[redacted]	4	D	36	M	C	15
[redacted]	5	D	x	M	C	11
[redacted]	5	C		M	W	13
[redacted]	5	D	x	F	C	10
[redacted]	5	D	✓	F	C	18
[redacted]	7	D	30	M	C	16
[redacted]	5	C	36	F	B	12
[redacted]	4	C	37	F	C	15
[redacted]	7	C	35	M	C	11
[redacted]	5	C		F	W	5
[redacted]	4	?				44.5 100
[redacted]	7	D		F	C	13
[redacted]	5	D	x	M	C	14

Figure 5.1: Selection criteria for the prospective Graphic Design students, designed by T1, 2015

The illustration shows the list of prospective students' names and specific areas of focus. This criterion is broken down to highlight the critical areas that are considered in the enrolment process of first year students.

T1's assertion was that if the right students were selected for the course, it curtailed the problem of students losing interest in the course and realising they were doing something they were not passionate about. With the new system, while every effort was made to ensure that the most suitable students were selected, the process could not be guaranteed. The reason was that sometimes students enrolled for the course under the impression that all they would ever do is draw. The assumption seemed to be that their ability to draw made them the ideal candidates for the course. The misconception was that Graphic Design was easy and not as academically challenging as other courses. This myth about the course subsequently led to disillusionment for those students when they were confronted with workload and unexpected academic expectations.

T1 agreed that some students were not fully prepared for the workload they encountered in the course and therefore struggled with time management and work submission deadlines. She attributed this either to poor adjustment from high school to tertiary workload, or inadequate organisational skills. For the most part, she attributed it to students' failure to balance their social life with their academic demands. She also admitted that there could be students who underestimated the course requirements because of misinformation. However, she explained that the Graphic Design staff tried to demystify the course demands by talking through what it entailed during the mandatory orientation week that they organised for all first year students. She believed that, because some students did not attend the orientation programme, they missed out on the opportunity to have those misconceptions dispelled.

T1 also explained how some students made it to the end of the first year with passes that qualified their entry into second year, but still dropped out of the course before their second year. She also admitted that some of this information was speculative, because there had never been a follow-up process to find out from students why they had decided to discontinue their studies. She attributed the failure of lecturers to follow up to the overwhelming amount of administration work that they needed to attend to. However, for those students that qualified to

repeat the year, there was a process where there would be a discussion between the student and the year coordinator. The coordinator spoke to the students to ascertain what their issues were so that the students could be offered appropriate assistance. Sometimes, even with this sort of intervention, some students dropped out without offering any explanation for their decision. It made it difficult to structure appropriate interventions:

T1: When students withhold information that could help us to assist them better, it just adds to our frustration, because we want to help them get over whatever it is that is causing their struggles. If there is something that is causing them to perform badly, could be financial or other problems at home, if we can help, we will definitely do. There are some students that we know struggle really badly financially and in our small way we try and make extra stuff available here, like materials they need, even though we don't get some of those things returned and our stocks are running low, students know we are here for them. (Interview with T1, 2015.)

T1 confessed that sometimes they had gone beyond the call of duty to assist students because they knew how challenging it could be for some of them. An example she gave was how she and a colleague had taken it upon themselves to provide sandwiches for students that possibly came to class hungry. They made the announcement to everyone so that they did not make the offer awkward by singling out individuals. Although some students took them up on the offer, the interest soon waned. She has always wondered why that was so, but did not follow it up with the students:

T1: There was one student whose story I knew very well, and I knew there were issues with finances and he came to collect sandwiches a couple of times, but he just stopped, I don't know why. The thing is, it was very discreet, so I don't know why he decided to stop coming through because I certainly didn't mind making an extra sandwich every morning when I prepared some for my kids.

Researcher: I also wouldn't know, but sometimes even when people have very little they tend to be very proud and not wanting to be viewed as needy. While the gesture was noble, there may have been some cultural hindrance that either made some students

refrain from collecting the free food or even continuing. It may have been very interesting for you to respectfully and discreetly probe why the assistance was not being taken up anymore. You could have been very shocked by the response or the response could have helped you explain your motivation to the students in question. I know that some cultures do not respond very well to charity because of the perception that it is taking away their dignity to be viewed as beggars.

T1: Well now that you say that, it really would have been interesting to know because what do I know, I am coming from a white middle class background and thinking I am offering much needed relief so that food is not an issue, at least for that time when they are here. Mmmmmmmh, this is all very interesting for me! (She smiles and giggles to acknowledge my commentary). (Interview with T1, 2015.)

Although the students I had spoken to had not told me about the interventions that the lecturer was providing, what T1 told me helped me to establish one of the reasons she was popular with the students: she was viewed as very sympathetic to the students' needs. She had, on a few occasions, been approached to intervene on issues that students had difficulties with, either with her work or other modules. While she was firm in her dealings with the students, she was generally viewed as fair and accommodating.

5.3.1.4 Importance of reflective teaching in multicultural classrooms

T1 admitted that there were challenges with teaching people from diverse backgrounds because every year presented with different people which meant a separate set of issues. While she found the dynamics very exciting overall, there was an anxiety associated with the arrival of new students at first-year level:

One hopes that the students find their feet quickly because once the work begins the terms suddenly feel very short. So, you want the students to get their rhythm early enough so that they don't lag behind at a time when you are hoping everyone has got the hang of things. Yet you do still get students that don't seem to be managing and are always looking flustered and completely lost. I will try to help where I can but at some

point, they need to find their feet and themselves amid all the chaos. (She chuckles at the thought.) (Interview with T1, 2015.)

At tertiary level, students were expected to have some level of responsibility with regards to being organised, time management and taking responsibility for doing their work. Lecturers also had a responsibility to follow up on those students that seemed to be having difficulty adjusting to the tertiary environment. While it was safe to assume that all students would be able to manage themselves in a manner that reflected their level of development as tertiary level candidates, some students had valid reasons for ‘slacking’.

T1 acknowledged that she had had students that she deemed suitable recipients of specialised intervention offered by the university’s Language Department. However, uptake of the intervention had been low. While some students had tried to go through with seeking assistance, others did not bother to attend. In some cases, students would start attending sessions but discontinued after a few appearances.

I have never followed up to understand why students are not so keen on utilising the service because it is offered free of charge by the institution. You would think that they would be motivated enough, but it is not. I think I just get so stuck into all the other things needing my attention to follow up on that. I suppose, I’ve always thought that just making that effort to let them know what services are freely available for them, they would utilise them. (Interview with T1, 2015.)

5.3.1.5 Bias and its effects on how students view lecturers

In our conversations, T1 had admitted to failing to understand the response to some of her well-meaning gestures towards students. In some of our discussions, where I had highlighted how the students’ behaviour might have been informed by nuances in their cultural backgrounds, she had seemed genuinely surprised. Her surprise had been accompanied by an explanation that confirmed her own cultural understanding of what was logical behaviour. T1 made clear her stance on racial bias and her neutrality towards how she viewed her students. However, she admitted that in some of her discussions with students she had discovered that there were lecturers who, based on students’ perceptions, could have been viewed as very harsh and unsympathetic towards the needs of some of their students:

I would like to think that all of us try to ensure that we are fair and accessible to students in our dealings with them. But there may be a few who are a little impatient and come across as very unsympathetic. I wasn't aware that there are students who have attributed this to possible racial bias. It's very sad that the students would feel that way though. (Interview with T1, 2015.)

After our discussion, she explained that she understood why the students could potentially draw such conclusions, particularly in situations where the lecturer was of a different race. She was disappointed that there were such feelings that existed among some of the students and that some were silently harbouring feelings of racial exclusion. I believed her feelings of discomfort were because of her own beliefs around the subject of bias of any kind. She confessed to disliking bias, particularly if it could be perceived as racially motivated, because it made for an uncomfortable learning and teaching environment. For this reason, I asked how students could be assisted to ensure that these kinds of notions did not fester and potentially create a negative perception of staff in the department. Her response was as follows:

I'm not sure how we could help the students, particularly if they do not approach someone with that kind of complaint. We do have year coordinators that they can go to so that we don't have the poor students feeling like they have no one to run to with their concerns. (Interview with T1, 2015.)

Researcher: In some cases, I got the sense that the students were uncomfortable with speaking up because of fear of being ostracised if they either confronted the lecturers or reported to someone else. While they admitted to never experiencing these outcomes, their fear was that this was a probable possibility. Their view was that lecturers would view their behaviour as defiant, coupled with the possibility that they were not favourites; the result would be bad for them. Do you think they have any reason to feel this way?

T1: Oh dear, that's not good! I'm really saddened by this, because I think everyone is very professional here and that the students are free to call us out on things they are not happy with. I know students come to me all the time with worries and things and I always make sure that I try to listen as best I can and help out if I can. One doesn't

think that things like this happen here until someone, like yourself, brings it to our attention. (Interview with T1, 2015.)

As we continued with the discussion of bias, T1 reflected on the views held by students about the lecturers. She admitted to the difficulties of teaching students who lived in an era where students were discovering the power of their voices against any form of injustice against them. We commented on how easy it would be for the students to use their disgruntled state as an excuse to stage a protest to highlight their plight.

5.3.2 Account 10: Background information on T2

T2 was a young black lecturer whom students had taken a liking to because of his upfront approach. He was very firm but very accommodating to the needs of the students. The students liked him because they felt that, although he was very strict in his expectations of the level of delivery of their work, he was fair. He had only been with the institution for about seven months. He had previously worked in industry as an art director at a Graphic Design agency. He admitted that, while he generally enjoyed good rapport with all the students, he sensed that there were some students who were frustrated by his teaching approach and the way he related to the students in general.

The rationale for his belief about students needing to exercise independence with making decisions about their work was that, since the final semester of the second year of their studies, the students had to be able to hold their own in the design studio, they had to be able to formulate concepts independently, differentiate between design ideas and concepts for their projects, understand technical jargon and defend their design choices governed by the principles that they had chosen to apply to visual communication. However, he felt that some students were still very dependent on the opinion of the lecturer to a point where their confidence in their abilities was incapacitated.

T2 used his industry experience to validate the approach he used in how he presented his briefs and the expectations he had for his students' projects. He believed the students' progress meetings with him were useful for assisting him to establish each person's progress and help

students regroup where possible. He saw his role in the classroom as that of a facilitator for learning, rather than as an infallible fountain of knowledge.

5.3.2.1 T2's views on students' work

My view is that the briefs cannot be viewed separately from what is happening in life. My students know that I want them to think things through. I want well considered solutions that are applicable to the real world because soon they will have to do work in the real world and out there it's brutal. (Interview with T2, 2015.)

T2 believed that briefs needed to challenge his students to think beyond what they had been exposed to. His view was that anyone could be taught technique, but the challenge was getting students to think creatively about the solutions to the design problems. As a lecturer, he saw his duty as guiding students towards thinking independently and conceptually. For this reason, the briefs were designed to encourage students to develop their concept building and problem-solving skills. For each brief, students were tested for their ability to thoroughly research the problem, as well as documenting in detail the viable solutions. He believed that students needed to explore alternative solutions to design problems.

Most of these guys are so hooked on what they know that if you challenge them to think out of the box they struggle. All I want them to do is forget about the tried and tested. I want them to use the road less travelled because that's what sets up an ordinary designer from an awesome designer. If they can just learn to do that, I know that job is done. (Interview with T2, 2015.)

For this reason, T2 discouraged solutions that he believed to be a first attempt in solving a design problem. He believed that if a solution was that obvious, there was a likelihood that many other people had either used it or considered it. His view was that if a student could come up with a few alternative solutions to a design problem, it meant they had considered the different variables as practical options for their design problems. For him, the ability to do that suggested that they had adequately researched the problem, the targeted recipients, as well as the different viable solutions that would meet the needs of the recipients:

My approach is influenced by the bad practice of plagiarism that I have picked up on among the students. I have caught some of them ripping things off the net and tweaking them here and there and passing them off as their own work. What's scary and worrying for me is that if it is their practice, they will take their portfolio to an agency with works that do not belong to them and risk not only losing the interview but their reputation as a designer. Other people don't take plagiarism lightly; these guys may get away with it while they are studying, but in the real-world things can get complicated pretty fast. Imagine pitching your plagiarised work to the very person who has created it?
(Interview with T2, 2015.)

Because he realised that students did not recognise their plagiarism as a problem, he had taken it upon himself to warn them about the dangers of plagiarism with every project they did. He realised that some students had begun to heed his warnings and were constantly checking with him whether they were breaking the rules or not. It was also for this reason that he insisted on students bringing to their consultations a range of solutions for a brief rather than a single completed idea. To encourage consultations, he introduced a system where students earned marks for daily progress made on their projects.

Another approach that he used for brief presentation was leaving out examples in his discussion of the brief. He would not refer to any work that illustrated what he expected of the students, believing that this practice made students want to emulate the examples given because they saw them as the standard. In situations where he had provided examples, he had witnessed students trying to force their thinking in the same direction as the examples he had shown them. He saw examples as limiting students' capability to provide adequate research that fulfilled the brief better. One of the many excuses for this practice by students was that they were pressed for time because of other deadlines and therefore chose to use simpler, less time-consuming solutions. His fear regarding this kind of thinking was that students neglected to recognise that every project formed an important part of a portfolio of work that reflected their abilities and work ethic too. For this reason, he saw his teaching approach as a way of encouraging students to interpret a brief and independently attempt to come up with fresh solutions to design problems:

Disregard the marks that they need to pass the different projects, the students need to learn very quickly that these projects need to be taken as seriously as any exam that they have ever had to take. Trying to play catch up later is not possible, because deadlines are looming and before they know it, it's all over and they have to start hunting for jobs. I try to emphasise this but some of them think I just want to freak them out, I mean I was a student and I know these things. (Interview with T2, 2015.)

He also reiterated the need for students always to work on their projects as if each project was a test because the course was not designed like other disciplines where students wrote tests and examinations. Students worked on continuous assessments with just one big project that assessed a myriad of skills acquired throughout the year in the end.

T2 testified to speaking to students to attempt to encourage them to work harder to improve their grades but had received a less than enthusiastic response from the students. His belief was that, while there were students that could be labelled as lazy, some students that struggled seemed to have other problems that were unrelated to academic problems:

I suppose for some students the environment does not feel comfortable to admitting that they have can't relate to the work given. I mean some of these kids have pride 'jo' (exclamation suggesting disbelief) and, while for the next person it sounds senseless that someone would prefer not to ask, for the student that is in trouble, the struggle is real. I think we need to come up with better ways of getting people to admit that they do not have an idea of what's going on with a brief. (Interview with T2, 2015.)

5.3.2.2 Dynamics of group projects

T2 believed that it was vital that students understood the value of working in groups. This is the norm in industry that no one is immune to. His experience was that, in the workplace, group tasks were assigned randomly with little consideration for how well people in that group related to each other. Thus, he held the view that the classroom environment needed to emulate that as a standard. How the group handled the finer details of assigning tasks and deliverables lay squarely with the group. For this reason, everyone shouldered the same amount of

responsibility for delivering a quality product, as per the expectation of the art director and the client. As such, T2 had made it his responsibility to train students in this very vital dynamic of the working world.

To drive the idea home, groups were selected based on a random selection of different topics. Therefore, students that picked the same topics were, by default, partners or group members for the duration of the project. They were assisted with handling the group dynamics through lecturers' regular pep talks and interventions in instances where groups or pairs had disagreements. Although sympathetic to students' grievances, T2 took a hard-line approach to resolving problems by ensuring that the students took responsibility for the conflict resolution. He admitted that the bickering could get tiring but was necessary for students to learn the important value of conflict resolution in a professional environment.

He also used group work to teach the students the value of learning from one another. He viewed working together as a way of encouraging them to learn to value the ideas of others, while learning a little bit about the other people in the pair or group:

I've had to break up a few fights in this project. You know some of these guys have a certain perception about the other students, so they will try hard to convince me that they are in a difficult group by creating all these situations to get me to react ... all I say to them is that all I want is the work done and that's why I don't allow one person to come and consult without the rest of the group. I want all of them to hear the discussion together so that later no one passes the buck about how they were not told by this person what needed to be done.

They need to learn that it's not always that they will have to do things that they are happy with. Sometimes they have to find a creative way to handle difficult characters. Life is unfair, they have to learn that they have to deal with things differently if they want to make it in this industry. (Interview with T2, 2015.)

T2 revealed that he saw group work (if used wisely) as an opportunity for students to get to know each other better and to build better relations among themselves. That way, when they

had to work with people that were not their friends, they did not feel like they were working with strangers. His feeling was that one of the reasons students were uncomfortable to work with people outside their friendships was the lack of camaraderie as members of the same class. He believed that if students were taught the value of their kinship, they would probably trust each other more, albeit knowing each other's weaknesses.

In group or pair quarrels, he opted for resolving the issues together with the group without advocating disbanding the group or pair. His belief was that there was value in students learning that running away from a problem did not help resolve it. His belief was that the decision to disband the group sent a wrong message to the students about how conflicts were resolved. His conviction was that disbanding a group created an even bigger conflict, because it affirmed the mind-set that people that have different personalities and viewpoints cannot work together. He also reiterated the fact that students needed to understand that they sometimes needed to concede to others' expectations for their own personal growth:

Look, I'm not saying that people need to kill each other for me to prove a point about learning to work together and respect each other's views. But what is the value of having such a wonderful mix of people if we are not going to use it to teach? Even worse, why would we miss out on an opportunity to teach these guys about what happens with group activities in the work environment? They need to understand that the work environment is a completely different animal, you can't pick and choose or people you want, you just do the work and put up with all the craziness that comes with being in a group project. After all, the client wants the final product and doesn't care about the internal politics. That's what I want them to take away from this experience, the real-life experiences, so that they don't get there and be shocked into situations.
(Interview with T2, 2015.)

T2 admitted that there had been many grumblings about his conflict resolution methods, but believed students had to understand that, while he was in charge, he would show his leadership through following through with his methods and decisions. He believed that failure to do this could potentially compromise his authority. His conviction was that his conflict resolution methods yielded results and thus he would maintain them. Students knew that he was

sympathetic to their needs, yet they also knew that he was firm in his handling of situations. Ultimately, he made sure that the students owned the responsibility of resolving conflicts. He believed that the method gave the students the power to manage the outcomes of their decisions better. He also kept a record of all incidents where he had played the role of a mediator.

From my talks with the students I got the impression that, while some students had had misunderstandings with T2 for a variety of reasons, they still trusted the way he had handled those conflicts. Their view was that he was unbiased in his approach and allowed for fair personal representation by everyone involved. His view was that conflicts were a way of improving relationships between himself and the students, as well as among the students themselves.

These students are different because of their backgrounds and I respect that. While I don't make an effort to focus on those differences, it's easier to understand them better if you have an idea of who they are. It's easy to take one look at them and conclude their stories right away. I prefer to go by what they present me with when I deal with them. I've been warned about some of them, but I personally prefer for them to act up, then I deal with it the best way I see fit. (Interview with T2, 2015.)

Although T2 came across as indifferent to the students' differences, choosing to work with how they related to him, T2 admitted to making a conscious effort to ensure that every student in his class was comfortable. He recognised their differences by knowing each of them by name and even using nicknames that the students and their friends used. He found that students found this very endearing and thus he was able to engage easily with them. Another way he broke the ice was by greeting the different students in their home languages and even referring to an event or incident from a specific project or class session that made the student chuckle. In some cases, he attempted to speak a language he was not good at and joked about the fact that he spoke it better than the student whose home language it was. The students seemed to enjoy the playful banter that arose from such claims by T2. In his view, his approach helped the students to open up and to talk to him about things they otherwise would have felt uncomfortable sharing.

I believed his age and his ‘easy going’ character may have also contributed to his being relatable to the students. The students I spoke to confirmed that his fairness in resolving conflict situations, the seemingly ‘customised’ attention that he gave them, and the assessment of their work, made him likable. His interactions with each student seemed tailored to acknowledge the uniqueness of each one of them as a method of bringing out the best of what each of them could offer.

T2 admitted that his approach came from the way he generally viewed people. He had observed that his approach made students more responsive and easier to work with. He was also proud of being a positive influence on people (particularly his students) and situations and was happy if this trait in his character made him easier to deal with. He knew that his students accused of him of being very tough to please but was contented that he was that way, because he pushed them to see possibilities they would otherwise not have imagined possible.

As we reflected on the views of his students about him, he reiterated the need for design students to understand the pressure that came with being creative. He wanted them to understand that they were capable of thinking beyond what they thought were the limits of their capabilities:

I want these guys to realise that their biggest competition is a year behind them, so they need to get their ‘A’ game on. They need to realise that this industry needs people who can reinvent themselves and keep up with the game. I need to warn them of a reality that they seem to forget: that the first years are their biggest competition in the job market. (Interview with T2, 2015.)

Individually, he gave pep talks to the students to encourage them to stay focused on their work. During his consultations with students, he focused on the projects being tackled and enquired about other deadlines and other issues that he knew the individual students were dealing with. These updates helped him to track the effects that events unrelated to his project could be having on students’ performance. Where possible, he assisted students by referring them to the relevant individuals in the department that could assist to resolve their problems. Interestingly, T2 seemed to consult simultaneously with students from his current project, some third years

who were working on their final projects, as well as fourth years who came for assistance with their projects. Even though he was not the lecturer in charge of the projects being undertaken by either the third or fourth year students, he was willing to assist with brainstorming and sharing ideas.

One incident stood out for me and was telling of T2's personality. A third year Zulu-speaking student walked into his office to ask for an appointment. He was at that point accustomed to these impromptu meetings with students from other classes other than his own. He exchanged pleasantries with the student and enquired about how he had performed in his last project. Pleasantries concluded, he invited the student to consult at that moment, if he was ready. The student asked to be excused so that he could collect his brief. On his return, T2 handed him a whiteboard marker and asked him to talk through his interpretation of his brief. The patience with which he explained the concepts in isiZulu and guided the student through the process to the point where he made a breakthrough was commendable. The student returned a few days later to give feedback of his progress and I sensed relief in the way he talked through his initial struggle to the point where he could resolve the brief and come up with his design solution.

The same stance that T2 used to encourage his second year students to come up with ideas was applied to the third year student. He used code switching to engage with him and, in some instances, asked the student to draw from familiar cultural references to assist his understanding of the requirements of the brief. He asked him to apply his understanding of concepts through the lens of his own background so that he could create an identity that was not foreign to him.

During my interview with the same third year student, the student had felt that he might have been able to cope better in his earlier years of study had he had someone like T2 to assist him. He explained how he had struggled with relating to some of the work because he did not have any cultural understanding of some of the concepts, such as some formalities and etiquette of Western culture. His concern was that he was sometimes expected to understand those cultural nuances so that he could design accordingly. He believed that, if he had known, then he could have comparatively applied situations to his own experiences (as T2 had often done when he consulted him), with the result that he would have found some of the course content less daunting. He also explained that the fact that he could explain himself in the same language

that he processed ideas in his head made it much easier to resolve his design solutions. He could, for once, have those confusing terms and concepts from the brief explained to him in a way that he could clearly understand them well enough even to be able to begin to do research confidently. When I asked T2 what his reaction to such feedback by students was, his response was modest as he brushed off my question. He admitted that he attributed his behaviour to his love for good design and teaching:

Honestly, I don't know hey! I think it's that thing in me that believes that everyone needs a fair shot at this game. I think it's only fair to give everyone a fair shot and if I can put it this way, level the playing field, good designers will emerge. Not everyone here will be great at designing. But I believe that if everyone started on the same footing, even those not so great designers who have the passion to learn and deliver can win. I help people that are hungry to know, I suppose that's why I do whatever it is you are saying I do (he laughs), argh I don't know, jo! (Interview with T2, 2015.)

T2 chose to downplay his contribution to students' learning to nothing more than just someone who wanted to assist enthusiastic students become better designers. I saw an individual who was driven to see every one of the students in his department succeeding beyond the limitations that had either been set for them, or that they had set for themselves.

5.4 Multicultural narrative of industry expert

The perspective of industry is vital to this research study, because it deals with the question of whether there is a need for industry to participate in structuring the Graphic Design curriculum to ensure that students are adequately prepared for the work environment. This would be through the efforts of industry being more involved in defining some elements of the curriculum, developing an internship programme and other such interventions. It was also important to understand from the industry expert to what extent design is affected by corporate standards that have nothing to do with design.

E1 is a young designer who has worked his way up to become creative director at a prominent advertising firm in Cape Town. He gave insight into how industry works, gave his views on

the current relationship between industry and design academia and, finally, gave his take on the dynamics that shape how industry and design institutions operate. A summary of my discussion with him follows.

5.4.1 Account 10: Background information on E1

E1 was a young black Graphic Designer who graduated from a design institution in one of Cape Town's prominent universities. He specialised in advertising and had worked for three design agencies, including the one in which he was currently employed. He had gone through positions as an art director at a small firm for two years, working his way up to Junior Art Director for another firm for two years and, finally, Medium Weight Art Director, a position that he had held at the current firm for four years.

E1 studied both Graphic Design and Photography; and, in his third year, he majored in Graphic Design, although he had an option of pursuing either Illustration or Photography. His passion for brands guided his choice towards Graphic Design as an area of interest. However, in his third year of study, he had to choose an elective course and he chose to pursue Advertising. In his time as a student, he was expected to do a lot of art direction for his work. The input of E1's lecturers had been minimal thus most decisions lay squarely on his shoulders, except for projects that were done in pairs or groups.

The importance of E1's background is that it helps one understand how his educational background had impacted his views on design and, in some way, his worldview. His background also gives insight into his understanding of the relationship that industry and academy share. His experience as a student and now industry expert at the level of Art Director was also invaluable to this research study. His role in my study also partially answers the question of the relevance of the university curriculum to industry needs.

E1's insights on design is documented in the following discussion.

5.4.1.1 Design as a language of cultural expression

E1 acknowledged that, so many times, designers focused on either the aesthetics or the rules of design, at the expense of the message and its comprehension by the target market. They neglected the fact that cultural ‘semiotics’ will not have the same meaning to different people because their meaning is culturally determined. His view was that student designers became the designers they were trained to be, meaning that the level to which a designer made their audience central to their work could partially be because of what that designer was taught to consider as important:

Design is a language and therefore it is not universal. Some people will get it more than others. You learn design in a specific way and naturally you will tend towards common references to those that teach you. You make peace with the fact you will never be understood by everybody. That your job as a designer is to do what you are asked to do.
(Interview with E1, 2015.)

His rationale was that, if a designer was taught to consider or question certain details over others in the work they did, one was therefore conditioned never to see a reason to do things differently. His assertion was that a designer’s work was, to an extent, determined by how one was taught. E1 agreed that, while it is important to provide guidance at university, students need to have a certain level of independence that is drawn from what has been taught.

E1 believed that, in the current multicultural climate in South Africa, it was important to equip students with skills to help them develop their competencies to enable them to apply their own understanding of situations. His assertion was that, if people could make connections between what was taught and what they already knew, they were more likely to develop greater confidence in their abilities. He also saw student interactions with one another as a good learning practice because of his belief that students learnt more about one another’s cultures during interactions. He reiterated that this learning helped in fostering respect and a less judgemental understanding of others’ cultures, thus making it easy to design with empathy.

Like, the industry in general is very white (E1 stutters and hesitates before he continues speaking); and a lot of the time you have situations where a certain culture is speaking with another culture and they are not necessarily fully enlightened, or the insight is not quite there. (Interview with E1, 2015.)

His analysis was that, when educators chose not to encourage students to develop their multicultural competencies, they inadvertently disempowered them. This is because of his belief that they thereby removed from the student the power to question things effectively, work out workable solutions, and ultimately do thorough research on the audiences at whom their communication was targeted.

The important message in this discussion was that students needed to develop an understanding of using a design language that was flexible enough to be customised for different audiences. Students were expected to become accustomed to designing to meet the demands and needs of the consuming public more than aiming at creating beautiful designs that did not serve a communicative purpose.

Unfortunately, during studies, you get lecturers whose focus on design, is its aesthetics, and they seem to forget about the message that the work is supposed to relay. The sad thing is that you get accustomed to that and carry that to the working world. Sometimes you find that the agency that you end up with encourages that thinking, it just becomes a continuation of a bad habit. Been guilty of this, because as a designer you want to create the work that is aesthetically pleasing and getting your work out there. I suppose what we miss is that it's about creating a balance and ensuring that our audience gets the message, easily. (Interview with E1, 2015.)

In his defence, E1 admitted that there was a tendency among designers to want to put one's work 'out there' and be commended for creating aesthetically pleasing work, while forgoing the fact that the work is as good as it can convey a message that its intended recipients can comprehend.

This discussion suggested that there was a culture of developing work that, while intended for specific audiences, also served as a way in which designers showcased their work on the design stage. For this reason, the focus of the work shifted from being audience-centred to being a piece of art that designers use to market themselves to bigger agencies that pay better and offer opportunities to work on bigger brands. In the following discussion E1's views on practices by designers that may or may not be responsible for the poor visual communication that audiences are sometimes subjected to.

5.4.1.2 The culture of the workplace and its impact on consumer-centred design

One of the significant points that became apparent in the discussion with E1 about the corporate world and its influence on design was that there were factors outside of design that affected the communication that audiences ultimately consumed. His view was that there was sometimes conformity to the concept of 'he who pays the piper, calls the tune', where design agencies were keen to satisfy a client to ensure that they secured their fees, rather than creating effective communication that held appeal for the consuming masses:

The thing is that, as designers, we enjoy 'quirky' or 'tongue and cheek' expressions in our visual communication [which] the public either completely misses or misreads and we lose them. For us the job is done because we get it. Unfortunately, we don't have the luxury to test out our ideas on lay people to check if our message is understood. We are eager to meet a deadline and move on to the next job. If our client is happy with the final product, we go into production. Sometimes we only get to know we misfired when there's complaints about the work from the public. The public might think the ad is a little too risqué or offensive to be aired. (Interview with E1, 2015.)

E1 believed that changing global business relationships accounted for a growing transnational culture that has become a trend in many industries. Consequently, design agencies were finding themselves working with big international brands that were keen on making their mark in different global markets. In E1's own experience, these international clients were sometimes very uncompromising in their demands and interactions with local design agencies. This was seen in how they would opt for design solutions that were foreign to local markets in favour of

solutions that had worked with their overseas markets. His view was that they neglected to realise that their product might be foreign to local audiences and therefore never tested, yet they still insisted on advertising it as if it were known. He viewed this approach as very condescending, because it benchmarked foreign thinking as the only and superior standard:

You know, it's like when big foreign-based clients come to us and ask us to come up with ads that will appeal to a specific target market in South Africa. When we pitch the final product that has a South African feel and addresses a specific South African audience, you could be told that it doesn't work. So, what they do is show us an ad that was shot in Europe and you are told to use the same ad but feature a South African. It can be very frustrating because you can see that the target market will not respond well to that ad because the thinking is all wrong. But then again, we work on the premise that 'customer is king' and at the end of the day it's the client that pays the bill, so you give them what they want and keep them happy. We work to make sure that we take care of the bottom line and everything else doesn't matter. (Interview with E1, 2015.)

E1 advised against judging a designer's desire for profit by questioning their commitment to the responsibility to honestly inform consumer audiences. His view is that while the mandate to consumers is to always ensure fair and properly researched content in their communication, they are sometimes torn between doing what is right and satisfying a client who at the end of the day pays the bill:

E1: You know what, ultimately the client determines what we put out there even though we are the ones that know the target market better. We give them the options that we believe best talk to their product.

Researcher: So, do you agree that, even though you don't choose what subsequently gets sent out to audiences, you have a level of responsibility for the creation of those options that the client chooses from and therefore you own what ultimately gets broadcast?

E1: I suppose in a manner of speaking we still do. I get your point, yeah (laughs). Yeah, the choice is really ours because we create those options, yeah. But hey, at the end of

the day everyone wants to get paid, so we provide the client with what we believe is more catchy and likely to get the attention of the target market.

It was encouraging to see that E1 understood that they still bore a lot of responsibility to the consumer, regardless of what the client's final choice was. This is because the mere fact that the client is offered a choice that is accepted or rejected by the consuming audience suggests this level of responsibility of the designers. The key message for educators was that it was important for their students to design with the end users of their communication in mind.

5.4.1.3 The relationship shared by industry and Graphic Design institutions

In E1's experience with design agencies, there were no formalised relationships with design institutions, except the occasional requests by design institutions for students to do unpaid internships. As far as his experience was concerned, design agencies did not work on a standardised and formalised scheduled programme because they did not view internships as part of their core business, thus did not invest too much time and money in them. Their view was that they were time consuming as they required the agency to assign members of staff to work with the students. Moreover, E1 explained that companies were reluctant to invest a lot of time and money into training students that they had not committed to retain after the internship period was over:

Basically, the view is that the kind of internships that are organised by schools are taxing on us because then someone has to be assigned to the guys. And believe me, with the kinds of deadlines we have, no one wants to be, I am sorry to say but, 'wasting time' on something like that. The reason is that we get guys who come in of their own accord, and not through a school, and apply for paid internships. Those we pay attention to because they are paid and the internship is longer and more formal. The thing is that you cannot learn everything at school because the schooling period is designed to help you understand the field. So, when you get a chance to be an intern in a company, you learn more and you become intuitive to what's right, the experience helps a lot to prepare students for the working environment. (Interview with E1, 2015.)

E1's view was that industry had a significant role in helping students to prepare for the demands of industry. For this reason, he believed the starting point would have to be a commitment by industry to provide structured and meaningful internships that gave feedback directly to design institutions to ensure that the curriculum was tailor-made for the needs of the market place and for change in the way things were done. His response to why industry had not been more proactive with providing design institutions with the kind of briefs that industry dealt with in their daily work highlighted a lack of genuine commitment by industry:

I think the schools and industry both have a responsibility to developing more conscientious designers. There needs to be a partnership, because industry knows what it needs. We therefore need to assist schools to give us what we want because it does not help for us to watch them train people that will struggle to fit into our world. On the other hand, industry also needs schools to remind us of some of those basic things that we take for granted that only schools teach. You can easily see this in instances when we misfire with some stuff that we put out there. We need schools to correct this in the students they produce. We need fresh perspectives and not people that will come and enhance those unhealthy habits that we are so used to in industry. (Interview with E1, 2015.)

E1 also believed that the internship programmes could assist to prepare students with some of the following concerns that they had to contend with.

5.4.1.4 The value of understanding deadlines

Design institutions have deadlines for the different projects that students undertake for the duration of their study life. In E1's view, the difference between those deadlines and those in industry were the timelines and conditions surrounding those deadlines. His view was that, because the workplace is such a high-pressure environment (with agencies running a few projects simultaneously), many students graduated believing that the university experience mirrored the reality of working life. In E1's experience, most students were jolted into the reality of deadlines and crumbled under the pressure:

Deadlines for students are not real. In industry, students get overwhelmed by the fact that deadlines are non-negotiable. Here you work fast and keep the quality. Students need to learn to pick up speed and move away from the mindset that they have two weeks to work on a brief. Here we do the same amount of work in half the time. This is because the client is deadline-driven and, because of that, the chain of events relies on the deadline and delivery from the designer: on this date, the work needs to go to the printers and the billboard has been booked. You cannot say you can't deliver because, then you are wasting your client's money. It's as simple as that. Live briefs would help drive that in them. (Interview with E1, 2015.)

E1 reiterated the need for realistic timelines and deadlines when projects were given. He admitted that, as a student, he suffered the same misguided assumption that in industry he would work on the same project for a whole week before he would be asked to hand in and start on a new one:

The working world shook me to the reality of working on a project for three hours and submitting it. What was worse, you discover on the job that actually there's no one who will constantly come to check how you are doing. You get on with it and have minimum consults with your art director because he's also too busy to be babying you. What's worse is that you are probably working on three jobs all demanding your attention because they all have looming deadlines. (Interview with E1, 2015.)

He described a very high-pressured environment and recalled many occasions where 'newbies' – those with very little or no experience, just a college portfolio to show for their skills – had been exposed for their lack of experience. His disappointment was that design institutions did not seem to create realistic expectations for the students, thus, when they first walked into a work environment and the reality of work set in, most students crumbled. Thus, he felt that the responsibility of giving this kind of feedback back to the institutions was theirs as the recipients of those graduates. He also reiterated the view that the fact that the scenario had not changed is evidence of the lack of communication between the two institutions.

E1's comments suggested that he was aware of the bigger role that industry could play to assist design institutions to produce designers that could easily find their feet in the design world.

5.4.1.5 Provision of live briefs for student practice

E1 believed that there was a need for students to participate in live briefs provided by industry to help them understand the nature of the work that industry dealt with. His suggestion was that they could use *pro bono* work for purposes of providing live briefs. He saw this as an opportunity for design agencies to identify students with a lot of potential that could either be seconded for internships or even employment. He also saw this as an opportunity by agencies to free up some of the deadlines they had by assigning them to students. His view was that the agencies could send through a representative to brief the students in the same way designers in industry did. Subsequently, the design agency representative would keep track of progress and assist educators with moderating the work. His suggestions were spurred on by the belief that 'real' projects enhanced any student's portfolio, particularly if their work was selected as suitable for presentation to clients.

His experience was that graduates were ill prepared for the realities of the industry because they were not trained to develop these competencies. In this, he believed, industry needed to take a more active role in assisting universities to prepare students better.

5.4.1.6 The importance of identity in Graphic Design

E1 believed that there was a need to teach students about the importance of culturally sensitive design. His view was that, the more students' backgrounds were acknowledged, the more confident they were to explore their design language. Moreover, he believed that acknowledging cultures other than their own was a positive step towards dealing with cultural difference. His assertion was that it was easier to teach and even learn new concepts if they were linked to students' prior knowledge of similar activities. He believed that this method of teaching could be an effective way to relieve the anxiety of connecting to a world that could at times be perceived as foreign, especially to students that did not have an art or design background. His argument was that sometimes the world of design could be intimidating to

people that had not had any experience of how it works. Thus, his suggestion was to demystify Graphic Design by showing its relationship to the students' varying cultural experiences and backgrounds:

We talk so much about the importance of understanding the cultures and identities of our clients, yet that does not seem to translate to the expression that comes from our students. People will instinctively draw inspiration from where they come, because ultimately people reference what they know. I see that in students that come in here and I look at their work and I instinctively can work out their background. (Interview with E1, 2015.)

He argued that, students needed to be made to feel that their backgrounds could enhance their understanding of other cultures, not only in their respective classrooms, but across a wider pool of audiences of all cultures. His motivation was that a designer that would be relevant in the future was one that was versatile in a lot of ways, including their ability to adapt to situations and cultures completely different to their own:

SA is a multicultural, multilingual nation with people from all walks of life, so the ideal designer would be one that fits that mould. One who knows the multiplicity of the country and can translate that into their designs; understanding township culture, city culture, rural culture, so that they can translate that into their design, so that whatever job is thrown at them, they can tackle it because they understand the diversity. Someone adaptable.' (Interview with E1, 2015.)

In his view, the South African designer that would be considered relevant had to be equipped with tools to speak effectively across cultures because they understood the metamorphosis that the country is going through. Being abreast of the issues and activities in the country allowed a designer to communicate effectively in order to be understood by diverse audiences. His assertion was that the "sincerity of any communication lay in the honesty with which a designer was prepared to invest in the final design work". A designer's success was measured by how well he/she could deliver a balanced, fair and accurate message. The value of accurate messaging was that it resonated with audiences.

The following section analyses the data that was discussed in Chapter 5. It discusses the pertinent themes that have been raised through the narratives in this chapter.

Chapter 6: Data analysis

The study sought to present an analysis of how first, second and third year students were taught Graphic Design at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The data collected pertained to questions on the adequacy of the curriculum for the culturally diverse student body. It also addressed the role of industry in training students to become effective communicators.

Some very compelling information around the teaching and learning of Graphic Design was unearthed. Most importantly, the data served as an eye opener, showing that, if not dealt with adequately, cultural issues could invoke feelings of exclusion in students who felt they were ‘victims’ of a predominantly Western style of teaching and learning in a discipline that is regarded in the same light. The data also revealed how such feelings of exclusion could have a bearing on the academic performance and morale of those students. The role of industry in enhancing what was learnt was also brought to light.

6.1 The students: Questions stemming from the narratives

The students who participated in this study informed the research outcome substantially through the data collected around their responses. The teaching and learning which occurred in the Graphic Design classroom was not always geared towards enhancing the multicultural classroom setting – in fact, the converse sometimes emerged. As I wrote up the events that I had observed, I felt that I had altered history somewhat; by merely allowing these students to speak up and be heard. I could not offer much more to them at the time, except being an active and empathic listener: providing an ear to listen to their stories; and, hopefully from their point of view, provide a sense of relief by hearing them.

As I analysed all data provided, I realised that the research conjured more questions than answers. The project sought to highlight pertinent issues in the multicultural Graphic Design classroom, as well as to understand the impact of some of these issues on how the Graphic Design curriculum was taught, and the impact of this teaching on student learning. There was also a need to understand how this culturally subjective discipline was taught and how the culturally diverse students responded to it, in light of the cultural ‘baggage’ that they brought into the classroom scenario. Through the voices of the students, questions around the role of

the educator in the Graphic Design classroom were raised. The students' responses drove the researcher to question how the educators used their positions to influence engagements with cultural issues that arose, either through the students' backgrounds or issues present in the curriculum. Moreover, the research study sought to understand how the educators in the multicultural Graphic Design classrooms addressed cultural semiotics in the work that students produced. It was important to understand how the lecturers dealt with their biases, prejudices and myths about people, places and issues without negatively impacting students, or their performance. The themes that were drawn from the students' accounts are detailed in the following discussion.

6.1.1 Students questioning their sense of belonging in the department

It was interesting to speak to the different students and get their perspectives on being part of the department. I noted how the first year students talked about their first year as being challenging. Their stories highlighted a missed opportunity to induct the culturally diverse students adequately into the culturally rich Graphic Design classroom. Orientation provides an important opportunity to introduce multicultural sensitivities and highlight its importance, both for the course content and to set the tone for a department that embraces difference and diversity. The induction could be beneficial in ensuring that every student feels like an important member of the class. In that way, no one would feel like a stranger, because the classroom environment accommodated everyone's different learning needs.

It became apparent, while I was speaking to the students, that some of them, particularly the black students, had chosen to study Graphic Design with very little knowledge of what the course entailed. Some had been advised by friends that their ability to draw made them good candidates for the course. Once their portfolios had been accepted and places for study were secured, they felt that their capabilities had been validated. The biggest achievement for some of the students had been the opportunity of attending university. As discussed earlier, some of the black students interviewed came from backgrounds where they were the first people in their families to progress in their studies to tertiary level. Therefore, the families had pinned all their hopes on them, because they were seen as the family's ticket out of economic hardships (Interview with R2, 2015). For this reason, when faced with the reality of the demands of the course content, there was a sense of uneasiness as some of them began doubting their

capabilities in dealing with the workload and grasping the seemingly complex concepts that the projects demanded.

At the beginning of the first year of their studies, the anxiety for some of the students arose from the fact that they were coming into an environment that was foreign in several respects. As seen in R2 and R7's accounts, some of the anxiety they experienced was fuelled by the linguistic and cultural changes that the unfamiliar environment imposed upon them. They both reflected on how they had begun their university studies in an environment that looked nothing like the learning environments to which they were accustomed. In addition, they were expected to adapt to this new educational setting with little help from anyone in the department. What was even worse for them was that their dream of being in university, pursuing a career that they hoped would mainly entail drawing and showcasing this skill, was soon dashed by the reality of a course that proved far more challenging than they had anticipated. They quickly discovered that, in addition to the demanding practical components, the course had a significant amount of academic work that needed to be passed to complete a year of study successfully.

Bearing in mind these revelations, the feeling among the students was that there was little support for students whose prior perceptions were destroyed by the reality encountered during the time of study. Everyone seemed to 'hit the ground running', as lecturers were keen to get the study programme going. The simple and basic orientation projects seemed to do little to ease the distraught students. It is here that the first missed opportunity for building an inclusive, multicultural educational experience occurred. As the pressure of the projects built up and students were expected to learn how to read and respond to design briefs, some students like R2 and R7 began to wonder if they had made the right choice by staying on the course. The clear conflict between cultures became apparent, because instead of speaking up and asking for assistance, students (mainly from black cultures) chose to keep quiet and 'suffer in silence' for fear of being perceived as trouble makers. Their reluctance to speak about their situation and their concomitant challenges was accompanied by a slew of bad marks that led to even more frustration and feelings of exclusion.

R2 blamed his poor academic performance on being ill-suited to the course because he felt that the course was not designed to be understood by 'black' students, since he felt that some of the concepts were foreign to black students. The use of race to justify their poor academic performance led me to wonder if there was a lack of a dedicated support system that could

assist students that found themselves in such conflicted positions. The impression I gained was that there was an assumption among some lecturers that everyone who had enrolled for the course knew what it entailed and therefore did not need additional support, since there were already adequate measures in place. From speaking to T1, I was assured that there was enough support for all students in the form of tutor assistance, interventions by the language departments, as well as the year coordinators for the different year groups. The only problem that the lecturers seemed to face was offering support systems that the students did not seem keen to utilise. Thus, over time, some of these resources were reviewed, deemed as unnecessary and subsequently discontinued because of the financial implications of running them.

While this was the case, I had asked T1 about a more effective way of assisting the students in ensuring that those that needed assistance got it. My question to T1 had stemmed from noting how it seemed as though some students had undergone such a life- changing experience and had to deal with it alone. The despondence that had led them to resigning themselves to the misguided belief that there were careers reserved for some races and not others, had never been dealt with, because they had not been brave enough (or felt comfortable enough) to approach anyone, let alone their lecturers, to assist them. To understand this kind of thinking by the students requires that one step back and understand the realities in which these students operated daily. As a consequence of coming from underprivileged backgrounds, the view of the world was sometimes defined in terms of black and white because of the history and remnants of apartheid in South Africa. These students came from a background where they had learnt that the history of privilege is reserved for white people, including access to quality education. For most black students, the reality of under-resourced institutions meant that subjects such as a theoretical understanding of art and design are little known (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Thus, when they were confronted with situations like the one being described above, their first thought would be that they were in the wrong place and pursuing the wrong career. What aggravated this mind set was the fact that most of the students who seemed to experience academic difficulty were black. On the other hand, good marks and pass marks were attained by predominantly white and coloured students.

Twenty-two years into the democracy of South Africa, it is not unheard of that students still struggle with the legacy of apartheid. This is because, for so many, little has changed in the socio-economic climate to reflect the changes that have occurred politically in the country

(Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Unless educators take on the challenge to address the lopsided nature of their teaching methods, these feelings of inadequacy could continue to haunt and divide students in multicultural classrooms. The reason for this is that, if black students find it difficult to relate to what is being taught and therefore perform below par in relation to their white counterparts, the stereotypes around capabilities could persist (Banks & McGee Banks, 2009).

It would be very easy to conclude that, with all the interventions available to the students, the assessment could be that they do badly because they do not work hard enough. The reality is that for as long as the design briefs that students have to respond to do not reflect an inclusive thinking about the diversity that exists in our classrooms in South Africa, feelings such as these are likely to continue to embitter and harm the learning environment. According to Chaudhuri (2015), the problem with not paying attention to these kinds of issues may result in widespread dissatisfaction that leads to students drawing conclusions that they are being racially excluded. The assessment that Chaudhuri (2015) makes is that, “institutional racism” has become the key term for an education system that continues to perpetuate the ideas and ideals that reflect the historic influences of colonialism. His view therefore is that there is a need to foreground the positive narrative that South African is working on instituting.

Chaudhuri (2015) asserts that what the recent countrywide protests at universities around South Africa have highlighted is that dissatisfaction among particular groups swiftly results in anger, which in turn results in scenes like the ‘#RhodesMustFall’, ‘#OpenStellenbosch’ and the ‘#FeesMustFall’ protests. For this reason, as well as many others, it is in the best interests of any learning institution to investigate why there seems to be an academic struggle by one group of students more than another and attend to the issues immediately and with purpose. It is not enough for educators to make a diagnosis of the reasons for the failure based on assumptions, rather than understanding and dealing with the problems and symptoms promptly and adequately. It is important for all educators to understand how South Africa’s segregated past has impacted the different racial groups. His argument is that there must be an understanding that, because of that past, some people have been marginalised and forced to work harder than others to access the most basic resources such as healthcare, housing and, most significant to this research, education. It is therefore important to note that, because of this history, there needs to be a concerted effort to develop the curriculum to bridge those gaps so that everyone in the multicultural classroom has an equal opportunity to achieve academic success. There is

also a need to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive in its representation of the different cultures that it is designed to cater for. Banks and Banks McGee (2009) asserts that multicultural education needs to promote education as an important vehicle in the process of transformation in a bid to reflect the ideals of a diverse and progressive society.

The assimilationist approach described by Mda (1997:115) could be given as a reason why students found themselves struggling with fitting in with the multicultural classroom. The students arrived in their new learning environment with preconceived ideas about what the experience would be like and those ideas were dashed when they realised that theirs was a case of 'survival of the fittest'. This 'survival' dictated that, in order to proceed to the following year of their studies, they would need to depend on their ingenuity to adjust to the multicultural learning environment, to the new learning material, and sometimes to staff who were not accommodating or concerned about their different educational needs. To this end, Banks (2010) maintains that multicultural education needs to be implemented beyond the superficial. He advocates that it includes thorough research on the interaction of race, ethnicity, class, gender and uniqueness. His view is that a total study needs to be done on each of these elements and their interaction to arrive at a deep and dedicated understanding to ensure that educational delivery is effective and free of loopholes (Banks & McGee Banks, 2009:391).

The issue of not belonging seemed a common thread among all the student respondents. However, it was expressed differently by each of the three groups. Among the first year students, there was a strong sense of doubt in their abilities and capabilities, thus fostering fear that the students might be pursuing the wrong career choice. It is understandable that those students felt that way at first-year level because, in unfamiliar territory, their first instinct was to wonder if they could not have chosen a course to which they could relate better. This is because they had no doubt that they were qualified to be in university, but rather questioned the appropriateness of their choice. The pressure to succeed and therefore be able to assist their families became another driver of their anxieties.

At second year level, there was a sense of relief that students had survived the challenges of the inception year. The view was that they could succeed, although the anxiety of failure was still a real threat to their quest for success. At second year level, the students were trying to find their rhythm so that they could prove that they could succeed as designers. The contrast between the first and second year student attitudes and approaches could not be more different.

The second year students seemed more relaxed and excited about the independence with which they were expected to conduct themselves and the way in which they approached their work tasks. Unlike their first year peers, they were more assertive and had a self-assured and independent attitude towards all aspects of their learning. While working on the final project of the year that supposedly sets the tone for the pressure that comes with third year work, it seemed that they were taking it in their stride.

However, they also complained about what they perceived to be racially motivated attempts by some of their lecturers to undermine their capabilities. This was usually noted in response to the poor assessments of their work. Like with any learning area, Graphic Design students perceived marks as the measure of their academic prowess because, apart from being a determinant for whether one passed or failed, assessment marks determined their placement as either a 'good' or 'bad' designer, at least among peers. Students became very competitive in showcasing their skills, with the only currency for measuring success being assessment marks. When students believed that they should have done well (based on positive comments from a public critique by peers and their lecturer), a low mark could be devastating and very confusing. My conversation with R4 and R5 revealed this frustration: at different occasions in their second year of study, they had felt that they had been marked unfairly, even after the lecturers in question had commended their work in agreement with the rest of the class.

The rhetoric of racially-motivated favouritism was a popular discussion topic among the students, suggesting that students were aware of some students being treated differently to others. By default, they attributed it to the most obvious difference, their race, especially if the unfair practices seemed to be more prevalently affecting black students.

While it cannot be proven that this assumption by the students is accurate, in the absence of any other justification by the lecturers for why work that had been qualified as being outstanding could subsequently be evaluated differently, students could not be blamed for drawing their own negative conclusions. Whether these conclusions are wrong or right, they are deemed to be the only justification by the affected parties. T1 seemed to suggest that in cases where students felt that they were the subject of bias, they had not openly communicated this sentiment with her, so she could not dispel their allegations. Her assessment was that the fact that she was white might have made it difficult for the students to openly tell her that they believed that some of her colleagues may have been racially biased towards white students.

Playing favourites takes away the credibility of any educator because, even where a student is deserving of merit, those that are not considered as favourites are likely to view the gesture with suspicion. The challenge is magnified in multicultural classrooms because unfair practices are suggestive of a number of issues, including racism. This suspicion is especially drawn if the alleged perpetrator of the bias is the same race as the students who seem to benefit from his/her practice. Rather than focusing on the merits of what is being taught, students begin to witch-hunt for behaviour that suggests that the educator is favouring particular students over others (Vandeyar, 2006:219). While T1 and T2 (lecturers) did agree that there could be instances where certain lecturers could be biased towards certain students, they did not attribute their behaviour to racial bias. T1 admitted that students were so overwhelmed by the unfair practices of some of the lecturers that thoughts like these do seem justifiable. However, both lecturers alluded to the fact that students did have the power to take up these matters with their respective year coordinators or any other lecturer with whom they felt comfortable about having such discussions. I drew T1 and T2's attention to commentary made by some of the students that they could never trust talking to any of the lecturers about their colleagues as they feared retribution for even reporting the behaviour. T1 was alarmed by this and wondered where the suspicion had stemmed from. Her reaction made me realise that she had been oblivious to the depth of the lack of trust by the students.

The fact that there were students who had the kinds of concerns that I had noted and had felt that they had no one to turn to for assistance, may have been an indication of a lack of cultural sensitivity in the Graphic Design department. In scenarios where the educator taught students who were of a different race, there was a need to be consistent and fair in the treatment of students and avoid tendencies that could be perceived as bias towards one group of students over another.

In the case of R7, educator bias affected his belief in his ability as a designer. According to Vandeyar (2006:220) a feeling of inadequacy may lead to students feeling excluded. His assertion is that, the feeling of exclusion as a result of bias is particularly elevated if the student and the educator do not belong to the same racial or cultural group. This is because the student may assign the bias to the fact he did not belong to the same cultural group as the educator. These fears of bias by R7 are particularly brought to life by the history of apartheid. Unfortunately, because of R7's low self-esteem, his view of his future as a designer was very

unclear. He became very worried that his poor performance in the course could indicate that he would struggle to convince anyone of his skills. The seed of doubt in his abilities was planted during his studies. If R7 had had had adequate support with most of the issues that he had faced, he might have developed more faith in his capabilities. R7 had been plagued by financial difficulties that kept him away from his studies. For this reason, he found it difficult to keep up with the academic demands of the course thus performed poorly. The result was low self-esteem that took away his confidence in his capabilities as a budding designer. The lack of support from his learning environment, coupled with other factors, did not help to improve this view of himself.

6.1.2 Implications for Graphic Design teaching and learning

The biggest challenge that bias brings into the learning environment, particularly in the Graphic Design classrooms that are being discussed, is the lack of social justice and unequal access to resources to enable educational success. When educators consciously make the choice to give preferential treatment to some students over others, he/she may find it difficult to notice prejudiced views in the classroom. This in turns creates a challenge for a classroom environment that encourages healthy, honest and informative discussions about sensitive issues. This mirrors Soudien's (1994:292) view that learning institutions view both educators and their students as incapable of possessing the ability to deal with the realities that racism invokes.

Consequently, a biased educator tends to fail to listen and watch out for assumptions about the right/wrong ways to do things, just because the dominant culture does them in a particular way. This is particularly true for educators who come from the dominant culture which is, in this case, also the culture of the learning environment. For this reason, such educators may fail to tackle problems and interpret issues from a different cultural perspective, and so, because it is viewed as going against the norm, they stifle learning that may be different but beneficial for everyone (Soudien, 1994:293).

Sometimes biased educators are also not creative in how they form and manage learning groups. They tend to encourage students to choose their own groups and let them work in the same groups continuously, at the expense of mingling for benefits of learning about other

cultures in a safe and controlled environment, such as the classroom (Turner et al., 2008:369). Their view seems to be that students work better with people with whom they have good rapport. Instead of encouraging other interactions, students are made to feel that interactions beyond friendship lines are not necessary. This approach creates a superficial and false expectation about groupwork in a formal working environment. It also reinforces the *us and them* phenomenon that negatively affects learning environments, sowing divisions among learners (Turner et al., 2008:370). The authors see the value of intercultural interaction as a valuable asset in the reduction of prejudice, as well as beneficial in reducing the anxiety caused by mixing with people that are from a different culture, race, or social group. Their conviction stems from an understanding that the quality of student interactions could be used constructively to develop knowledge sharing. Their view is that constant interaction could foster positive communication among students which may lead to them relating better to each other. Graphic Design students need to experience diversified interactions to broaden their knowledge of the world so that they improve their role as visual communicators. They have to learn about the realities of stereotypes and learn to use their interactions with their peers to create accurate and informed choices when they have to communicate with culturally diverse audiences.

6.2 An assessment of the lecturers and their teaching styles

Nieto (2010:101) views the educator as the heartbeat of every learning environment. The educator's position is responsible for the successes and failures of a successful classroom dynamic. Nieto's assessment became apparent during my research, as I witnessed the power that educators wielded in the learning environment. As educators, we advocate independence of thought and action from our students, but we are at times guilty of not paying attention to how our own actions promote or hinder this. My impression was that T1 and T2's lively teaching styles inspire and motivated the classes.

T1's assuring nature seemed to calm students as some of them struggled to grapple with the demands of their projects. Each time they presented their ideas to her, their uncertainties seemed to wane as she brainstormed and discussed with them possible ideas for their projects. An unfortunate consequence was that this seemed to create a sense of dependence on her by

those students that struggled to resolve their concepts and they ended up carelessly using concepts that did not work with their given brief.

T2 on the other hand, while apparently easy going, was firmer and more uncompromising than T1 in his demands of the students. Thus, some of his students seemed to have done thorough research before they consulted him on their work and were confident. On the other hand, those that had not done enough work always came across as nervous and expectant of being reprimanded for being ill prepared. The students seemed to pre-empt his reaction to their presentations, because they felt that he also knew their weaknesses and strengths very well. They knew they would be praised for working well and chided when they slackened. T2's open-minded and upfront nature encouraged his students to be confident, adventurous and explorative of the resources and the environment in which they operated. I experienced this adventurous nature in T2's classroom as he challenged students to explore their capabilities and not to sell themselves short on what they could do. He said he believed that students needed not learn to be assertive in the way they viewed the requirements of their briefs. He also commented on how, as Graphic Designers, they needed to have an enquiring mind and break away from their comfort zones to allow themselves the opportunity to be communicators that could work with all kinds of clients and audiences.

When I spoke to both T1 and T2 about the students' views about them, they seemed oblivious to the impact they had had on their students. My assessment was that this stemmed from their perception that they were facilitators of learning whose sole purpose was to impart knowledge on the skills that students needed to qualify as Graphic Designers. They did not seem cognisant of how they had influenced their students' worldviews beyond the learning material. They did not assign the confidence with which their students tackled their projects to anything that they had said to or done for the students. It became apparent from the discussions with the students that their educators served as both educators and role models too.

6.2.1 The importance of representational staffing in a multicultural learning environment

More and more black students are being admitted into university and, for this reason, classrooms in institutions of higher learning are beginning to reflect this trend (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:59). Students are beginning to venture into non-traditional professions outside of professions that fall under the banner of ‘traditional professions’, such as teaching and medicine. Faculties such as Design have also attracted more black students. However, some of them barely know what the course entails, as evidenced in the discussions with R2. These students are at times enticed by what little they hear about the course. However, in view of all the changes that have occurred through time in the education space, the Graphic Design Department at this CPUT campus has not implemented any significant transformation in their staffing to meet the needs of the diverse student body.

The Department does not seem to recognise the benefits of a racially and culturally balanced staff complement. I discovered that students were happier when they could consult with a lecturer from a culture like theirs, particularly for concepts that might seem alien to them. The English- and Afrikaans-speaking students have had an advantage over their black South African counterparts because they have enjoyed being taught by educators who have a similar, if not the same, cultural background. For Afrikaans students, it has always been easier to code switch between English and Afrikaans whenever they struggled with understanding terms or concepts, whereas black students who could not relate to the topics or the subject matter being explored (because they could not make a cultural connection with the material or the context), have had to use their own ingenuity to fill in the gaps.

With the arrival of the Xhosa-speaking lecturer (T2), the dynamic seemed to have changed in favour of the black students, for the Zulu-, Xhosa- and sometimes Sotho-speaking students used him as their resource person. I saw his role as serving to bridge the cultural gap especially because he could relate to the two worlds (learning environment and being a black African) very well. T2 consulted outside the classes that he was designated to teach. His approachable and upfront nature had made him very likeable among students.

His teaching style was recognised by some students as being fresh and 'relatable'. The reason for this could have been the fact that he was young and had recently worked in industry. He taught his students to be accountable for all the work that they did. So, to aid their understanding of briefs, rather than assisting them by giving examples, he insisted on students making the decisions that they felt best represented their understanding of a brief. R6 agreed with the students' view that T2's inclusion in the staff complement provided black students with a role model. His presence in the Department challenged the sentiment held by some first-year students that the course was not designed for black students. His presence reassured black students that they, too, could successfully pursue a career in Graphic Design without viewing it as foreign to them. The challenge, however, was that this reassurance was not sufficient in convincing students to stay on the course, because the curriculum and teaching methods of some lecturers did not equitably acknowledge all the cultures in the classroom.

On several occasions during the research process, I witnessed black students who went to T2 to consult on projects that they required assistance with in their mother tongue, such as isiZulu, isiXhosa, or even seSotho sometimes. Their expectation of him was that he translated and sometimes explained the brief in simplified language using illustrative examples to which they could relate. I noted relief on a lot of faces in the discussions when a concept was clarified. I also witnessed consultations where students went through the entire process in their mother tongue and admitted how they had been struggling to make the same point to their respective lecturers in English. It was of critical importance to note that language could be a barrier to effective learning for some students. Where the adequate provisions for students' needs such as language, were not made for students, their lack of comprehension as a result becomes evident.

Jansen's (2004:117-128) argues that, while universities have progressed in enrolling more black students into previously white faculties, there has still been a real issue of fear of enrolling black educators because of the notion that white educators are competent and black ones could lead to a lowering of standards. His view is supported by Soudien and Sayed's (2004:155) argument that the process of racial inclusion is masked behind the veil of maintaining 'standards', suggesting acceptance of the notion that the inclusion of black educators could jeopardise the spotless reputation of the environment.

6.2.2 Need for a culturally inclusive Graphic Design curriculum

The curriculum is an important consideration in transforming education so that it is inclusive of all its targeted groups. Van Heerden (1998:110) and Davis (2017:89) question the validity of a curriculum that is not representative of all the people it is designed for. Both their views compel one to question whose values and culture the current curriculum is advancing. In promoting one culture, which other culture is being compromised and what could the reasoning be? Bourdieu and Passeron, (1990) asserts that parents bequeath their children with an array of attributes including, most importantly, cultural capital. While there is no harm in endowing these attributes, many institutions and teachers focus on these as ‘the standard’, which inadvertently perpetuate inequalities in people’s ease of access to educational opportunities. Furthermore, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argues that schools and teachers that support these inequalities set a precedent that promotes the values of certain groups of people over those of others.

The questions raised talk directly to the document analysis carried out for the research. The briefs that had been designed to cater for students from diversified backgrounds lacked the character that reflected a diversified learning environment. I questioned the lack of diversity in the briefs because they appealed only to the individuals who could relate to them. This, in turn, begged the question if there was a consultative process that was embarked upon to ensure that briefs were updated to reflect the cultural climate and diversity in the studio that they were geared towards. On the surface, the briefs that ‘celebrate’ South Africa’s diversity are simply that; yet on close inspection, the briefs lack the depth and character that truly reflects an attempt at inspiring diversified views and epistemologies. Carrim’s (1998:311) view is that the minimal type of multiculturalism found in universities tends towards the worst kind of parodied stereotypical profiling. His view is that little research is done on aspects that are introduced to cater for minority groups. Thus, instead of being a positive addition to the culture of an institution they end up prejudicing the very people they are supposed to be including. Instead, Vandeyar (2006:222) suggests a multicultural curriculum that showcases the history and experiences of the marginalised groups as an attempt to deal with the racial and cultural tensions that are prevalent in societies. Confronting and engaging academically with the injustices of South Africa’s past, for instance, is not an attempt to burden academics with a

‘guilt trip’ into accepting responsibility, but it helps to create an understanding of the circumstances of some of the students’ realities. Honest engagement may offer students a reciprocal opportunity to genuinely confront the prejudices that they have about those students that come from backgrounds that are different from theirs.

Jansen (2004:117) advocates a curriculum that is learner-centred and does not exclude anyone but seeks to fairly represent and include everyone without emphasising one culture over others. As a visual communication course, Graphic Design requires that the correct visual references be deployed when communicating with different target markets. However, how do we, as educators, encourage students to be conscious of the needs of their audiences if their own diverse needs are not appropriately and adequately catered for in the classroom? It comes across as a hypocritical exercise to teach students about the value of making multiculturally sensitive provisions in their work, when they themselves do not benefit from the same multiculturally sensitive considerations in their academic context.

6.2.3 The specific roles of Graphic Design institutions and the industry

The most important questions that precede any discussions on whose responsibility it is to ensure the effective training of Graphic Designers are governed by the following thoughts:

1. How industry views its role in Graphic Design education;
2. The level of interaction between academy and industry;
3. Understanding the gap that exists between industry and the academy;
4. How well-equipped graduates are to leave university and take on a Graphic Design job.

An improvement in the relationship between industry and the academy could be beneficial in adequately managing the students’ Graphic Design careers. I felt that the two institutions needed to share a mutually beneficial relationship where one trains and the other recruits. For this reason, the potential recruiter should be seen to be actively engaging with material that is taught to ensure that the designers that graduate are equipped with the skills that industry in its entirety (design agencies and other sectors in which Graphic Designers operate) requires. On the other hand, institutions should be liaising with industry for design projects that reflect the

realities of the industry with regards to deadlines, levels of competence for different skills, and the professionalism with which the projects are run.

6.2.4 The projects as reflection of the curriculum

The projects were designed by the lecturers and sometimes seemed to emphasise the production of products more than the actual process. During observation of the first years, the students seemed to spend far too much time thinking about how they would execute the project in the quickest way, rather than doing thorough research on the market and therefore understanding how best to execute their visual communication. There was too much focus on how the finished product would look (layout, font, colours and other semiotic references), rather than on how best to design the product to communicate effectively with both the client and the target market. Consequently, when all the work was showcased, there were many students who could not give a clear rationale for their choices in creating the products that they had on show.

T2's view was that most students spent too much time looking at work that had been created by other designers. His view was that they attempted to emulate the same styling, neglecting the realisation that, to be recognised in the design spheres, one needed to come up with fresh designs that challenged what was already on the market. His advice therefore was for student designers to create a portfolio of work that was so diverse and unique that the student's portfolio could not be ignored by any recruiter because of its prominence.

6.3 The importance of understanding industry standards for students

E1's view was that, because there were fundamental skills for any designer, it was in the best interests of the graduates to acquire these skills while studying. He felt that it was easier for students to grasp these before graduating, because during their university education, they would get opportunities to learn through trial and error in a non-threatening environment where they did not feel that their careers were threatened by failure to successfully complete a project. However, he advocated on-the-job training in the form of internships. His sense was that, unless students were put in real-world situations where they had to deal directly with client deadlines, the issue of meeting targets would always be an elusive concept. His sense was that students

benefitted more from being in an environment where they worked with diversified groups of people in terms of age, experience and differing opinions. For him, this would allow students to get gain some insights into the nature and expectations of the industry.

E1's view was that, for as long as there was no commitment to students' training needs, from either design institutions and Graphic Design agencies, students would continue to suffer the outcomes of the disconnect between the two institutions. This was because, if a student was ill prepared for working in the industry, he/she would bear the brunt of having to compensate for the gap that existed in his/her training. He asserted that, because institutions could not teach it all, there should be properly structured learnerships or internship programmes that students needed to be exposed to. However, he did not want to commit to saying whose responsibility this was, because his sense was that how students were trained should be a shared responsibility of the two institutions.

6.4 The importance of taking responsibility in Graphic Design

This section of the discussion is the most contentious, as it makes up the crux of the research discussion. The question that it attempts to answer is:

How can a narrative multicultural approach be used to explore creative ways to teach Graphic Design to a culturally diverse group of students at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology?

It is important to understand that, to address the issues that exist both in the classroom and in industry, the participants (students, educators and industry recruiters) need to engage actively in issues about cultural diversity. The value of narratives is that they capture snapshots of the experiences all three groups that are vital to understanding the challenges that exist and hopefully begin to address the causes of those challenges.

Graphic Design is more than just a learning area that deals with creating things. It is a conceptual field where human practice is studied with the sole intention of understanding their interaction with environmental systems so that solutions to problems are contextualised to meet

the needs of the targeted consumers (Sassoon, 2008:13). Sassoon (2008:13) recognises the need for designers who recognise that “giving a physical shape to an object is a small part of the design process”. In his discussion, E1 alluded to the expectation for designers to play the dual role of creators and perceptive communication specialists of messages. In discharging their duty, they had the responsibility to communicate responsibly and ensure accuracy in what is subsequently dispensed.

Because of the widening scope in the demands for Graphic Designers, the need for a holistic approach in understanding the consuming markets has become compelling. E1’s conviction regarding designers is the following:

We can no longer replicate past communications and hope that they apply to any market. Consumers have become very discerning with what will work for them and what will not, thus they dictate what they consume. (Interview with E1, 2015.)

This challenge the approaches in Graphic Design, from how students are taught and trained about communicating, to how they eventually practise in industry. Roberts (2006:22) argues that, because design operates within the realms of society, there is a level of professional responsibility that needs to be maintained.

The ‘cut and paste’ approach that some designers use to create communication for target audiences that have different needs is criticised by E1 as insensitive and irresponsible. This is because such practices are evidence of laziness to conduct adequate research on the target market. The result of this could be that there is no guarantee that the message may resonate with the target market.

Roberts’ (2006:23) assertion is that Graphic Designers’ decision to work with the kind of material that they use for their visual communication is generally determined by personal conscience. The consequence is that the onus rests on designers to decide where to draw the line regarding decisions that they make in preparing any communication for audiences. This means that, on more occasions than not, designers have the power to influence the outcomes of briefs given by clients. The assessment therefore is that on those occasions where

‘irresponsible’ communication is dispensed, the designer’s role cannot easily be ignored, because of the integral role that he/she plays in its creation. Roberts (2006) maintains that part of the professional obligation of Graphic Designers is ensuring that, in accepting a commission, they accept to fulfil their mandate to see to it that they duly complete the job, timeously and within the stipulated budget. Within that context, it is important that both designer and client realise that the consumer is at the heart of all considerations, because the design work reflects the various aspects of the society being captured in the visual communication (Archibald, 2008). In line with this view, E1 believed that it was important for the designer to realise that reform in design would only be possible with introspection on the role and values of design in the society. Thus, the need exists for designers who are determined to invest in thorough research to ensure design outcomes that are favourable to multicultural design audiences. He views this shared responsibility as beneficial to both designer and client, as it forces them to play their part in ensuring that the needs of the audiences are adequately paired with planning and profit (budgets and payments for work done). Designers work within contexts of societies that, in turn, operate within specified communities. These communities adhere to social practices that set them apart. Therefore, it is important that a Graphic Designer’s pre-design research considers the relevant cultural nuances that are central to producing visual communication that only reports accurately and honestly about the culture of the targeted group. The research should utilise visual cues and employ language that best resonates with the group so that the ‘call to action’ yields the appropriate response from the targeted group(s) (Interview with E1, 2015).

Graphic Design has been viewed for a long time as an area of expertise lacking in, and sometimes devoid of, any ethical value. It has been construed as a field that is plagued by a group answerable to itself only, because of its role as representing trendsetters and determinants of people’s choices (Archibald, 2008). However, there is a wave of change in the way designers view their role as visual communicators. For instance, the issue of sustainability has seen a shift from ecologically-driven design (being viewed as a global responsibility and not just designers and big business) to human-centred design, with more focus on cultural sensitivity, especially in our cosmopolitan existence. The proceeding discussion in Chapter 7 summarises the findings and offers some recommendations for the research. The chapter also sums up the research.

Chapter 7: Summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Summary of findings

At the beginning of this study, three research questions were posed. This section presents a summary of the observations and answers revealed by the data obtained during this research expedition.

The first research question interrogates the impact of a diverse learning environment and asks:

What are the effects that diversity of languages and cultures of students have on teaching and learning Graphic Design?

Teaching and learning were observed across the three levels of Graphic Design classes. The objective was to determine if the cultural mix of students had any impact on what was learnt and how it was learnt too. For this reason, there was a need to engage in dialogue with both the students and educators. In understanding the students' diversity, the lecturer's own identity was interrogated because of its impact on the interpersonal relationships that existed in the classroom. As Witsel (2003) asserts, teachers teaching in multicultural classrooms have the arduous task of ensuring that they are also part of the chemistry that occurs in class. This is because they bring into the learning environment their unique personalities. For this reason, the interest is not just in how students may differ, but about what happens in the classroom when the teacher and students are all interacting in and through their uniqueness.

My experience in the three multicultural classrooms suggested that the students had had to work through their fears, insecurities and sometimes prejudices, sometimes through interactions with cliques that they had established. In some cases, the respondent students highlighted how they had had to manage these challenges alone for fear that others may be prejudiced against them. An example was R2, who chose to withdraw from active participation in class discussions for fear that his classmates would tease him about his 'mispronunciation' of English words. For T1, this was unthinkable because she had never thought that students could taunt each other in that way. Moreover, she had not been made aware of the incident and had not addressed it with the class. Her response to a few of the situations of which I made her aware suggested that, because of the nature and schedules of the classes, the lecturers were

unable to address some of the issues unless they were highlighted for them by the aggrieved students. Such responses from the educators suggest a need for more reflective engagement. However, Alsubaie (2015) affirms that, over and above reflective teaching being used as a 'best practice' teaching model, teachers should be provided with professional development opportunities that train them to teach people that are different to them. Such opportunities are geared towards assisting teachers in learning how to teach, train, assess, and to build their confidence in multicultural teaching.

Teaching a diverse multicultural classroom of Graphic Design students is challenging because of the reliance of the subjects on a culturally determined resource. For this reason, students were frustrated with lecturers that challenged their interpretation of briefs. Some of their frustrations stemmed from lecturers that assisted to a point where students felt that the lecturers had taken over their projects. More frustrating was that the final mark that the student attained for the project did not reflect the extensive assistance. Some students felt that the level of 'spoon feeding' hindered their ability to learn and think independently.

The other disadvantage of excessive lecturer assistance for some students over others was cited as worrisome (by some students) as it was an indication by lecturers that they preferred to work with some students over others. There were students that were seen to perform better than others due to the level of attention that they seemed to receive from some of their lecturers. According to Verkuyten, (2010:91), favouritism drives a wedge between students because it suggests that the favourites are in some way better than everyone else.

The results of the research are not generalisable because the dynamics that existed in the Graphic Design Department may be not the same across institutions or even faculties or departments within the same institution. It is important to note that, amidst the successes achieved through the Graphic Design Department, there are notable changes that need to be instituted for the multicultural groups of students to feel a sense of belonging. Moreover, there needs to be a concerted effort by educators to pay attention to students who may require more attention than others so that such students do not complete the three-year diploma course feeling like they have been existing as outsiders in the learning space.

The second research question addresses the adequacy of the curriculum in preparing students as effective communicators. It reads:

To what extent is the curriculum geared towards preparing students to be effective communication design practitioners in multicultural South African and global contexts?

The document analysis of the different design briefs suggests that the curriculum is adequately designed to equip students with technical capabilities required by industry. However, there seems to be little focus on the cultural and linguistic backgrounds that account for their students' individualised worldviews responsible for their semiotic perspective. The design briefs seem focused on the technical aspects of design; in testing the students' ability to address the formal aspects of design, namely space, form, line, colour, texture, etc. In observing these, there was a tendency towards rigidly applying the formal rules of design without contextualising them to their semiotic meanings. According to Lee (1997:79), design and visual communication is by nature riddled with ambiguity because of the varying perspectives that visual messages elicit in different people. Thus, if a design is being assessed by someone that falls outside the targeted persons, it is important to provide a design rationale. The rationale assists by explaining the cultural nuances that account for the design choices the designer has created for a specific target audience. The rationale thus serves to guide meaning and the reasons for choices made in creating the design. In a classroom setting, the design rationale serves to inform the lecturer of the student's reasoning behind a given brief. However, at least in the classes that were observed, because the design rationales were not used regularly to assess visual communication, some students felt that their work might have been assessed differently had the lecturer had the benefit of the design rationale. As a result, students complained of unfair assessments, because they felt the adjudication of their work was sometimes affected by the lecturers' bias towards certain design influences over others. For example, if a lecturer was inclined towards trendy design, the work of students who did not apply the same influences was not considered as favourably as that of their peers who did. There seemed to be a belief among those students that came from 'non-influential' groups that there was a campaign to stifle their academic success. This, they believed, was done systematically through briefs that they either could not relate to (and therefore struggled to fulfil), or through an assessment system that was alien to their thinking. In principle, when their way of thinking was rejected, they tended to feel that they had been rejected. The students'

sentiments echo Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction which offers a paradigm of class analysis argued to be capable of explaining persistent inequalities in education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). As explained earlier, the theory suggests that students are endowed with cultural capital that institutions subsequently employ to distinguish or measure them against one another. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that institutions and teachers support this family-based reproduction process by rewarding possession of elite cultural capital in students and by setting up elitist standards designed to favour upper and middle-class students over others (ibid, 1990).

The third research question examines the role of industry in determining the standards for practice and thus influencing what is taught, as well as assessing the pedagogic needs of design institutions. The question reads:

What is the role of industry in determining standards for design practice for students and therefore influencing the curriculum and pedagogic needs of design institutions?

The sense that the industry expert (E1) gave was that there was very little participation by industry in what happens in the academy. While that was the case, the expert noted that there was a need to get involved with preparing students for industry. His observation was that industry was not doing enough to get involved in defining the kind of designer they wanted the academy to train. His feeling was that industry was more concerned with activities that enhanced their businesses and saw development of students as a waste of time and money. According to the industry expert, investing their time and resources in internships and liaising with design institutions should be seen as enhancing their mandate and contributing to the kind of designer that design houses envisage as fitting their needs. His feeling was that the academy had to do its part in pushing for more participation from industry for development in this regard.

The expert noted that getting involved through offering internships would enable design institutions to design curriculum and teaching materials that were relevant to the world of work. Industry's active involvement in education would determine the training suitable to produce a designer that would be functional, both as an employee and/or as a generator of employment. However, from his experience, the value of investing in education was an opportunity to contribute to the production of designers that could function with ease in multicultural environments.

On the other hand, what was apparent through my interactions with the respondent lecturers was that the briefs that were prepared were guided by the trends in industry, as perceived by the lecturers. There were standard skills that the students were taught and the way in which these were taught that was supposedly influenced by trends in industry. The lecturers confirmed that, from time to time, an expert from industry was brought in to assist with imparting knowledge on how industry tackled a project like the one that the students were undertaking. However, this process was not carried out in a way that involved industry and which demonstrated how it applied its standards to the projects. For this reason, some students went into industry with the belief that the same relaxed approaches from their university experience would be applied in practice. According to E1, this gap between the realities and perceptions about how industry worked could be closed through simulation of industry created, guided and assessed projects. He also believed that students would benefit from being exposed more to the different areas of focus that exist in the Graphic Design industry, for example, advertising, desktop publishing, product design, etc. Although one would not opt for a curriculum that is completely defined and determined by industry, for fear that industry's vices (focus on profit over responsive and responsible design) could hinder the independence of design institutions.

The benefit for design institutions of having industry participation is that it could curtail situations like R7's where, a few weeks prior to completing the diploma programme, he was still unsure about his prospects of employment because of the uncertainty about in which fields he could operate as a graduate Graphic Designer. If these situations were addressed early on in their studies, students could be more resolute about their future after their studies, as was the case with R8. R8's exposure to holiday work in a Graphic Design environment enabled her to get exposed to the nature of the work, its demands as well as some standards. Thus, she was able to train in an area in which she was adept for the duration of her studies. Her work experience guaranteed her a job, either in the same company or any other design house that required her skills. Wells and Edwards (2013:158) advocate internships for university students because they believe that internships benefit students by bridging together universities and the professional world of work. Moreover, they view internships as a platform through which institutions can have their courses tested for their economic relevance. For employers, an internship programme can serve as 'auditions where talent is spotted'. In line with this view, E1 also indicated that they had retained interns for employment through the internship programmes that they sometimes conducted. His confidence with internships was that agencies

benefitted from talented students that they had trained themselves. Wells and Edwards (2013:158), rather than seeing internships as ‘knowledge transfer’ (from university to the workplace) exercises, saw them as developing a capacity for ‘sense making’ of the chosen career.

7.2 Recommendations

This section lays the foundation for future studies to be undertaken, flowing from the findings of this research. The above findings were documented during the course of end of the year in 2015 to mid-2016. The expected year of completion was 2016, however, there were challenges that I encountered with my then supervisor that affected the successful completion and submission of the research.

At the beginning of the research process, I was conscious of the limitations of time that I would have had to contend with because of the depth of the issues under study in light of the students graduating from one year to the next and the uncertainty that some of my first year respondents had about returning to the university the following year. Some of those limitations included availability of the students due to work commitments, as well as the time I had to allocate to all the planned activities to carry out an informed research study. A study of this nature would benefit from additional research to investigate thoroughly the detours that emerged from the data. For instance, tracking individual participants’ career paths (from inception into the course at first year to the time they graduate after third year and join industry) would offer a panoramic perspective on students’ transition from the academy into industry. The ‘gap’ between what is taught and what is expected in the world of work is well documented (Wells & Edwards, 2013:158). Students’ development would be properly documented so that the curriculum, their learning and lecturers’ teaching styles could be assessed based on the expectations of industry, and how these align with the multicultural realities of the studio setting (which represents a microcosm of the macrocosm which is a diverse and complex society). The processes would also inform the kinds of teaching and learning strategies that could benefit a multicultural classroom.

Internships were also highlighted as an important inclusion into the learning programme because of the benefits of on-the-job training. Most internships that are organised by

universities for students are usually non-paying. The students that engage in the internships are final year students. Thus when industry takes on interns, they not only is recommended that a clear schedule of the internship programme be designed in collaboration with different sectors in industry. The internship should be built into the curriculum so that its outcomes can be tested against specific aims and objectives that contribute to the students' development and its responsiveness to the market. Wells and Edwards (2013:160) view internships as having the ability to provide students with concepts that could be applied to interrogate workplace practices that students could use to prepare themselves for understanding their chosen careers. The collaboration could help industry to view their role as a more active and engaged one than that of mere recipients of the workforce that is provided by design institutions. In this way, industry could play an even more active role in providing 'live' briefs that are run using industry standards to ensure that students benefit from the quality of a professional brief, as well as the myriad of skills that such jobs provide (Interview with E1, 2015).

The final year of study can be as tense and anxious as the first year for some students, as it creates a lot of panic that is caused by the uncertainty of the road ahead. Indeed, this is where a balanced curriculum could stand the newly graduated students in good stead. It could herald a new beginning, in the same way that the first-year experience does. However, in the final year of study, the pressure is more intense because of the expectation of confronting working life. Expectations regarding professional life were situated at opposite ends of the continuum for two student participants: one confident with a path clearly laid out with a guaranteed job at the end of her street; and the other, a distressed student not sure of what the future held for him because of low self-esteem stemming from a slew of academic failures and financial struggles. The difference in their prospects is an indication that the Department needs to prepare students adequately for their departure so that they all look forward to graduating as competent Graphic Designers. The structured internship programme discussed earlier could be the best way to ease them into the working world with lowered levels of apprehension felt by many students at this stage in their lives. This would also present an opportunity to introduce the teaching of a responsive, multicultural curriculum which is in step with contemporary demands

The group selection method that T2 employed was ideal for a multicultural classroom that is geared towards using the diversity of the classroom to benefit students' interpersonal relations. This is from the understanding that such interactions help students learn to develop tolerance

and trust, while encouraging the exchange of knowledge. According to Freire and Macedo (1995), the value of dialogue is that it helps to promote a safe and calm ambience that makes it easier to navigate difficult subjects, such as cultural and racial prejudices, which are inherent in multicultural classrooms. Such encounters are also opportunities for teaching about prejudice as a way of breaking down stereotypes in a safe and controlled environment.

Finally, the issue of staffing needs to be investigated so that all the students feel a sense of belonging within the learning environment. While there was an admission that there are systems in place through the institution's language centre, there was evidence that these interventions were not being utilised. Instead, the black students seemed more comfortable with consulting internally with T2, as someone that they felt recognised their challenges. Banks and McGee Banks (2009) advocate ensuring that the staff complement is balanced to adequately cater to the diverse cultures of the student body in multicultural institutions. In that way, the learning institutions and teachers are not seen to be propagating the values of the dominant culture(s).

The dependence of many students on T2 suggested that these students could benefit more from someone within the department to assist them with translating concepts, as well with understanding the language of design. To this end, T2's intervention A survey of why the current system does not seem to work for the students that are referred to could reveal information that may benefit the department in planning more effective interventions. T2's ability to use students' home languages interchangeably with English (medium of instruction) proved useful for those students that seemed to struggle with understanding concepts.

Although he was operating in a Graphic Design classroom the issue of *translanguaging* is a case for consideration in the discussion. *Translanguaging* has gained a lot of traction in education research over the years. Lewis et al. (2012) define translanguaging as the act of using one language to reinforce the other in order to increase understanding and augment the pupil's activity in both languages. Garcia and Kleyn (2016:578) assert that *translanguaging* should be viewed as a process of using dual languages in the same context to enable comprehension. The duality of the languages is important because it removes the connotation of dominant and non-dominant language. It for this reason that advocates for *translanguaging* view the process as unifying the languages by placing them at par so that their competence in one does not denigrate

the other as less important (Garcia and Kleyn, 2016:579). The benefits of this approach in multicultural teaching and learning environments have been tested and proven to be useful. Thus, inclusion of *translanguaging* as a pedagogic approach is recommended for teaching in multicultural Graphic Design environment.

7.3 Conclusion

We live in an age that is controlled by access to information, which suggests that everyone seeks to be heard amidst the noise of all the communication that consumers are fed at every passing moment. For this reason, communicators are finding ways of dispensing information far more quickly than they have ever done. Sometimes this occurs at the expense of adequate and accurate investigations on the audiences being targeted. The result is that sometimes the communication is of a nature that the target audience cannot relate to.

What is key in visual communication is an accurate and culturally sensitive depiction of the communities being addressed or depicted. This is because Graphic Designers, due to their ability to mould people's experiences, are endowed with a lot of power. The magnitude of this power cannot be reduced merely to relaying messages of businesses to their consumers through visual means. Their power is accompanied by the responsibility of the knowledge that they influence the choice of what people consume and aspire to. Graphic Designers need to understand that they are advocates for socially conscious design, which is an important concept in design. Debrah et al. (2017

:68) advocate a design whose 'choice of solutions' is well thought out with a clear and empathetic consideration of the end user and how he/she may be impacted by the suggested solution(s). Their view of a designer is that of an ethical practitioner that is aware of the effects that design has on communities, their culture and public perception by other cultures because of what is propagated about them. This sentiment is also echoed in Roberts's (2006:29) conviction that, for a designer to lobby for reform, he/she should recognise the effects that design currently has on the affected communities and consciously undertake to effect changes that are required to undo or improve on the undesirable effect(s) of that design.

This research study was geared towards understanding how design institutions and industry could work together to ensure that designers uphold the kind of ethical responsibility that Debrah et al. (2017) and Roberts (2006) lobby for.

The call for reforms is triggered by responses to visual communication that, due to its inappropriate nature (in relation to offensive content, prejudiced views, divisive messaging and other ‘tasteless’ communication), lends itself as bad design. However, the point of departure for the research was to understand at what point the intervention needed to occur. The two most important institutions involved in answering this question were investigated: the Graphic Design classroom that is responsible for training the designers for industry; and the Graphic Design industry.

I decided to start my journey in the classroom where students were prepared and readied for industry. I had to understand the context in which educators and students interacted. It was through the different narrative accounts that I could capture the lives of students in the classrooms and relate them to their background stories that gave meaning to what was happening in the present. To understand their stories, I needed to embed myself in their lives by participating in the daily processes of learning. The first year student accounts set the stage for the fears, anxieties, excitements and self-discovery of being in the first year of study. The plethora of emotions expressed by students at this stage were assessed in relation to how they impacted the learning outcomes of the students. It was also important to find out to what extent the stories that the students shared, impacted their view of the Graphic Design course in relation to their career prospects. The accounts also compelled me to question my own practice introspectively. I allowed myself to question some of the methods I had used in the classroom to understand how these could have affected students. I also questioned how student performance is assessed, subsequently diagnosed and how interventions are applied.

The briefing and consultation sessions were another telling area for communication problems. I recognised a need to tailor-make these sessions to suit the diverse student body, as it was apparent that their varied language and cultural demands had to be considered. The design briefs, while diverse, needed to be culturally accountable to ensure that all the students felt that they were an important consideration in the learning outcomes. The Eurocentric, dominant

cultural approach and tone of the briefs did not reassure those students who already felt alienated by the environment. For these students, as first-time university candidates in their families, coming from backgrounds where the pressure to succeed is governed by the fact that they are seen as the economic salvation for the family, the teaching and learning environment at the university contributed to feelings of isolation and exclusion.

The suggestion of racial bias poses a serious threat to the effective teaching of cultural sensitivity in multicultural Graphic Design classrooms. The fact that some black and coloured students questioned why they did not seem to perform on a par with their white peers, even though their work seemed to be of the same standard, made their allegation of racial profiling understandable. This, coupled with the fact that some lecturers were insensitive to students' financial, academic and sometimes social needs, gave life to the students' accusations. This was because the students that often presented with support needs were either black or coloured. Unfortunately, with South Africa's history of racism and recent racism flare-ups, credence is given to some students who default to the 'accusation of racism' rhetoric in the face of what seems to them to be selective bias. In an environment where the race of the educator is the same as that of the students who enjoy his/her attention, it is very easy for other students to feel neglected and thus make all sorts of accusations. The students' experiences highlighted a common error in many classrooms that tends to spark controversy and cause tension. The tension manifested as some students' refusal to work with certain other students, citing unfamiliarity as an excuse for avoiding pairing or being put into those groups. On talking to, the students, particularly the black students that were interviewed, I learned that they felt that the white students were never keen to work with them. The white students' excuse was that they preferred to work in their groups so that they avoided being in groups with lazy students.

The students' choice to only work in groups that did not reflect cultural diversity is concerning for Graphic Design studios, because it contradicts our teachings on cultural sensitivity. If we are not employing the same standards in our studios, how can we effectively teach this concept? As educators, we determine the character of our learning spaces, so if we exhibit undesirable behaviour, this tends to set the tone in the classroom environment. I was compelled to confront my own approaches and responses to different situations that I have had to deal with in the classroom and try to understand them in relation to what I experienced in the design studios. It

is very interesting how seemingly innocent practices by an educator can be read through multiple lenses and attract as many conclusions too.

One significant reality in the research findings was the fact that students' learning experiences were not enhanced holistically by acknowledging their vast and varied backgrounds. Students were dealt with as a homogeneous group. Little appreciation of their individuality and its impact on the way they processed information was shown, relating both to the design brief demands and, subsequently, to their responses to the briefs. Socio-cultural theory is very important in understanding how students' backgrounds account for how they learn and process learning material. The theory lays a strong foundation for understanding how people access knowledge before they enrol at design institutions and how those concepts are later transferred to the learning material at design institutions. According to Garrick, Pendergast and Geelan (2017:136), committed multicultural teachers would recognise the value of the socio-cultural learning theory in its ability to be creative in the way they dispense knowledge. The theory also allows learners to personalise their learning so as to enable creative ways of accessing knowledge in a way that that is unique to each individual learner. The success of the theory lies in its ability to enable students to pace and manage their learning.

Some of the lecturers' practices described by the students suggests that they might be oblivious to the impact on the students because they have not been trained to teach in multicultural classrooms. The assumption is often that some educators use their teaching experience as a departure point to argue for their competence with multicultural teaching. They neglect to understand that the number of years in service does not correspond necessarily to doing things 'right'. The discussion with E1 reiterated the importance of reflective teaching practice. The ability to assess and reassess one's teaching methods and approaches to problem solving is vital in any classroom scenario, but more so in multicultural Graphic Design classrooms where meaning is negotiated using visuals that are culturally specific (Jensen, 2010:50).

The industry expert reiterated that there were people in industry who were aware of the loopholes that exist in their relationship with design institutions. His admission that they could do better to serve both the industry and young designers by addressing pedagogy was positive. However, his insistence on serving the bottom line (profit) was worrying, because industry

comes across as self-serving and oblivious to the imminent lack of support from audiences that are becoming more critical to culturally insensitive advertising material. However, he agreed that reform in the way industry operated was necessary if they were to remain credible, current and, ultimately, profitable.

The research process proved to be a personal roller coaster of emotions, wanderings, and a return to the assessment of my journey as an educator in a visual field, mirroring the voices of the student participants. As a researcher, I could sit through and observe other practitioners at work to try and understand how we impact the lives of the students who place their trust in our expertise and experiences. The opportunity to observe, listen and learn made me realise how we negotiate the obstacle course of both teaching our charges and learning from their experiences. I understood for the first time how, in teaching, we are companions in the journey of knowledge sharing. Rather than viewing ourselves as the ‘fountains of all knowledge’, we need to take a step back to allow students to express that which is true to their view of the world, so that we challenge linear thinking and encourage diverse solutions to design problems.

While I could not prepare myself for the outcomes of the research, I was challenged to continue investigating to understand how design education could be bolstered to ensure that we produce designers who are confident to challenge the status quo in all its complexity. The motivation is that, if students are adequately prepared through a curriculum that addresses their realities, they could reform the way we view design. If students felt that the curriculum was inclusive and responsive, they would not think that it is more suited to one group of people over others.

The narrative multicultural approach takes on an auto ethnographic approach. It thus enabled me to get a glimpse into the lives of the participants through observing them taking part in teaching and learning. I got an opportunity to address my own issues with teaching, while learning how to deal with the challenges of teaching students from diverse backgrounds. The narrative multicultural approach requires that the researcher be present and aware at all times, because the researcher has to capture life as it happens. In the process, I learned to see beyond the ordinary conversation.

The narratives gave voice to the muffled rumblings of disgruntled students who felt they had been silenced by the fear that, if they spoke out, they would be victims of the lecturers they challenged. This issue shone a light on what to some might have seemed a clear case of lazy students making excuses. The issue also highlighted deep-seated issues of certain students battling with feelings of inadequacy and a sense of alienation because of a learning environment that did not accommodate their multicultural make-up. The narratives also revealed the need for a curriculum that places the needs of the diverse student body at the centre of all operations.

The research challenged my views of what I thought I knew about teaching Graphic Design to culturally diverse students. It made me realise that there is a need for educators to be educated and sensitised to the multicultural realities of the studio setting if we are to achieve the mandate of producing confident, competent and empathetic designers. Learners are as unique as the experiences that they bring into the classroom. This individuality is reflected in the relationships that they form with peers, the teacher and ultimately their response to learning material. The goal of responsive and responsible design begins in a classroom that enables all students to experience an opportunity to co-create and co-design their learning within the parameters of the curriculum. In a diverse society such as the one that exists in South Africa, it is important that learning encourages multicultural ways of thinking about design that create the basis for responsible design.

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Appendix A: Ethics Clearance Consent Form signed by respondents

 <p>The Cape Peninsula University of Technology</p>
<p>FID Research Ethics Committee (REC) – ETHICS CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION FORM</p>
<p>In order to meet the requirements of the university's Higher Degrees Committee (HDC) the student must get consent to collect data from organisations which they have identified as potential sources of data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where applicable mark relevant boxes <input type="checkbox"/> with an x = <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Replace red text with further description if needed or delete if not. • Delete grey descriptor text. <p>For further clarification on this matter please contact either the supervisor(s), or the Faculty Research Ethics Committee secretary (Ms V Naidoo) at 021 469 1012 or naidoove@cput.ac.za.</p>

1: Applicant / Researcher:	Title, name & surname:		Masters	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctorate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non Diploma Purposes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Office Telephone:	Cell:	e-mail:						
Student/Staff Number:	Start and proposed end of Study:							

2: Supervisor/ Project leader (if applicable):	Title, name & surname:	
Office Telephone:	Cell:	e-mail:

3: Project , Thesis, Article Title: as per HDC 1.1

4: Project Description and procedures:

Replace this text with a description derived from the studies 'aims' statement

5: Confidentiality

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential unless noted below. I understand that the contents will be used only for <<fill in, e.g. M Tech thesis, journal article etc. >> and that my confidentiality will be protected by <<fill in>> (explain how the confidentiality will be protected, e.g. use of pseudonyms etc).

6: Anonymity

Anonymity will be protected in the following manner (unless noted below) <<fill in>> (Describe how anonymity will be guaranteed, e.g. if photos are being used, the blanking out of faces and/or places names. If anonymity cannot be protected, state this expressly, explain the reason why and explain the risks involved for the participant, the organization, etc).

7: Conservation of data

The data collected will be kept in a secure manner <<fill in>> (Describe how and where the data will be stored, who will have access to it, and how long it will be conserved, e.g. digitally recorded interviews will be encrypted and kept in a password controlled environment. Note: original data or a copy of the data should be kept for audit purposes).

8: Voluntary Participation:

I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed. <<Change 'destroyed' to something else if negotiated with the participant. Get the participant to initial the change if done by hand.>>

9: Informed and Continuous Consent

Permission has been gained from all participants in this study. If permission can not be granted from the individual because of age, ability or other circumstances written permission will be sourced from the appropriate gatekeeper. If language or culture differ considerably a relevant assistant researcher is required to gain consent. (Informed implies the subject is fully aware of the nature of the study)

10. Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest (including financial gain, vested interest etc.) likely to result from my participation.

11: Additional consent: I make the following stipulations (please tick as appropriate):

	In thesis	In research publications	Both	Neither
My image may be used:				
My name may be used:				
My exact words may be				
Any other (stipulate):				

12: Notes:

Acceptance: I, (name) from (company / organization)

Agree to participate in the above research study conducted by <<fill in name of researcher >> of the Faculty of Informatics and Design <<fill in name of Department >> at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, which research is under the supervision of <<fill in name of supervisor >>.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or the supervisor. If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the secretary of the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at 021 469 1012, or email naidoo@cput.ac.za

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

<<In the case of a group add all names. In the case of children or participants with diminished decision making capacity or participants that are in custody all gatekeepers signatures are needed>>.

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisors signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B: Sample Questionnaire for second year respondents

The questionnaire is part of a research process for a Master's dissertation in Multicultural design education at an institution of higher learning. Please answer the questions as accurately as possible.

1. Name

--

2. What is your age? Please circle the one closest to your age

19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43+
-------	-------	-------	-------	-----

3. What racial group do you belong to?

Black	White	Coloured	Indian	Other (Specify)
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4. What is/ are your home language (s)?

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5. What year are you in your studies?

2 nd year	Repeat 2 nd year	3 rd year	Repeat 3 rd year
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6. What were you doing before you enrolled for the course?

High school grad	Working in graphic design industry	Working in another field	Self-employed/ doing nothing
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(If working, please specify what industry and what position)

7. Who is responsible for paying your fees?

Parents / Guardians	Bursary	Student Funding	Self
---------------------	---------	-----------------	------

8. What is your design background?

Art school	Other design programmes	Home/ Community based design	Other (Specify)
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9. Any formal art/ design knowledge?

A lot	A little	Not really	None
-------	----------	------------	------

10. What inspires your design choices?

Things from home	Immediate surrounds	Other designers	Not sure
------------------	---------------------	-----------------	----------

11. Do you believe your work reflects who you are as designer and person?

Always	Mostly	A little	Never
--------	--------	----------	-------

12. Explain your answer for question 10. In as few words as you can.

Thank you for taking part in the questionnaire!!!!

Appendix C: Sample of interviews with lecturers

1. Introduction: Establish rapport (shake hands)

Introduce myself and explain the context of the research and outline the topic as per discussion in both the email and telephone conversation.

(i) Purpose; explain the purpose of the interview

I would like to ask some questions that relate to your background as an educator/designer, as well as gain some insights about your teaching career in the multicultural environment that you teach.

(ii) Motivation; detail why the information is required

I hope to use the information that I get from you to understand the process that you use in teaching in multicultural classrooms.

(iii) The dialogues will last about 45 minutes at a time. However, as we engage, the times may vary according to your schedule and availability. If possible, I would appreciate telephonic and email engagements at those times when we cannot physically meet.

(Aside; I hope that is agreeable with you)

As per our telephone conversation, may I check that you are still comfortable with me recording our conversations?

(Transition) Let me begin by asking about your personal, academic and career background.

2. Context

My research topic as mentioned on my email correspondence is: **Multicultural narratives in Graphic Design teaching and learning for diverse audiences at a University of Technology**

The sub questions that relate to the research are:

1. What are the effects that diversity of languages and cultures of students has on teaching and learning Graphic Design?
2. Why is the current curriculum inadequate in preparing students to be effective communication design practitioners in multicultural South African and global contexts?
3. What is the role of industry in determining standards for design practice for students and therefore influencing the curriculum and pedagogic needs of design institutions?

3. Personal information

As you have noted, my research seeks to establish how the multicultural make-up of the class impacts what you teach, the way you teach. How your own culture contributes to the ambience in the classroom environment.

Establish; Lecturer's cultural background, ask where they are from. If not from Cape Town, ask how long they have been in the city and follow the flow of the answers with appropriate questions.

3.1 Education/career background

Area of study, career path (decisions, timespan, and different institutions of work)

Teaching background; what was it like at the beginning of their teaching career, make-up of classrooms then and presently? Line of questioning to be guided by the responses.

Establish how lecturer's own cultural background may influence interactions.

3.2 Curriculum matters

Understand lecturer's views on the curriculum and its suitability for the environment they teach in, based on his/her assessments and experience.

What are the different curriculum considerations at the levels where they teach; first, second or third year levels?

How are the design briefs designed? Follow up with leading questions on experiences with their different briefs.

What kinds of competencies do the briefs test? What issues have arisen from the briefs and how are these addressed year on year?

Ask lecturer to give examples of problems they have encountered with their briefs.

3.3 Relationship with industry

What is the relationship status?

From what level of their studies are students exposed to industry?

Does industry play an active role in academia?

Due to the extensive nature of the questions, they will be addressed as the process goes through meetings, telephone calls and emails. Some will be impromptu and guided by the conversations that will be heard, for the duration of the research.

Appendix D: Interviews with first year students

Introduction: Establish rapport and give an in-depth introduction of myself, background and research details. Refer to the email and telephone conversation that confirm the meeting.

Purpose of the interview

I would like to ask questions relating to your personal life, academic, journey thus far.

Motivation

I would like to use the information to understand where you come from and how you are coping with the course thus far.

Timeline

I hope to keep our interactions to about 30 minutes at a time. We will be chatting regularly, so our meetings will be guided by our continued conversations.

I will be recording all our conversations but, as discussed, your names will be replaced with pseudonyms. No-one will have access to the recordings by me.

(Transition) Let me begin by asking some background questions that relate to your personal, academic qualifications.

Background

What is your cultural background and what languages do you speak?

Where did you study? Did your study anything related to design?

How did you decide to study Graphic Design?

How are you finding the course so far?

What are your best and worst moments in the course thus far?

The rest of the questions will be informed by the observations and interactions with the first - year group.

Appendix E: Interviews with second year students

Introduction: Establish rapport and give an in-depth introduction of myself, background and research details. Refer to the email and telephone conversation that confirm the meeting.

Purpose of the interview

I would like to ask questions relating to your personal life, academic, journey thus far.

Motivation

I would like to use the information to understand where you come and how you are coping with the course thus far.

Timeline

I hope to keep our interactions to about 30 minutes at a time. We will be chatting regularly, so our meetings will be guided by our continued conversations.

I will be recording all our conversations but, as discussed, your names will be replaced with pseudonyms. No-one will have access to the recordings by me.

(Transition) Let me begin by asking some background questions that relate to your personal, academic qualifications.

Background

Where do you come from?

What is your cultural background and what languages do you speak?

Where did you study? Did your study anything related to design?

How did you decide to study Graphic Design?

How are you finding the second year of your studies?

What are your prospects for the final year? Have you decided on your majors and what you want to do after your final year?

What are design principles and considerations when you work?

The rest of the questions will be guided by the observations, interactions and observations.

Appendix F: Interviews with third year students

Introduction: Establish rapport and give an in-depth introduction of myself, background and research details. Refer to the email and telephone conversation that confirm the meeting.

Purpose of the interview

I would like to ask questions relating to your personal life, academic, journey thus far.

Motivation

I would like to use the information to understand where you come and how you are coping with the course thus far.

Timeline

I hope to keep our interactions to about 30 minutes at a time. We will be chatting regularly, so our meetings will be guided by our continued conversations.

I will be recording all our conversations but, as discussed, your names will be replaced with pseudonyms. No-one will have access to the recordings by me.

(Transition) Let me begin by asking some background questions that relate to your personal, academic qualifications.

Background

Please give me some background about yourself, where you come from.

What is your cultural background and what languages do you speak?

Study years and future prospects

How have the last two years of your study been?

Are you looking forward to the final year?

What are your plans for the coming year?

The rest of the questions will be informed by the interactions with the third-years.

Appendix G: Interview with industry expert

Introduction: Establish rapport and give an in-depth introduction of myself, background and research details. Refer to the email and telephone conversation that confirms the meeting.

Purpose of the interview

I would like to ask questions relating to your academic, personal and career backgrounds in the Graphic Design field.

Motivation

I would like to use the information to understand the relationship that industry has with Graphic Design institutions. I would also like to know what level of influence industry has in the Graphic Design academy.

Timeline

I hope to keep to our agreed 45 minutes with the hope that, should there be any other information that I need, we could liaise either telephonically or via email.

(Confirm the recording of the conversation again as per the email request.)

(Transition) Let me begin by asking some background questions that relate to your personal, academic qualifications and your career.

Background

What is your cultural background and what languages do you speak?

What are your academic qualifications and positions you have held leading up to your current one?

Where did you study and what was the duration of your studies?

Industry

What challenges do you think industry is faced with in the current globalised markets?

How are you as an agency keeping up with the ever-changing demands in the current globalised climate?

How do you deal with the changing cultural demands of the local and global markets?

What is your view of design graduates that are looking for employment in agencies such as yours?

Can you paint a picture of the ideal candidate for your agency?

Academy

Do you think that industry has a role to play in academy? What do you believe is industry's role in the academy?

Do you believe there is a role that industry can play in influencing the Graphic Design curriculum?

Do you see a need for such an intervention? If so why and if not, why not?

What is your agency' relationship with any of the design institutions in Cape Town or the Western Cape?

Do you think there are any benefits to industry developing strong ties with Graphic Design institutions?

What do you think are the traits of a designer that could successfully service the current globalised market?

Due to the extensive nature of the questions, they will be addressed as the process goes through meetings, telephone calls and emails. Some will be impromptu and guided by the conversations that will be had for the duration of the research.

Appendix H: Illustration of a first year design brief by Graphic Design Department, 2014

Design Techniques 1

Brief 8 - 2014

Dept. Graphic Design

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

subject code	Lecturer	project no.	sem. week/s	project intro.	no. of days	deadline
1) DGT 100s	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	8	14-18 Sept 28 Sept-2	15/28 Sept	5	2) Day 5
3) Project: ABSURD OBJECT ADS						

Aim:

An exploration of prop making and special effects.

Brief:

Create, customise and produce a convincing object designed for use by a specific person. The object will be used as a prop in an advertisement.

Scenario:

An advertising company has employed you (as a member of a special effects team) to produce a number of small props for a series of adverts that are going into production. The products that are needed are based on the idea of everyday items with a ‘twist’. Each item is designed for a specific person and is meant to reflect something about their character. The object could be functional, quirky, absurd, and could be overt or subtle in nature.

The adverts are for a brand whose promise is about ‘imagining’, ‘pushing limits’, ‘creativity’ and the ‘uniqueness’ ‘personality’ (of the client), where no problem is too small. The objects are required to communicate this in some way. There is an underlying sense of humour, a lightness and a personal touch in the objects.

Process:

You will be part of a team of four special effects specialists who have a deadline to meet for the ad. In your group, you will need to work together to make choices and decisions around your objects and the people for whom they are meant. You will also need to decide on the general look and feel of your ad. Each group will hand in collectively i.e. there is no such thing as an individual hand in.

The type of person used in the ad is someone you know intimately, i.e. a family member for each member of the group*, and the object is something that you could identify as having significance to that person. It could be something they would use frequently, really like, or even be something that you could imagine they would like if there were such a thing. As such it could initially be quite ordinary, or not.

Choose a member of your family as the owner of the object. Interview your person to find out about their likes, dislikes, favourite memories, dreams, disappointments as well as their day-to-day habits and lifestyle.... Present this to the class on day 2.

Choose a simple object that you would consider being appropriate to that person, which would reflect something of their interests, work, or everyday experience you have discovered. Choose something that is an interesting object in itself (shape, details, colour etc.) and presents possibilities for the project.

Imagine how you could transform or tell a story with the object to make it an extraordinary object with a personal twist. You will need to come up with 5 ideas for your object and develop the most successful solution. Give your object a name (which will help you conceptualise and define the object).

Your task as a team is to create the objects as authentically as you can within the context of an advertising shoot and within the deadline. Make them well and fast. Present them together (all four items) or you don't meet the deadline (movie shoots don't wait). Write an overview of the concept for the collection of objects and characters in your group to accompany your hand in (300 words max). Include all the names of the group members. Write and type a rationale of your own object (to be pasted into your prep).

Research:

A person in your family and an object. (interview)

Props in general (**four** relevant examples, printed out, can be in black and white)

Find out all you can about the object you are about to make and your proposed transformation – pictures, similar examples (**printed** examples in prep).

Research possible materials that you could use to make the object as **real-life** as possible (i.e. not for the primary school play).

Considerations: (A few questions to help you on your way)

Who is going to use the object (personality)? What features does the object have? How will the audience read the object? What does it do? What is the look and feel of the object (style)? How does it fit with the other objects in the group? Is the object believable? Am I working in my group or will I get fired?

Scale: as per concept and discussion, but should be able to be given and received in the ad, i.e. not huge!

Materials: whatever works and looks authentic!

Note: This project requires you to supply materials to make and finish your items. Some of these will be in your kit, but you may need to buy additional items. You can, however, often get offcuts from suppliers for no or little cost. You can also be creative in the way you can use recycled existing materials (as long as they are transformed and no longer have the visual memory of what they used to be).

Hand in per group:

1. Prep work, beautifully presented, per person (interview, prop and object research, 5 ideas scamps, final idea development scamps, material and finish research and experimentation)
2. *rationale (per person)
3. *written overview per group, displayed (this must also be photocopied and handed in as part of each person's prep)
4. set of objects

* written work pasted onto first page of prep (on layout)

Assessment criteria:

Group deadline (10%), Prep (interview, research and design development) (5%), group identity and presentation (5%), concept (choice and development of object, relationship to group objects) (60%), technical (form, control of medium, authenticity (finish) (15%), presentation, group deadline, group description of object, rationale (5%).

PAST

Which is your most cherished childhood memory/ memories?
What were you like when you were a child?
What are your happiest memories?
If you could have done one thing differently, what would it be?
What was your biggest regret in life?

PRESENT

What is your ideal thing to do to relax or unwind?
How would you describe yourself in three words?
What is your most cherished possession?
What makes you mad?
What brings you joy?
What do you love to do?
What do you hate to do?
Are you afraid of anything?
What are your daily habits?

FUTURE

If you had to learn something new, what would it be?
How would you imagine your life to be different?
What is one thing that you would still love to do?

If you had a million rand what would you do with it?
If you had to visit one place in the world, where would you go?

GENERAL AND SOME SILLY QUESTIONS

What is your favourite colour?

What is your favourite word?

What natural gift would most like to have?

If you had to come up with a personal motto, what would it be?

Were you named after anyone?

Do you like your handwriting?

Who do you miss the most?

What is your favourite smell/s?

What is your biggest fear?

I feel happy when...

What traits in others do you respect?

If you could witness any event past, present or future, what would it be?

What's the hardest thing you've ever done?

What was the first thing you bought with your own money?

If you could change the world what would you do?

What is usually your first thought when you wake up?

What do you think is the secret to a good life?

Who are you proud of?

What is your favourite meal/ food?

What would you wish for if you had a fantasy life?

What type of movies and books do you enjoy or hate?

How do you like to spend your birthday?

Appendix I: Sample of a second year creative rationale by Graphic Design Department

CREATIVE RATIONALE

1. What is the name of your Brand?

2. What is the problem you need to solve/or the Brief objective?

3. Who is your target market; what age are they and what is their demographic?

4. What is your advertising message, or SMP (Single minded proposition).

5. Explain what your creative concept is. (How you are interpreting your message).

6. What was your 3rd media choice, and explain why you are using it?

Appendix J: Sample of a second year design brief by Graphic Design Department, 2015

COMMUNICATION DESIGN 2

Brief 5 - 2015

Graphic Design Program
Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Campaign Workshop 1:

Ad Campaign Research *(Students may work in groups of 4)*

Find an existing Ad campaign. Analyze and prepare a 10 minute (or Pecha Kucha style) presentation of your analysis and aesthetics of the campaign using the following guidelines:

- Who is the target market?
- What is the message in the Ad/Campaign?
- What is the big idea behind the brand
- Is the tagline, slogan and wording successful?
- Is the campaign line and pay-off line relevant, clear & impactful
- What associations are depicted in the Ad? (Wealth, fame, adventure, risk, persuasive, etc.).
- What is the message of the campaign? Aspirational, factual or strong call to action (retail)
- What emotional appeals have been used and is it successful? (The need to be accepted, to have security, to be sexier, etc.).
- What is the tone of the campaign? Fun, Serious, confrontational, controversial or rational.
- What media has been used in the Campaign? (print, publication, online, digital, TV, outdoor, radio, indoor, guerilla, etc.).
- What is the timeframe on the Campaign?
- Will this campaign still be relevant in a year from now?
- Was this form of advertising very successful in your opinion and what other advertising or marketing vehicles could have also been used?
- Was this campaign successful and why? If not, what else could they have done to create stronger brand awareness. Different media channels? Stronger visuals? More compelling copy?
- Is this a campaign you would be proud to include in your portfolio and why?

NOTE:

PK – Pecha Kucha presentation style using only 20 slides and only 20 seconds per slide < <http://www.pechakucha.org>>.

Appendix K: Sample of a second year design brief by Graphic Design Department, 2015

COMMUNICATION DESIGN 2

brief 5 - 2015

dept. graphic design
cape peninsula university of technology

subject code	lecturer	project nr.	sem. week/s	project intro.	nr. of days	deadline
CMD200S		5		October 2015	5 weeks	Presentations and hand-in: 26-27 Oct 2015

Project: Campaign Challenge

Project learning objectives:

- To analyse existing advertising campaigns and the importance of the message being conveyed to "Whom" and with what tone and attitude.
- Learn more about target audiences and their reactions to Ad campaigns.
- To be able to understand payoff lines and their meanings and how it relates to the message of an Ad campaign.
- To understand how to apply appropriate persuasive advertising techniques and strategies.
- To visually demonstrate a campaign by applying design principles and knowledge.
- To apply an integrated approach within a campaign strategy.

An advertising campaign is a specific course of action designed to advertise a company, a cause, or product that employs an intentional and carefully coordinated series of media contact points in order to reach the target market. The outcome of any Ad campaign is to boost awareness of the product, service or event and generate interest as well as incite interaction between the target market and the brand. An advertising campaign must have specific goals that must be realized in a given period of time.

Challenge:

As a pair of graphic designers (design studio) you have been challenged to create a campaign for a local brand. Your target market is defined as young people between the ages of **18 and 25** to whom you will communicate your message and "Call to action". This target market are known to spend a lot of time in front of computers and the campaign will encourage them to get away from this comfort zone, to get out and go explore new experiences and broaden their horizons.

1. First Thursdays (happening tonight!!! – so get down there to experience it)

"ON THE FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH, EXPLORE THE ART GALLERIES AND CULTURAL EVENTS OF CAPE TOWN'S CENTRAL CITY UNTIL LATE."
Cape Town's central city comes alive on the first Thursday of every month, as dozens of art galleries stay open late along with cultural events that go on into the night.
First Thursdays is an incredible way to experience the cultural wealth that this city has to offer and to explore the streets on foot with friends both old and new.

Challenge: Create a campaign for this local brand. A call to action to get young, techno/phone people away from their screens and into art galleries and creative spaces. To encourage young people to mix, communicate, challenge, create and appreciate the art, food and anything else this event may generate.
<http://www.first-thursdays.co.za>

2. Yellow Pages

The term "Yellow Pages" has been a well known source of business directory services and the name for the industry which has produced it for over 100 years. Rapid evolution of internet media seems to be revoking the conceptual connection between printed pages, which are yellow, and sources for finding local

businesses. Search engines such as Google and local business directory websites have become an instant search solution to many. So, has the "Yellow Page" name become obsolete? The Yellow Pages website has recently undergone a major facelift to keep up with the new and trendy business directory brands as a start to regain brand loyalty.

Challenge: Create a **BRAND AWARENESS** campaign to step up activities, to build consumer loyalty and brand recognition again. To distinguish Yellow Pages from its competitors, highlighting its benefits, point of difference and recent updated online features.
www.yellowpages.co.za

3. "Green Pop"

A Cape Town based tree planting initiative and social business that celebrates greening SA and bringing South Africans, from all walks of life together. The Green Pop team is passionate about community upliftment, social integration, sustainability, urban rejuvenation and climate action. Green Pop invites everyone to join in making green living fun, educating people, creating a culture of planting trees and social participation..

Challenge: Create a campaign that **RECRUITS** and **DRIVES** young adults to join the 'treevolution' – participating in tree planting projects, green events, education and voluntourism and activate people to start doing!
www.greenpop.org

4. Hop On Hop Off Cape Town Bus

Hop on and hop off the double-decker red bus and discover Cape Town. With informative audio commentary about all our major attractions in 15 different languages (and a special kids channel), City Sightseeing tours are the easiest and most fun way to see the sights.

Challenge: Create a **BRAND AWARENESS** campaign for the Cape Town busses. It should encourage young, techno adults to get off their phones and Ipads etc to experience what Cape Town has to offer. Consider what is special about locals using this form of entertainment which some might find is aimed at tourists.
www.citysightseeing.co.za/cape-town

5. Hint Hunt

HintHunt is a simple and fun, live escape game, designed for small groups of 3-5 people. Teams get one hour to decipher a bunch of puzzles and mysteries in a tiny room. The goal is simple yet challenging: get out in time! Else ... you could be trapped inside forever! During this engaging and challenging game team members truly live and breathe in union for an hour.

Challenge: To create a **BRAND AWARENESS** campaign for Hint Hunt. It should encourage young, techno adults to get off their phones and Ipads etc and solve mind-bending clues within a team, without the help of Google!
<http://hinhunt.co.za/>

Research, strategise and think innovatively around how media can be used as part of your idea rather than just a vehicle for it. Look at existing Ad campaigns, whether it is print or on-line and analyse how the target audiences respond to it – www.adsoftheworld.com
This will give you ideas on how to strategize for your own campaign and apply appropriate and an integrated media techniques that suits your TM.

NOTE:

Your campaign must consist of the **two** mandatory elements plus **two** from the free choice section.

Mandatory design elements:

- Print: DPS (Double Page Spread) Ad in an appropriate Magazine.
Illustrated: (handdrawn, digital, collage, print, paint, doodle, etc etc). Full, final digital layout with text etc.
- TV AD (illustrated storyboard of 9 frames) ... **OR** ... Campaign Mobile App
Illustrated (digitally or by hand) – illustrating an instructional graphic on how to use the App in 5-10 frames

Choice: (consider which one will allow your next PHOTOGRAPHY project to shine in)

- Outdoor media print or interactive – billboard, bus stop, posters, etc.)
- Online media (interactive banner ad, social media, Youtube etc)
- Experiential / Ambient / Guerilla tactic etc
- Installation
- 3D item or other / direct mail package / gimmick / giveaway / competition / clothing or apparel
- Your recommendation based on campaign.

Campaign Considerations (See Concept Voyage Guide):

- What is the problem I need to solve?
- Develop an Advertising Strategy.
- Develop a Single Minded Proposition.
- What is your message?
- What is your Call to Action?
- What is your Concept?
- Your Execution and Direction.
- What are your Contact Points/Media?
- How does the campaign benefit or enhance the consumers life or lifestyle?
- Who is your primary target audience? (*Message becomes more personal when the TM can relate to your campaign.*)

Project requirements:

1. You will be working in design pairs made up of a GD2A and GD2B student.
2. Workshops: Presentation of Workshop by students: **Monday 5th October**
3. **PROGRESS 1 (Wednesday 7th October)**
 - Concept Reviews
 - Create a Visual Board showing target market, ideas, visuals, techniques, influences, etc.
 - Understand and know your target audience – don't make assumptions or take things for granted.
 - Work on Campaign strategy (*Try and sketch out your strategy in the form of a mind map*)
 - What advertising and marketing techniques suit your target market.
4. **PROGRESS 2 (Wednesday 21st October)**
 - Black and white (B/W) proofs and mock-ups for approval by lecturer before final colour prints.
 - Quality and refinement of campaign elements.
 - Bulk of work completed!
 - Preparing for final presentation to "Sell your Big Idea"

Print submission:

- All printed design elements to be mocked up for presentation and display.
- Any online/social/experiential/ mobile media, guerrilla elements should be digitally illustrated in Photoshop or illustrator.
- Miniature mock-ups to be made up of any 3D elements.
- All print design elements to be mounted where appropriate.

Research submission:

- Research, scamps, references including mind-maps of your campaign strategy can be ring bound and B/W proofs to be placed inside an A3 manila envelope to show your IDEATION process.

Digital Submission:

- Save all artwork as pdf's and submit in server (CT as advised by lecturer). For (BV) > email to gdlevel2@gmail.com
- Digital Presentations to be loaded before final Pitch– adhere to lecturer's instructions!

FINAL PRESENTATION

All students / teams will be presenting their campaigns on **Monday and Tuesday (26 & 27 October)** from 10am. Please be ready as teams will be drawn from the hat to present!

NOTE: This is a professional presentation of your campaign to the client. Dress and conduct yourselves accordingly. All students to be present for ALL presentations, whether you have presented yours or not.

Marking criteria:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Progress review mark 1 | 15 % |
| a. Research and strategy | |
| 2. Progress review mark 2 | 15 % |
| b. Refined strategy and design techniques | |
| c. Time management, b/w proofs | |
| d. Quality of layout and designs | |
| 3. Concept and strategy | 30% |
| e. Creative and original campaign idea, no creative plagiarism. | |
| f. Creative and appropriate strategy. | |
| g. Appropriate choice of campaign media elements | |
| 4. Design and execution | 20% |
| h. Application of design, typesetting and layout principles. | |
| i. Incorporating fresh and contemporary design techniques. | |
| 5. Presentation | 20% |
| - Quality of printed designs, mock-ups, and research submission | |
| - Presentation Skills | |
| - Adhering to brief requirements | |

TOTAL **100%**

Marking rubric:	
0 – 39%	No comprehension, omission of work
40% - 49%	Very weak
50% - 59%	Average, passing adequately
60% - 69%	Good, showing great potential
70% - 79%	Very good
80% - 89%	Excellent
90%- 100%	Excellent competence in all the assessment criteria

Project Outcomes:

1. To apply problem-solving skills and understand the importance of target audiences in advertising.
2. Demonstrate creative thinking and strategising skills.
3. Be able to explore new and intergrade innovative media techniques within an advertising campaign.
4. Digitally demonstrate technical design skills.