Right thanks very much for agreeing to allow me to interview you the first question:

Q. At our school you are faced with children in class who speak different home languages, 3 or 4 different home languages at least and yet the medium of instruction is English, how do you and your colleagues cope with this?

P: Ok Umm I cope with it with giving them simpler, simpler, easier work picture, writing, instruction, show them (P uses hand gestures to emphasize what she is saying) but its not just give them the instructions you have to show them, more like you know show and tell, show and tell that’s it. And picture, pictures and things like that and then first you have to do a baseline test to see where they are I mean the kids maybe speak different languages but some of them are, are bright which they can cope so you have to do sort of a baseline test to see where they really are at.

Q: Ja And how do you and the other teachers experience teaching in a multilingual classroom?

P: It’s very difficult very, very difficult because those children require individual attention because some of them speak different languages from the kids in your class who can help them you know, cooperative learning but it’s become very difficult because you sometimes you tend to get a discipline problem and when you do teach your mainstream kids your you know first language you find and then when you go to assist the others your kids are going off at a tangent and it is difficult at times very difficult.

Q: And is there a way that you can manage to include all the different language speakers in all the lessons?

P: Well recently that’s what I have done well I felt that uhh when it comes to written work there.. I do it individually with them but when it’s group work and things like that I get learners who are able to help them a lot and I sit there and I help them and I tend to put them in their own group so they can help each other and it
works I mean even though they speak different languages they able to um help each other and I give them an instruction, I simplify it down for them.

Q: So what teaching methods would you say actually work for them?

P: Group work, xx co operative learning um individual attention (chuckles) I mean there you have to do that and um you as a teacher have to do some extra work and try to explain this to kids you can’t say oh you don’t speak another language goodbye I you know I you I there’s nothing I should do for you because I feel that some of the teachers in this school do have that attitude, oh because he’s from China he’s good at maths just leave him and he will go at the end of the year. Children are at school to learn and even though we have children who are first language English speakers they also very weak.

Q: So what would you say are the biggest problems that you face?

P: Biggest problems? Ja in the situation umm when you don’t have other learners who speak that first language like I’ve got uh Bobby he’s from India and he speaks Hindi and I don’t even speak that Indian language but he’s picked up over the month uh that could be a problem as I said the behaviour problem they become bored and then they become behaviour problems if you do not show them the right uh lesson uh sometimes you don’t get around to doing a set of work for them because of the extra prep and then you have you as a person have to spend that time explaining that worksheet to them and they, they require your individual attention that’s it and you know the behaviour problems we have you can’t do that because somebody is hitting somebody, things like that.

Q: So what would you say the biggest impact on your teaching is by having to modify your teaching for these children?
P:  Umm  A lesson which would have taken you thirty minutes
would take you another forty five minutes you know and uh
sometimes you have to if the kids are doing like maybe art and
uh these kids are they have to lose out on that because you
have to give them that atten.. attention and I feel that English
and Maths are the most important things that they need to know
about and that is why we are pull them out and you have to sit
with them.

Q:  Do you believe that there’s any better solutions?

P: (sighs) I can say that put all these second language children
in one class but there you also going to have multi- language
where ever you go, whatever you do, even if you go to another
country the same thing is going to happen like the, the child that I
have in my class Alan I have decided this is what I’m going to do,
you are going to be part of the class you are going to do
everything else maybe at a easier pace and a slower pace but
the fact that you are learning you are meeting the assessment
criteria, assessment standards but not as like the kids in your
level are at but at a different level that's, that's my best solution
and that's what I’ve done and its worked and Alan has picked up
a lot because you’ve tested him at the beginning of the year and
if you test him now you’ll see the difference.

Q:  And what role if any does culture play?

P:  A lot because some of these kids are very arrogant and they
feel they do not need to learn another language even up towards
culture our history of our country, apartheid, they just feel that I
don’t need to learn Afrikaans, I don’t need to learn another
language why should I? That’s what you get sometimes.

Q:  Is this from both um ordinary English speakers as well as
from umm the second language learners?  ordinary children
too why should we? Why can’t we learn in our language? you
know, so you see its not so bad when you come to Grade 5 um
if they came here last year and they were speaking the
language you get the arrogance set in but if they’ve been here
from Grade 1 you don’t, you don’t you know because they, they change they change.

Q: Okay, Some people say that you should allow the children to use different languages in the classroom while you are teaching. What is your opinion about this?
P: I do allow my kids when they x x x? interacting each other and things like that because that’s wrong I mean when we interact with our colleagues we are all speaking the way we want to speak I mean you, we all use upper English we use all our slangs and things like that and we come to work and they speaking to their peers and colleagues and I think that when it comes to group work I’ll allow them but if they coming out to present or we’re doing something in English and I’m assessing them then I expect them to do it in English because I feel children should be comfortable in what they shouldn’t, I shouldn’t allow a kid to be don’t be bored because they don’t know how to speak English or they, you know they must be interactive I don’t mind I don’t say o.. you not allowed to speak your language my kids do it and they’re happy.

Q: What do you know about second language learners or language acquisition in general?
P: uhm by language acquisition? How children acquire language. Okay second language learners I feel that they better with maths, you know I’ve taught maths they much, much better, pictures, number representation all that is better and from teaching Grade 1, I learnt a lot had to do your phonics by rote learning. You have to drill the phonics. You have to show them pictures. You have to read it everyday and I’ve been doing reading with my classes, I promise you from the beginning of this term, from the beginning of last term their reading has picked up so much because listening to me reading they have to listen to someone else speaking and I think that’s where our biggest problem with second language kids because they listen to their parents speaking at home, parents don’t speak English and I write in their report they need to be exposed to more Eng.. of the
English language by watching TV, listening to the radio, reading books in that area, that’s how I feel I mean that's how we all learnt.

**Q: What kind of support do you think teachers should be given in order to cope?**

P: Smaller classes (laughs) small classes um what else? I think that the, the school should work out a programme, which we have done, uh and the, the teachers need to actually monitor that, they need to actually have some one monitoring these second language because you know when you get caught up in your work you forget. You do and that is what has happened, everything is in place but it is still not working. We need to have sort of a system to monitor these kids where they really are at. I mean fine we have these bridging classes after school and things like that but whose really monitoring I mean, how much these children are learning and what, and what progression levels they moving to I mean that’s what we need.

**Q: And have you received any kind of training or gone on a course or read any books about how to cope with second language learners?**

P: No it’s just from what I’ve acquired from you and I’ve acquired by myself and I think its all a learning experience you have to do and then say oh this is not working and do the next thing but there’s no there’s been no actual support in that [to say?] we been given booklets but fine you can give some one a booklet, how they use it is their problem.

**Q: And when you trained to be a teacher um what language were you trained to teach in?**

P: English

**Q: In English and how would you say your teaching has changed over the years?**

P: Okay I came into the system when um we still had the old, old system where you ticked off and then when I was in my second
year we went to OBE and now we into RNCS (laughs) so all in
the space of seven years I have done three teaching you know
uh curriculums - what was your question again? ja how would
you say your teaching has changed? It’s changed a whole lot
promise you um from just being standing there and talking all the
time and having little resources to lots of resources, walking
around the class facilitating my children and I have to, I have to
say get mechanism you know to include my second language
learners and include the other kids who are slow you, you have
to do it, you have to have extra worksheets and enrichment and
remedial and everything in between but you sometime I have
reached frustration levels where I feel that God as much as I do I
can’t, then try the next day but..

Q: So what have been the good positive changes?
P: Teaching is much more exciting now; I’ve learnt from my
experiences uh I try and do all the interesting things and I mean
as much as I complain about my job I can’t see myself doing
anything else.(chuckles)

Q: And have there been any negative changes?
P: Yes! I feel that the management of the school does not
support us enough and um with the changes in teaching in your
grade I mean and being the grade head and bearing all that
burden has become too much for me and I feel that being in
Grade 5 for 4 years is caught in a rut. Next year I actually want to
change because I just feel that I’m not doing the best that I could
do because I’m caught up in a rut and the work load is too much,
the admin is too much, that is what, that, instead of attending to
your, your kids who need you, you rather sit because you need
to send in your admin you have to sit at your desk and do your
admin that …..

Q: What advice would you give any one considering
teaching as a career now?
P: (sighs) Honestly I’ve told lots of my cousins and family and
friends that teaching is a good job I mean we have to bear in
mind that um the children of today are very different, you know
and the I learnt that you know, as you say why did I change my
teaching styles because I came from a conservative Indian
background to come to this was a culture shock, multicultural
very shocking but you had to change to suit everyone you have
to change and the kids who are finishing school now are the new
generation they will be able to cope with it because we have
coped with it, and but like some one who’s very old I would
suggest they do, do resign from teaching I promise you I’m
being honest. (Laughs)

Q: And what is the effect of multilingualism on the children
in your class?
P: It’s a good thing the kids learn about it. They learn that not
everyone speaks English that that’s not the only way that we
speaking and English isn’t the only form of word, it’s the most
important but it’s not the only form of communicating and they
learn about other cultures, they respect each other. Where even
the black kids they have so many different languages still respect
each other as you said some of the arrogance does come in
because you Zulu and I’m Xhosa and I’m Sotho and I’m better
than you, you know, you get that you do.

Q: Are there any other negative effects?
P: Um negative effects, not really but we did have a problem
where the Korean and the children..Chinese children don’t get
on, because that’s because of historical background there’s the
historical background and then also the negative effects the kids
who do speak English feel that the second language learners
they getting away with murder in their eyes you know how come
they getting such .assessing but they getting like you know they
feel like the same assessment but they don’t really understand
how you assessing them that’s what they feel that’s the negative
aspect coming in.

Q: And do the multilingual children the second language
learners do they feel badly done by?
They also, its, its actually, I feel sorry for those kids because its they, some of them think why do my parents put me in this school I'm just going through the motions and some of the kids are frustrated because the teachers don’t worry about them they put in the corner you do this okay break up pictures you do this and they don’t worry and that’s not fair and I’ve noticed this in Ms Naidoo’s class ever since she’s came those kids whom those teachers were not paying attention to, have got some attention and they very happy about it, they are.

Q: Okay to sum up how would you describe your teaching experience in a multilingual classroom?
P: (Laughs) I've had some very good, very good points and I've had some very, very, very bad days where I want to throw in the towel and want to leave.

Q: Can you give me some examples of the good ones and the bad ones?
P: Okay the good ones - you learn a lot from these kids, it’s challenging to you as a teacher I mean if you like challenges its good for you because you will try and make this child understand and you do use different methods, you use pictures and whatever. The negative if I had a smaller class and I had more time I would do, I would do a much better job, much better job, these kids would be speaking proper English by the end of the year but and what’s unfair is that the past grade did nothing about it and the year before and the teacher before that did nothing about it and it becomes your problem, becomes your problem and you know being the aid teacher in the school it becomes your problem which is not fair, teachers are not playing the game.

Q: Tell me about your very bad, bad times when you wanted to give up, give me an instance.
P: When a child is not interested and uh no matter what you do, how much you positively motivate this child, the child is not interested they just feel why should I be here and learning this
language and he throws in the towel and the behaviour gets ugly
and you get angry with all the children in your class and you
reach your frustration point I’ve done that where I’ve walked out
the class because you trying to help this child and this child does
not want to be helped and you get lots of those learners out
there and the bigger they are the harder it gets very, very much
harder, they not interested.

Q: Why do you think they not interested?
P: The teachers are not stimulating them enough or they feel that
I’m at this age why should I do it its too late, its too late for me I
mean I had Ricardo last year, he was reading grade 1 books but
he was not interested in the beginning and after I sat with him
and I did whatever I could, he was but he was not interested in
the other teachers classes why? …… That’s been the bad part I
mean there are some days where I just want to cry (chuckles)

Q: Is it just because the children are not interested or is it
because it’s difficult?
P: The children are not interested because you, you know you’re
trying your best and you tell the kids try your best and uh it
actually brings out the hor… you, you become horrible and I don’t
like to be that way towards kids.

Q: Anything else you’d like to add about your, about how
you cope in a multilingual classroom?
P: Really but I, I just want to say that there’s no actual way of
escaping this multilingual and teachers, the teachers out there
need to know that all these people who are sitting in these all
white classes or these all black classes who are teaching in their
language they need to get an eye opener because some of them
just feel oh its never going to touch me there’s teachers in our
school also its never going to touch me and they just send the
children on through the motion, that is not fair, that is not fair
unto that child its definitely not and you know what they don’t
realize that by helping a child you helping the child for life, you
are.
Q: And what do you think of the um the policy that they’re talking about bringing in where they say that all children must learn in their mother tongue until grade 4, English or whatever other language they choose as a subject and then in Grade 4 and Grade 5 start learning in English?

P: So it means we going to have all Zulu speaking schools, uh Sotho speaking schools there its going to be so segregation we still going to go to our old schools those children are going to learn in that way always they going to never want to go, like our kids who learn in Afrikaans in Afrikaans schools they will never go to an English school you go to some of these people never want to speak Afrikaans, you know they never want to speak in the language I don’t think that's going to work.

I don’t know how it’s going to work but this is what they are talking about.

Because think about it you get some places where people will never speak you speak to them in English and they know how to speak English and they’ll never it’s a culture thing, it’s a the historical background of this country it really is the arrogance of this country I’m telling you, I’ve been where people have speak have spoken to me but they have spoken in Afrikaans and I know because if you can understand English you can speak English I’m sure you have experience of this.

Q: Anything else you’d like to say.

P: Good luck with your … I hope I was very helpful.

After the tape was switched off and she was walking out, she related the following: But I must just say that at my previous school which was 90% black poor kids, the black parents didn’t like black teachers teaching their kids as they believe they can’t teach properly.