Teacher Identity in a Context of Religious Diversity

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Abstract

The requirements of the state as laid out in the Religion and Education Policy (2003), expect teachers to adopt a multi religious approach to Religion Education. The paradigm shift from a mono religious approach to a multi religious approach has been problematic for many teachers. A recent empirical research project in selected KwaZulu-Natal primary schools provided evidence that to varying degrees teachers have experienced a religious identity conflict. I argue that teachers have to negotiate their religious identity from a position of 'identity paralysis' or 'identity paradox' or even 'identity flexibility' to one of 'identity transformation'. This is a necessary process for teachers if they are to promote the human right to religious freedom, encouraging learners to grow in their own religious beliefs but also to empathetically respect the religious beliefs of others in society.

Keywords: Religion Education, religious identity negotiation, religious identity transformation.

Introduction

In this article I contend that teachers' religious identity and understanding of religious freedom can either entrench religious discrimination or promote religious dialogue in the classroom. The abolition of apartheid presents the opportunity to reshape religious identities and to fashion new understandings about religious diversity. The Religion and Education Policy (2003) requires teachers to shift from a mono religious to a multi religious approach to

Religion Education (RE). However, research (Jarvis 2008; Roux 2005) has shown that this shift has been problematic for many teachers.

There is often a disparity between teacher image (what is expected—by the curriculum or in a specific school context) and teacher identity. This disparity has been demonstrated by research projects including those of Carrim (2001), Soudien (2001), Matheson and Harley (2001) and Jarvis (2008). In the context of religious diversity, this disparity could translate into the difference between what teachers claim they are doing in a religiously diverse classroom and what is actually taking place. More specifically, this could point to a difference between talking about 'religious freedom' as a human right and the actual classroom praxis which should reflect the multireligious approach promoted in the Religion and Education Policy (2003).

What is needed is not simply the provision of more training in the skills required for effective teaching, but also an opportunity for teachers to explore their own religious identities and the 'understandings that [they] hold of themselves in relation to official policy images' (Jansen 2001: 242). The 'policy image' that is depicted by the Religion and Education Policy (2003) requires teachers to employ a multi religious approach to teaching RE. Such a requirement, in many cases, conflicts with teacher's personal religious identities (Jarvis 2008). This 'identity conflict' needs to be explored and negotiated in order for the Religion and Education Policy (2003) to be successfully implemented.

While there has been substantial research focusing on the teacher as practitioner, how teacher identity (the teacher as person) informs the way in which he/she approaches RE, has been under-researched and needs to be explored. I am guided by Goodson who advocates that it is critical to know about 'the person the teacher is' (1992: 10). The teacher is not simply a practitioner but a person with a unique history which impacts on his/her work. Mattson and Harley's (2003) research shows that teachers' personal values often differ from policy and according to Ratsatsi (2005), if a teacher feels that a curriculum's content contradicts his/her beliefs then that part of the curriculum is invariably disregarded or considerably altered. The religious identity of the teacher has direct bearing on the teaching of RE as

demonstrated by a recent empirical study (Jarvis 2008) described in the next section[1].

Research Design and Methodology

The study contributed to a wider research project (Roux *et al.* 2006) focusing on understanding human rights. It was carried out in three purposively selected KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) primary schools. The schools were selected in order to investigate three different school contexts in terms of demographics and resources. For the purposes of this article they will be referred to as Schools A, B and C. School A was a well-resourced, sub-urban, former model C school with predominantly White[2] and Indian learners, and which promoted a strong Christian ethos. School B was an under-resourced, peri-urban, former mission school comprising only Black learners and which unwaveringly promoted Catholicism. School C was a fairly well-resourced, sub-urban, former HoD[3] (House of Delegates) school comprising both Indian and Black learners and which claimed to adopt a multi religious approach to RE.

I employed an exploratory case study approach to determine how the understanding of the human right to religious freedom was constructed and

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[1] Religion Education fits into the Life Orientation curriculum, under outcome 2 which focuses on the social development of learners.

[2] It must be acknowledged that for some South African scholars the term 'Black' refers collectively to 'Africans', 'Indians' and 'Coloureds'. In this article, however 'Black' is used to refer to 'Africans'. 'Indians' and 'Whites' are called by those names. This is shifting nomenclature however, for it seems now that it is politically correct to refer to 'Black Africans' simply as 'Africans'. It must be noted that the researcher does not endorse these politically racial classifications, but uses them for expediency in describing the school contexts in which the research took place.

[3] 'Former Model C schools' refers to schools that were formerly 'White' schools under the apartheid regime. 'Former HoD schools' refers to the House of Delegates schools which were formerly 'Indian' schools. The 'peri-urban black school' refers to a school that is 'Black' in staff and learner composition and situated on the rural urban fringe

interpreted by Life Orientation (LO) teachers[4] in these schools. Male and female teachers of all race groups participated in the research, also young and fairly inexperienced teachers as well as older more experienced teachers. Teachers of Grade 4—Grade 6 LO classes were requested to complete self administered questionnaires in which they expressed their understanding of religious freedom and the way in which they thought their biography and school context influenced their approach to Religion Education. The Grade 6 LO teachers were then invited to participate in semi structured focus group interviews during which I was able to probe further their responses to the questionnaires. In order to gain a better understanding of the school context and the school policy and management position with regard to religious freedom I conducted a semi structured individual interview with the principals in each of the three schools. I used discourse analysis as the theoretical approach to analysing the data collected.

The study showed that practicing teachers' biographies strongly influenced the way in which they either promoted or discouraged an inclusive approach to RE in a context of religious diversity. It became evident that as they engaged with the LO curriculum, and more specifically, RE, they did not leave their identities at the classroom door (Bell Washington, Weinstein & Love 1997). However, the way in which they managed their identities differed from teacher to teacher. In the next section I discuss the theoretical framework which served as the lens through which I viewed the responses of the participants in my study.

Theoretical Framework—Religious Identity Formation

The relationship between the individual and society is crucial to understanding how identity is constructed and experienced (Francis 2005). In order to conceptualise how teachers construct their religious identity, and how this impacts on their approach to RE in religiously diverse school contexts, I worked within an interpretive paradigm using social identity theory as the theoretical framework. In this article I will be focusing in

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[4] It should be noted that without exception the teachers who participated in this study were teachers of LO who were not formally trained LO specialist teachers.

certain key ideas from social identity theory, namely the notion of 'multiple identities' (Giddens 2002) and 'identity negotiation' (Nias 1985; 1989) to explore how teachers formed their religious identity. Underpinning these principles is the view that identities are not fixed over time and space but rather, that they are multi-faceted and dynamic (Baumeister 1997; Randall 1995) consisting of membership of social groups (Newman 1997) or 'organizing principles' (Wetherell 1996). These include nationality, ethnicity, class, occupation, gender, race, sexuality, age and religion. Each of these intersects and interacts with the other.

Individuals identify with specific groups (Hood 1998) that they perceive themselves to belong to, thereby bolstering their self-esteem and sense of identity. Postmodernists like Harro (2000) describe how socialisation begins from birth when individuals are shaped into particular identities by already existing structures such as history, traditions, beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes, and influenced by powerful social, religious and cultural agents like schools and religious institutions.

Teachers, specifically, find themselves in schools which usually have an 'institutional identity' (Jenkins 1996) with established norms of practice which in many cases entrench a particular religious identity and this can either enable or hinder any individual agency in constructing a personal religious identity. Teachers have to negotiate their multiple identities/roles as they teach Religion Education in a context of religious diversity. I will later be using the notion of 'identity paralysis', 'identity paradox' and 'identity flexibility' to discuss the degree to which the teachers in the study (Jarvis 2008) were able to negotiate their religious identity.

Multiple Identities

Teachers move between the private and public domains of their life. Distinguishing between the personal and professional self draws attention to what Bendle (2002) describes as 'multiple identities'. Which of these identities is appropriate for an individual at any one time would vary according to the social context. I contend that some teachers, in adopting a multi religious approach to RE, may experience an 'identity conflict' (Jansen 2001). They are South Africans bound by the constitutional emphasis on 'freedom of religion' with the expectation to adopt an inclusive, multi

religious approach to RE. However, they may also be members of a religion which is exclusive in nature, exhorting them to disregard any religion other than their own. Teachers have to manage 'multiple identities' as they move in and out of a variety of social contexts, not least their religious community and school classroom. Individuals choose the identity they wish to embrace and often make choices among various identities as they move from one circumstance or context to another. The possible identity conflict between their professional and personal identities could impact on their classroom praxis. Teachers may struggle to teach adopting a multi religious approach, because they feel they are compromising their own religious identity. Others may struggle because the school context enforces a mono religious approach which is at odds with their religious identity and they therefore feel marginalised and uncomfortable.

The notion of a multiplicity of identities also includes the different roles played by individual teachers in each social context. For example, in a mono religious community an individual teacher may on the one hand play a leadership role in promoting a particular religion and then again in the classroom context the same individual teacher may well be expected to put this particular 'religious identity' aside in the interests of promoting a multi religious teaching approach. The teacher is expected to put into parenthesis his/her own values and beliefs, while not necessarily undermining them (Jackson 1997; Jarvis 2008). In order to do so a process of 'identity negotiation' would have to take place.

Identity Negotiation

The management of multiple identities necessitates identity negotiation (Nias 1985: 1989) so as to develop a consistent set of behaviours. While teachers may have inherited 'sets of paradoxes and ambivalences' (Kearney 2003: 2) their identities are not 'fixed or predetermined' (Kearney 2003: 4), but rather a self reflective project, always in the process of formation (Giddens 2002), making identity negotiation possible. Power relations play a definite role in this process of identity negotiation and formation (Hall 1991; 1996; Wetherell 1996). While an individual is born into a specific religious context, each individual has the power to design his/her own religious identity in response to the organising principle called religion. There is a

distinction between the collective identity or social message and the individual identity. What is crucial is how people in their individual capacities react to the organising principles of society like that of religion. The individual can choose how to respond and make choices and decisions that mould their identities. My contention is that when organizing principles such as religion, are addressed in RE as part of the broader LO curriculum, it is reasonable to assume that if teachers have not engaged in self reflection and negotiated their own religious identity, there is the potential to create less than the intended effect in the curriculum.

Teachers often find themselves in the position where they have to negotiate the school context, or 'institutional [religious] identity' (Jenkins 2006) by deconstructing it in relation to their individual religious identity. It became evident in the study (Jarvis 2008) that several teachers experienced a tension between their individual religious identity and that of the institution in which they were teaching.

The position taken by the school with regard to a multi religious approach to RE has a direct influence on the 'teaching perceptions and strategies of … teachers in a multi Religion Education programme' as demonstrated by Roux's research (2005: 305). I will be using school A as an example to demonstrate this. The School Management Team (SMT) strongly promoted a Christian only ethos in this school in which the majority of the teachers were Christians. The SMT unilaterally made the decision to remove RE from the LO curriculum.

Of the LO teachers who participated in the research project (Jarvis 2008) several teachers, primarily younger more inexperienced teachers, were overwhelmed by the hegemonic position held by the SMT and responded by endorsing the SMT decision. There were other teachers who, while not fully agreeing with the SMT position, nevertheless went along with the decision and did not openly challenge it. They felt uncomfortable because other religions were being marginalised, but at the same time they felt that they had to adhere to the 'institutional discrimination' promoted by their school. It became apparent, however, that while they did experience a measure of discomfort, they also enjoyed the comfort of being in an environment where their own religion was promoted.

There were however, teachers, mindful of the religious diversity in the school, who did not agree with the SMT decision, and their response was

to continue to teach RE. These teachers were able to maintain their own religious identity as Christians while adopting a multi religious approach to RE despite the ruling of the SMT. By doing so they became marginalised as they were not supporting the status quo. The way in which teachers chose to negotiate their religious identity impacted on the way in which they responded to the SMT decision.

In the next section I categorise teachers' responses to teaching RE. Having used social identity theory and more specifically the concept of teachers having to negotiate multiple identities I now refer to, modify, apply and extend Roux's research (1998). She posits the notion of 'paradigm paralysis', 'paradigm paradox' and 'paradigm flexibility' as lenses through which to approach the teaching of RE. Her conclusion is that it is unhelpful to look to the future through the lenses of old paradigms such as a mono religious approach to teaching RE. She concedes however, that replacing a well worn, comfortable paradigm is not an easy matter. However in order to embrace a new paradigm namely, a multi religious approach to teaching RE, teachers need to exercise 'paradigm flexibility'.

Teaching in Contexts of Religious Diversity—Teacher Responses

I have applied Roux's (1998) notion to religious identity. The following categories demonstrate the degree to which teachers have managed to negotiate their multiple identities. The ways in which they manage their personal religious identity, the school context in which they teach and the demands of the Constitution of South Africa and more specifically the Religion and Education Policy (2003) can be categorized as 'identity paralysis', 'identity paradox' or 'identity flexibility'. While these categories serve the purpose of identification for analysis, in this article I would like to introduce a fourth category, namely that of 'identity transformation'.

Identity Paralysis
Teachers who fall into this category are those who come from mono religious environments and who display signs of fear or discomfort when placed in a

multi religious environment where they have to facilitate lessons about belief systems and values which are not part of their cultural and/or religious and spiritual traditions (Roux, Du Preez & Ferguson 2007). These teachers experience identity paralysis, or what Featherstone (2003) calls 'bounded identity'. They are teachers who are bound by their biography and membership of certain social categories and who, when approaching RE in a context of religious diversity refuse to negotiate their identities. For fear of compromising their own religious identity, they choose not to accept any religion other than their own and teach only from a mono religious position, usually maintaining the status quo in the school because it is aligned with their personal position. This was evidenced in the study (Jarvis 2008) by Christian teachers like Bona[5] and Siya, both in school A, who experienced difficulty as they struggled to reconcile their own religious identity within the religiously diverse context in which they were teaching. Their responses reflect the desire to engage with their religion only and an unwillingness to accept religious diversity and a need for change.

Bona: I think Christianity is the right way and only that should be practiced.

Siya: You are determined in what you believe and don't alter on those beliefs. I think I can explain to the learners who are not familiar with going to church because there are those who can't even pray. So right now we have got to promote that.

Teaching in a school such as school A where the SMT had decided on the set of beliefs to be presented as the one true religion meant that Christian teachers did not have to compromise their own religious identity and they were not challenged to be inclusive, taking into consideration the other religions represented in the school, especially amongst the learners. This is reflected by the school principal and two of the LO teachers.

School Principal: We're a Christian school and we do not give space/ time to other religions to practice their religion at school.

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[5] The names used in this article are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the teachers who participated in the study.

Angela: Yes, our ethos is Christian and so are our assemblies. I love it because I am a Christian.

Sonja: I'm happy with the religion environment I am around because they are all Christian. Only the Christian religion is practiced.

Not only did several teachers experience the kind of identity paralysis described above, but some also experienced an identity conflict (Jansen 2008). These were by and large the older Christian teachers in schools A and B, schools which formerly (pre-1994) were encouraged to have a Christian only influence and ethos, who now found themselves in the position where Christianity is no longer the institutionalised religion of the State. These teachers were aware that adopting a mono religious approach to RE was no longer constitutional but this realisation did little to resolve their conflict as they were paralysed and unable to move forward from the pre-1994 position with which they had become accustomed.

There were some teachers who demonstrated an identity paralysis for a different reason. These were teachers who felt overwhelmed by the hegemonic position held by the SMT and who responded in a totally subordinated manner, endorsing the SMT decisions. They felt that they had no agency to employ any approach to RE other than that promoted by the SMT.

Identity Paradox

Teachers who experienced discomfort at the fact that religions other than their own were being marginalised, experienced something of an 'identity paradox'. They felt 'bounded' by their own religious identity but they also desired to negotiate their identities in order to embrace a multi religious approach to RE so as to be more inclusive. However this was not without difficulty and they felt unable to do so. They were acutely aware of the religious diversity represented by especially the learners in the school and the Religion and Education Policy (2003) directive to teach RE using a multi religious approach. This is clearly expressed by two of the participants from school A and B respectively.

Lyn: … we are certainly not being fair to non Christian learners. The other religions are not fully considered.

Jabu: … there are people who are African Christians[6] but their religious freedom is not taken into consideration.

These were Christian teachers who recognised the need to accommodate the religious diversity in the school using a multi religious approach to RE as opposed to presenting a mono religious, particular Christian perspective only. Their struggle lay with adopting a multi religious approach to RE which would run counter to the 'institutional [religious] identity' (Jenkins 1996) and mono religious approach adopted by the seemingly unbending and unaccommodating SMT. It became clear during the interviews that these teachers experienced discomfort with this approach especially because of the religious diversity represented amongst the learners. This discomfort is expressed by the following teachers, the first two from school A and the third from school B.

Purity: I do believe the learners at this school have to compromise their beliefs. There is no religious freedom … we don't ever really pay specific attention to any other religions other than Christianity.

Lindy: The policy set by management is strongly based on a very Christian ethos of which I do agree with but we are not a private school, we are a government school and should be accommodating at least to an extent and respect other religions.

Jabu: One religion[7] is promoted just because more learners are from that religion so others are neglected because they are few members from different religions.

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[6] Jabu is referring to those learners and teachers who belong to the African Independent Churches and who are not Catholics.

[7] Teachers at school B often used the term 'religion' as synonymous with 'denomination'. This tended to be confusing at first but with probing I discovered that they are stressing the fact that Catholicism is promoted and other Christian denominations as well as Traditional African Religion are overlooked.

It was difficult for these teachers to exercise individual agency in their school contexts. They expressed disempowerment, sharing the view that it would be 'safer' to keep quiet.

Purity: We are not allowed to discuss things openly at meetings.

Jabu: Keeping quiet is safer.

Teachers suffering with both 'identity paralysis' and 'identity paradox' find themselves in a position of ineffectiveness. They are unable to successfully negotiate their religious identity and while in some cases a measure of discomfort is experienced, there is an inability to promote the human right to religious freedom.

Identity Flexibility

However, there were certain teachers in school A, who, despite a SMT decision to remove RE from the LO curriculum, did in fact include RE and teach it using a multi religious approach. One of these teachers said the following:

Nomsa: I do in LO, teach learners about other religions.

These particular teachers in school A, expressed a measure of individual agency and identity flexibility. They said that in their teaching of other religions they still remained committed Christians in terms of their personal religious identity, but were able to adopt a multi religious approach to RE. This was expressed by another participant in school A who had this to say:

Charlene: My belief is firm and I feel very secure therefore there is no problem to teach religious freedom in schools. I can deepen the learners' faith and belief in their own religions, at the same time teaching them to respect other religions.

In contrast to schools A and B, the teachers, without exception, in school C were quite accepting of a context of religious diversity and a multi religious approach to RE. Two teachers and the school principal made the following comments:

Len: … in our school we have total religious freedom and respect all religions. We should respect all religions as equal … make a Hindu a stronger Hindu, Christian a stronger Christian etc.

Priya: Learning about other religions helps to broaden my own views. We are free to express our views and children are enthusiastic about learning about different religions.

School Principal: There are different religions and they are all treated the same or given fair share i.e. the school considers all religious holidays in the calendar.

By and large these were teachers who had been raised in homes that were tolerant of religious diversity and whose personal religious identity included an embracing attitude towards religions other than their own. They experienced no discomfort when adopting a multi religious approach to RE and made the following comments about their position:

Len: My parent's religion had a great influence on me. Because my parents were Hindi speaking I grew up in a home being rooted in Hinduism, this allowed me to find myself and where I come from...it has shaped me to have the ability to know where I come from and be open to understand and respect other religions.

Barbara: I do believe that my religion teaches me not to condemn other religions. I believe every individual has a choice to make on their own. I respect this.

Priya: My religious affiliation does not condemn other religions.

For these teachers in school C adopting a position of 'identity flexibility' was not problematic. This was so different to the scenario in schools A and B where adopting a position of 'identity flexibility' was far more difficult. However, while 'identity flexibility' is a move in the right direction, my contention is that unless teachers move to a place of 'identity transformation' a multi religious approach to RE will be adopted only for the purposes of being constitutionally correct. It could be very superficial, focusing on religious literacy and, as was the case in school C, ensuring inclusivity simply by marking every religious holy day and special event.

What I found lacking in all three school contexts was any meaningful, empathetic engagement with RE. For this to take place, I argue that teachers need to negotiate their religious identity to a position of 'identity transformation'.

Identity Transformation

Simply knowing about other's religions and adopting an inclusive, multi religious approach to RE does not necessarily deal with prejudice, suspicion, fear and stereotyping in the RE classroom. I contend that teachers need to adopt a position of 'identity transformation'. In order to do so they need to be comfortable with their own religious identity and their own religious discourse and sufficiently secure therein so as to be able to empathically[8] investigate the practice and traditions of other religions represented in their classrooms and in society as a whole.

Teachers need to interrogate their own biography with regard to religion and identify the practices and traditions which influence those beliefs and then reflect on their attitudes towards those (the 'other') who hold different beliefs. Moving to a position of 'identity transformation' does not mean compromising individual religious identity but rather it means taking into account the right of others to hold different religious identities which, while different, are equally of value to those who hold them. It means being able to dispel a 'belief in the superiority of a particular [religion] leading to prejudice and antagonism toward people of other [religions]' (Baez 2000: 330). Teachers in this category of 'identity transformation' should be able to employ a 'reflective-dialogical' approach (Roux 2007) that provides for the expression of their own opinions as well as the consideration of the ideas of others.

The dialogical approach should be about searching for meaning and understanding (Allen 2004). It is about recognizing that each person has 'something of value to contribute; it is opening [up] to the possibility of

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[8] Empathy is described by Abdool and Drinkwater (2005) as more than just knowledge about another person's religion. It is the capacity to understand and respond to the religious experiences of another person with an increased awareness of that person's thoughts and feelings.

learning from the other' (Ipgrave 2001: 7). Even amongst those who share a common religious identity there could well be differences in religious outlooks, as was evidenced in schools A and B in particular. Dialogical activity recognises the individuality of religious thinking (Ipgrave 2001) and provides an opportunity to explore this.

A recommendation of the study (Jarvis 2008) is that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture needs to create opportunities for teachers to share their religious narrative (which includes tradition and practice) with one another. 'Narrative unity' (MacIntyre & Dunne 2002) takes place when teachers meet each other simply as individuals and not as representatives of one religion or another, and listen to one another's stories and grow in understanding of their own of one another's traditions. This interaction provides the opportunity for teachers to put their own beliefs into parenthesis (Jackson 1997) so as to adopt an impartial yet empathetic approach to the beliefs of others.

This dialogue has the potential to be emancipatory and transformational for those involved (Allen 2004) . Teachers emerging from it are likely to be less fearful of compromising their own religious identity (often the root of 'identity paralysis' or 'identity paradox') and more able to engage with confidence in situations of religious diversity. This process begins with the acceptance of diversity, difference and change ('identity flexibility') but then needs to move to a place of being open to difference and willing to engage with difference and learn from others ('identity transformation').

'Identity transformation' needs to take place not only on an individual level, but also at the level of 'institutional identity' (Jenkins 1996) which in certain institutions, continues to be a 'bounded identity', as was the case in schools A and B. Teachers who have undergone an 'identity transformation' should be able to exercise individual agency to make possible the disruption of and redefinition of (religiously) intolerant structures (Baez 2000).

It is my contention that when teachers have moved to a position of 'identity transformation' they will be able to employ a 'reflective-dialogical' approach (Roux 2007) in the classroom that will provide learners with the space in which to express their own beliefs as well as empathetically take

into consideration the beliefs of others. It is at this point that meaning will be added to any multi religious approach to RE.

The table below summarises the four categories of 'negotiated' religious identity discussed above

Identity paralysis	Identity paradox	Identity flexibility	Identity transformation
The teachers who experienced an identity paralysis were unable to negotiate their religious identity and were unable to adopt a multi religious approach to Religion Education.	These teachers who experienced something of an identity paradox did so because they experienced discomfort at the fact that religions other than their own were being marginalised but they were still unable to sufficiently negotiate their religious identity so as to adopt a multi religious approach to Religion Education.	These teachers were able to negotiate their religious identity and adopt a multi religious approach to Religion Education albeit limited to religious literacy.	Teachers in this category are secure in their own religious identity and are able to dialogue reflectively and empathetically with those who believe differently so as to transform attitudes and truly promote religious freedom.

Conclusion

The transformation in South African society, and its education system, not least with regard to RE, has challenged the religious identity of individual teachers. However, it has also created the opportunity for teachers to fashion a new set of understandings about who they are. Both the Norms and

Standards policy (1998) and the National Curriculum Statement (2003) assume that teachers are able to engage positively and meaningfully within a context of religious diversity. The findings of this study (Jarvis 2008) have shown that this assumption is simplistic at best.

In the domain of religion, post-Apartheid religious identity construction has been problematic. Not only individual teachers, but also institutions, have not been emancipated from holding on to a 'bounded [religious] identity' (Featherstone 2003). There are still post- Apartheid schools that are resistant to transformation and who experience 'identity paralysis'. Within those schools individual teachers find themselves in a position of 'identity paralysis' or 'identity paradox'. There are schools that show semblances of change but do not actually address meaningful transformation, and in some cases could even be seen to be anti-transformatory. While 'identity flexibility' is a move in the right direction it is not enough.

Intrareligious[9] and interreligious[10] dialogue needs to be encouraged. This requires an element of reflectivity as individuals investigate their own religious identity whilst also developing a religious literacy and religious empathy that will enable them to adapt to a context of religious diversity so that various aspects and issues of religions are brought into a mode of critical dialogue. In order for this to be successful teachers need to know who they are, and they need to acquire the necessary skills to be reflective as they negotiate their religious identity. The questions which need to be further explored include when and in what contexts religious identity negotiation should take place, and the sustainability of such a process.

The religious identity of teachers could play a pivotal role in their classroom praxis as they either entrench discrimination on the basis of religion or promote religious dialogue and transformation. Teachers need to adopt a position of 'identity transformation' in order to encourage their

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[9] To allow for critical inquiry and interaction between groups/ denominations of the same religion.

[10] To broaden knowledge about different religions when individuals of different religious traditions are in contact with one another within the same context.

learners to grow in their own religious beliefs but also to empathetically respect the religious beliefs of others in society.

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