

https://dspace.org/

A psychology of a Catholic education: A case study of a day primary school in Johannesburg

Jaki, Patrick Odwora

2008-05-30T12:54:54Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/4912

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

A Psychology of a Catholic Education: A Case Study of a Day Primary School in Johannesburg

Patrick Odwora Jaki

Dissertation Submitted in Fulfilment of the Degree of
Masters of Education in the Faculty of Humanities
University of the Witwatersrand

July 2007

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work.

Patrick Odwora Jaki

Place_____ **Date** _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation was made possible because of the support of my friends. I am foremost indebted to Carol Ann Macdonald for her commitment to her student — myself. She believed in me. She was a supervisor and a mentor in Vygotskian thought. This made me accomplish this piece of work. Her patience and understanding in my slow progress, her concern for my personal welfare — my deepest gratitude to her for accepting me for who I am.

I am indebted to the Principal of Holy Family Primary School for allowing me unrestricted access to the facilities of the school, thus enabling me carry to out this inquiry. I am deeply indebted to Ms. Rosa and Mrs. Rosaline, the learners of Grade Six A.C. and Grade Five R.S for being available and for their unreserved participation in this study.

I thank Samuel Antobam Kojo, Fidele Tugizimana, Joseph Wasonga and notably Peter Jonathan Tserayi for their valuable time in reading the draft document.

My deepest gratitude to myself for seeing my dream realised, for the time and dedication in burning the midnight oil.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my late mother Leonidas Ada Aumma for putting me through school. She never knew how to write her own name.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an investigation of 13-14 year-old learners in Grade Five and Grade Six being taught and learning moral sociocultural values. The specific variables investigated are children's perspective of values, their beliefs, goals and motives implicit or explicit in the learning of sociocultural values.

The investigation uses the theoretical framework of Cultural Psychology in which Activity Theory is used to analyse and explain the school as an activity system. The working hypothesis is that activities are *embedded* into each other if they share a common *object* and envision a common *outcome*. The notion of *embedded* activities is developed based on the Engeströmian third generation Activity Theory model. The assumption is that if the school is the central activity system in a formal teaching and learning milieu, then other activities systems that support the teaching-learning processes constitute *embedded* activities. For instance, the classroom, a lesson, a morning assembly and any other project that contributes to the teaching-learning processes of sociocultural values.

The method used for this investigation was ethnography. Data were collected using participant observation, interviews, still photographs, videography, school records, documents, and children's artefacts. The data were analysed by Atlas.ti version 5.2 computer based qualitative data analysis software using strategies from Strauss and Corbin's 'microanalyses' and Maykut and Morehouse's 'interpretive-descriptive' strategy. The results showed that children at first learn sociocultural values from the culturally more able; in this way, values are taught through co-construction of knowledge. Children learn sociocultural values through what they do. This constitutes their activities: mental and practices as derived from their home ethos through to their school ethos. If this is missing, children will learn other values presuming these to be the best for their welfare, which may have undesirable outcomes and undesirable implications. Socio-cultural theory provides the way out that initially children need to be taught the art of living by the culturally more able as the necessary thing to do.

KEY WORDS

Activity Theory, Catholic Education, Cultural Psychology, Embedded Activities, Ethnography, Ethos, Mediation, Sociocultural Values, Leont'ev, Vygotsky

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
	Title	i
	Declaration	ii
	Acknowledgements	iii
	Abstract and Key Words	iv
	Table of Contents	v
Chapter One:	**INTRODUCTION**	1
1.0.	Preparatory Remarks	1
1.1.	Research Hypothesis and Focus	3
1.2.	Historical Thread	3
1.3.	Cultural Psychology	5
1.4.	Activity Theory	7
1.5.	Qualitative Research and Ethnography	7
1.6.	Chapter Overview	8
Chapter Two:	**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**	9
2.0.	The Underlying Paradigm — Cultural Psychology	9
2.1.	Context	12
2.2.	On Activity Theory	13
2.3.	Schools as Learning Zones	19
2.4.	Catholic Education	20
2.5.	Ethos	20
2.6.	Values, Beliefs, Goals and Motives as Mediating Learning	28
2.6.(a)	On Motives	29
2.6.(b)	On Goals	36
2.6.(c)	On Beliefs	38
2.6.(d)	On Values	39
2.7.	Some Basics of Sociocultural Theory	42

2.7.(a)	The Link Between Emotion and Cognition	42
2.7.(b)	On Language and Concept Formation	43
2.7.(c)	Mediation at Holy Family Primary School	44
2.7.(d)	The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)	46
2.7.(e)	Learning Artefacts	49
2.8.	Chapter Summary	50
Chapter Three:	**METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**	53
3.0.	The Fundamental Principles	53
3.1.	Methodology and Methods in Cultural Psychology	55
3.2.	Scope of the Data Collected	57
3.3.	Ethnography	58
3.3.(a)	Some Issues of Using Ethnography	62
3.4.	Ethnography and Sociocultural Theory	63
3.5.	Specific Research Methods Employed in Data Collection	64
3.5. (a)	Participant Observation	64
3.5. (b)	Ethnographic Interviews	66
3.5. (c)	Ethnographic Documents, Records and Artefacts	70
3.5. (d)	Visual Ethnography — Imaging	70
3.6.	Ethical Principles Guiding the Research	72
3.7.	The Process of Data Analysis	73
3.8.	Ethnographic Computer Assisted Data Analysis— Atlas.ti 5.2	74
3.9.	Research Credibility and Accuracy	77
3.10.	Chapter Summary	79
Chapter Four:	**THE RESULTS: THREE LOCAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES**	81
4.0.	Three Local Learning Activities	81
4.1.(a)	Historical Thread	82

4.1.(b)	The School — An Activity System	83
4.1.(c)	Application of Engeströmian Activity Model	86
4.1.(d)	An Embedded Activity System — A New Model	87
4.1.(e)	The Classroom — An Embedded Activity System	90
4.2.	The Mediating Role of the Teacher	92
4.3.	Anti-bullying — A Learning Activity System	96
4.3.(a)	Historical Thread	96
4.3.(b)	Anti-bullying Presentation — The Learner an Agent of Change	97
4.4.	Leadership — Learners' Leadership Structures	101
4.4.(a)	Historical Thread	102
4.4.(b)	Leadership as an Embedded Learning Activity System	106
4.4.(c)	Learners' Leadership Structure Workshop	108
4.5.	Grade Six R.C. Discourse Between the Teacher And the Learners On Values (DVD Analysed)	111
4.5.(a)	Historical Thread	117
4.5.(b)	Analysis of Specifics Episodes of the Debates cum Discussions	121
4.6.	Chapter Summary	129
Chapter Five:	**THE CONCLUSION**	130
5.0.	Summary of Key Chapters	130
5.0.(a)	Chapter Two	130
5.0.(b)	Chapter Three	135
5.0.(c)	Chapter Four	135
5.1.	Some Reflections	137
5.2.	The Way Forward	138
List of References:		141
List of Figures	Figure 1:	16
And Tables:	Figure 2:	17
	Figure 3:	24
	Figure 4:	88

	Figure 5:	90
	Figure 6:	91
	Figure 7:	95
	Figure 8:	99
	Figure 9:	109
	Table 1:	100
Appendix A	Sample Interview Questions	A-1
Appendix B	Letters of Consent to Parents	B-1
Appendix B	Letter of Consent to Teachers	B-2
Appendix C	Grade Six R.C. Discourse Between the Teacher and the Learners on Values (DVD Analysed)	Insert

Chapter One

Introduction

"How one conceives of education, we have finally come to recognise, is a function of how one conceives of the culture and its aims."

Jerome Bruner

1.0. PREPARATORY REMARKS

> What we resolve to do in schools only makes sense when considered in the broader context of what the society intends to accomplish through its educational investments in the young. How one conceives of education, we have finally come to recognise, is a function of how one conceives of the culture and its aims… (Bruner, 1996, p. IX).

Holy Family Primary School[1] as a constitutive member of the larger sociocultural context intends that the learners who pass through its academic corridors receive a 'holistic integrated' education that leads to the growth and the development of their minds, their hearts and their spiritual personae. This involves setting objectives, expectations and practising established sociocultural values according to the vision of those who share in it. The excerpt below is an example of this.

> *Learner B*: Why do we have to follow the values of our parents?
>
> *Teacher*: Because you are still a minor my darling… you don't have enough information to make … informed decisions that are going to impact the rest of your life. When you are eighteen you may make those decisions.
>
> *Learner E*: Maybe they should give us the freedom, freedom (*sic*) to make our own values and our own decisions.
>
> *Teacher*: (*Firmly*). Not as a child.
>
> *Learners*: (*Many voices*). Why?
>
> *Teacher:* (*Firmly*). Accept that you are children, and when you are a big person you will do what you want to do (Jaki, 2006, DVD: 0:23:03.09 — 0:23:25.22).

[1] This is used to disguise the real name of the school.

The excerpt suggests that children come in a sociocultural milieu that has established practices — the grand sociocultural design — such as informal and formal schooling. There is no denying especially at the early stage of schooling that all sociocultural values must be accepted as given — that is the learner has to fit into the grand sociocultural design. Concerning schooling, the initial vision and plan are all mediated by the culturally more able, for instance, the kind of school and the initial requirements. Beyond elementary and primary schooling, learners can make choices in the line of the careers of their desire always in the context of the grand sociocultural design.

A key assumption of this study is that schooling forms the minds of learners. Underlying this supposition is another claim that the culturally more able have the duty and responsibility to teach sociocultural values that orient the learner towards desired objects — in the case of Holy Family Primary School — these include the common good and being good citizens. The impetus towards this begins at home and is put into practice by parents and other family members; it continues at school. Schools play an equally significant role in the schooling of the child not just in intellectual development and growth but also in the schooling of the 'heart' as observed above. This has to do with 'everyday' virtues of life: honesty, respect, politeness, anti-violence and sympathy among others. Whether children become good adult citizens — the intended outcome — is a choice that is always difficult to predict accurately. However, one fact that can be said with certainty is that practices manifested in adult life are deeply engrained by years and years of practices enculturated during the course of childhood development and growth. As said earlier, the culturally more able is responsible for orienting children towards the sort of choices they need to make through following desirable sociocultural values. If learners are not taught these values, the void will be filled by other values. One might note in passing that teaching of sociocultural values is a shared experience, for the sociocultural values taught and learnt at school derive from the community beyond the school.

1.1. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS AND FOCUS

This research is contextualised in Cultural Psychology, using the rubrics of Activity Theory with an ethnographic approach. The intention is to gain understanding of children learning sociocultural values in light of their beliefs, motives, goals and values, which play a role in forming minds in a cultural and a formal learning milieu.

1.2. HISTORICAL THREAD

The researcher worked in various high schools: non-faith-based and faith-based before pursuing postgraduate studies. During this time, he had first-hand experience of how different schools have substantial influence on forming the minds of learners. Each school is unique. A uniqueness that sets it aside by virtue of its ethos — an ethos that is constituted by the object that emerges from those who share in the same sociocultural values. The fact about sociocultural values is that different communities will tend to emphasise specific aspects of those values. For example, Islamic schools will stress Quoranic values; Christian schools will emphasise Gospel values and secular schools will likewise give prominence to secular values.[2] Accordingly, the stress of what will pass as desirable sociocultural values will more or less depend on the dominant and prevailing culture. This presumes that the ethos of a school affects the minds of learners in a specific way.

As an undergraduate, the researcher trained as an economist and later on pursued studies in computer science and philosophy. When the time came to pursue postgraduate studies, he resolutely set his eyes on Psychology of Educational Counselling, for in the last school he taught, he spent a considerable portion of his time providing counselling services (as an untrained counsellor). The school had one trained counsellor who was overwhelmed by the sheer number of learners he had to counsel. Evidently, there was need for this service. In the light of these

[2] In terms of the South African Constitution, by definition all faith-based schools are private institutions.

facts, he felt a calling to train as a school counsellor. Regrettably, he was ineligible — his undergraduate degree was not psychology. He could not pursue studies in counselling at postgraduate level. However, the M. Ed (Psychology in Education) an academic course accepted his application and enrolment.

The University of the Witwatersrand enrolled him to pursue postgraduate studies in Cultural Psychology. 'Culture' and 'psychology' were two separate but familiar words. However "Cultural Psychology" — "What was it?" to echo Shweder (1991, p. 73). It was a virgin territory to the researcher. He spent the next two years attempting to answer this question and exploring this academic land — of which part of the answers constitutes this dissertation. The researcher informs the reader that he trained as a high school teacher. The supervisor informed him that her speciality was primary schooling. This was an issue then; a verdict had to be taken. He took a leap of faith. His problems had just started.

The first problem was that coming from the backdrop of economics he had to make a paradigm shift. This was not made easier by the fact that his studies were by dissertation in contrast to coursework. He did not make this choice. The year he applied to enrol at the University, the number of students registering for the Cultural Psychology as a course did not add up to satisfy the University's requirement. The available alternative was to register as a dissertation student. The implications were colossal: with the generous and never tiring support and guidance from the supervisor, he had to school himself in the areas of knowledge that pertained to this research. The strategy was to read vastly in three dimensions into fields that were completely unfamiliar. The first area was Cultural Psychology beginning with its history —from Wilhelm Wundt in Cole (1996) to contemporary authors: Eugene Matusov (1998); Michael Cole (1996); James V. Wertsch (1985, 1998); Barbra Rogoff (1990); Yrjö Engeström (1999); Marianne Hedegaard (1988, 1999, 2001); Harry Daniels (1996, 2001); James Bruner (1960, 1996) among others. The second area was to understand qualitative and quantitative research — to know the difference. Qualitative research was a foreign territory but authors like N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (2000); Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1990, 1998); Harry F. Wolcott

(1995, 2001), and Pamela Maykut and Richard Morehouse (1994) among others were useful sources. Resources in ethnography included those from Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (1995), David M. Fetterman (1998) and John Van Maanen (1988) — constituted the basic resources. In addition, during data analysis, he had to learn how to use Atlas.ti (qualitative data analysis software).

1.3. CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

The raison d'être for carrying out this study is because Cultural Psychology provides the avenue to research the thesis that schools have substantial influence in forming children's minds. Cultural Psychology provided the theoretical framework following from one of its key claims that the functioning of the human mind derives from culture and it depends on the employment of cultural tools for its realisation.

Cultural Psychology is tasked with explicating the role of culture in the growth and the development of the human mind. It is an emerging discipline not so much for its content but how this content has been re-defined to re-focus the understanding of psychology. The re-definition and the re-focusing have lead to a new understanding of the processes of mind and in so doing have raised some interesting findings. In spite of the prolific literature available on Cultural Psychology, the wealth of the knowledge it can yield has hardly been explored. Similarly, the findings in this dissertation are contestable. Yet, this study is a modest contribution to the pooling of knowledge on Cultural Psychology.

Cultural Psychology is concerned with the problems of the human nature. It deals with issues on a case-by-case basis so as not to set limits that exclude, even though this may mean different things for different theorists. The line of thought that is pursued goes as far as recognising that in any school situation, thinking, the ability to solve problems, the construction of meaning and ultimately learning occurs through sharing common sociocultural values. This in one sense occurs through the learner's beliefs, values, goals and motives contextualised in cultures. In this connection, Bruner makes the observation that:

> You cannot understand mental activities unless you take into account the cultural setting and its resources, the very things that give mind its shape and scope. Learning, remembering, talking [and] imagining: all of them are made possible by participating in a culture (1996, p. X).

Bruner's argument gives culture prominence in the development of mind because the processes of knowing and the character of mind are situated in culture. One may speak of ideas in abstraction but even abstracting an idea presupposes a context, which is but a cultural one. This is so because mind is associated with a way of life, a "reality [that] is represented by a symbolism shared by members of a [common] cultural community in which… [a] way of life is both organised and construed in terms of symbolism" (*ibid,* 1996, p. 3). Here then is a shared, conserved, elaborated and transmitted life to succeeding generations.

Cultural Psychology's approach to cognition has its origins in the works of Vygotsky and his comrades. It draws the reader's attention from the study of the individual to the social: it is cultural and historical; it is social and material; and its context allows one to understand how knowledge is constructed, displayed and transmitted from the social to the individual (Lee and Smagorinsky, 2000, p.1). According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is mediated first between an individual, the culturally more able and their cultural artifacts, and then only does the individual appropriate it. Learning involves mentoring by culturally knowledge-able people where meaning is a constructed activity. In a 'jug-mug' mode of learning relationship, the teacher or the culturally more able is thought of as the source of knowledge. This knowledge is communicated to the child in a top-down style. In the Vygotskian dispensation, meaning is co-constructed. It is made possible through mediational artifacts that are historically and culturally constituted. This means that learning is not only a social event — even when others are absent or are indirectly involved knowledge is still co-constructed. This is because learning depends on social and cultural intersubjective relationships: learners and teacher(s), learners and parent(s), learners and peer(s), among others. The capacity and nature to learn is infinite and ever dynamic. It is dependent on what is already known, the nature of the problem to be solved, the structures within which learning occurs, and the quality of the learners' interaction with the

culturally more able. That is why in co-constructing knowledge, the learner relives a previous learning experience by either repeating or transcending it. Hence context and capacity are connected.

1.4. ACTIVITY THEORY

A vital theory used in this study is Activity Theory. This theory has its origins in classical German philosophy in the writing of Karl Marx, and later on in Vygotsky, which in its current dispensation is "a self-organising system of interacting subjects" (Engeström, 1999a, p. 20). Activity is about what people do either mentally or physically. This research borrows from Engeström's model of activity (*see Figure 2 — Chapter Two)* and introduce a new model that explains learning activities as *embedded* (*see Figure 4 — Chapter Four)* in contrast to *networks of activity systems* (Engeström, 1999b). The argument is that embedded activity systems are only possible within a global activity system if and only if the latter shares with the former a common object (sociocultural values). This thought is developed further in Chapter Four.

1.5. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND ETHNOGRAPHY

The phenomena investigated in this dissertation were approached from the paradigm of qualitative ethnography. This allowed for *in vivo* study of naturalistic setting and exploration of the formal schooling activities of the learners of Grade Five and Grade Six at Holy Family Primary School. The following specific ethnographic methods were resourceful: observation, interviews, collecting records, reports and artefacts, still photography as well as video photography. The focus of the inquiry emerged progressively during the course of fieldwork and preliminary data analysis. It narrowed down to analysing sociocultural values.

1.6. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter One — Introduction: This is an overview of the key areas of the dissertation attempting to answer the central issue of how a school ethos is constitutive in forming the minds of the learners. This issue is insufficiently explored in the context of South Africa. This dissertation explores this issue using the theoretical framework of Cultural Psychology, the rubrics of Activity Theory and empirical qualitative ethnography. In so doing, this study maintains through empirical and theoretical analysis that Vygotsky's ideas are relevant to the understanding and studying of social contexts, the cognitive and emotional phenomena of individuals or groups of individuals in embedded but variable local sociocultural contexts. The rest of the dissertation is thus presented:

Chapter Two — The Theoretical Framework: This consists of some of the main concepts used in the dissertation from Cultural Psychology such as context, mediation, sociocultural values, concept formation, culture, ethos and activity.

Chapter Three — Method and Methodology: This chapter covers the methodology and methods used in data collection. Qualitative research is briefly discussed, ethnography is explored and specific data collection methods: participant observation, interviews, collecting documents, records and artefacts and the use of photography both still and video are explained. This chapter also covers data Analysis: the theory of data analysis. It describes the workings of qualitative computer assisted data analysis software Atlas.ti version 5.2.

Chapter Four — The results and details of three local learning activities: anti-bullying, leadership and texts, debates and discussions as a way of teaching and learning sociocultural values.

Chapter Five — Conclusion: covers the chapter summaries, some of the researcher's reflections and some suggestions as to the way forward.

Chapter Two

The Theoretical Framework

"Vygotsky regarded education not only as central to cognitive development, but as the quintessential social cultural activity…the capacity to teach and to benefit from instruction [is] a fundamental attribute of [being] human."

Louis C. Moll

2.0. THE UNDERLYING PARADIGM — CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Chapter Two provides the conceptual basis upon which sociocultural values mediate the formation of mind of learners through the teaching and learning process within the framework of Cultural Psychology. The prolific literature from Vygotsky (1962, 1978), Wertsch (1981, 1985, 1998), Shweder (1990), Moll (1990), Lave and Wenger (1991), Scribner (1985), Cole (1996, 1997), Bruner (1996), Hedegaard (1999, 2001) and Daniels (1996, 2001) attests to the significance that Cultural Psychology has come to play in academia.

Cultural Psychology is born of two primary ideas: psyche and culture. Its focal construct is that the products of mind are sociocultural in origin. This is one view contributing to the understanding of how culture and human psyche are entwined to constitute a conception of human nature. Geertz argues that "there is no such thing as human nature independent of culture" (1973a, p. 49), for culture and mind are interwoven and will nevertheless present us with a window through which we attempt to understand human existence. Thus, Cultural Psychology seeks to understand human nature through the prism of relationships, which are premised on meanings that are *constructed*, *reconstructed, negotiated*, *sustained* and *disputed* (Baerveldt, 1996). Acquiescing, Bruner says:

> [Cultural psychology] concerns itself centrally with meaning . . . inevitably becomes a cultural psychology, [which] must venture beyond the conventional areas of positivist science… (1990, p. xiii).

Bruner points to the central construct of Cultural Psychology as well as the transcendence it has made by moving away from conventional positivists stance. In other words, phenomena may be viewed, explained and interpreted through the window of culture.

In this discourse, the concern is with cognitive and emotional activities as phenomena of culture given that they are psychological phenomena that help to know the person in a learning environment. Hence, it is necessary to examine these in the context of culture and individuals since they constitute psychological processes, and without doubt influence human activities.

In sociocultural theory, the objects analysed are activities that are embedded in society and culture. To learn something about them, the researcher asks, what is culture? The intention is to contextualise Cultural Psychology in culture. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) and Shweder and Levine (1984) have discussed various definitions of culture. To put culture in perspective, a germane delineation is one that perceives culture as a historically and socioculturally dynamic activity (Serpell, 1993). This relates to this inquiry by way of method and theory. Shweder and Levine's view of culture as "a shared organisation of ideas includes intellectual, moral, aesthetic standards in a community and the meanings of communicative actions" (1984, p. 67) relates to this study. This view points to collective activities, assumes socioculturally shared meanings that emerge from lived experiences, supposes historical development and growth of values, structures and practices (Geertz, 1973a) webbed by consistency, coherence and connectedness of beliefs, values, customs that exist in practices and in ideas, in individuals and in groups, and are either tacit or explicit or both.

The sort of culture this inquiry is focusing on concerns a private Catholic mission school founded by the Marist Brothers in 1924 in Johannesburg. According to Bruner (1996), a school constitutes a culture. Holy Family Primary School is a sociocultural establishment that enculturates children in practices and activities that are valued by the community in which it is embedded. Thus, an argument advanced in this inquiry related to ethos is that the school context has an essential

influence on the development and growth of children through its practices, curriculum, the national constitution, rules and the community of interested parties (Klein, Kantor, and Fernie, 1988).

Children come into a world that is organised and managed by the adult members of the community. The realities of life dictate that, among other things, children need to be taught how to live in the unwelcoming and harsh world. Adults therefore take it for granted that it is their duty and responsibility to instruct and equip children with knowledge and skills that will allow them to harness and tame the environment including the individual as a constituent of that environment for the good of his or her survival. A rhetorical question that might be asked is whether children have a choice in these dynamics, take for example, learning. Anscombe (1957) observes that learning occurs only and only if learners can be said to truly intend to learn. This presupposes choice. Without the desire and active participation by learners, teachers for example would have the insurmountable task of trying to teach the delights of any learning activity. Two facts are derived. Firstly, the power that learners wield in enabling the learning process to occur. Secondly, the inevitable change resulting and mediated by their activities to transform not only the environment, but also that the environment in turn transforms them.

Accordingly, this research is tasked with exploring the ideas above — to open the drawers of activities to explain and to understand how best sociocultural values can make learning a qualitatively better activity as well as make those who learn qualitatively better individuals. Needless to mention, some contents of the drawers may be obvious whilst some is less obvious. This research points to these distinctions by analysing the various activities of the learners (*see Section 4.0*.). Furthermore, in the context of culture an important aspect of this study is to affirm the role of individual group differences in the paradigm of the whole. That is Holy Family Primary School is viewed as an activity system in which Grade Five and Grade Six are embedded activity systems. This is because knowledge springs from everyday, culturally organised, historically evolving activities of a social group (Mead, 1935; Dewey, 1938). Holy Family as a unique activity

system may also be visualised as embedded in yet a larger community. The larger community is vital since the school derives some of its essence from it. Socio-cultural theory agrees that this is consistent with human condition. Cole's (1996) study among the Kpelle people of Liberia is evidence that individual groups, their conditions, behaviour, sociocultural and historical context provide for their being. Cole observes that:

> In order to give an account of culturally mediated thinking, it is necessary to specify not only the artifacts through which behaviour is mediated but also the [context] in which the thinking occurs (1996, p. 131).

Cole's point is that there is a link between cultural entities and their context. This link extends to cultural groups and mediates the forming of human mind.

2.1. CONTEXT

The context of the learner, which is culture, influences the learners' behaviour and activities (Wentworth, 1980). If one considers that experiences and social conventions are born of practices from individual actions that are manifestations of social relations (Taylor in Cole, 1996), one may also grant that context is a world realised through relations among individuals as well as their sociocultural institutions. Both can transform the context and the conditions of the individuals. This makes culture "a system of artifacts and mind a process of mediating behaviour through artefacts" (Cole, 1996, p. 143). It follows that culture is a "medium" that can be said to be a context that is both "surrounded" and "woven" together (*ibid*).

The concept of context as that which surrounds concerns activity, cognitive and emotional occurrences as embedded layers of surrounding contexts that inter-connect. For were this not the case, phenomena would be isolated and unrelated. This would be inconsistent with human condition (*ibid*, p. 135). In this discourse, the main context is the 'school ethos' which is an activity system. In it are embedded learners who are surrounded by learning contexts and activities: the

classroom and other relevant areas and events of school life such as assemblies, lessons, school administration and so forth. Beyond the school ethos is the larger culture that surrounds the school. These include the school board, parents, department of education, ethnic and racial differences. The point is that activities especially in institutionalised contexts are embedded. In addition, the notion of that which "weaves together" refers to a "qualitative relationship" (*ibid*) between an event, action or task and its context — two or more moments acting in one process braided by "activity" (*ibid*, p. 139). Human activity "integrates the subject, the object and the instruments…into a unified whole… [involves] production and communication…, [and] always contains the subsystems of production, distribution, exchange and consumption" (Engeström, 1993, p. 67). The notion also refers to a place, disposition as well as to sociocultural activities.

The development of a learner is a function of the culturally more able and context. Although context provides the foundation upon which all activities operate including the basis upon which knowledge and skills are constructed, it is simplistic to confine the understanding of context to the function of a container. Context is a necessary but not a sufficient variable for learning to occur. This is why Cole's notion of that which *surrounds* and that which *weaves* combine appropriately to explain the notion of context, implying the properties of mutuality and complementarity (*see Section 2.5.*).

2.2. ON ACTIVITY THEORY

Object-orientedness is a key canon of Activity Theory. It discusses the specific Activity Theory viewpoint on the nature of objects with which human agents interact. Activity Theory developed from the philosophy of Karl Marx (Engeström, 1999a). It assumes that human beings live in *objective* reality; this determines and shapes the nature of subjective phenomena. This assumption allows for an objective account of subjective phenomena.

Although Leont'ev (1981) held that psychology is no less a thorough rigorous science than natural sciences are, he knew that the concept of object in

psychology could not be limited to only physical sciences. Socially determined properties of things, especially those of artefacts and the very involvement of things in human activity are very much objective properties that can be studied with objective methods. Accordingly, object-orientedness requires that human beings live in a reality, which is objective in a broad sense. The things, which constitute this reality have properties which are objective according to natural sciences but which also have a sociocultural extension as well.

Since human interaction with reality is the subject matter of several disciplines, and Activity Theory develops as a psychological approach, the problem emerges of how to define a specifically psychological perspective on activity and how it is related to other psychological approaches. It differentiates between internal and external activities. The traditional notion of mental processes corresponds to internal activities. Activity Theory maintains that internal activities cannot be understood if they are dichotomised (dualistically) in isolation from external activities because there are mutual transformations between these two kinds of activities: internalisation and externalisation. The general context of activity therefore determines when and why external activities become internal and the reverse is true (Vygotsky, 1978).

Internalisation, that is, the transformation of external activities into internal ones, provides a possibility for human beings to simulate potential interactions with reality without performing actual manipulations on real objects. In some cases, external components can be left out in order to make an action more efficient for example a mental plan. In other cases, internalisation helps to identify the optimal way of acting before performing this action externally. Externalisation, that is, the transformation of internal activities into external ones is often necessary when an internalised action needs to be 'repaired' or when collaboration between several agents requires their activities to be performed externally in order to coordinate a collective activity (Bannon, 1997).

Activity Theory's emphasis on social factors and on interaction between agents and their environments explains the significance of artefact mediation. Artefacts

shape the way human beings interact with reality. It seems that shaping external activities ultimately results in shaping internal ones (Vygotsky, 1978). Besides, artefacts usually reflect the experiences of other people who have previously tried to solve similar problems by inventing or modifying the artefact to make it more efficient. This experience is accumulated in the structural properties of the artefact as well as in the knowledge of how it is used. Artefacts are created and transformed during the development of the activity itself and embody a particular culture — the historical remnants from that development. In other words, artefacts carry with them the accumulation and transmission of sociocultural knowledge. It influences the nature not only of external behaviour, but also of the cognitive and emotional functioning of individuals.

Vygotsky (1978) held that there are two kinds of mediated artefacts — material ones and psychological ones. Whereas computers manipulate physical objects, human beings use ethos to influence individuals' psychological activities. Artefacts expand human possibilities to manipulate and transform different objects, but also the object is perceived and manipulated within the limitations set by the artefact (Wertsch, 1998). Hence, mediating artefacts constitute an enabling and a constraining function (*ibid*). This includes the context of use. In this respect, use is shaped by the sociocultural experience (Bannon, 1997).

Activities are human doings that are object oriented to obtain a desired outcome. To do so, humans utilise artefacts (tools or, and signs) — "mediated action" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 54). Human activity is mediated externally or internally towards an object seeking to transform and in turn allowing it to transform the subject. For Vygotsky (*ibid*), most elementary forms of behaviour require mediation by artefact (tool/sign) through which it realises itself. What appears to be elementary behaviour, arising from *mediated action*, is complex behaviour because of the forming web of relationships (*see Figure 1. overleaf*). The relationship between subject and object is not anymore simple and unmediated. This relationship is complex since it is mediated by artefact) resulting in multiple reciprocal relationships of subject ⇔ tool/sign ⇔object.

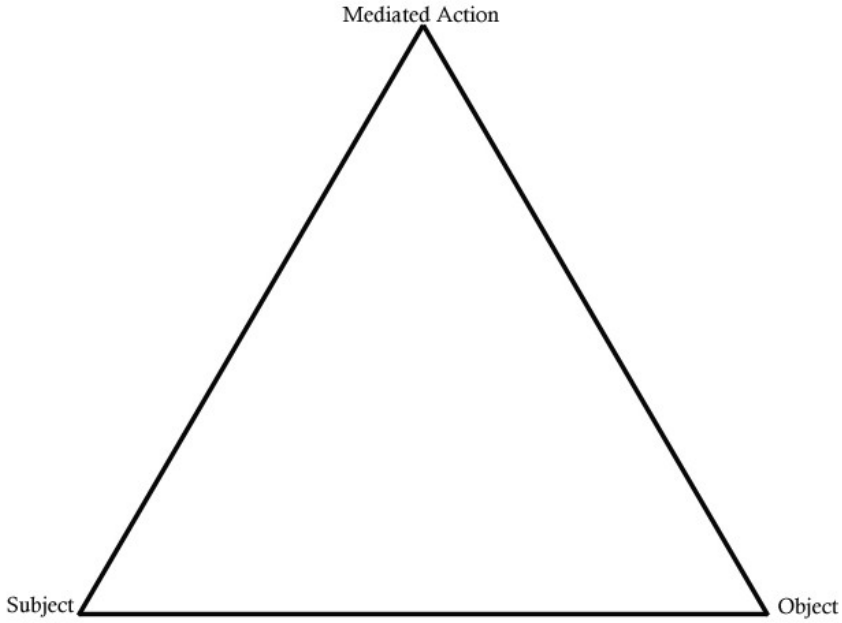


Figure 1: A Vygotskian Activity Triad: subject—-object are mediated by actions (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 40)

Leont'ev expanded Vygotsky's notion of activity. In his view, activities can be multiple either with a single motive or with multiple motives. Whereas actions constitute activities, goals arise from the intention to solve tasks in activity. Operations arise from change in action (Leont'ev, 1981). In the Leont'evian model, actions as entities of activity are dependent on goals and operations are controlled by conditions of a specific goal so revealing the network of relationships in mediated action.

Engeström (1999a) developed the Vygotskian and Leont'evian model of Activity Theory. His model is multi-voiced, diverse, and dialogical. It is inherently characterised by tensions and contradictions as constituents of human activity. This environment creates and enables the possibility for transformation. To the traditional bi-concept of *subject* and *object,* he added *community* — those sharing the same object, *rules* — which mediate subject and community. These are norms, conventions, and social relations both in a community. *Division of labour* — this mediates object and community and is about how community is organised (Engeström, 1999a) represented in *Figure 2* below. This study has established that a *mediating artefact* is a material or psychological tool used in the transformation

process of subject and object. The object is the central pivot of activity because it connects individual actions to the collective activity[3] (*ibid*). Here, Activity Theory presupposes social context. Activity arises from this context because *rules* establish how subjects relate in the community and *division of labour* establishes the relationships between the object and the community.

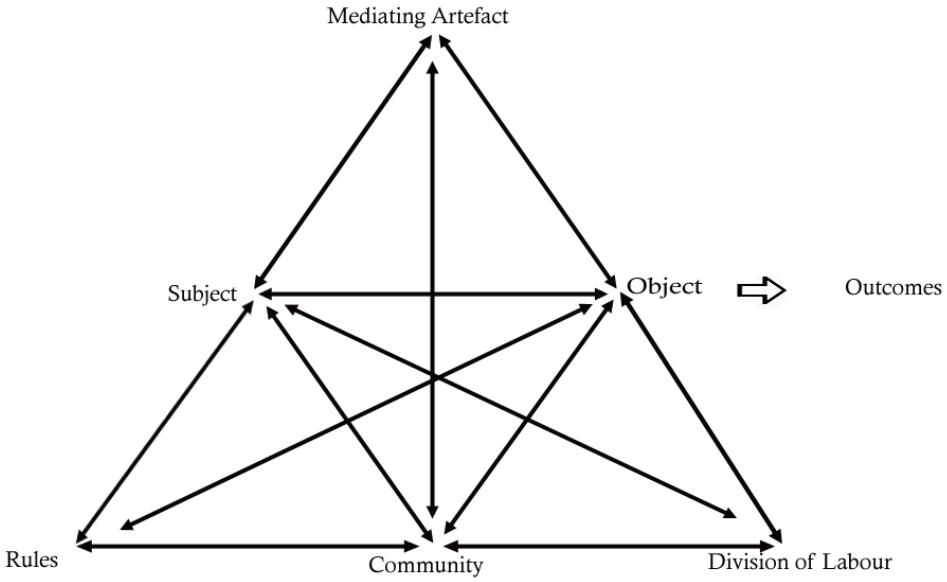


Figure 2: Third Generation Engeström's Activity System Model (Engeström, 1999a, p. 31)

Engeström's model of activity (*Figure 2*) is relevant to this study because it incorporates various components of activity that interrelate. These continuously form and transform to explain human nature (learning). Engeström's model allows this study to combine ethos with activity and to show that ethos is the primary learning context where sociocultural knowledge is constructed and within which are other micro-contexts of learning. In other words, it allows for the possibility of developing the notion of *embedded* activities in contrast to *networked* activity systems (Engeström, 1999b; Macdonald, 2006) — a central notion to this study.

Activity Theory may be used to analyse and understand learning problems as in the examples of Davydov (1988), Lompscher (1999), and Hedegaard (1999). This

[3] Leont'ev's (1981) 'joint labour activity' referred to individuals and not to collective subjects.

study evaluates how sociocultural values through the learners' values, beliefs, goals and motives facilitate learning. Motives, goals and beliefs in the context of activity are extensively discussed in *Section 2.6.*

Activity Theory is based on the following canons (Engeström, 1999b).

a) *Unit of analysis* — the unit of analysis in activity system is a collective, artifact mediated and object oriented in a network of relations to other activity systems. Goal directed actions are only subordinate units of analysis.

b) *Multiple voices* — activity system has multiple voices: many points of view, traditions, histories and interests; hence, these are sources of tensions.

c) *Historicity* — activity systems develop and are transformed over the long-term. Issues associated with it are understood in their own history of ideas, objects and tools.

d) *Tensions* — in activity systems tensions are a source of transformation and expansion. The openness of the system inevitably leads to new developments that on the one hand may cause contradictions that in turn produce instability and more contradictions, but on the other hand may bring about innovations in activity.

e) *Expansive transformation* — this occurs sometimes when the object and motive of the activity are reinterpreted to include much wider possibilities absent in the previous mode of the activity.

This study uses the first four of these tools in Chapter Four to analyse the question of the relationship between sociocultural values and learning.

2.3. SCHOOLS AS LEARNING ZONES

Schools are zones where learning activities occur. Bruner (1996) says that through schooling — by which he means formal education — the young are inducted into society's practices. These practices are historically evolved. Schools are places where cultural practices are transmitted, and for Hedegaard (2001) schooling is a process of making history. The intention is that schools are paths for development, for learning changes not only the subject but also the society of the subject. These changes have many facets and are engendered in many ways. One facet, an important focus of this study, is *ethos*. A school ethos is embedded in larger sociocultural contexts in environs Cole describes as "surrounded" as well as "woven together" (1996, pp. 132 and 135). By this fact, schools are themselves cultural units that are distinct, identifiable, and dynamic. They have historically evolved. In other words, ethos exists through specific practices and activities that are unique to a specific school, some of these cultural practices are a continuation of explicit and tacit practices of the broader sociocultural group. Therefore, learning sociocultural practices as a human activity is intersubjective: from being a natural process to a cultural activity mediated by tools and the culturally more able.

Vygotsky (1978) conceptualized learning as the internalisation of social inter-actions in which communication is central — communicated are sociocultural values that society deems it should bequeath to its young not merely for the survival of the individual but also for the survival of the human species. Two points are worth emphasising here: Firstly, when learning takes place through sociocultural interaction in specific contexts, what the learner internalises in their general and varied forms are concepts of various sociocultural values. Secondly, by internalisation Vygotsky (*ibid*) means dynamically transforming the external interaction to new strata of interactions that guides the learner's actions. Internalisation is a transformed reflection of external social relations suggesting that the individual is embedded in sociocultural context from whence he or she appropriates skills and knowledge. Thus, school ethos (culture) is viewed as educational, psychological and social in character (Leont'ev, 1981).

2.4. CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Holy Family Primary school is a Catholic institution. It is therefore proper to say something about Catholic education. One can possibly speak of Catholic education as a form of culture since it accords with Levine's description of culture mentioned in *Section 2.0.* The Catholic Church was the vanguard of formal education long before governments shouldered this task. The Church regards education as one of the most effective forms of apostolic activity in the service of faith, promotion of justice, forgiveness, love and so forth (The Jesuit Conference, 2000). Therefore, education mediates learning (evangelising) and an instrument of transforming the individual as well as society. Education, be it at tertiary, secondary, primary or kindergarten level has been run by nuns, priests, bishops, dioceses or congregations in collaboration with the laity. They have advocated for the aggregate formation of the individual believing that this vitally contributes to the collective, complete and integral liberation of the human person leading to goodness and a virtuous life. The context of a Catholic ethos makes this possible, which is so to speak a distinguishing character expressly preserving Christian values. It is in this connection that the global dimension of Catholic education serves to endow those who pass through its academic corridors with the faculties to critically assess values propagated by contemporary culture, evaluate the results of modern economic and social trends. This is a system of education that addresses issues of human rights, safeguard of human life, the protection of the environment, economic justice, the problem of the marginalised, the injustice of sexism, racism, and religious intolerance among others (*ibid*). It is a system whose outcome constitutes moral persons and good citizens. This system sets its eyes on the sublime ideal of the common good. In a way, this connects with Vygotsky's observation that individuals are made by culture even though culture itself is made by humans (Bakhurst and Sypnowich, 1995).

2.5. ETHOS

Following the discussion above, ethos as culture therefore remains a human creation. The notion of ethos in teaching and learning abounds in the literature:

Bronfenbrenner (1974), Dancy, (1979), Rutter, *et al* (1979), Allder (1993), Donnelly (2000), William (2000), Grace (2002), Lovibond (2002), Glover and Coleman (2005), and McLaughlin (2005). Ethos is derived from Greek connoting custom, disposition or character. The current meaning as given in the online Merriam-Webster dictionary delineate ethos as that "distinguishing character, sentiment, moral nature, or guiding beliefs of a person, group, or institution."[4] McLaughlin in his philosophical distinction writes:

> [Ethos is] prevalent or characteristic tone, spirit or sentiment informing an identifiable entity involving human life and interaction…such as a nation, a community, an age, a literature, an institution and an event and so forth (2005, p. 309).

Two issues in McLaughlin's definition need to be analysed. The first one is that ethos is born of human activities and practices. The second derives from what is said above, implies that ethos is a product of human intersubjectivity. Essential to both definitions is the explicit or tacit reference to diverse human activities and values. For instance, traditions point to specific social and cultural values, moral values of right and wrong, group or individual beliefs by which a person or a group guide their lives and so forth. In the literature, ethos is usually discussed with reference to moral meanings and sometimes as if it were culture itself (Donnelly (2000), Glover and Coleman (2005), Solvason (2005)). Whatever the argument, ethos admits to human interaction and their sociocultural values, practices, activities and relationships. This makes it possible to argue that ethos is a way of being that is collectively lived and experienced (Allder, 1993). As a lived experience, ethos has the purpose of shaping "human perception, attitudes, beliefs, disposition and the like…" (McLaughlin, 2005, pp. 309-310). It follows that there is a link, not a necessary one but a useful one between ethos, teaching and the learning of sociocultural values in their diversity for what society sees as the common good. The point is that learning is not only a matter of the head; it is also a matter of the heart. Intelligence by itself insufficiently reflects the holistic integrated formation of the individual.

---

[4] In the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle (1976) ethos signified character or emotions of a speaker (writer). Classical authors used pathos to refer to violent emotions and ethos to mean the tranquil ones.

A school ethos constitutes, though not exhaustively, the following:

> Learners' moral, teachers moral, teachers' job satisfaction, the physical environment, the learning context, teacher-pupil relationships, equality and justice, extra-curricular activities, school leadership and discipline…(McLaughlin, 2005, p. 308).

The essential issue above is the mediational role of ethos. Mediation coalesces in activity because the subject can interact with the object through mediated arte-facts. To return to the notion of context, McLaughlin (2005) refers to Aristotle who believed that human development requires mediation by culture to generate human personality and character. Millennia later, Vygotsky (1978) saw child development as mediated by culture through social interactions and lived experiences. If one maintains that culture is a medium of transformation, it follows that the concerns of educational influences as part of that culture are outcomes — "achievement agenda" and "humanity agenda" (Crick and Wilson, 2005, p. 371) of any school system. In ordinary terms, it is the schooling of the head and the heart. The specific learning may occur by way of "imitation, habituation, training in feeling, attention and perception, induction into patterns of actions, habits, forms of guidance, …experience and exemplification," (McLaughlin, 2005, p. 319; Gallimore and Tharp, 1990) aimed at the learners' intellectual growth as well as:

> The encouragement of character for growth in personal life that is more than moral education, citizenship education … it is concerned with the awakening, support and development of personal confidence and a sense of responsibility for one's own becoming (Crick and Wilson, 2005, p. 370).

The Vygotskian paradigm points to the fact that all this transformation occurs when the learners appropriate sociocultural patterns in the course of interacting with the culturally more able. The ethos of the school makes it possible to maintain that those values that characterise the intention and motives of the school community (learners, teachers and parents) will be desired and that every endeavour will be put in place to pass them onto the learners as the lived

experiences of the entire community.[5] Schools are *adult environment* (Crick and Wilson, 2005) in which formal learning occurs. Children do not come up with the idea of schools, yet schools are one of the places where the community instantiates sociocultural values that equip children to live in these communities.

Individual as well as societal transformation occurs because humans partially control their own circumstances by using human created artifacts (Wartofsky, 1979; Norman, 1988; Hutchins, 1990; Engeström, 1999). A major fact about ethos is that it is a human creation. It defines a school context by giving the school its unique identity. Ethos serves the purpose of mediating between the learners and sociocultural values that they ought to appropriate as part of their cultural legacy. Furthermore, it is a human object that epitomises historicity, represents the ideal, it is a symbolic resource that makes activity uniquely human (White, 1959; Il'enkov, 1977; Wartofsky, 1979).

To speak concretely of the ethos of Holy Family Primary School, it is Catholic in bias for the reason mentioned in *Section 2.4.* For the Catholic Church, education is an evangelising mission a medium through which it teaches its values. Holy Family Primary School has established a Pastoral Care Programme whose duties, among others, are to "assist … in carrying out the mission of Catholic education" and to "serve as a vehicle for the ethos of the school" (Picas, 2004, p. 8). From 1976, Holy Family made a radical departure from the government policy of separation of races in educational institutions by admitting into the school learners from all races. The mission of the school has come to epitomise an:

> … [Education that provides for the] body, mind and spirit. We educate for life. We help young people to become happy, confident and competent people of hope and personal integrity with a deep sense of justice and compassion and with this is a sense of social responsibility to transform the world (Picas, 2004, p. 43).

To put it visually, the mission statement captures the essence of the school ethos in *Figure 3.* Drawing '*A*' illustrates what reflects the outcome of an ethos that is

[5] Ethos assumes that educational achievement include personal development: "Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and education for citizenship" (Crick and Wilson, 2005, p. 372)

oriented towards "achievement agenda and a humanity agenda". From what is obvious in the drawing — with Pastoral Care — the desired values are learnt by the children. Some of these include higher school attendance, active participation in school activities, study assignments and highly motivated learners. On the other hand, drawing '*B*' typifies what the school outcome will be were the school system to fail in its overall object of educating the minds and hearts of the learners. The evident outcomes are anarchy in the learners' life who are unmotivated, bored, who abuse drugs and whose school attendance is poor.



Figure 3 'A' school outcome with Pastoral Care. Figure 3 'B' school outcomes without Pastoral Care (Picas, 2004, p. 8).

An ethos is the result of intentional human experiences that are sustained by continuous and consistent evolvement, transformation, reformulation and renewal of the ideals it objectifies, and teaching these to its young in keeping with the existing sociocultural values and needs of the school.

At Holy Family Primary School, although the entire school community is involved in realising the values enshrined in the school's Mission Statement the Pastoral Care Programme (highly organised, structured and resourced) is at the heart of this task. It has distinct objectives and scope to shoulder the task of initiating, organising and implementing the functionalities and various aspects of the programme — it puts in place the nuts and bolts that hold the specific ethos of the school together. It is impossible to discuss every detail of the Pastoral Care Programme here, yet one item needs to be emphasised, viz, that it is a communal activity involving every member of the community in a dialogical, participatory and consultative role according to the level and needs of the specific moment.

So far, this study has established the sort of "educational influence" envisioned at Holy Family Primary School (McLaughlin, 2005, p. 315) — the education of mind and heart, which occurs in the context of the school ethos that is integral to the essence of the school, where its merits are known, established and acknowledged. This is hypothesised on the knowledge that education is formative in dynamic and diverse ways, and that this is the school's way of instructing the young of its community. This needs to be coupled with key but specific issues such as the quality of the curriculum, educational resources, motivation of teachers and learners; levels of interaction at school, parental involvement, and quality of teachers. Above all sustainability of the system have to be addressed to answer the question: What constitutes quality education?

It is imperative to note that ethos also include phenomena that are difficult to measure, such as the composite living legacies that teachers bequeath upon learners. As it were, the horizon of the teaching and learning process does not terminate with the mere acquisition of information (Lave and Wenger, 1991; McLaughlin, 2005). Teaching and learning whether intentional or not will impart knowledge at various strata: information, wisdom and experience. These in one respect arise from mundane dispositions of everyday judgement of issues, intellectual virtues and manner of doing things that includes tone of voice, gestures, dress code, temperament and so forth which more often than not are passed onto the learner unconsciously (Oakeshott, 1990).

Furthermore, a school ethos combines many interrelated educational features (Rutter, *et al*, 1979) but most significant, in my view, is the culturally more able and specifically an effective teacher(s) — one who believes that the learners can learn. Learning cannot be imposed but through constructive, realistic and practical human relationship, motivation, and intersubjective interactions the contentment of learning is brought to influence the learner. Arganbright (1983), argues similarly that a mundane truth of efficient schools is a place where teachers believe that learners can learn. The teachers need to reflect this belief in their instructional methods that enshrine values learners are intended to appropriate. Likewise, Vygotsky (1981) maintains that an essential feature of learning is that it awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the learner interfaces with the culturally more able. The basic fact underlined here is mediation. Within the anatomy of sociocultural historical paradigm, mediation portrays experience as the basis upon which new activities find their beginning (Vygotsky, 1978). The role of a model teacher as the culturally more able in imparting not merely knowledge but wisdom cannot be overemphasised, of course, better augmented by being the exemplar.

This research holds the view that in times when juvenile delinquency is a present and real problem in schools, among other reasons, it is because educators and school systems have given primacy to intellectual development. They have rather neglectfully ignored the vital role the schooling of the heart plays in the integrated holistic growth and development of the individual. It is even possible that some children do not care about formal schooling anymore. This matter is not as simple as it is discussed it here. It is a complex socio-psychological concern. The point is that teachers who spend a great deal of time with learners have enormous responsibility to the learners as well as to the community that has entrusted them with the education of its young. Far from carrying this responsibility alone, teachers need the support of the community: the political structures as well as the legal structures (see mediation in *Section 2.7. (c)*, *Section 2.7. (d*) and *Section 2.7. (e)).*

The core activity of learning is to transmit sociocultural values since this bequeaths the cultural heritage of a community to the next generation of its

members (Gamage and Lova, 2005). On this account, the fabric of society that holds communities in concert is contingent upon the sociocultural values taught to its young. At Holy Family Primary School, for example, the school, in various ways, emphasised moral values such as service, honesty, responsibility, tolerance, accountability, diligence and intellectual excellence among others as part of the sociocultural values cultivated at the school. No opportunity is left to pass. This is reflected on notice boards, during assemblies, in classrooms, during teacher-to-learner interaction and learner-to-learner interaction. From a metaphysical viewpoint, the ethos of the school requires that such activities are ingrained and objectified in the learning activities of the school. Accordingly, ethos is the context in which the learner is exposed to the diverse manifestations of sociocultural values — the environment in which events that characterise these activities interacts with the learners and the learner interacts with them.

In activity system, the objectification of the rudiments of learning activities are reflected in concepts of — *objects* — activities — *goals* — actions — and *conditions* — operations. Holy Family Primary School as a collective activity system has learning activities that are embedded within the global school activity system such as assembly, classroom and lessons. The reader is informed of the interrelation-ships among ethos, learning, activities and mediation. How are these phenomena mutually dependent? This is discussed in relationship to Activity Theory and activity systems in *Section 2.2., Section 2.6. (a)* and *Section 4.1. (c)*. Let it suffice to observe that the connection between activity systems and ethos arises from the fact that human activities, which are objectified and goal-oriented, occur in social and cultural contexts. These activities constitute the entities of culture. If one grants the subjectivity of concept and in place of culture swaps ethos, it can read as artefact or context depending on why this is the case. When it comes to viewing a school system as an activity system and an ethos as a specific culture, this study assumes it is the same thing in so far as a common object is shared, namely, communicating of sociocultural values to the young. One way of understanding ethos is by seeing it as that which '*surrounds'* and that which '*weaves'* (Cole, 1996). This does not necessarily preclude embeddedness of activity systems within the school ethos (*See Section 4.1. (c).*

2.6. VALUES, BELIEFS, GOALS AND MOTIVES AS MEDIATING LEARNING

The researcher now turns his attention to the learner. How can one connect school learning to their lives? This relevant and encompassing question transcends the immediate walls of school life. At the heart of this question, is a prior question: What possibly can be done to make the learning experience meaningful to the learner? Although the learner operates in various milieus: media, parental and various societal institutions the school remains the prime influence on his or her personal growth and development granted the investment in time and other resources. A school is one place where the learner is educated, forged and equipped with sociocultural values. At Holy Family Primary School, sociocultural values include academic, moral, personal, religious, group values as in Grade Five and Grade Six and institutional values inherently integral to school. Recall that one focus of the research is to argue that learning should be about the holistic growth and development of the individual — "body, mind, and spirit" (Picas, 2004, p. 43). This also involves imparting values that society deems acceptable and necessary for its current and future needs. At Holy Family Primary School, this is done at two levels:

a. The school (communal) level:
    - Vision and mission— an unambiguous common way of seeing the direction the community wants to raise its young enshrined in the founding documents of the school, in the laws of the country, in the curriculum and so forth;
    - Sociocultural values — specific values that society upholds. Values come in all guises: academic values, moral values, institutional values, personal values, and group values, which are implicit or explicit.[6]
    - Mechanics — specific desired ways used to implement sociocultural values defined by context and needs of the school (larger community).

b. The individual level — the study confines itself to the cognitive and emotional psychological phenomena:

[6] These values emerged from the data analysed.

- Values
- Motives
- Beliefs
- Goals

The above cognitive and emotional attributes have been the subject of the development of ideas. Socrates once claimed, "Only one thing I know, and that is that I know nothing," (Durant, 1953, p. 6). Underlying Socrates' disposition were values, beliefs, motives and goals. Socrates is important because he thought it was a worthier challenge to understand the mind: What it is and what it can become. The becoming of mind continues to beguile modern scholars because it is a productive area of research. Even though Socrates did not speak literally of emotions, but with the current knowledge of how cognition and emotions are linked and work, one assumes that emotions are implied in his thinking. The becoming of mind has to do with the epistemic needs of human consciousness, which is to know, to comprehend and to be — through the process of learning. So, "know thyself" is a timeless invitation to learn (*ibid*).

2.6. (a) On Motives

Human learning, among other things, is complex and multi-determined by values, beliefs, goals and motives. There have been attempts to explain the inter-relatedness among these attributes. This inquiry will now explore some existing theories in psychology that have investigated motives, goals, beliefs and values within the learning environment. The notions of *selective direction of behaviour patterns, selective energisation of behaviour and selective regulation of behaviour patterns* have always explained motive (Ford, 1992, pp. 2-3)[7] as that which arouses, directs and maintains any goal-directed activity. In sociocultural theory, motive in the Leont'evian (1981) view is a product of need. This explains why it is the kernel of any activity system. Ford (1992) tabulates thirty-two theories that have dealt with motive variously beginning with Psychoanalytic Theories and ending with

[7] Italics in original

Motivational Systems Theory (MST). In addition, Eccles and Wigfield (2002) have discussed values, beliefs, motive and goals with focus on individual theories such as Expectancy Theories (beliefs) and Theories of Reason for Engagement (values). The difficulty this research has encountered with regard to the concept of motive is to understand whether in the various branches of psychology the term is used with a common understanding. As an opinion, different understandings obviously cast doubt as to whether the branches are even discussing the same concept (see the discussion on Matusov on pp. 35-36). This is not to say that the re-conceptualisation of the concept is inadmissible. At times, such enterprises are necessary to purge the concept and allow for new insights and better understanding of the phenomena in question.

To return to Motivation System Theory, it is of specific interest because it tasks itself with integrating these theories by arguing that although they have different historical and theoretical backgrounds they nevertheless deal with the same issue — motive. According to Ford (1992), motive is at the heart of learning. This concurs with sociocultural theory that maintains that at the core of human activity the energising potency is motive. In this regard, "Human activity exists only in form of an action or a chain of actions" (Leont'ev, 1981, p. 61). For example, a specific learning activity comprises of learning actions. However, what causes the individual to learn? The Online Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines motive as "something (as a need or desire) that causes a person to act". This definition does not undermine the understanding in general psychology or in sociocultural theory of the notion motive, as stemming from needs and which is viewed as a driving force.[8]

It need be said that motives, goals, beliefs, and values are properties of human consciousness and therefore operate and are observed in human activities. The highest forms of activities — socialised activities — are exclusively a human attribute. They are multiple, distinguished by objects (motive) and constitute the very essence of how the individual functions and interacts with the environment in response to possible needs (Leont'ev, 1981). Leont'ev explains that the

[8]There are also nonmotivational psychological factors and behavioural influences that shape human behaviour (Ford, 1992).

external psychic activities have to do with what is properly human locomotive operations, whilst the internal ones are aimed at 'mental actions' whose object are 'images'. Internal activities are the prerequisite for external activities and are realised through the latter (*ibid*; Frolov, 1984). In this way, the individual interacts with the environment.

The basic constituents of human activities are actions, but actions are ancillary to 'conscious goals'. In character actions have intention and operate under certain conditions. An action accomplishes a particular task with a specific goal. The goal prescribes the agency and quality of action and by this very fact directs action (Leont'ev, 1981). An action is a reality that is mobile, independent and realises itself through operations. For this reason, it can be appended to several motives, to several activities, to several goals, and in all cases, the reverse is also true. In the case of 'goal formation', the numerical value of goals required to attain a motive depends on the "motive of the activity" (*ibid*, p. 62). In carrying out a goal, the operational conditions can change but the goal remains the same. Operations differ in their degree of effectiveness. For instance, typing on a keyboard may functionally be more preferred to writing with a pen. Both are operations, but quite different types of operations. Operations presuppose instrumentality and mastery. Some knowledge of the instrument is a prerequisite to carrying out the operations. Operations arise from the change in action. Yet with frequent use become automated, always realising the action of the individual who remains its source (motive) and controller. A bird's eye view of activity reveals that one can distinguish individual activities linked to motives, actions as processes dependent on goals and operations dictated to by conditions of a specific goal; thus, revealing the inner systemic character of activity (*ibid).*

How does one account for values and beliefs in an activity paradigm and specifically how are they linked to motive? There are many activities whose links are internal (Leont'ev, 1981). A simple example is cognitive activity where there is a cognitive motive. Cognitive activities are executed by processes that are external in form — actions or operations whose manifestation are in internalisation and externalisation. Recall these are properties of consciousness.

It is sufficiently clear that the motive of an activity arises from a need, whilst goals are constituted by the desire and the intention to solve tasks arising in activities. It is a fact of everyday life that within activities, operate many other cognitive and emotional milieus necessary for the fulfilment of a motive. It is therefore not a distant idea to include beliefs and values to this milieu. They are attributes of the cognitive and emotional psychological realm that account for motive when they inform, arouse, direct and maintain activity processes.

According to Motivational System Theory, various components of the whole person work in cohesion with each other — the cognitive, emotional and environmental — for the person to function as a unit-in-context (De Corte, 1990).[9] Leont'ev (1981) underlines this same point when he speaks of the complementarity of internalisation and externalisation in an activity scenario. An individual is capable of self-direction, autonomous decision making, personal responsibility as well as automated operations in an activity scenario. Every learning opportunity theoretically assumes all the above choices, roles and relationships working in concert.

If motive is the object of any learning activity, it is a complex process guided and supported internally and externally. The former involves some form of cognitive and emotional competencies that are then externalised through actions — mental or practical mediated by artefacts. Higher forms of cognitive activities such as logical reasoning, problem solving and planning are evolved from lower forms of cognitive activities such as basic perception, natural memory, involuntary attention through social interaction and the internalisation of social forms of activity that mediate mental activities (Vygotsky, 1978). Somehow, mind acts on reality indirectly through psychological artefacts — language is the most common one arising from culture and history (*ibid*).[10]

---

[9] See Ford, (1987) and Chapter Two in Ford (1992) for a description of LSF. Briefly: "The Life System Framework is a comprehensive theory of human functioning …that is concerned with the characteristics of people in general…and the organisation and operation of these characteristics in individual persons… [It] is designed to represent the person-in-context analysis … all aspects of being human and not just certain attributes or processes…" (Ford, 1992, pp. 19-20).

[10] Sociocultural theory agrees with MST on the biological necessity and constraints on psychological processes. Whereas nature provides the initial point in form of lower psychological functions, culture

Whereas, referring to the concept of context, an individual becomes the extension through which values, beliefs, motives and goals operate; the contents of his or her operations come from sociocultural structures (*ibid*). The concept of mediated action in its definition entails that it works within the individual and beyond. Language validly manifests this fact. It operates within the individual but also extends beyond. If one extends this argument to motives, goals, beliefs and values one can see that these are psychological tools whose content and meaning are socioculturally derived. Gardner (1999) considers that human cognition emerges from being, knowing (skills) and the sociocultural institutions. Gardner implies the contextuality of the individual; by so doing, he reinforces the idea of mediation. For example, at infancy the 'beginnings' of learning are mediated by the mother. With time, the child begins to make distinctions. This "assigning of differences" makes the world dynamically visible to the learner (Varela cited in Horn and Wilburn, 2005, p. 747).[11] The child may have the cognitive and emotional faculties to make these distinctions. However, for the actual distinction to be made, the infant needs content from the sociocultural realm. These develop gradually through "intersubjectivity" (Bruner, 1996, p. 20) and maturation. In the dynamics of 'co-participation', the learner is an agent of cognitive action (Davydov, 1988). This means that learners participate in the construction of knowledge. One level of knowledge construction involves learning that which society values. For argument's sake, "education is never neutral" (Bruner, 1996, p. 25). It comes with purpose and the context defines the content taught and learnt. This new knowledge involves acquiring or forming new impressions, skills, attitudes, intentions, meaning, information, abilities, information, mental schemas, pieces of wisdom, new words (Zuckerman, 2003). This epistemic reality is harnessed through the culturally more able.

It is through actions that human behaviour is directly observable. They are more or less the means by which desired or undesired outcomes are produced (Kuhl and Beckmann, 1985). Mead (1934), Burke (1969) in his dramaturgical method, Vygotsky (1978), Zinchencko (1985), and Wertsch (1991) have

---

through social activity and tool mediation translates lower psychological functions to higher psychological ones.

[11]This is much more complex than it is indicated here; yet on another level it is a life long project.

discussed action. The shared thought among these authors suggests that human action may be analysed to understand particular aspects that explain the person and his sociocultural context. Burke's understanding of action, for instance, is related to motives: What makes people do things? Why do they do these things? Burke uses "act, scene agent, agency [and] purpose" as a tool for interpreting human action and motives (Wertsch, 1998, p. 13). Similarly, values, beliefs and goals become instruments that this research is using to study human actions. By human action, this inquiry means physical actions as well as cognitive actions by a person or groups of people in a sociocultural context.

The principle of "unitary functioning" in Motivational System Theory tries to explain that a person functions as a unit-in-context with respect to values, beliefs, motives and goals (Ford, 1992, p. 22). This does not contradict sociocultural theory since a person is subsumed into a community of individuals, which makes her the individual she is socioculturally and historically. The notion of collective activity (Engeström, 1999) is assumed since human capacities emerge from social actions to become individual actions (Vygotsky, 1978). Motivational System Theory tasks itself with explaining how motives, goals, beliefs and values interrelate. The end result of which is action as the last step in a series of processes that will exhibit a 'new' behaviour. The learning of new behaviour arises from *selective information exchange*, *selective activation of a person's internal constructive processes*[12] *and that influence on a person's motivation activities occurring through selective processes*. Ford posits that:

> Motivation provides the foundation for learning, skill development, and behaviour change by determining how, where, and to what ends people will invest their capabilities for behavioural self-construction (1992, p. 22).

Motivation is requisite for learning, skill development and activity in general; it arises from the organised flow of a person's activity patterns that are observable through actions or activities of the person or group of persons. Activities are rational integrated sequences of human actions; they are "context-specific" and

[12] "Whereas "selective attention" is a prerequisite for learning, "selective action" is a prerequisite for new behaviour patterns (skills through practice and rehearsal).

"goal-directed".[13] Any activity is immediately represented by three states: it can be attained, it may be interrupted provisionally by another activity or it fails (Ford, 1992). Needless to say, the circumstances leading to each of these are varied and complex; for instance, they involve a *subject* and *objects* that are *mediated* to realise desired *outcomes*. The subject is either an individual or group who historically uses artefacts to mediate any activity. These artefacts are either external or internal. Therefore, activity explains the subject's doing in a setting and the motives driving their actions (Leont'ev, 1981; Wertsch, 1998; Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001). Leont'ev saw three tiers of activity in human nature: activity as a universal concept driven by human motives; activity as individual actions that are goal driven, and activities as objective human operations mediated by tool in specific contexts (Leont'ev, 1981; Kozulin, 1998). Notice that motives, agency, goals and mediation as concepts of activity are present in Leont'ev account of human cognitive functions. The relevance of activity in this project lies in the fact that agent (subject) and agency (object) are properties of activity. In a learning scenario, learners have the competencies to self-direction. This is to say that they set goals and attempt to realise them through an optimal course to their motives in the activity process (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001).

Let us digress for a while and discuss an interesting point that Matusov draws to our attention. Can a goal-directed activity be motiveless? Matusov (2004) has attempted to argue this. However, since this specific issue is beyond the scope of the dissertation, it will not be pursued further than to make a general observation as to whether there is such a thing as learning without a goal or more radically without a motive. To answer this question requires one to be familiar on the one hand with the understanding of the concept of motive in the general literature, and on the other hand with Matusov's arguments concerning motive. In a general textbook of psychology such as Wade and Tavris (1987), the sense given of motive is that of a 'driving force' of human behaviour. In Activity Theory and other theoretical paradigms motive is the focal theoretical construct. Matusov (2004) wonders whether the term is over-used or under-used with respect to its

[13] There are three types of instrumental episode: motor activity, observational episode (seeks information) and thinking episode (Ford, 1992, p. 24). Any learning experience requires observing, thinking and doing to have a phenomenal impact.

application. He departs from this understanding for two reasons: Firstly, it deprives motive of agency. Secondly, it is reductionist when it equates motive to a container. In developing a new insight, Matusov, argues that motive occurs when in an activity there exists "mediated action" and "two conflicting tensions" (*ibid*, p. 3). Notice that this arises because the agent is cognisant of the (or some) main facts (has more information) about the activity and can make a choice between one and another condition. This creates tensions. The evidence is in Matusov's example. The tension arises during the repeat of the demonstration[14] and after he had explained what he was trying to achieve. Even more contentious is the argument that a goal-directed activity may not always have a motive. For a goal directed activity to have a motive, it needs to fulfil the following conditions: a). It must have two tensions. b). These tensions must be mediated by some sort of value (mediated action), that is, a conscious rational choice is made between two or more alternatives. In this way, one is in control of his behaviour and not vice versa.

From a logical standpoint, in formulating his argument, Matusov creates the premises from "mediated action" and "two conflicting tensions" (*ibid*) the conclusion must follow — presence of motive. In this thinking, a goal-directed activity can be motiveless. Similarly, an activity with a motive may have no goal. The significance of Matusov's insights and re-conceptualisation of goal-directed activity guards against the fossilisation of the concept in the literature. Knowledge needs be rediscovered, reconceptualised and reinvented.

2.6. (b) On Goals

Goals have a *directive cognitive* utility hence they are "psychological processes that are anticipatory and evaluative" [15] (Ford, 1992, p. 73). In this sense, goals are

[14] Matusov places a pen before his student without explaining why; predictably, he picks it up. Matusov repeats the exercise but explains the demonstration. The student is in tension whether to pick or not to pick up the pen.

[15] There are three key motivational processes. (a) They are future oriented (Cofer & Appley, 1964). (b) They are qualities that are inherent in the person and not the context (Weiner, (1990), for if beliefs, values, goals and motives are cognitive and emotional properties, one has to assume that they

desired outcomes of future states. Envisaged so, goals prepare the learner to attempt to produce desired future outcomes — remember a goal may be attained, interrupted or fails — in addition to providing regulatory processes by evaluating the effectiveness of the learning activities. In each case, the learner evaluates his circumstances in relationship to the perceived outcomes. Goals embody desired future outcomes. They also objectify values and beliefs that are requisite in the process of meeting these outcomes (*ibid,* p. 83).[16]

Furthermore, just as activities may have several motives and goals, similarly, goals can be multiple even in a single activity (Leont'ev, 1981; Ford, 1987; Pervin, 1991; Wertsch, 1998). In any activity with a single motive, there can be sub-goals with different actions aimed at providing solutions to the specific activity. This hierarchy expands until the specific action is accomplished. The significance of this in the learning process indicates that motivation is augmented by attending to sub-goals since they are immediate, easier to deal with, generate less boredom and anxiety; moreover, immediate results induce satisfaction. Clear goals are better for the learning process than goals that are nebulous (Ford, 1992). A Swahili adage sums this most fittingly: *haba na haba hujaza kibaba*. (Little by little fills up the measure). The argument is that learners perform to their best in the here-and-now. It is possible to evaluate the interim success which itself may serve as basis for further motivation and activity. Sub-goals ensure that motive is

---

are inherent in the person not in the sociocultural context. As Ford (1992) explains "personal goals" are derived from "context information", that is, from shared meanings and opportunities. A goal assigned by a teacher will motivate if the learner takes responsibility of a "personal goal" (*ibid*, 1992, p. 74). So, one can never impose a goal. It must be adopted as a personal goal for it to perform a directive function. A goal can become a subgoal for another valued goal by helping the person gainfully or in realizing or avoiding an end. For instance, a learner will accept punishment because he wants to be finished with it, he wants to move on or he wants to end the matter now than have the parents involved. Accordingly, this becomes a personal quest and not the quest of doing the punishment (*ibid*). It is sufficiently evident that values play an important role in motivation – what one personally values is what one will do. (c) Motivational processes deal with problems since they help the person to choose to restore, maintain or strive for better or new states of life. The actual task of solving problems is vested in the body, skills and sociocultural aspect (Ford, 1992, p. 73). Motivation is like a driver who decides where to go. To move the car the driver needs to initiate or maintain the activity, the skills and the sociocultural environment that support the driving: driver, destination, roads, the traffic rules and driving decorum. Directive cognitive processes, regulatory cognitive process and control processes are functions that govern the working of motivation.

[16] See details of "goal content", that is, types of specific goals (Ford, 1992, pp. 83-122).

dealing with what is possible within the current resources and context.[17] In addition, the most motivating learning activities will be those that involve other kinds of goals such as entertainment, new experiences, some kind of rewards or benefit, friendships, trust, responsibility, belonging, happiness, comfort and security. If this is true, how should curriculum designers, classroom teachers and lesson teachers create opportunities for learning? The answers are varied but enough to show that learning should include elements of enjoyment, challenge, instruction, relevance, roles of responsibility and exploration (Ford, 1992).

2.6. (c) On Beliefs

Beliefs like goals are cognitive states that regulate behaviour by processing information about an object and its outcome. When a problem arises, beliefs "anticipate" and "evaluate" (Ford, 1992, p. 74) the learner's ability to solve it within his or her context and to resolve whether the goal is attainable within the specific existing conditions. Ford designates this as the "power of positive thinking" (p. 124). This is the yeast that ferments resilience, commitment, hope and perseverance that supports learning given the best personal and sociocultural conditions (*ibid*). Teachers, counsellors and parents through interventions to enhance learning can mediate this area. How this is possible is a discussion not attempted here.

Furthermore, beliefs in their functional state work with specific goals. This is because any goal is appended to some sort of value (relevance or need) the individual holds and must act on (*ibid*). In sociocultural theory cognitive faculties, beliefs for example belong to individual psyche even though their contents are derived from culture. Beliefs make sense in the context of activity. For instance, a learner who believes that she cannot be a student leader because she is afraid of crowds hypothetically snuffs out her future political ambitions, and evidently has no object of pursuit, has no motive, will not formulate any goal

[17] This needs to be taken into context because it has its downside in terms of meeting specific learning goals – it is important not to lose sight of the final destination which explains why goals direct and guide (Bandura, 1986; Winell, 1987).

in this regard and will therefore take no actions to fulfil this specific activity. The learner's belief is now no longer a personal matter but is socioculturally garbed. The learner has beliefs but they are playing a negative role. Learner's values neither move her to become a student leader nor a politician. Additionally, notice that the mediation of belief is strong if the learner places value in the goal or anticipated goal. These are weak if there is no value or goal (Bandura, 1986; Meece, Wigfield and Eccles, 1990; Ford, 1992). Learners need to believe that they are endowed with ability and opportunity to do something. Motive requires personal commitment where learners can choose among possible alternatives, goals they value and the means to realise their object.

2.6. (d) On Values

Values are linked to emotions. Emotions are essentially incorporated in any learning activity. They equip the learner with evaluative information (judgements) about the problems and opportunities of personal value. Emotions engage the learner in a 'state of action readiness' (Fridja, in Ford, 1992). So they constitute a vital source of energy in motivation — "emotional arousal process" (Ford, 1992, p. 75).[18] Cognition and emotions meet when information is presented to cognition for evaluation. Through selective attention, the mind chooses what is of value through various feelings. Vygotsky affirms this when he claims that: "behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last why in the analysis of thinking" (1986, p. 252).

Emotions endow the learner with the ability of decision-making within the personal and sociocultural constraints. The relationship between emotion and cognitive structures cannot be underrated. Without this relationship, the claim that a learner is functioning as a unit-in-context is fallacious, for the function of choice and decision-making renders it deficient. Supporting this line of thought,

[18] Motives are either "facilitated" or "constrained but not imposed" (Ford, 1992, p. 76ff). Other than the learner himself no one take hold of his thoughts, beliefs, feelings, goals and switch them on or off, for one cannot be compelled to value something, to be optimistic, pessimistic or to feel a certain emotion. Still it remains possible to influence a learner's specific patterns of goals, emotions and beliefs otherwise teaching would impossible (*ibid*).

Ford (1992) rejects the view that cognition, emotions and motivation are innately dissimilar and qualitatively a separate kind of psychological phenomena. Similarly, "[emotions] cannot be understood outside the dynamics of human life," (Vygotsky, 1987b, p. 333). It is within this context that the emotional processes acquire meaning and expression. In considering the person as a whole, emotions are important when they relate to the values, beliefs, goals and motives. Otherwise, they will be stateless in the literal sense. People respond emotionally to events that are important to their goals and motives (Frijda, in Ford, 1992). Even though it is not the norm, subjectively granted, one tends to go with what is emotionally gratifying. Perhaps in this sense, learning activities will be more profitable to the learner if they are linked to learners' emotions and goals (*see Section 4.5*. especially pp. 112 — 114). Emotions denote phenomena of value to the learner in the sense of 'there whence your treasure, is your heart!'

Values are directly proportional to emotions a learner invests or does not invest in an object of interest. A learner likes or does not like something depending on the degree of her emotional affection or disaffection. The relationships amongst the elements of human motivation are complex and reciprocally support each other. If any of the components is missing in an activity, for instance, the learner has no goal, beliefs, or sees no value in anything she is learning she will have no motive because these elements co-occur. Consider a situation where a teacher assigns a learning activity. If the learner does not see the relevance of the assignment as mediating her personal goals, she will take no action in writing the assignment and will have no motive for performing the activity. It does not matter what positive emotions or beliefs are held. Likewise, if she has no faith in her teacher's ability to teach her or doubts her ability to do the assignment she will have no motive to carry out the learning activity. Accordingly, values, beliefs and goals complement each other in mediating motives. If human actions are mediated by human agency then values, beliefs, motives and goals are a manifestation of this mediation. These examples explain why the teacher needs all these elements to mediate motive.[19] Anscombe (1957) says, if a learner is unwilling to participate in learning activity the teacher cannot impose it — the learner must want to learn

[19] In practice, some activity is still possible with the absence of an element, but it means that the motivation will also be weak, that is, efficiency will diminish (Ford, 1992).

and must try to learn for learning to occur. Although individuals function as a 'unit-in-context', they do not act mechanically. However, some of their operations become automated because of repetitive functions such as is seen in an expert typist or pianist. Individuals are different in what they want, means of attaining it and the manner they evaluate their progress in attaining what they want in context of their sociocultural, personal and biological circumstances. In this respect, one can conceive of learning as a function of cognition; yet, emotions are equally requisite since both are embodied in the learner and constitute the whole.[20] This study stresses that the interdependence of values, beliefs, motives and goals to motivate an individual is a necessity for any activity to be initiated, maintained and fulfilled. The necessity of these variables is in their inter-dependence, which emphasises their mutuality and 'complementarity'.

In the traditional sense of the term, motive is the mover that causes a person to act — limiting the discussion to cognition and emotions — that which causes one to act may be arrived at either through a process of logical argument or through feelings (need) for or against an object. Whether action is arrived at through a process of logical argument or a process of feeling (need), both are *ipso facto* psychological processes. Motive depends on non-constant factors such as organisation, the disposition and ability of the individual, available opportunities and circumstances in the school, role of the culturally more able and socio-cultural constituents to create motivational patterns that permit learners to invest themselves in appropriate learning activities. For this reason, in a school system, there is no such thing as a select group of motivated learners.

Each culture defines for itself what it considers valuable for its welfare and proper functioning. Whether one appreciates it or not, some form of collective value systems serve as the basis upon which individuals find the basis of their own value systems. This is what makes them sociocultural. Thus understood, values in their concreteness are the foundation on which individual and societal activities may or may not progress.

[20] One wonders where the divide between cognition and emotions begins and ends in the learning process. The argument is that this line certainly begins somewhere, what is certain is that both are requisite in the learning process.

2.7. SOME BASICS OF SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

This section establishes the relationships between learning, cognition, emotions, language and concept formation, mediation, the zone of proximal development and learning artefacts at Holy Family Primary School. They constitute the bedrock on which learning takes place in sociocultural theory.

2.7. (a) The Link Between Emotion and Cognition.

Human learning involves much more than the cognitive element. Emotions are fundamental to any human experience since they motivate social and individual activity for example the learning activity (Ratner, 2000). Vygotsky (1986) seem to establish the connection between cognition and emotions in human decision-making processes. The context of thought supposes an object. Consider for instance the concept 'common good'. At Holy Family Primary School, the learning process seems to hinge on it — the unspoken norm that it is required and demanded. This is the source of energy turning the wheel of learning at the school. Hence, its very expression is sociocultural in that the learner appropriates the cognitive and emotional understanding of the concept — 'common good'. However, what do cognitive and emotional dimensions of the 'common good' mean? The concept 'common good' has to be comprehended in its philosophical, religious, societal and cultural scope, that is, as an epistemic fact. The concept's sufficiency lies in its experiential and existential character, namely, that the knowledge of the 'common good' ought to contribute to the welfare of society and the individual. It is in living a shared life; it is in the everyday activities whether they are societal or individual that the 'common good' is manifested, experienced and realised, and not in merely having the knowledge of the 'common good'. The 'common good' has existential, spatial and time dimensions in human practices over and above its epistemic confines. It is this existential scope that crystallises and completes the meaning of the concept — 'common good' as a psychological and socially shared identity. The interplay between cognition and emotions in Vygotsky view is in the act of making choices

— evident in his words: "Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency" (*ibid*, p. 252).

If mind is sociocultural as Vygotsky (1978) claims, two points become relevant to this discussion. Firstly, cognition and emotion in theory might be distinct entities in the human psyche, but in actual daily experiences, the divide between them is blurred. Secondly, Vygotsky (1987a) recognises that they are essential for the full functioning of the individual. Werner (1948) and Piaget (1962) corroborated this view. They observe that there is no point in human life where one finds a state or behaviour that is purely cognitive without affect. Glick (1983), Noddings (1995), Tappan (1998), DiPardo and Potter (2003) also assert that cognition and emotions are not divorced in the learning process.

2.7. (b) On Language and Concept Formation

In a normal school such as Holy Family, learning requires language because "Intellectual growth is contingent on mastery of thought [through] language" (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 51). Language is an important tool because it mediates learning and facilitates concept formation (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990). English at Holy Family Primary School is the medium of communication. Learners of Grade Six and Grade Five were proficient in English both the spoken as well as the written. It is evident from the DVD (*see Appendix C*) that the learners can hold a coherent and logical debate among themselves or with their teacher on substantial issues (see Chapter Two and Chapter Three — Jaki, 2006, DVD). The mastery of language is important for concept formation and academic excellence (Tharp, 1989; Gallimore and Tharp, 1990; Macdonald, 2005).

> A concept as a mental construct consist of a persons' organised information about an item or class of items that enables that person to discriminate the items or the class of items from other items and also to relate it to other items and classes of items… (Klausmeirer, 1990, p. 94).

Concept formation is important because it underlies learning. Vygotsky's (1986) understanding of concept development is that it stems from artefact mediation;

for instance, in language, signs direct attention to objects. This does not occur in isolation. Conceptual bonding of objects goes hand in hand with conceptual development. As learners' understanding of signs develops, conceptual development steadily increases (Klausmeier, 1990).

2.7. (c) Mediation at Holy Family Primary School

The concept of *mediation* is a thread featuring extensively in this dissertation (*see Section 2.1. and Section 2.2.*) It is the theoretical cornerstone of sociocultural theory. The strategies teachers use to mediate the learning of values are varied:

a. The context: being a Catholic school the school ethos is an extension of the Catholic ethos. This mediates the teaching of values in the sense that there is no fundamental contradiction in teaching values between the school and the teachers and the Catholic institution.

b. The teachers: these are willing partners ready to spread the gospel of good values. It seems that everyone is involved beginning with the principal to the secretaries. An unwilling teacher who enters a class grudgingly is a liability to the learners since she does not participate totally in the teaching process. The research did not encounter such.

c. The learners: the involvement and participation of the learners is vital to this process. It is impossible to teach learners who are unwilling to learn. In sociocultural theory, learners teach themselves as well as others — manifest in the anti-bullying, the verbal and the written discourse discussed in Chapter Four.

d. Various fora are provided for teaching or discussing values. The assembly is excellently used for this purpose. A verbatim example is:

> When it comes to homework, I have been told the dogs ate the homework…, the book got stolen, and somebody else took it, and …I did do it but left it at home — that is a

> great one. And then people are very upset that you say: but well that doesn't help. If you are at home who is going to mark your homework? Do you have a teacher at home, your own private teacher that is going to mark your homework? So if it does not come to school, what does it help to say that it is done but it is at home? (Fieldnotes, at 7:45 a.m. on Friday, 9th July 04)

Other fora included meetings, classroom lessons, notice boards, drama sketches, the library, school newsletters, workshops, trips to historical places such as the Apartheid Museum, learners as well as parents' and teachers' committees, and special occasions, for example, when the Grade Sixes invited their grandparents to a tea-party to talk about values.

e. Learning activities such as anti-bullying lessons organised and mediated by Grade Six learners to the rest of the school, debates on topical issues in the classroom, leadership workshops, artistic works (stars) depicting the most important values for the learners. There are also PowerPoint presentations of the values learners identify in Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi.

f. The evaluation of the learning activities as quizzes, tests at one-level and staff meetings at another level are examples within the school ethos-mediating learners to grow and develop in a certain way (Cole, 1996).

g. *Figure 4*, (*see Chapter Four*) embodies the notion of mediated activities in context (Macdonald, 2006) — the school ethos mediates ideationally and interpersonally.

The above are instances of different forms of mediation. According to Engeström, (1999a) mediation is the thread that holds Vygotsky's works together. In various ways Cole and Scribner (1978), Wertsch (1985) and Ratner (1991) agree with this proposition. It is in the essence of human nature that all activities are mediated in some form, be it the mediation of mental activity or practical activity since all mediated human action is inseparable from its context. Artefacts mediate in one form or another when used by human intention and human

activity. They personify meaning because they are products of history and culture and they incorporate a *goal-directed activity* (Cole, 1996).

2.7. (d) The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The ZPD is dependent upon mediation. It is a cultural psychological construct that is important to Vygotsky and this inquiry.

> …The zone of proximal development… is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined through independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (1978. p. 86).

The ZPD is essentially interventionist and supposes the idea of agency. It is Vygotsky's way of explicating interactive learning between the learner and the culturally more able (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996) and underlines the idea that learning is sustained by sociocultural structures in human activity (Daniels, 2001). The ZPD has been discussed variously by Bruner (1985), Engeström (1987), Hedegaard (1988), Tharp and Gallimore (1988), Lave and Wenger (1991), Matusov (1998), Wells (1999) and Daniel (2001). However, Engeström's collectivist interpretation namely "the distance between the everyday actions of individuals and the historically new form of the societal activity that can be collectively generated" (1987, p. 174), is in keeping with the idea of learning as an apparatus of individual as well as collective change. The claim is that in the course of learning, the activity of transformation transcends the individual. Tharp and Gallimore (1990, pp. 184-186) identify four steps of the ZPD of assisted performance to facilitate learning:

a. Assistance by the culturally more able. In this scenario, the learner needs assistance at every step of mediation. There might be learners needing this sort of assistance and it is the teacher' responsibility to seek them out.

b. Assistance by the self — the self is a co-participant in meaning making, a communicator, a practiser who experiences his own activities as well as

other learners' activities. This learner begins to take some responsibility in the learning process. Some assistance is still required but the learner is not completely dependent on the teacher for assistance. She can work out some problems on her own.

c. Automatised and fossilised activity — by this stage the ZPD is achieved. Evidently, progress has been made. The learner progressively needs less and less of assistance from the teacher and reaches a point where she needs no more assistance; she is now competent on problem solving.

d. De-automatised performance leads to *recursion* through the ZPD. There are times even with the initial assistance from the culturally more able, the child develops the capacity to learn and makes progress but eventually loses this capacity. It is in this scenario that the learner has to be re-taught the tasks, hence, *recursion* through the ZPD.

The basic idea that runs in the four steps is that agency extends to each one of the assisted performances. One can see mediation in action. Mediated help is a requisite at any point of conceptual development. Mediated help implies that the learner can complete that part of the task that does not make sense to them. Furthermore, it entails discerned and differentiated individualised interactions with the learners, given that each one of them may have special needs. For Bruner, the ZPD is the manner by which parents, peers and teachers: "Arrange the environment to enable the child to reach a higher or more abstract ground from which to reflect… becomes more conscious" (1985, p. 23).

Bruner is contending that the learning process is already a potential in the child but the ZPD bring it to fullness. Bruner is emphasising the sustainability or extension of the learning process by the culturally more able.[21] This position is

[21] Lazarev reading Davydov argues that [Davydov] rejected the view that joint activity does not exist before and without individual activities. In the process by which the child appropriates the cultural 'models' of activity, its inevitable that the child should imitate adults. The child by himself can be regarded only as an individual subject in the process of formation. But according to Davydov, the child becomes an individual subject not by passively imitating adults but by taking part directly in activity — under guidance — of collective subjects. This is to say, appropriation requires a certain degree of initiative and independence in the child, who at first is able to appropriate something new

further verified when he underlines that the learner is "quintessentially assisted" (*ibid*, pp. 24 - 25) until he masters the activities through consciousness control. Whereas the child in the ZPD scenario as an individual may do some things without help, there will be times when the learner must be helped to perform or learn other activities (see Jaki, 2006, DVD). The teacher standing in *loco parentis* is an avenue by which sociocultural values are taught to the learners. Thus, the ZPD provides teachers with the occasion to reach out and to research on what optimal learning prospects should be created to facilitate learning for effective development (Hedegaard in Daniels, 1996).

Nevertheless, it need be said as in White's (1989) point of view that the ZPD:

> Is more than social support…It is a locus of social negotiations about meanings, and it is, in the context of schools, a place where teachers and pupils may appropriate one another's understanding (1989, p. xii).

This says that active participation by learners in a classroom context stretches the teacher's mind and intentions. For instance, in the debates or questions that transpire between the learners and the teacher, whether the teacher needs to respond to every question in its full weight or find a reasonable response that is satisfactory or the learner discovers the answer through some leading clues constitutes the ZPD. It is a sociocultural space that allows the learner to cross the learning zone with assistance. Yet assistance is not necessarily a direct answer. It might be a challenge that sets the learner to a deeper investigation or invites the learner to a deeper thinking; it might be an exploration. It might be that the learner is denied out rightly what she or he sees as appropriate for learning and growth (*see Section 4.5. pp 112-114*). Overall, the teacher mediates this trans-formative role by the manner of her techniques of teaching, communicative skills, disposition towards the learners, her philosophy of teaching, and her roles in the actual learning process.

---

only through joint activity with adults and peers. In this connection, the process of appropriation must not be equated with the process of development (Lazarev, 2004).

A teacher is not an end but a means to an end. Such a teacher orchestrates a course of action that promotes the construction of knowledge through her teaching methods, innovations in the curriculum, innovations, classroom management, and encouraging learners' participation. One can surmise from above that a teacher is a powerful mentor. A teacher is powerful given the proper skills, good judgment of the teaching-learning phenomena, a subtle balance between her aspirations and the aspirations of her learners. She is in position to make marked differences in the learners and the learning process — and is a formidable engine of initiating transformation. The learner needs to be enculturated — Zinchencko calls this entering the zone of "consciousness of consciousness" (1995, p. 114). The ZPD is a process of enculturation (*see Section 43, Section 44 and Section 45*). It does not necessarily ignore the potentials of the learner who is also his own instrument of learning (Lompscher, 1999).

A point of caution though, the learning process within the ZPD is not a smooth easy process. The dynamism involved implies contradictions, pains, and stresses, rejections, impediments, resistances and tensions (*see Section 4.5. ff*). This is because the teaching-learning process reflects the reality of human activity.

2.7. (e) Learning Artefacts

The notion of artefacts is discussed in *Section 2.2*. Artefacts are important because they expand or constrain human learning in mediated activity. There are various learning artefacts throughout the school, the classroom, the library. These are worksheets, books, pens, and blackboard. Indeed, anything that adds to the teaching and learning process. Artifacts therefore connect the mind and the real world. They take various forms, resource and constrain thought and activity, help solve existing problems and find solutions to emerging ones (Cole, 1997). Given that artefacts embody *meaning* and *value* that are expressed in *human activity* (Cole, 1996; Daniel, 2001), humans have mastered artefacts and are able to control their psychological functions by internalising and externalising activity in one form or another (Vygotsky, 1978; Cole and Scribner, 1978; Kozulin, 1998).

Ethos, as any other social cultural phenomenon embodies socioculturally shared meanings for its participants. Meanings as in context carry with them intentions, goals and object of the ethos. At Holy Family Primary School, the research speaks of sociocultural values which children come to learn. Children do not come to school without values. They have acquired these from their homes, parents and peers in their initial learning experiences. Blatchford, *et al* observe that a further "influence on children will be…parents' attitudes and views towards their child's development" (1982, p. 10). At school, children acquire, refine or discard some of these values. As a contrast, whereas pre-primary learning is oriented towards structured play, in post pre-primary learning, play and work takes on more definite identities based on internalised values (Cleave, *et al*, 1982).

2.8. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The focus of this study is sociocultural values in Grade Six R.C. and Grade Five R.S. at Holy Family Primary School. Children begin learning sociocultural values at home. The school however provides another platform on which to continue this process of teaching and learning sociocultural values, which are examined in a Cultural Psychological theoretical framework. Children's values, beliefs, goals and motives are crucial aspect of the learning activity. This paradigm guided fieldwork and data collection on the targeted learners. The following points informed the writing of this chapter.

- Context — culture, influences the learners' behaviour and activities (Wentworth, 1980). In sociocultural theory, the objects this study analyses are activities that are embedded in culture. Shweder and Levine's notion of culture as "a shared organisation of ideas that includes intellectual, moral, and aesthetic standards in a community and the meanings of communicative actions" (1984, p. 67) fits this study. Context provides the basis upon which all activities operate including the basis upon which knowledge and skills are constructed. Therefore, the growth and the development of a learner is a function of a contextualised culturally more able.

- Activity Theory — activities are human doings, which are object-oriented to obtain a desired outcome. It emphasises human interactions between the subject and object mediated by artefacts. Engeströmian Activity Theory is the basis on which Holy Family Primary School is studied as an activity system.

- Catholic educations and ethos are explained and offered as mediating learning and are considered as cultural contexts.

- Values, belief, goals and motives as properties of human consciousness and therefore operate and are observable in human activities. Whereas motive of an activity emerges from need, goals are constituted by the desire and the intention to solve tasks arising in activities. Beliefs and values are within cognitive and emotional states required for the fulfilment of a motive. These phenomena are interdependent in motivating an individual.

- Emotions and cognition are hypothetically distinct entities in the human psyche. In actual function and daily experience, the divide between them is blurred. Vygotsky (1987a) recognises that they are essential for the full functioning of the individual. Piaget (1962), Glick (1983), Tappan (1998), and DiPardo and Potter (2003) corroborate his views.

- Language and concept formation requires mediation by language or some type of sign form because mediation facilitates concept formation (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990). English at Holy Family School is the medium of communication that is both spoken and written.

- Mediation is a key construct of sociocultural theory. Mediation of human action is inseparable from its context; there are many forms of mediation but the chief mediation is performed by the culturally more able and the ethos of the school. The mediating artefacts personify meaning which are products of history and culture and incorporate a goal-directed activity (Cole, 1996).

- The ZPD is interventionist and supposes agent and agency. It is Vygotsky's way of explicating interactive learning between the learner and the culturally more able (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996). Gallimore (1990) identify four steps of the ZPD of assisted performances to facilitate learning: a) Assistance by the culturally more able, b) Assistance by the self, c) Automatised and fossilised activity, and d) De-automatised performance leading to *recursion*.

- Learning artifacts connect the mind to the objective world. They take various forms, resource and constrain thought and activity, help solve existing problems, find solutions to emerging ones (Cole, 1997) and embody meaning and value that manifest in activity (Daniel, 2001). Ethos in one sense is a social cultural artefact that embodies socioculturally shared meanings for its participants. Meanings as in context carry with them intentions, goals, and object of the ethos. At Holy Family Primary School, this study speaks of sociocultural values which children come to learn. Children come to school with values. They acquire new ones, build on old ones, refine them and at times discard some of them.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Methods

"A methodology is a coordinated set of lenses through which to interpret the world."

Michael Cole

3.0. THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

In Chapter Two, this research gave an account of the theoretical framework of Cultural Psychology as one view that attempts to explain human nature. It covered key concepts of Cultural Psychology: culture/ethos, mediation, context, concept formation, mediation, the Zone of Proximal Development, values, beliefs, motives and goals as emotional and cognitive phenomena mediating learning viewed in the context of Activity Theory that gives on view of why humans do what they do.

In this chapter, the research discusses the paradigm and the method used to collect data that attempt to answer the question: What are the activities that allow children to learn sociocultural values in a Catholic School? The conduct of research in Cultural Psychology traces its origin to Vygotsky (1978) where he insists on analysing process rather than objects, and where explanation and not description takes precedence. Therefore, the investigations start by observing the learning behaviours of children at Holy Family Primary School. It is through studying the subjects in their natural environment that this research was able to unravel some of the phenomena under study.

Research is about how phenomena are known. There are different paradigms[22] that purport to explain what there is to be known. On the one hand, there is the quantitative research paradigm and on the other hand, there is the qualitative

[22] A conceptual world-view: Kuhn (1962) is credited with using the concept of paradigm shift in a new way that extended beyond the traditional scope of physical sciences to include social sciences: history, economics, business management and sociology.

research paradigm. Each paradigm provides a set of dynamics on how to examine the fabric of human problems and how to solve some of these problems. In this connection, Cole says that "a methodology is a coordinated set of lenses through which [we] interpret the world" (1996, p. 338). Strauss and Corbin (1998) characterise methodology as a means of thinking and studying reality in its various manifestations including the educational one. Methods are sets of techniques for gathering and analysing data to understand the reality they reveal.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Maykut and Morehouse (1994) discuss the concept of paradigms at length. They argue that whereas both quantitative and qualitative paradigms are based on interpretive observations, the former conforms more to measurable variables that are predictable, are based on provable propositions and therefore suggest statistical analysis. The latter is word, action and meaning based. However, important to both cases is the central role of the researcher in the research process (Banister, *et al*, 1994). The researcher is not only the brain, but also the rudder that steers the ship of inquiry towards its destination.

In academia, it is fallacious for any paradigm to claim that it is 'the' paradigm *per excellence*.[23] Each methodology has its own merits and demerits, and that none of them can be relegated to a second-class status. The researcher plays an important role in any study. What is important in any research is that the specific paradigm used is concerned with relevance, thoroughness, is open to insights from academics in the field and that any of the findings apply themselves to research veracity and accuracy.

In the view of Denzin and Lincoln:

> [The] choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked and the questions depend on their context: what is available in that context and what the researcher can do in that setting (2000, p. 2).

[23] Quantitative or qualitative method can be used to support the scientific or naturalistic research. Quantitative method is not the same thing as a scientific paradigm and qualitative is not a naturalistic paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

The choice of a research methodology is value-laden and it places emphasis on the qualities of entities, processes and meanings that are interpreted. In Vygotskian epistemology, one speaks of the relationship between subject, artefact and objects and how meanings are constructed within these relationships in a specific context. Granted, it follows that how one measures these relationships depends on how one determines, conceptualises and analyses them — in which case methodology and methods are implied.

There have been qualitative ethnographic researches undertaken in education; for instance, Eisner and Peshkin, 1990; LeCompte, *et al*, 1993 and Vavrus, 2005. The choice of this study to be a qualitative ethnographic study was dictated by the paradigms involved namely CHAT, Cultural Psychology and the question of the research (*see Section 1.1*). This is a qualitative study, for Cultural Psychology and CHAT depend almost solely on data derived from ethnographic studies.

3.1. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS IN CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Cultural Psychology today stands out as one field through which academia seeks to understand human nature (Vygotsky, 1978; Shweder, 1991; Cole, 1996). Following the understanding that for Cultural Psychology cognition is constituted by culture, the study assumes that this inquiry derives its methodological theory from its rubrics (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). Hedegaard succinctly captures the essentials of what this means with respect to learning. She says:

> Within the cultural-historical tradition, following Vygotsky, learning is conceptualised as a foundational concepts for understanding human life as cultural and societal. Vygotsky conceptualises tool mediation as a core aspect of being human. The capacity to handle tools has to be transferred from one generation to the next. From this perspective learning can be seen as a change in the relation between person and world, though the subject's appropriation of tool use and artefactual knowledge. A child learns to mediate between his needs and the world through the appropriation of the capability to handle tools. Children learn from their interaction with parents and other central persons [teachers], and this interaction takes place within social settings. For children, home, school, peer-group and work are the primary settings for learning. These settings are

> characterised by different traditions for tool use and social interactions, therefore tradition and institutionalisation of tradition have to be taken into consideration when learning is discussed (2001, p. 15).

This text speaks of a cultural context within which learning is mediated when the learners interact with each other and with the culturally more able (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985; Cole, 1996) — assisted performances (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990). Culture in this sense is required to straighten the seams of an imperfect nature — that cultural phenomena interact with the experiential reality of individuals to become a constitutive part of their human experience through learning and the accumulation of knowledge.

The phenomenal desire to understand the process of becoming human as mediated by culture has increasingly become a substantive subject of discussion in the literature. There is a need to extend research in this field to explore the uncharted territories in the literature. This inquiry studies the ethos of Holy Family Primary School to understand the cultural historical educational phenomena through the analysis of everyday school learning activities. There is a distinction between school learning activity and everyday activities. The former supposes the learning activities that occur in a formal setting at school. The latter supposes collective actions both mental and physical that occur in a child's life: at home, church, during play and at school.

The question of methodology and methods is a topical issue of discussion (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). In Cultural Psychology, Vygotsky (1978), Cole (1996) and those of a similar persuasion discuss it. The appropriateness of any methodology is not because it is 'the' avenue to the zenith of knowledge in a manner that excludes other equally sound and valid paradigms, but because it provides one appropriate academic means of arriving at knowledge.

On another level, the question of the suitability of methodology and methods presupposes ethical issues, issues of appropriateness of data collection and issues of data validity, which in no way are specific to any discipline of inquiry. What is of essence in any inquiry is whether the specific inquiry adheres to the rubrics of

scientific research, which must apply themselves to a methodology and to methods for a scientifically acceptable inquiry. Qualitative research privileges no one data collecting practice. The nature of the question, the reality it seeks to address and the context of the empirical study are connected in such a way as to delineate the methods that are employed to collect the most desired data for analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

3.2. SCOPE OF THE DATA COLLECTED

From anecdotal data, Holy Family Primary School is one of the best schools in Johannesburg in academic performance at the provincial and national levels and in matters of discipline.

It is a well-known fact that violence is prevalent in schools around Johannesburg. What accounts for good academic performance, low levels or complete absence of violence in a school? What accounts for good discipline? Do sociocultural values that are taught and learnt influence the growth and development of children in terms of their values, beliefs, goals and motives? These questions seek to answer the research hypothesis. They orientated the researcher to choose Holy Family Primary school as a case study because the research required children in a formal schooling environment with their teachers to answer the research hypothesis.

The sample classes selected were Grade Five R.S. and Grade Six R.C because they were the oldest children (13-14 years old) — selection based on researcher's bias. Each class had 24 learners. This has implications for the teaching and learning process.[24] The other sample involved the teachers who teach these learners (a total of five of them). These samples were observed, interviewed and videoed and generally involved in the data collection processes in the teaching and learning environment.

[24] California's Class Size Reductionhttp://www.wested.org/policy/pubs/full_text/class_size/sect4.htm Downloaded, 5 June 2007.

3.3. ETHNOGRAPHY

The research hypothesis: What sorts of sociocultural values contribute to the holistic integrated learning of children? This question requires a multi-methodological approach to answer the research hypothesis.

This inquiry is an interpretive-descriptive investigation into the cultural learning activities of a selected group of learners at Holy Family Primary School. The entire gamut of events during fieldwork required methods that captured activities that were to be interpreted. Hammersley and Atkinson observe that:

> According to the naturalist account, the value of ethnography as a social research method is founded upon the existence of such variations in cultural patterns…and their significance for understanding social processes… Naturalism proposes that through marginality, in social position and perspective, it is possible to construct an account of the culture under investigation that both understand it from within and captures it as external to, and independent of the researcher, in other words, a natural phenomenon. Thus, the description of cultures becomes the primary goal (1995, pp. 9-10).

What is emphasised is the concept of *ecological validity* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which has to do with the accurate representation of phenomena and processes of the subject of investigation from the eyes of the participants. With this understanding of methodology and methods, the researcher waded into the field to carry out ethnographic research. Ethnography in education is commonplace: Rist (1973) and Vavrus (2005) are examples. The basis for doing an ethnographic study was driven by the aims of the research question in Chapter One, the conviction that qualitative research has the tools suited for accomplishing a sociocultural investigation and that it is consistent with the current theorists of Cultural Psychology (Wertsch, 1985; Cole, 1996) among others. These theoreticians advocate for a multifaceted and interdisciplinary approach, a position this inquiry has adopted.

The supervisor inducted the researcher into the essentials of ethnography by recommending two monographs in the popular domain (Barley, 1983; Barley, 1986). What were noticeable in these monographs were the relationships

between the informants and the researcher. According to Burgess (1989), ethnography depends on relationships between the researcher and the informants. One immediate undertaking at the school was to build relationships, to establish confidence between the Principal, classroom teachers, the learners and the researcher. A good working rapport facilitated this inquiry.

Ethnography as a form of research involves observing and obtaining data from all sources in a specific context, formulating hypotheses and analysing them. The ethnographer is an active participant in the research milieu to the extent that he can discover and interpretatively show the links between the activities and the experiential dimension of the informants in a cultural context (Banister, *et al*, 1994). There is no denying that ethnography as a method and a theory combines specific procedures and techniques for data collection as well as data analysis (Fetterman, 1984; Hammersley, 1995). This is woven together by the medium of language that is used to internalise and externalise social reality, show how individuals and social cosmologies relate and are represented. In short, ethnography depends on the mediation by language (Atkinson, 1992).

In Geertz's view, "What defines … [ethnography] is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in", to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, "Thick description" Geertz (1973b, p. 6) implies interpretation. Wolcott (1980) says that the essence of ethnography is cultural interpretation. Fetterman (1984) specifies that methodology inform cultural interpretation. When one interprets, one does so from the data collected about a culture. Culture supposes a corpus of knowledge that is understood as defining the contextual essence, an essence that *generates* as well as *describes* and defines social cultural activities. Thus:

> [Ethnography is the] descriptive study of a particular human society or the process of making such a study. Contemporary ethnography is based almost entirely on fieldwork and requires the complete immersion of the [researcher] in the culture and everyday life of the people who are the subject of his study (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2004, DVD).

There are many definitions of ethnography (Wolcott, 1992; Boyle, 1994; Stewart, 1998). However, a working definition in a broader theoretical and

methodological framework will suffice. Stewart's (1998) four characterisation of ethnography are discussed. These characteristics are more in line with their applicability to this project rather than the want of a definition. They are in keeping with ethnography as a method rather than as a basis for theory building.

The first of these characteristics is *participant observation*; it presupposes a human instruments as well as fieldwork where the immersion *in vivo* of the researcher in some form of participative role in the natural setting of the object of inquiry is central. However, if the findings in participant observation are going to be valid two assumptions are invoked: a) "prolonged engagement" and b) "persistent observation," (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 193). The advantages of assumptions mentioned above include better engagement with issues, multiple voices imply a diversity of data collected, multiple dialogues allow for different perspectives of issues in question to be addressed, triangulation of data and detailed observation.

Participant observation is like a sponge. When immersed in water, it absorbs some water and may retain it for some time, but it does not become the water. This is one level of the researcher's interaction with the object of inquiry. Wolcott carries this idea further. He observes that "any one who engages in ethnography also assumes responsibility to participate in [it]…seeking satisfactory ways to explain [its intricacies] to others" (1992, p. 47). In Stewart's view, the instrument of data collection *per se* is the ethnographer. He brings his experiences into the inquiry in what is "in joint, emergent exploration with the actors or insiders" (1998, p. 6).

Holism is the second characterisation of ethnography. It assumes that the human instrument embodied in the person of the ethnographer is the one who can synthesize dissimilar observations from which a holistic depiction of a reality emerges (Thornton, 1988; Strathern, 1992). In an anthropological sense, culture is understood as an integrated whole in which an individual can only be understood within the context of that whole (Johnson and Johnson, 1990; Cole, 1996). This claim accords with Vygotsky's view (1978) that the individual and his cultural milieu constitute the whole. In another sense, holistic ethnography

collects data that is all encompassing. It has breadth, depth and height. It does not derive universal concepts but focuses on the study of a localised situation (Fetterman, 1998; Stewart, 1998).[25] This study focuses on Holy Family Primary School (Grade Six and Grade Five).

The third characterisation — *context sensitivity* derives from the previous two and stresses contextualised explanations. This is to say that the specificity of "the site" (Stewart, 1998, p. 7) or "context" according to Wolcott (1995, p. 30) limits what is observable and hence what can be generalised. Cultural Psychology agrees with this fact (Cole, 1996).

Sociocultural descriptions are the fourth characterisation. The domain of ethnography is "sociocultural" (Wolcott, 1992, p. 42). This implies that to be ethnographic, 'it' must be "cultural" (Van Maanen, 1988; Wolcott, 1990; Rosen, 1991) for the simple reason that "the final goal of which an ethnographer should never lose sight…is…to grasp the native's point of view" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 25), participant's "subjective vision" (Asad, 1994, p. 57) or "emic perspective" (Fetterman, 1998, p. 20).

The above four characterisations are certainly not the only ones that constitute the nature of ethnography. However, these capture the essential environment that situates this study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) add *processual immediacy* — the human ability to process information and test its validity — immediate opportunities to clarify, refine and summarise and opportunities to explore further "idiosyncratic responses" (*ibid,* p. 194).

Ethnography presupposes fieldwork, which Wolcott defines as

> …a form of inquiry in which one is immersed personally in the ongoing social activities of some individual or group for the purpose of research. Fieldwork is characterised by personal involvement to achieve some level of understanding that will be shared with others (2001, p. 66).

[25] This is not to suggest that generalisations cannot be made.

Wolcott underscores that fieldwork (and ethnography) is complete with the production of the final report. His position is that "information shared from experience is what validates fieldwork activity" (2001, p. 67). Fieldwork was done at Holy Family Primary School. The researcher selected the research area for the reasons given in *Section 3.2.*

A further theoretical matter is that ethnography occurs in what Rogoff calls the "socially assembled situations" (1990, p. 3) — a school, a classroom viewed in a broad sociocultural educational activity context where the researcher was exploring for multiple meanings in learning.

3.3. (a) Some Issues of Using Ethnography

An essential understanding to be grasped of ethnography is the fact that it is fraught with difficulties inherent within its processes. First, it is an intersubjective tool — a tool that tends to compare. This was a problem since the researcher was from another culture in the sense of race and context. There were at least four other cultures within the school with peoples from different races: whites, Indians, Africans[26] and other Asians although all are locals of South Africa. Being aware of this diversity was a step in dealing with it. Coming from outside the context of inquiry left the researcher wondering what kind of biases he had inadvertently let sneak into the field. Were these intellectual or personal biases that might sneak into the observations, questions, inferences and descriptions?

A further problem arose when the researcher began to identify with the informants — the 'comfort zone'. Although this in itself is not a problem, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) think that this familiarity gnaws away at the objectivity of the ethnographer and his critical analytical perspectives are undermined. Therefore, the validity of the research is questioned and the finding may be rendered inconclusive when one moves between making the unfamiliar

[26]A common misconception (based on anecdotal evidence) from those outside Africa is to think that Africa has one culture. The African continent spans hundreds of thousands of square kilometres with many different peoples on the lands. There are as many cultures as there are peoples.

familiar and the familiar unfamiliar (Banister, *et al*, 1994). While it may be said that in the cosmology of possibilities this is a plausible occurrence, awareness and keeping up one's guard buffers against hurdles that may interfere with objectivity.

Another difficulty arose from the process of data recording. There were times when the process was overwhelming especially when there was so much occurring simultaneously that the researcher could not capture all details to satisfaction. Although voices were captured using a voice-recording device, it left out the details that go with an event: emotions, facial expressions, gestures and body language. Immediate situations were better captured by pen and paper.

3.4. ETHNOGRAPHY AND SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

This section further points to why this study was a qualitative ethnographic study. There is no want of literature on Cultural Psychology, which purports to maintain a theoretical link between ethnography and culture. In what is the prevalent thread of thinking, Scribner (1975) discusses locating an academic investigation in a naturally occurring environment. Cole cites Bronfenbrenner and observes that the researcher should:

> …Maintain the integrity of the real-life situations it is designed to investigate; be faithful to the larger social and cultural contexts from which the subjects come and be consistent with the participants' definition of the situation… (Cole, 1996, p. 255).

When Cole (1996) discusses the concept of context, he leaves no doubt that every individual is embedded in a context that is cultural. For this reason, ethnography studies the individuals who are embedded in a cultural context. Baerveldt referring to context in Cultural Psychology says:

> [It] favours research methods [and a methodology] that are 'ecologically valid': Central is the investigation of meaning as it is constructed, negotiated, sustained and disputed in everyday social interactions. Its methods include those, which traditionally fall outside the repertoire of psychological research, like [ethnography] or participant observation… (1996, p. 2).

In addition Wertsch says, the task of research is to seek to comprehend how mental functioning relates to "cultural, institutional and historical context" (1998, p. 3). Cultural historical approaches consider the concepts of instrumentality where activity is crystallised in history. This echoes Hedegaard's (2001) historicity of activities in the concept of artefacts. The history of an artefact, as it were, is embedded in the tradition that defines its use. One can speak of ethnography as an artifact that the study uses in a specific context and for a specific purpose. It is as a mediating tool between subjects (school, classroom, teachers, and learners) and objects and the outcomes of what they do at school. The input from the sociocultural theorists accentuates the value of doing an integrated and rigorous inquiry without sacrificing quality and scientific rigour. It also demonstrates that there is concordance between sociocultural theory and ethnographic practices as a method of data collection. The pre-disposition that emerges then is that Cultural Psychology advocates for empirical inquiries that are embedded in a natural environment (Grade Five R.S. and Grade Six R.C.).

3.5. SPECIFIC RESEARCH METHODS EMPLOYED IN DATA COLLECTION

3.5. (a) Participant Observation

This study began its inquiry by observing the activities of the learners. The day at school always started with a staff meeting at 7:30 a.m. This was followed by assembly at 7:45 a.m. and lessons at 8:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. with a break of 30 minutes. The school day was always flexible according to need and context. The researcher observed the learners within the school premises or without the school premises. Hammersley and Atkinson grant, "all social research is founded on the human capacity for participant observation" (1995, p. 21). This makes participant observation the basic technique used by ethnographers to access data. Bernard designated it "the foundation of anthropological research" (1988, p. 148).

Initially, the process of observing was unstructured and unfocused. Eventually the research begin to focus on activities that captured the learners' values, beliefs,

motives and goals as manifested in their learning activities. As it were, the research intention was to attempt to understand the learners through their school activities. The observations were open naturalistic observations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Wolcott, 2001). With time, it became obvious that observing was an insufficient method for capturing all the desired information.

Wolcott (2001) discusses the question of saturation. In this scenario, participant observation works like a thermostat implying that there are both active moments as well as passive moment of data collection. There is likelihood that this passivity can degenerate into boredom. The awareness of this phenomenon and the fact that the research eventually became selective in what was observed enabled him to maintain some balance.

The construction of fieldnotes constitutes a key research activity of ethnography that is to be done with much care and awareness (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The principal tools required for fieldwork are a pen and a writing pad, common sense and some methods of how to go about doing fieldwork. In addition, technology has advanced that gadgets such as still-life camera, video camera and digital recorders are modern ways of data capturing. The pen and the paper remain the simplest devices most suited to simultaneously capture observations as well as other phenomena such as moods and so forth. Hence, the person as the central research tool is irreplaceable.

Fieldwork is a practical activity. The researcher writes descriptively from what prior theory reading suggested or simply jots what he perceives as relevant to the project — but from a viewpoint. The researcher wrote notes of what he observed, felt or heard — informants' activities: actions, words, artifacts, the environment as well as an attempt to capture moods and feelings. At times depending on conditions, the researcher merely listened and as soon as he had the occasion, he sought some seclusion and wrote whatever memory had retained. This was only part of the initial work. The writing of fieldnotes is a labour intensive activity that requires paying much attention to details. Upon arriving home, all notes had to be typed and at the same time expanded, developed and organised into a logical

descriptive-narrative.[27] In the course of composing the fieldnotes, initially the researcher wrote as issues emerged — uncritically at first but then realising that sometimes there was need to write his own feelings, reactions, impressions and thoughts, which were differentiated from the main corpus of the fieldnotes by colour and timed notes (Fetterman, 1998; Wolcott, 2001).

3.5. (b) Ethnographic Interviews

Reason and Rowan (1981) indicate that ethnography succeeds to the extent that the researcher and ultimately the reader begin to understand what is going on in a social field. This is all the more reason why other methods need to be employed to capture the breadth, depth and height of the learning activities. It is reckless to rely solely on ethnographic observations, among other reasons for triangulation. To get beyond the obvious, there is need to find other sources of information from learners, teachers and situations that give an inside view of life at school: the historical perspectives, current perspectives and those aspects that would be inaccessible to outsiders especially when constrained by one method of data collection. So, interviews were used as one of the empirical research methods of this study to corroborate participant observations. This method was suitable because it allowed for data collection — to explore, discover new ideas, clarify meaning and evaluate the progress of the research. Interviews also presented the prospect of informants participating actively in the research. Questions asked during these interviews were geared towards knowing something about the ethos of the school from both the teachers and the learners and more specifically about the values, beliefs, goals and motives of the learners (*see Appendix A-1 and A-2*).

In any ethnographic model, the researcher of necessity depends on the informants to obtain the inside view of the school's cultural activities. Interviews as a recognised method of data collection involve talking and listening to informants. Interviews increasingly became unavoidable the more data the researcher collected and analysed with the focus of clarifying points of interest, examining

[27]The researcher is a skilled touch-typist; this facilitated the typing of fieldnotes.

emergent issues, gathering more facts on emergent issues or merely engaging the informant in conversation that would hopefully yield valuable information.

In the literature, there are various formats of interviewing. There are structured, semi structured, informal and retrospective interviews. Informal interviewing (Fetterman, 1998) was the preferred mode of interviewing for this study. This is because they are 'user–friendly' and fit the ethnographic model of research. Their merits further lie in the fact that they can be conducted in a conversational mood. This allows for improvisation as well as flexible judgement: as questions emerged from conversations, it is possible to tailor the questions as well as the conversation to fit the researcher's intention. This however requires skill and prior preparation at least in a general sense. One needs to know what to look for or at least to know what direction one wants to pursue in terms of emergent issues. Interviews conducted in the manner described above provide more data as compared to the other techniques because of the "ethnographic model" (Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 650).

Another consideration is that the nature of this research though not sensitive in itself was concerned with sensitive subjects — children. The kind of information informed by the theoretical framework required an input from learners. The dilemma was whether the researcher was prepared to interview the learners directly or whether it was possible to obtain information from and about them without interviews. This was possible either by using the participant observation technique or to video tape their activities. The Principal was clear in her advice about interviewing the learners: "Identify the key interviewees, the time and interview them in my presence". On advice from the supervisor and because of emergent issues from the preliminary data coding, an interview was scheduled.

After obtaining the necessary permissions a sample of seven learners: four girls and three boys were randomly selected. The date and time for the interview was set. Knowing how difficult it is to interview children, it was preferred that the learners were interviewed as a stake group. The learners sat in a semicircle in front of the researcher. This created a friendly environment where the learners

would not feel intimidated. From the point of view of this arrangement and subsequent events, this was a wise decision.

Even though the researcher initially had a list of questions prepared in advance, the intention was to ask questions from emergent issues following the responses of the learners. The researcher started with the questions on his list but eventually eased into the rhythm of asking spontaneous questions (some of the questions in Appendix A-1 and A-2 emerged during the interview). The interviewees were given guidelines that allowed each one a chance to speak. The researcher would ask the questions; any one interviewee was free to comment, question, discuss issues provided one learner spoke at a time. If the initial fears were that, the learners would say very little these fears were assuaged since the problem was now to restrain the learners from saying too much. The researcher realised that to let them speak, provided there was guidance, was a better option; hence, the result was one hour and twenty minutes of interview.

The reader needs to know that at the beginning of this research, the sort of interviews that were conducted started as spontaneous conversations but then became controlled conversations especially with teachers. However, this in no way suggests that there was no planning. Planning may not have been a formal aspect of the interviews, yet some form of planning was inevitable in formulating ideas, speculating on what to say, how to ask questions, ordering the sequences of issues of concern, when to get the interviewee to talk and so on. For instance, one day during participant observation, Rosa speaking about report cards requested the learners to remind their parents who had not returned report cards to do so.[28] This provoked the researcher to want to understand the dynamics of assessment and report cards at Holy Family Primary school. The researcher decided to have a word with Rosa on this issue.

This technique of interviewing appears simple but this is deceptive. It requires adequate preparation, practicing and mastering the mechanics involved. For example, the ethnographer should ask open questions that avoid 'yes' or 'no'

[28] Report card dossiers are kept at school but sent to the parents to read and comment at the end of every term.

responses. He should avoid formulations that are prescriptive or inhibiting. It is a delicate game of good judgement, knowing the mechanics involved, treating the informant humanely and respectfully, involving the informant, being sensitive, being patient, being somewhat-prepared and ensuring that much data is obtained. There is no one right way of doing this except to admit that it is experiential.

The following example highlights why even the simplest preparation is of supreme importance. On one occasion, the researcher scheduled an interview that seemed to have gone well except that the voice recorder did not capture the data. It was a frustrating moment because being the researcher's first formal interview. He had prepared well and gone about it with skill and knowledge. It was a failed interview insofar as nothing was recorded on the digital device. The substantial omission was the failure to double-check that the device was functional and operational. The lesson was learnt that it was no trivial matter to double-check or even triple-check devices to be sure of their functionality. Still, it is critical to take notes where circumstances permit such an activity even though the interview is being recorded digitally. Again, this also has its own set of problems. In the circumstance narrated above, the researcher did not write any notes on the one hand because he was so engrossed in asking questions and listening to the interviewees' responses. On the other hand, it was an awkward situation where the interviewee was overwhelmed by emotions caused by some memories of a previous experience that the interviewer had triggered.

During subsequent interviews data recording involved two modes: jotting notes in the old way using pen and paper when it was possible; and by using a digital voice recording device (Panasonic RR-US006) — a very handy device. Its most outstanding merit is the advantage it has over the traditional recording devices such as tapes and tape recorders; it is 'computergenic',[29] that is, it comes with software that allows it to be computer operated. It requires no tapes. The files can be manipulated on the computer. However, at some point the audio files need to be transcribed for analysis. The computer as a modern workbench facilitates the processes of transcribing.

[29] The device is attachable to a computer and basic applications such as downloading, editing, copying, storing files, retrieving files and sound management are performed.

All interviews were conducted in the English; it is the medium of instruction at the school. It is well spoken and written by the staff and the learners. The informants used it to respond to questions during the interview.

3.5. (c) Ethnographic Documents, Records and Artefacts

Artifacts, documents and records are sources that provide invaluable data. These have their own life and they tell their own story. Hodder calls them "mute evidence" (2000, p. 703). Lincoln and Guba (1985) distinguish between documents and records.[30] In this study, document artefacts included report cards, letters to parents, and letters to the learners, of the school and a book entitled *Educate with Mind and Heart.*[31] These provided modalities and invaluable insight into the dynamics of Holy Family Primary School "pastoral care", exams scripts, diaries, mission statement, newsletters, lesson plans, homework assignments, award certificates, posters, fieldnotes and schemes of work. Where possible, these artefacts were of use because they revealed the culture of the school, the learning habits, history of the school, relationship between parents and the school. An artefact as previously said is a material object, resulting from human sociocultural production; it correlates to a tool or sign (Cole, 1996). These include models constructed by learners, works on the classroom walls and on the notice boards. This category also included photographs of these artefacts.

3.5. (d) Visual Ethnography — Imaging

Harper (2000) traces the theoretical and the practical genesis of visual evidence as a method of ethnographic research that started with the telescope to the modern-day digital video and World Wide Web. This discussion concerns itself with still photography and video photography — imaging techniques used in this study. In recommending attention to a photograph as "a record of a subject at [a] particular moment" (Harper, 2000, p. 721), the researcher is merely emphasising the importance of this modern day ethnographic device. Photographs provide an

[30] Records are not easily accessible to the public, while documents are readily available. This study does not make the distinction between records and documents; in all cases they were available.
[31] Authored by Robins Picas.

efficient prospect of analysing artefacts in picture form (Bourdieu, 1990). Photographs may show different levels of activities at school, by presenting a visual-narrative of events as they unfold (Harper, 2000, p. 724). Sourcing for data in photography has certain merits such as finding events that happen consecutively or separately in time and space and yet are able to condense the events together. What is more, photographs elicit ethnographic data that tell a sociocultural story, and hence concretise observations in the field that can be analysed at any time. The researcher took photos of artefacts on the walls, notice boards and the library, some learning events, cultural school events and so forth.

According to Harper (2000), contemporary video technologies have redefined the image and its social meaning. This is the case because advances in technology have made what used to be an exclusive domain available to be popular technology. It is now possible to record hours of low cost, high quality, synchronised visual and audio information. The implications of this development from an ethnographic point of view are vast. Visual and audio format provide a record of the informants' activities at a moment in history, by which it is possible to construct an ethnographic reality of the social circumstances of the learners. In other words, the researcher can relate a sociocultural story about the human experiences of the learners — what Harper calls "visual narratives"[32] (*ibid*, p. 724). These visual images are empirical data but that is not to suggest that it is the same thing as 'objective truth'. Harper informs the reader that this is so because "the very act of observing is interpretive, for to observe is to choose a point of view" (*ibid*, p. 721) and this point of view is the researcher's point of view (*see Section 4.5. and Appendix C Insert*).

Videos for researchers are in themselves of little value if the story they tell is not interpreted to constitute cultural information. The unfolding story coupled with its interpretation should inform and enlarge the understanding of the phenomena in question, firstly from the ethnographer's point of view when he interprets the data therein and secondly from the perspective of the learners.

[32] A video clip is a form of visual narrative.

The decision to videograph the learners came late in the research. It was interesting to see how the learners were negotiating meanings and co-constructing knowledge with the teacher in the course of the learning-teaching process. At this point, the researcher made the decision to capture such moments of learning or classroom activity on video that would inform this inquiry. A total of three hours of unedited video footage was made of specific teaching-learning activities of sociocultural values although in the final report only one hour is used for analysis.

3.6. Ethical Principles Guiding the Research

This inquiry was guided by ethical principles from its inception. After the researcher and the supervisor identified Holy Family Primary School as an area of research, a meeting was scheduled with the Principal. The following steps were agreed to and implemented to meet the requisite ethical principles.

- Permission was obtained to carry this study at Holy Family Primary School. The discussions with the principle covered the reasons for choosing Holy Family Primary School, the subject of the study (ethos of the school), the sample groups which were Grade Five and Grade Six, and teachers of these classes. The researcher emphasised during this meeting that the study was purely an academic pursuit that did not involve other stakeholders.

- Sample of the Informed Consent Forms were discussed (see *Appendix B-1 for learners and Appendix B-2 for teachers*).

- An undertaking of anonymity was made to omit the name of the school and the names of the respondents in the final report.

- An undertaking was made to seek specific permissions if photographs, videos or the like were taken.

- An undertaking was made to seek permission of the school if any part of the dissertation was published.

- Finally, a copy of the findings would be made available to the school.

3.7. THE PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

This section discusses the process of data analysis. The theory and methodology examined in Chapter Two and Chapter Three merge to explain three selected local learning activities in Grade Five R.S. and Grade Six R.C. (*see Section 4.0.*). This research generated so much data on learning activities that it is impossible to analyse the different activities in the period available to finish this dissertation.

Data analysis is an ongoing activity that begins with the logging of initial data (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). This strategy was adopted for this study because it allowed the researcher to log a record of emerging details, thoughts, experiences, and questions that, like buoys, keep data trends visible. Analysis takes into account all the methods employed in data collection. In this manner data examination proceeds until, in the final analysis, it is presented in a final written report (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Fetterman, 1998). The findings in this dissertation are presented in "interpretive-descriptive" narrative (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 123) in keeping with ethnographic methods and theory.[33] This kind of narrative, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) requires selective attention and interpretation of data. It involves the researcher being skilled at "weaving descriptions, speaker's words, fieldnotes quotations and their own interpretations into a rich believable descriptive narrative" (*ibid*, p. 22). This is because the sort of variables the research is dealing with namely values, beliefs, goals and motives are difficult to measure.

Although the basic data analysis draws from the rubrics of ethnography, the research has used a melange of different approaches to a certain extent to

[33] This study uses 'interpretive-descriptive' strategy (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) for presenting its findings. It does not use the 'constant comparative' approach.

maximise data analysis. The research does not use 'grounded theory' of Strauss and Corbin (1990), but uses the strategy of "microanalysis" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 57) to read all the primary documents (*see Section 3.8.).*[34]

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) have mentioned that there are quite a few forms of data analyses. Nevertheless, the essential character of analysis in qualitative research involves sifting the grain from the chaff. In ethnography, data is the product of interaction between the researcher and the data sources. Since it appears in a form and meaning given to it by the sources from which it is derived, and since interpretation is a vital part of this data, the sifting of what is relevant and what is not plays a substantial function of the analysis. It is therefore correct to postulate that meanings are renegotiated and reconstructed in the process of data analysis to provide a new reading and understanding of the context. This is in keeping with ethnographic principles of holism, context, human activities in their natural setting and time factors (see *Section 3.3.* and *Section 3.9.*).

3.8. ETHNOGRAPHIC COMPUTER ASSISTED DATA ANALYSIS — ATLAS.TI 5.2.

The method used in this data analysis involved the use of computer assisted qualitative research analysis software — Atlas.ti version 5.2. The first step after every fieldwork involved typing, organising data collected and saving it in Microsoft Word (Rich Text Format). Archival documents were scanned and saved as graphic files; a selection of photographs[35] and video footage were saved onto the computer's hard drive. These materials were then loaded into Atlas.ti software as 'primary documents' into a shell called a hermeneutic unit[36] the study named S.H.P.[37] Hypothetically, this is a house-like structure where analyses are performed on the data in the different rooms.

[34] This inquiry has used some strategies from various qualitative approaches to analyse data. Qualitative approaches do not necessarily work in isolation, but may integrate strategies from different approaches to facilitate data analysis.
[35] In JPEG format.
[36] This is a data structure that handles a project.
[37] This is an acronym referring to the school's real name.

Once S.H.P. was created and launched, the initial process of data analysis commenced. It involved "microanalysis" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 57) — this is reading all the primary documents line by line segmenting and coding[38] of words, lines, paragraphs or graphics to generate the initial categories of what was interesting, important, relevant or meaningful to the study. Codes assist in the discovery of concepts. Three types of codes were used: *open coding* — examines and exposes thoughts, ideas and meaning in data. *Coding by list* involves selecting a pre-existing code created in open coding and reusing it to code. *Code in vivo* takes words of the respondent as the code name (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Alongside the coding process, two major events were taking place: a) the writing of comments on the codes. This facility is embedded within Atlas.ti — little pages onto which one makes brief notes about the codes and b) the writing of memos[39] which are the researcher's records of ideas, analysis, interpretations, questions, answers, observations, direction for further data collection and text from the literature (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), some of which might be incorporated into the final report. The first part of analysis consisted of first-level coding, sometimes requiring one to go through the primary documents several times. The second level was concerned with searching for patterns in the codes or memos to find general themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994) — in Atlas.ti this is called 'families' (categories to use a familiar term). It involves grouping primary documents, codes or memos according to their type, patterns and purpose into families — each family is assigned a name. Comparing to determine inclusion or exclusion of meaning is a substantial aspect of data analysis. A family will be created where there are items of the same type. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the main task of categorising is to bring together into transient categories data that relates to the same content. This implies devising rules that describe properties of each category. This is important for replicability and internal consistency of data. Relationships are created only within a group of the same

[38] Coding usually succinct word, phrase or text implies classification whereas quoting implies an interesting area for which not classification has been identified. For emphasis, codes capture meaning but also serve as handles to identify text, graphic, audio or video (Muhr, 2004, p. 32).

[39] "A memo may stand alone or it may refer to quotations, codes and other memos…they can be grouped according to type …may be used as object of analysis by assigning them as [primary documents] (Muhr, 2004 p. 33)."

kind for instance codes at this level.[40] At this point, a network of relationship within the categories or across may be made to crystallise observations.[41] At every stage of analysis, interpretation is still a vital process of trying to give sense to the data. Units of meanings that are similar are bundled; thus, allowing for relationships to be established as explanations, as supporting evidence, as contradicting other facts and so forth — these usually form the basis for generating hypotheses. Flexibility in data analysis is important since it allows analysis to undergo rigorous refinement through out the process of data collection and data analysis to ensure trustworthiness.

A word of caution is appropriate concerning Atlas.ti. It indisputably facilitates the ethnographer's work by providing a technologically advanced working environment. True enough, Atlas.ti has replaced pen and paper to a certain extent. In spite of this advantage, Atlas.ti has replaced neither the ethnographer's judgement nor his interpretative ability that is crucial to qualitative research. Atlas is not a method for instance like interview or observation but a tool. More analogically, it stands in place of paper, stickers, pen, writing pad and the like. Muhr (2004) points out that although Atlas.ti was developed as a tool that efficiently supports the human interpreter through selecting, indexing and annotating, these functions on their own cannot grasp the "complexities, lack of explicitness and contextuality of everyday or scientific knowledge" (*ibid,* p. 5). The researcher always remains the tool *per excellence* in a research activity.
The continual revisit of pertinent literature is part of the processes of data analysis to substantiate observations, analysis and conclusions in the literature. In qualitative data analysis categories arise from interpretation. The inclusion or exclusion of a value in any specific family is based on whether that specific data carries meaning and fits into that category. The analysis involved "within-case analysis" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, pp. 143 – 144). This is crucial since it accounts for activities: events, objects, time, location, processes, outcomes, relationships and so forth within a context that surrounds and a context that weaves (Cole, 1996). In sociocultural theory, the concept of context explains

[40] Generally families are designed to facilitate handling of groups easier.
[41] Networks help in conceptualising a structure by linking similar elements in a visual diagram. In this way, relationships are expressed between codes, quotations and memos (Muhr, 2004).

internalisation as contextualised. Leont'ev understood the "overwhelming necessity of introducing words in context" (1981, p. 56) that is the basic meanings of words derive from different contexts in which a word may occur. Similarly, human experiences that derive from their values, beliefs, motives and goals obtain their actualisation from their contextual embeddedness in Grade Five R. S. and Grade Six R. C. (Cole, 1996).

In Chapter Four, the researcher presents the findings of this study. Data analysis that involves judgements, interpretation must culminate in a research report. Three activity episodes are chosen as the focus upon which the research report will be written. Each activity episode describes and explains how learners approach the task of learning informed by sociocultural values. The learner is an agent of activity, that is, he acts by making personal goals in the learning process, establishes the learning conditions to these goals and chooses the optimal means to meet the learning needs (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001).

Describing and explaining are the hallmark of the "art interpretation" (Denzin, 1994, p. 500). The researcher describes and explains the reality of learning in the context intended in this dissertation. Each activity episode is part of a series that is separate yet is explained by subsequent activities through the concept of Activity Theory and sociocultural values. Each episode is examined in detail owing to its inherent potential to explain the specific learning activities. In keeping with Cultural Psychology, no universal conclusions will be made in the findings; rather, conclusions will be specific to the context since findings are dependent on the "problem content and activity" (Cole, 1990, p.103).

3.9. RESEARCH CREDIBILITY AND ACCURACY

The question of research credibility and accuracy engages every aspect of the research process. The conduct and the finding of the research need to speak for themselves. In respect to data analysis, validity is delineated as the "trustworthiness of inferences drawn from data" (Eisenhart and Howe, 1992, p. 44). Validation is a factor of any academic research even in a local context. Thus:

- Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Banister, *et al* (1994), Maykut and Morehouse (1994) and Bogdan and Biklen (1992) have suggested that multiple approaches go a long way in establishing credibility and veracity more than would a single approach. This research used participant observation, interviews, still photography, videography and artefact collection provide a basis for establishing this credibility.

- For the research, the time spent in fieldwork was important. The initial five months (2004) spent doing fieldwork was deemed sufficient to collect the primary data. This is described in Chapter Three. Another two months (2005) were spent examining emerging details identified in the previous data collected (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984).

- Fieldnotes are indispensable to ethnographic research because this is the means by which one records data. By so doing, one defines the scope of the data, that data that will be analysed and from which the results will emerge.[42]

- Some self-reflection on the criteria, suggested by Eisenhart and Howe (1992, p. 648) are — *Completeness:*[43] the final report needs to have all the requisite elements appropriate for such a report. *Appropriateness*: the research design needs to address the question it has asked. *Clarity*: what the research is about. *Comprehensiveness*: a scope that is encompassing and persuasive. *Credibility*: the conduct and the result of the study need to be significant.

- Fetterman mentions triangulation as being the heart of ethnographic validity — which is the "trustworthiness of inferences" (1998, p. 93). Triangulation involves many approaches. For instance, during the interviews as each learner spoke, each learner either corroborated or contradicted some of the emergent issues. This can be determined during data analysis. In this sense,

[42] Hammersley and Atkinson define fieldnotes as the "traditional means in ethnography for recording observational data… [This] consist of capturing relatively concrete descriptions of social processes and their contexts" (1995, p. 175) — recording details of observations, informants' comments, activities and pedagogical details providing the base upon which to analyse, interpret, and reconstruct the reality of the issues in question.

[43] Italics in original.

triangulation works by improving data quality and enhancing its accuracy through consistency, completeness, reliability and diversity. The researcher alerts the reader in a general manner that triangulation took the form of observing together with the supervisor, and discussing emergent issues with her during fieldwork, writing and re-examining different source of the literature.[44] In summary, there are many sides to the notion of triangulation: data-source triangulation, methodological triangulation, methods triangulation, data-analysis triangulation and researcher triangulation.

3.10. CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The researcher has described in Chapter Three the methodology, methods and issue arising that informed the preparation to descend into the fieldwork, the actual data collection and the dilemmas that keep arising during fieldwork. Evident from the introduction, videography is an alternative method that was introduced towards the end of the fieldwork. From this, one methodological fact becomes clear that one can never prescribe a method(s) *a priori*. These are born of the context of the inquiry and the need to adapt. Adaptability in this case becomes the mantra of research (Janesick, 1994).
- Qualitative Research is about how phenomena are known. Different paradigms purport to explain what there is to know. This is a qualitative study in which ethnography using a set of dynamics investigates the fabric of human problems and how some of these problems can be solved.
- Ethnography: Allows the inquirer to study the subjects in their natural environment. This allows for the principle of triangulation to operate (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). It allows for interpretation-description.
- Ecological Validity: It allows for ecological study (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) with emphasis on participant observation, holism, context sensitivity, sociocultural descriptions, processual immediacy, opportunity for clarification, refining and summarising issues and further exploration (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

[44] Triangulation in research takes many forms, for example; merging many data sources and checking the consistency of the different sources, using multiple perspectives to view and interpret the data, by using many data collection methods (see http://www.tele.sunyit.edu/traingulation.htm, Downloaded, 6th June 2007).

- Data Collection methods: Ethnography permits multiple data collection methods to be used: participant observation, interviews, ethnographic documents, records and artefacts, and visual ethnography — imaging.
- Data analysis using Atlas.ti 5.2.: Data analysis begins with the first log entry into the fieldwork journal. In analysing data, this inquiry used Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software. *Section 3.8.* describe the working of Atlas.ti.
- Research Credibility and Accuracy — this is about trustworthiness and accuracy of research process. This result from fieldnotes, accurately writing down observations made, interviews, taking photographs, recording voices using electronic devices to ensure accuracy. In addition, self-reflection includes completeness, appropriateness, comprehensiveness and credibility.

Chapter Four

The Results: Three Local Learning Activities

"Data have meaning, and this word meaning, like its cognates, significance and import, includes a reference to values."

Abraham Kaplan

4.0. THREE LOCAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

This chapter presents the analysed details of the research's findings. It begins by presenting three local learning activities that constituted the core of the data analysis. These learning episodes of activity are *embedded* within the Holy Family School's global activity. In other words, they constitute part of Holy Family Primary School's teaching and learning activities. These activities are:

- Anti-bullying activity.
- Leadership activity.
- Debates and discussions of issues of sociocultural values in class (on DVD).

These were selected for analysis for the following reasons:

- They embody the sort of values the Holy Family Primary School thinks the school ought to teach to the learners.
- They have multiple voices.
- The have motives. Leont'ev observes, "Activities are distinguished [by] their motives and object[s] towards which they are oriented" (1981, p. 18). Therefore, Activity Theory is appropriate for analysing the three learning episodes.
- They are a source of tension and conflict

- They have historicity.
- They provide opportunity for learning where this inquiry can investigate how the learner's values, beliefs, goals and motives play a part in the overall learning process.
- Most important, they represent specific object of sociocultural values that denote the interconnectedness of embedded activity systems in a sociocultural context of Holy Family Primary School.

4.1. (a) Historical Thread

This section concentrates on sociocultural values as one paradigm of learning in activity systems. The purpose of Activity Theory is primarily to understand the unity of human consciousness[45] and activity. Consciousness is in one experience: practical or mental. Human "activity is conscious" (Davydov, 1999, p. 40). If "consciousness [is] objectively observable behaviour" stemming from socio-cultural practices (Wertsch, 1985, p. 187); and if consciousness maintains the view that "humans… are constantly constructing their environment and their representation of this environment by engaging in forms of [activities]" (*ibid*, p. 188), two possibilities may be drawn: Firstly, sociocultural values in their diversity are a constitutive part of human behaviour. This is to impute to consciousness human intention, decision or reason of doing something. This reason can be; for instance, learning, being moral, having the common good govern lives, neighbourly co-existence and of the development and the betterment of human conditions (sociocultural values) which are manifest in human life practices. Secondly, recall humans are active agents who do what they want to do. The argument is that in practice one cannot separate sociocultural values from the activities individuals or groups of individuals do because these values are intrinsic to motive granted that at the heart of activity is motive.

[45] This is any mental functioning — decision making, remembering, classifying, abstracting, reasoning, intention and generalising arising from sociocultural interactions. This view is in keeping with an activity theorist: Vygotsky, 1978; Leont'ev, 1981; Wertsch, 1985; Shotter, 2006.

Leont'ev observes:

> Humans do not simply find external conditions to which they must adapt their activity. Rather, these social conditions bear with them the motives and goals of their activities. In other words, society produces the activity of the individuals it forms (1981, pp. 47 – 48).[46]

From above, sociocultural values co-occur with human activities, for the former is objectified in the latter, which is why one cannot separate activity from the context of its occurrence.

4.1. (b) The School — An Activity System

Since activities are a system of human actions, the context of the subject orients the kind of actions that comprise activity. The context of this study is a school constituted by learners, teachers and administrators' activities. Activities for the learners are varied and mostly routine: attending school, attending classes, assembly and lessons to name a few.

The focus of this study is the school's activity system. The subjects direct their resources to learning, which is why they come to school. One of the subject matter of teaching and learning is learning sociocultural values (object) that are taught and learnt either explicitly or implicitly. Sociocultural values are *embedded* entities. There are personal values. Some are group values such as those that are specific to Grade Five R.S. (pledges, beliefs, and personal principles, moral values, personal values and religious values). There are values that obtain from Holy Family Primary School as a whole (education, learning, good performance, good learners, the common good and so forth). These global values give the school its identity. They are the preserve of school ethos whose outcomes are mediated by artefacts. The reader is informed that the line between personal values and global values is sometimes blurred. What is a personal value may stretch to become a sociocultural value (This is common among world citizens such Mandela, Gandhi and so forth). Something becomes a sociocultural value

[46] This is not to say that activity is reduced to sociocultural values and vice versa. There is need to understand the structure of activity in its current formulation: subject, object, the concept of mediation, rules, community and the division of labour.

because it is shared (a global value). Shared values presuppose a context. For this reason, this study argues that activities are *embedded*.

In the above discussion, it is possible that there are areas where the learner's activity system, that is, as seen from her perspective can be fundamentally different from the school's activity system. That is because every person is unique. Each learner is different in what he or she desires and so forth. In a sociocultural engagement, a learner's motive may differ from a global sociocultural activity motive (*see Sections 2.6. (c) and 2.6.(d))*. This point is again underlined in *Section 4.5*. In spite of this observation, the child is a sociocultural being. She cannot live in her own world. She has to live with other people, go to school, learn with other learners and do what learners do as envisaged in the global motives of the school. If there is dissonance between the activities of the learner and the school, teaching and learning will occur in very difficult circumstances or the impossibility of learning acceptable values becomes real *(see Section 2.5 especially Figure 3 B)*.

The reader needs to recall that sociocultural theory maintains that the values the learner learns are first obtained from a sociocultural context before the learner makes them his or her own. When the learner has made the learning of these values his or her own, they become part of his or her autonomous learning processes (Vygotsky, 1978) (*see Section 4.1. (b*)). This means that there is a global perspective of phenomena that is autonomous of a learner's perspective; these perspectives may differ even though for sociocultural theory there is an initial necessary relationship between the learner and her sociocultural context.

The global motives of Holy Family Primary School are enshrined in the school's Vision and Mission Statement (Picas, 2004, pp. 43 – 44):

- Catholic ethos — underpinned by Gospel values, but recognising the multi-faith aspect of the school such that learners are encouraged to appreciate their own faith but also respect the faith of others.
- Society and nation building — service to the community, compassion to the needy, responsible citizens and effective decision makers.

- Appreciation of differences — developing a multi-cultural, non-racial and non-sexist disposition for mutual co-existence.
- The school community — that communicates openly, respects and is courteous to each other to establish healthy interpersonal relationship between community members.
- Holistic education — the development and growth — spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual physical potential of the learners.
- Personal success and educational excellence — bring out the best of the learner by committed teachers and peers.
- Learners' centred learning — focusing on individual needs, abilities and allowing for differences.

These motives constitute the current activity system of Holy Family Primary school. In the 85 years of the history of the school, global motives have changed depending on the needs at that moment of history. This is consistent with sociocultural theory and activity theory — the inevitability of change arising from tensions and contradictions inherent in the system. At first, the need was oriented towards learning how to read and to write. Following the Student's Uprising of 1976 the need was oriented towards giving equal opportunities to the students of colour. The current motives enshrined in the Mission Statement embody the history of the school, but project this history to the future (the possibility of future change).

Bruner writes that education has been viewed as "the means to better the lot of children…it is almost a universal belief that children should have better educational opportunity than their parents" (1960, p. 74). This fact remains today; it is very often one of those unspoken motives. Another such motive is the belief that the financial opportunities for children with a better education are enhanced. These and many other implicit motives constitute learning motives that are long-term and short-term or both. The motives discussed in the Mission Statement are explicit motives. Today attention is paid to the "content" and the "quality" of education (*ibid*). In this study, the bias is towards the sort of education that rise above mere intellectual development,

that is, extends to those aspects that constitute the holistic integrated education of the individual (Picas, 2004). These in the view of this inquiry include socio-cultural values.

4.1. (c) Application of Engeströmian Activity Model

Engeström's (1999a, p. 31) model of activity is the basis of the model in this study — *Figure 4* (p. 88). It represents Holy Family Primary School's activity system. As a private Catholic school, it envisions education as an evangelising mission (Jesuit conference, 2000). It promotes the holistic integrated development and growth of the learners (*subjects*). The school integrates learning activities that are sociocultural (*objects*). Objects distinguish activities from each other. When the object tends towards *global outcomes* in this case moral person, good citizen and the common good, the propensity towards outcomes is what motivates activities. At Holy Family Primary School, the learners and the learning activities (values) are mediated by the school ethos. This is the artefact and the context that empowers and constrains the learners and the community of support. Artefacts are social objects with certain modes of operation and are possible because they correspond to the goals of practical action. One underlying assumption of this activity system is that learning is a 'collective activity' because it involves the *community* of parents, educators, administrators and the learners. They are bonded together by sociocultural values that connect their "individual actions to the collective activity" (Engeström, 1999a, p. 31). *Norms* shape sociocultural values and arise from the Constitution of South Africa, School Rules and Code of Conduct, pledges made by the learners and the parents, the moral teachings of Catholics, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and African Traditional Religions; the school curriculum, personal beliefs and values of learners. The learning activities require *division of labour* so that there are different producers and power players of activities in the field: teachers, administrators, parents and learners who play different roles at different levels. Whereas *norms* define how learners' activities fit into the school community, *division of labour* describes the functions of teachers, learners and so on.

4.1. (d) An Embedded Activity System — A New Model

This research has developed an embedded activity system based on the Engeströmian model — see *Figure 4 overleaf*. Engeström's model supposes a mono-activity model (*Figure 2*.) His example: "International activity-theoretical collaboration" (Engeström, 1999a, p. 31) confirms this. This study attempts to explore the possibility of explaining relationships through the concept of *embedded* activity systems. This study has identified in *Section 2.2*. the reasons why activity systems may be used to explain the learning of sociocultural values. Engeström has demonstrated these relationships through the concept of networks of interacting systems (Macdonald, 2005). In *Figure 4,* this study assumes that if a school is embedded in a community and a class-room is embedded in a school and the lesson is embedded in the class and so forth, a stronger model is required to explain these relationships; hence, the concept of *embeddedness of activity systems*. Activity systems can be embedded in a global activity system if the attributes of the global (parent) activity system are shared with the embedded activity systems.[47]

In *Figure 4,* this research retains Engeström's structure of the activity system. It maintains, "The central issue of Activity Theory remains the object" (1999a, p. 31). It connects individual actions to the collective activity. If different activities systems can constitute collective activity, one can postulate that in practice, the experience of a sociocultural value in an activity system does not necessarily alter its experience, manifestation and even essence in another activity system. In the new model, sociocultural values (object) are thus one attribute that cuts across in embedded activity systems. In the researcher's view, the concept of embedded activity systems is applicable in a context of a school, a hospital, a prison, and a church (an institution). From these examples, one assumes that such a context shares the same object. On this basis, would it work across institutions of the same kind? This is not tested but it seems that here is where the concept of networks of activities within and across institutions is applicable (Macdonald, 2005).

[47] The fact that embedded activity systems share the same attributes does not imply absence of tension or contradictions. The essence of activity systems supposes contradictions and tensions.

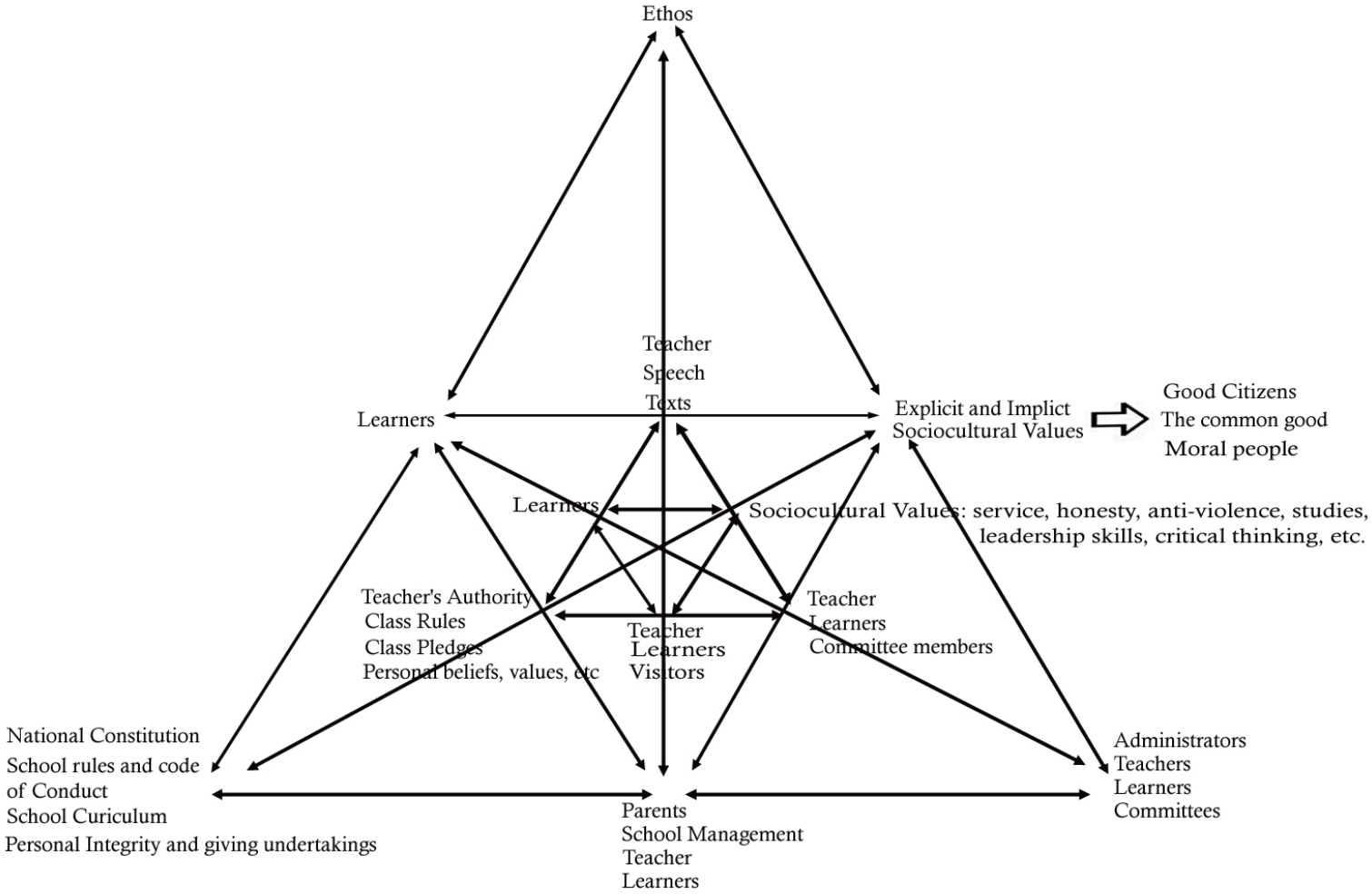


Figure 4: Holy Family Primary School as an activity system within which are embedded other activity systems.

It should be noted in *Figure 4* that the possibility exists of multiple embedded systems which cannot be represented diagrammatically, but take their form from the shared sociocultural values. At Holy Family Primary School, the global motives are given (*see Section 4.1. (b)*). But the concrete operation of these motives in activities suppose different strata of operations. Administration[48] partly chooses the sort of sociocultural values it deems necessary for the instruction of learners. These permeate to the different activities of the school's activity system through the *object* and *division of labour*. Much as administrators contribute to the learning processes at specific areas of learning activities, touching on the notion of power play in the division of labour, teachers as well as learners have their own contributions to make in their various capacities and activities. It may start with a staff meeting at school in which they discuss how to go about teaching socio-cultural values, for instance, an issue such as honesty or service. The meeting deciding on this matter may constitute an activity system. The typing of the script that explains the subject matter of honesty or service as a sociocultural value constitutes an activity system. The teacher who talks about the issue at assembly or in the classroom constitutes an activity system. Notice the *division of labour* involved, the *actions* involved in the different activities, and how these filter from administration to the learner; hence, the collective nature of activity. From above, and within the global activity system of the school there are embedded activities that in their own right allow the school to function and transform itself. Activity is negotiated, diverse, multi-voiced and dialogic in an embedded activity system. These are prerequisites for embedded activities granted that the object of the school activity system is shared (Engeström, 1999a). The manifestation of any activity is not the same as the previous one in the school, assemblies, classroom and the lesson. This is consistent with sociocultural theory, which maintains that issues associated with history are better understood in their own history of objects, ideas and tools (*ibid*).

[48] Represents two types of voices: a) the active voice which is that of the administrative staff at school, for example, secretaries, receptionists, the principal and other management officers. b) The school collaborators which constitutes the silent voice of parents, education department and so on.

4.1. (e) The Classroom — An Embedded Activity System

In the Vygotskian tradition, change is a basic concept for understanding human life. The classroom is a specific historically social context where learning occurs (Hedegaard, 2001). Through social interaction children learn from their parents and the culturally more able — in the classroom the teacher is the significant culturally more able other. Internalisation changes external interactions to a new form of interaction that guides the child's action as self-regulating (*ibid).*



Figure 5: Some of the sociocultural values the learners promise to observe.

Holy Family School decided that it was a positive experience to commend learners, reward them for good behaviour and activities. Consequently, a system of awards was instituted for this purpose. Periodically, Care Award Certificates are awarded during assembly to all those who would have been identified doing good deeds. *Figure 5* constitutes the sort of sociocultural values that Grade Six are required to learn. These values are communally agreed upon. *Figure 6* is therefore a specific example of a Care Awarded Certificate awarded for honesty. The learner picked up money that was lost and returned it to the owner. Honesty is an example of a sociocultural value the school promotes and commends.

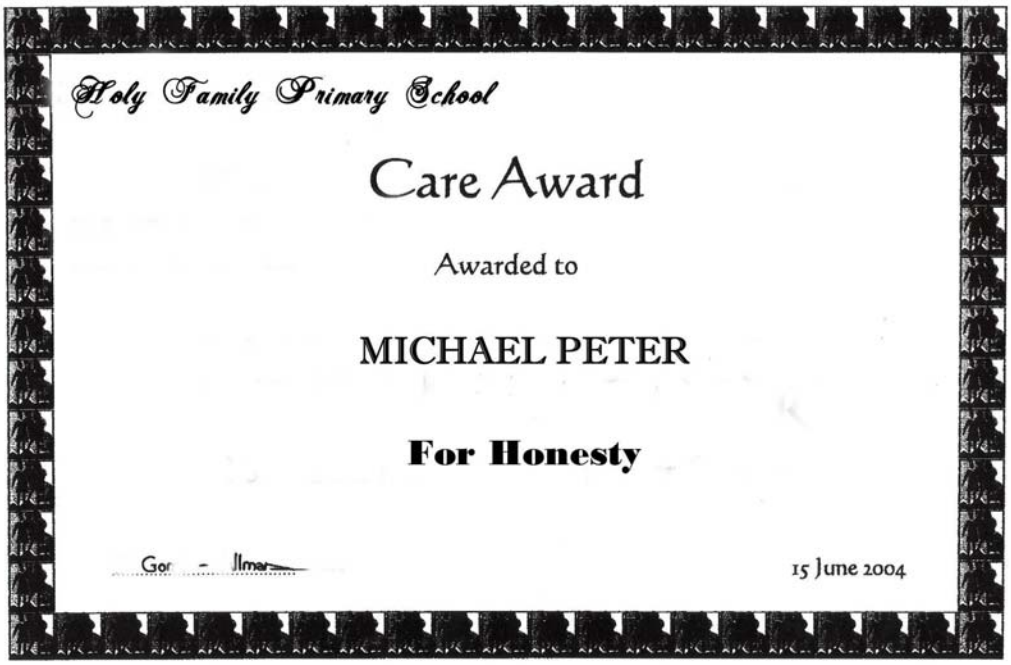


Figure 6: A sample of a Care Award. (The school and child's name are fictitious).

Theoretically, global motives inspire local motives that function and are embedded within the various contexts and activities of the school. Diversity within the school is revealed through its activities — but this is difference in unity. A school functions like a body: the head, the eyes, the mouth, arms, and legs are different in their functions but they have to work together for the body to function as a unit-in-context. Similarly, unless the object of the school coincides with that of the classroom and other school activities, it is difficult if not impossible to see how the concept of embedded activities will apply.

To further elaborate the above discourse, learning occurs in a context where the learner's knowledge and skills interact with the context. Vygotsky's instrumental and psychological acts imply activity as historical and practical. The historicity of activity is in the artefact, which is in turn of human activity. An artefact plays a role in a learner's life because someone has learnt or taught the knowledge and skills of how the artefact works in that context (Hedegaard, 2001). Hence, context is a "practice tradition" (*ibid*, p. 20). Ethos provides the context in which the school practices its traditions. Granted that ethos is the artefact and context where learning activities occur, this obliges those who share this view to agree

that *tradition* with the artefact is action — that is where the learner learns/ practises tradition using a kind of artefact in a kind of context. Recall Coles' (1996) context of that which 'weaves' viewed as the practice or the activity a learner participates in. Cole's concept grants us to speak of activity as embedded since it brings person and context together. In McDermott's (1993) example, the child's reading skills transformed from a test context, to a class context and finally to a club context after school demonstrates this embeddedness — that learners' competences are embedded within the context and are not separate from it.

4.2. THE MEDIATING ROLE OF THE TEACHER

This dissertation has already discussed mediation as a key concept in Cultural Psychology (*see Section 2.7. (c)*). This section discusses it with specific reference to the teacher. In the classroom, mediated action is crucial for the learning process. Teaching comprises of assisting performances through the ZPD (Tharp and Gallimore, 2001). Considering bullying as a learning activity, for example, the teacher is approached in the sense of: What do we do about this problem? The learners know and understand the mediating role of the teacher. Concerning the ZPD, (*see Section 2.7 (d))* it is necessary to emphasise two points that relate to the learner engaged in the anti-bullying activity. The first is motive, which constitutes the source of meaning in the learning activity. The second is *context as practice tradition* necessary for meaning making of the activity (Leont'ev, 1981; Rosa and Montero, 1990; Ford, 1992; Hedegaard, 2001). Meaning is constituted in a concrete activity. The anti-bullying campaign is a classroom activity or rather it begins with a lesson in the classroom. The teacher initially mediates the anti-bullying motives and guides the direction that meaning making will take, hoping that the learners appropriate and internalise these meanings. Rosa believed that children have the potential to learn and given some amount of flexibility, they do take responsibility of their own learning. She observes:

> And the thing is, with the Apartheid training that we got then - because I had to analyse myself first before doing the other stuff - huh it was all here in the syllabus — spit it out and teach it to them — they must learn that. No thinking skills at all! No thinking skills

> and that is the way you got your propaganda across — you know! Then I realised the power of education and that is when I thought — no child in my class will not be able to think for themselves when they go out. Because I was studying peace studies, I said to the people in my assignment — education is my non-violent victim, you know against injustice: if you get the kids to think critically that is all that you need to teach them. They can use their own brain to sort out anything and… not the shallow thinking. Kids like to think superficially and not think of the real issues. So teachers have to attach effort to teach that [critical thinking] (Fieldnotes, at 8:45 a.m. on Friday, 9th July 04).

Rosa is the essence of what she believed is a model teacher. She believed that education is a powerful tool for transforming mind(s) (Rogoff, 1981). Education is therefore a means of socialising those values that society needs to bequeath to its young. One such value, in my view, was that the best part of teaching for her was if she succeeded in teaching the learners to 'think about thinking' — in her words "thinking critically" (*ibid*). This value characterised her very presence in the classroom, her interaction with the learners and her lesson projects as will become clearer in the development of this discourse. She assumed that critical thinking gave the learners the ability, the flexibility and so greater latitude in problem-solving. This agrees with the notion of "self-regulation…, the [learner's] capacity to plan, guide and monitor his or her behaviour from within and flexibly according to changing circumstances" (Díaz, *et al*, 1990, p. 130). Díaz, *et al's* example, seem to suggest that the capacity of *self-regulation* is an instantaneous event, though practiced thereafter. When the learner begins to regulate his or her own behaviour without need of external control: this is the very essence and purpose underlying critical thinking or learning. This concurs with Gallimore and Tharp's third stage of 'assisted performance' namely 'automatised and fossilised activity' (*see Section 2.7.* (*d*)). The learner has learnt and internalised the task (activity). She requires no further assistance. However, a significant point needs to be made in this regard; *self-regulation* is an everyday process manifesting itself in the various processes of learning. *Self-regulation* is not an isolated process but one that co-occurs with motive and meaning making. This is so partly because learning passes on from the outside to become the learner's own through the process of critical thinking *viz*, from passive meaning making to active meaning making originating from the learner's personality, consciousness and

activities (Leont'ev, 2005). In the example of the anti-bullying activity, initially the teachers will diagnose bullying as anti-social behaviour and prescribe a course to deal with it. In *self-regulated* behaviour, which is a learning process, the learner starting from the input of the teacher appropriates those motives, sets goals and prescribes goals to solve a problem. In this scenario, sociocultural values, goals, beliefs and motives have coalesced and the learner's meaning is objectified in activity, for example, one aspect of anti-bullying activity such as politeness.

Engeström's (1999a) activity model provides for negotiation, dialogue, multiple voices and contradictions. For Rosa, the mediating role of the teacher is also how much teachers negotiate to accept the burden of responsibility in the learning process not so much as the source of knowledge but as a committed mentor to the learner. It is possible for a teacher to be uncommitted to her duties in as far as she earns her wages. For these sorts of teachers, teaching is merely a job. Yet, there are teachers for whom teaching is a calling. These are some of the tensions and contradictions inherent in the system. Rosa observes:

> …I am telling you almost always eighty percent um depends on the personality of the teacher, the experience of the teacher…The teacher is crucial but but [sic] the ethos of the school helps. So, if you've got an inexperienced teacher or may be not so, um your ethos helps get them in the right direction… (Fieldnotes, at 8:55 a.m. on Friday, 9th July 04).

In thinking about the mediational role of the teacher, one seldom accounts for the quality of the mediator. If it is true as Hedegaard (2001) observes that learning is equipping the learner with their own tools for future activities and the teacher is in part responsible for this, this inevitably requires that attention be given to the quality of the mediator. This is less of a problem if teaching for the mediator is a calling, but of course other phenomena such as a strong school ethos, class ethos, teacher ethos, curriculum, form of learners' assessment, general attitude towards 'critical thinking' as opposed to rote learning comes into play. *Figure 7* is a depiction of the teacher's role in forming minds. The moral of this cartoon is not so much in its authoritarian leadership style, but in its hidden meaning. The learner knows about the immense influence the teacher has in her life. Teaching starts with parenting. There is some sense in saying that bad learners are made by

bad teachers. Correspondingly, bad parenting makes bad children by not teaching them good sociocultural values.



Figure 7: One hears it said years later that so and so a teacher made me what I am today (Cartoon by D. Chikoko: source unknown).

Surely, *Figure 7* provokes some thought about the sort of leadership and authority teachers (parents) should provide to children. At Holy Family Primary School and specifically with Rosa and Rosaline — two teachers the researcher mostly worked with — it was not "authoritarian" leadership but "authoritative" leadership (Díaz, *et al,* 1990, p. 139). The latter means that the teacher is in control and pays affectionate attention and care to the detailed circumstances of the learner. Díaz, *et al* (1990) claim that such learners exhibit *social responsibility*, *independence*, are *achievement orientation*, *nonconformity*, have a *sense of purposiveness* and *autonomous self-assertion*[49], an indication of a *self-regulated* strata of management at the school. At the core of this leadership style is intersubjective relationship which expects "mature and obedient behaviour" (*ibid, p. 139*), but at the same time appeals to learners by reason, persuasion, explanation and subtly relinquishing control of activities and responsibility to them. Such learners, it is argued, are predisposed to be more mature in their *moral growth* and *altruistic behaviour* (Hoffman, 1970). For Grade Six learners to carry out the anti-bullying campaign was to underline the sort of behaviour they need to learn. Observe, the learners use the approach of reason and explanation to pre-empt any potential bullying.

[49] Italics in original

4.3. ANTI-BULLYING — A LEARNING ACTIVITY SYSTEM

Anti-bullying is a focus in this study because it is a learning activity. It is a source of tensions and contradictions, hence the need for change of behaviour. Anti-bullying is predicated on the premise that each learner has dignity that needs to be respected and supported, for every person has "rights and responsibilities" (Picas, 2004, p. 49). Bullying undermines these values. This is also evidence that there is a drive to instruct learners in matters that transcend cognitive development and growth — matters of the heart and matters of a social nature that emphasize that co-existence is an effort that begins from childhood and that the child needs to know values associated with this effort.

4.3. (a) Historical Thread

Bullying is recognised as a social problem in schools. This is the source of tension and contradiction because it is incompatible with the sociocultural values of any given school. Bullying occurs in interpersonal relationships. Evidence from 702 FM Radio Talk Show in Johannesburg confirms that bullying is indeed a current problem, given its frequency and fatalities (O'Connor, 2006). Bullying is not new in schools. However, the approach of Holy Family Primary School, which recognises that it is a problem that must be nipped in the bud, is unique and this is what makes it a learning activity.

Bullying is "any action, physical, verbal or psychological which diminishes the dignity of another [and involves] the use of power aimed at humiliating [the] other" (Picas, 2004, p. 49). An anti-bullying activity involves a series of actions taken collectively to correct, forestall or eliminate any bullying behaviour hence the proactive approach. Even though anti-bullying is a collective activity, the learners are the exponents of the activity: they are the victims and the victimisers. The learning activity occurs when internalisation in the Vygotskian (1978) sense of transformation should presumably lead to change of behaviour arising from the learners' activities and the responses of the community. The school dedicates a whole week to the campaign (Bullying Week). The preparations are demanding,

involving and the rehearsals are comprehensive. Groups of five learners are assigned specific classes in the intermediate and lower primary, teaching learners on the range of problems associated with bullying: its manifestations, what engenders it, its effects and the reasons for its eradication.

Bullying is a source of tensions and contradictions. It connects *individual actions* to *collective activity* (Engeström, 1999a). It is a collective activity because the entire *community* of parents, teachers and learners is engaged in working against it. Bullying does not constitute a motive of the school and works against its ethos.

An anti-bullying activity has multiple motives; some are obvious others are not. The obvious ones are stipulated by the school and are adopted by the various classes; for instance, ridding the school of any bullying behaviour, not permitting any learner to ever suffer at the hands of a bully, the harmonious co-existence of learners at school and conscientising learners to the evils of bullying. The hidden motives may be the enjoyment of giving the anti-bullying lesson, a learner nursing the desire to improve on her stage performance or overcoming stage fright, or the group becoming the best presenters in an anti-bullying campaign.

Multiple motives presume multiple activities. Within any anti-bullying activity, there are embedded activities, which are oriented towards realising the main motives of the anti-bullying campaign. These activities include lessons in the classroom about life skills. In this particular case, assertiveness mediated by Rosa is a process of equipping the learners with life skills, splitting up the learners into groups of five to prepare their presentations, lesson plan, themes, role play of participating learners, choosing a team leader, making a mock presentation and finally making a presentation to a class.

4.3. (b) Anti-bullying Presentation: The Learner an Agent of Change

This anti-bullying campaign was inaugurated on the 18th June 2004 from 9:00 a.m. After the team leader introduced the team, two facilitators entered the

classroom: one was pushing, pulling, and demanding money in a mock demonstration of a bullying behaviour. Subsequently, the team leader said:

> "Well, we are going to teach you for the next hour about bullying. Bullying manifests itself socially, emotionally physically and verbally. Bullying occurs when a learner uses his or her power to bully another whom she or he thinks is weak" (Fieldnotes, at 9:08 am on Tuesday, 18th July 2004).

A facilitator put up a poster of a gun-wielding man. She used the symbolism to explain why "bullying is about power over the other person who is helpless. This helplessness is the feeling the bully induces in the bullied" (*ibid*). The school thinks that the learner is the best agent of change hence the learners' participation.

In an activity system, the leading shared motive is to learn anti-bullying behaviour but there are other motives depending on need. Motive is extrinsic when it is mediated by the culturally more able and becomes intrinsic when the learner internalises and externalises it. A learner acquires and contributes to motivation by participating in the activity (Elkonin, 1971) and by interacting with the culturally more able. The teacher mediates between the school, the class and the learner; the learners mediate between the classes, learners and the learning activity — by this fact constitutes the agent of change and embodies the school motive. Observe that this embeddedness of activity presumes that the community speaks with one voice on the question of object and outcomes. The *division of labour* is how the object of anti-bullying activity relates to the community. In the anti-bullying activity, the *division of labour* is simple. There are five facilitators and a team leader in a group. Each is assigned a task(s); for example, one shows that bullying involves mostly obnoxious feelings. She invites two learners and asks one of them to assault the other. The facilitator wants to establish how the learner feels after the assault. She reveals that in spite of an assault one can choose how to respond through assertive behaviour, that is, choose to control the situation. The tension is between choosing to fight back and responding by taking oneself out of harm's way. "Assertiveness implies that one tells the bully how one feels in a respectful way that gets the bully to listen" (Fieldnotes, at 9:08 a.m. on Tuesday, 18th July 2004).

In the *division of labour*, the teacher introduces anti-bullying activity as part of Life-skills in her lesson. She monitors the preparation of the anti-bullying activity, gives advice on a required activity, monitors the delivery of the presentation and evaluates it. The teachers gradually pass on the control of the activity to the learners as part of the process of *self-regulation* (Díaz, *et al*, 1990). Rosaline agrees saying: "You know one thing about children; once you guide them and show them that they can do something …they take it up." (Fieldnotes, at 9:18 a.m. on Tuesday, 18th July 2004).

In another example of the *division of labour,* the facilitators' resourcefulness in using artefacts as teaching-aids is typified. The ensuing one answered the question: What happens if confronted by a bullying activity? Behave like a "bullying robot" (see *Figure 8*). This is a representation adapted from the idea of traffic lights; it is familiar and simple to understand. By adapting it to the anti-bullying activity, it is used as a mediational artefact that is relevant to the activity system of 'True Blue'. It means that one takes charge of the situation and is in control where a bullying behaviour is in progress.

Red behaviour was supposed to make the victim and the aggressor to stop, think and prepare to act (**Stop**)

Yellow behaviour both victim and aggressor remain passive (**Think**)

Green behaviour was supposed to make the victim do something (**Do**)



Figure 8: True blue

In the final example related to the division of labour, the facilitator evaluated the listeners in a quiz. The class was divided into five groups. There were three sets of questions. One set of questions was to identify the emotion associated with bullying from the viewpoint of the bully as well as the victimised. Group Two won the prize of a can of candy. *Table 1* illustrates the scores of the different groups the number represent five groups. The x mark implies the group failed to answer that question. The tick mark indicates the group passed that question.

Group	1	2	3	4	5
Score	X	✓	X	✓	✓
	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	X	X

Table 1: Scores of learners' responses to a quiz

The *rules* guiding the anti-bullying activity are those that govern social relationships. In the specific anti-bullying drive, there are explicit and implicit norms that derive from the South African Constitution, school rules and pledges, norms from religions, school curriculum and personal values.

The thinking is that with *self-regulation*, which go hand in hand with internalising and externalising behaviour in concrete activities the learner gradually takes control of their own behaviour. During the follow up (interviews) concerning the learners' view on the anti-bullying activity, there was a consensus that bullying was wrong: "Huh, I think bullying is very wrong…I have seen people hurt and I have seen what it does to people's lives when they are growing up". (Fieldnotes at 8:47 - 9: 47 a.m., 2nd November 2005). Another learner said "huh, it is not nice to be bullied" (*ibid).* The learners also agreed that the anti-bullying activity was an ongoing activity because bullying continues to take place especially among the children in the lower primary grades. The bullying week was an important part of the children's experiences because it gave them the time and resources to concentrate on the anti-bullying activity. It gave them a certain amount of control (power), motive, belief and values that they internalise and externalise as in checking bullying by good example.

The collective activity against bullying is helped by the school ethos. Grade Sixes[50] prided themselves with the desire to live the values of their school — values they progressively internalise and externalise. Even though punishment is an option invoked to deal with indiscipline, persuasion, explanation and reason are the first line of attack in matters of schooling the heart (Hoffman, 1970). Finally, the learners believed that with the level of conscientising the anti-bullying campaign was working; for example:

> I think because like (sic) since we have done that, ah there has been less bullying happening. I mean before we done it, there was more bullying going on around the school (Fieldnotes at 8:47- 9: 47 a.m., 2nd November 2005).

This section has described and elaborated the anti-bullying activity as a socio-cultural learning activity, which in a sense is an adult intervention designed to shape the child's current and future behaviour towards certain outcomes. Whether these outcomes are actually realised is difficult to determine at this point. The hope is that when the learner knows that she or he is entrusted with responsibility and is supported by commendations for socially acceptable behaviour, he or she will externalise competencies and mastery of learning tasks. Externalisation assumes that the learner has internalised sociocultural values through critical thinking, self-regulation and assisted performances.

4.4. LEADERSHIP — LEARNERS' LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES

This activity was chosen for analysis and discussion for reasons given in *Section 4.0.* The establishment of the Learners' Leadership Structures (LLS) is premised on needs such as providing services and "competent leadership" (Picas, 2004, p. 81); therefore, implying change that took into account the following:

- An inclusive structure — that is each learner must belong to a committee of choice and participate in any other committee each term.
- No learner must be set apart above the others, that is, the principle of equality applies to all. This contrasts to the prefects' system where you

[50] In this part of the school, Grade Six is the senior class.

had the head prefects and prefects holding other portfolios within the existing prefect cabinet. Committees have members who are not elevated to so high position of leadership.

- The structures need to give each learner an opportunity to be involved in activities of their interest. It appears a learner may not necessarily provide leadership but can make a contribution to the welfare of the school, hence, the flexibility of a learner belonging to any committee.
- In Grade 11, each learner is required to attend a leadership training camp during which learners learn leadership qualities, for instance, to be positive role models, responsible and self-disciplined.
- Learners not interested in leadership *per se* have the alternative to participate in other activities by supporting and encouraging others in *care education*, for example, in anti-bullying and HIV/AIDS programmes. Obviously, this is wider in scope than the prefect system and certainly pays attention to the education of the heart.
- Since in the LLS system tasks are done in committees, all learners participate in creating committees. Whereas in Grade 11 all learners attend a leadership training camp, in the primary section they must attend training workshops for a specified period.
- All members need to attend anti-bullying workshops.
- All members must fund raise for the charities of the school (*ibid*, p. 39).

A scrutiny of the points above reveals that the kind of leadership Holy Family is advocating is oriented towards service, bonding of learners and teachers, family-like structures and co-operation and transmitting of leadership skills (the welfare of the school). This is consistent with the schooling of the heart and is partly a move towards the holistic integrated development of the learner (Picas, 2004).

4.4. (a) Historical Thread

Most, if not all, schools have some form of leadership structures: class monitors prefects, house heads or captains. The point is that there is some form of

structure-governing students' leadership holding various portfolios according to needs of the learners and the school.

Leadership is a sociocultural value. Anthropologically speaking, social or cultural groups usually need either individuals or groups of individuals to serve them or to provide leadership. The motives for such a structure depend on the purposes for which it is intended in the specific sociocultural milieu. At Holy Family Primary School, the choice of committees over other leadership systems points to the tensions and contradictions within the activity system of the school. The decision to embrace a new system indicated the desire and need for change to a system that meets the needs of the individual learner and those of the school (*see Section 4.4.*) These briefly are proactive service oriented leadership, teamwork, appreciation of each member's contribution to building of the school and a family affair so that some problem solving is communitarian. This is not to suggest that specific individual talents and needs are ignored. On the contrary, these are developed in the context of committees as a specific learning orientation.

Until a few years ago, Holy Family Primary School had a prefects' system of leadership but decided that it did not address the sort of vision the school had for learners' leadership formation; hence, change was inevitable. Changes in activity systems arise from tensions, contradictions and conflicts within the various members of its entities or among networks of activity systems where such contradictions and conflicts exist (Engeström, 1999a), or among events in the system. Embedded activity systems are one view of human activities that embody tensions that arise from human interactions with phenomena: time, environment, events and people. These "historically accumulating structural tensions" (Macdonald, 2005, p. 8) inevitably result into conflicts and contradictions that may necessitate change. Change presupposes "reflective analysis" (Engeström, 1999a, p. 33), this is to say, the community desiring the change makes these changes on an informed basis. The participants know the constraints of the previous system and have a plan of action to transcend these constraints leading to a new system (*ibid*) — in this case "Learners' Leadership Structures" (Picas, 2004, p. 39). LLS as instituted at Holy Family Primary

School opened up wider learning opportunities for the learners because "[communities] face not only the challenge of acquiring established culture; they also face situations in which they must formulate desirable culture" (Engeström, 1999a, p. 35). On this basis, LLS became an aspect of interest worth investigating as an embedded activity system that transforms the community of learners but in turn is transformed by them (Leont'ev, 1981). Setting up LLS was *multi-voiced* and consultative involving, intervention, *dialogue, negotiation* and even *conflicts* (Engeström, 1999a). These are evident in Rosaline's verbatim description of how with others, she set up LLS:

> …We then went into a monitor system and that didn't work — it was a disaster. I think it was not administered well. I was still a parent at that point and then when I came in and introduced the Pastoral Care thing …I said we're changing the system. The Principal had insisted on the LLC in which I had two representatives from each Committee on a central thing. After two years, I said it was the same thing as the prefect's system. I went to the Grade Sixes and asked, what do you think? "Scrap it!"
>
> When we set up the whole thing, we went to the Grade Sixes and asked what do you think about throwing out the monitor system…and bringing in another system of committees? It was very much my planning. Grade Sixes said they agreed…So it was that…they had to fill in a questionnaire, and then we started with the committees. We scrapped that sinful group …because they said …we don't need that group. That group does nothing. …And we've got the system as we've got it now. They do so much in the school. You know what it does; it keeps them busy. I am convinced about it. We don't have discipline problems anymore because they are so busy taking responsibility and involved in ethos development, organisation of the school they really don't have time…[for mischief].
>
> Everybody is out. They choose their own committees. They've two workshops at the beginning of the year with me — leadership workshops and then they put their names down. The programme begins at the beginning of the year. They get training two-three hours workshops after school before the extra-murals start the very first week of the term; we developed a pledge as classes then we come up with a school pledge and the Grade Sixes have to make the pledge. They made group pledges that were part of the process: group pledge and then a whole grade pledge. The representatives from each class come forward and we put together a school pledge, then they make it to the school and they get their badges… (Fieldnotes at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, 18th June 04).

The demise of the old system gave rise to a new system of committees of the kinds described below (Picas, 2004, p.40):

- The Sports Committee — concerned with sporting activities.
- The Founder's Committee — concerned with the spiritual matters.
- The School Life Committee — concerned with environmental issues.
- The Catering Committee — concerned with catering issues
- The First Aid Committee — concerned with First Aid issues.
- The Concern Committee — concerned with justice, community service, outreach and charity issues.
- The Communication Committee — concerned with communication, birthdays, bereavement and notice boards.
- The Public Relations Committee — attend to guests, new members of the school, ushering, and assisting secretaries.

In sociocultural psychology, learning is an activity of culture: sociocultural values that manifest themselves in the activities of the community of participants and culture coincide to constitute a learning activity (Hedegaard, 2001, p. 24). There are as many learning activities as there are things to do or as there are intentions to learn. Leadership at Holy Family Primary School is a learning activity oriented to instructing the learner how to serve the community — those who share in the same sociocultural values. On another level, it is an activity used to induct the learners in leadership skills and roles, that is, on how to go about their duties in the establishment of providing service. The object of Holy Family Primary School is the transmission of sociocultural values in their variation to the learners (Engeström, 1999a). Whereas the school ethos mediates the objectified human needs and intentions (Wartofsky, 1979), the context is the area within which this objectification occurs (Cole, 1996).

The leadership learning activity system is embedded within the global activity system of the school, in the classroom as an activity and within other activity systems of the school. Recall that what makes the embedded activity system possible is the common object that cuts across the embedded activity systems

namely sociocultural values (*see Section 4.1. (d)*). For example, an act of service — a sociocultural value — may manifest itself variously, yet it remains an act of service whether it is performed at a school level, at a classroom level or among individuals: learners or/and teachers within the school system. This analysis shows that sociocultural values cut across embedded activity systems because participants in the system share in it. Learning takes place in the context where the learners' knowledge and skills interact. These arise from the sociocultural phenomena of that context — a "practice tradition" (Hedegaard, 2001, p. 20). Therefore, activities, knowledge, skills and context are not disjointed phenomena but share common aspects that permit embedded relationships.

As in the anti-bullying activity, the teacher's mediation plays an important role in the leadership learning activity. From the excerpt in this section, the teacher's involvement is visible in providing the initial motive, dialogue, multiple perspectives, power relationships, setting up and ensuring the proper functioning of LLS. Learners are motivated at school when the more culturally able other — parents; teachers and peers are interested and involved in their work. Rosaline and Rosa's roles as mediators are consistent with the researcher's own vision of the sort of teachers for whom teaching is a calling (*see Section 4.1. (a)).* The teacher is not merely an expert handing down knowledge. The teacher provides guidance, is an interventionist, challenges and is a collaborator with the learners — this increases the learner's competence and mastery in doing tasks. Recall the learner is not a mere recipient of knowledge but together with the teacher, he or she engages in "joint problem-solving activity" (Díaz, *et al*, p. 140). This is consistent with the notion of *self-regulation* where control is passed to the learner in any respective learning activity, that is, *knowledge* and *responsibility* are transmitted (Rogoff and Gardner, 1984).

4.4. (b) Leadership as an Embedded Learning Activity System

What constitutes an activity is the collective object/motive that characterises the activity thus contributing to the welfare of the community who share in that object/motive (Leont'ev, 1981). Participating in the LLS in the school has a

collective motive/object. Its manifestations might be different depending on the specific activity of the Committee as dictated by concrete actions guided by goals of individual learners.

At Holy Family Primary School, the global motives of the activity system in *Section 4.1. (b)* and *Section 4.1. (c)* are established as part of collective motives mediating learning. In the case of LLS, although these motives are localised they in no way contradict the global motives of the school's activity system —rather they contribute to them by dealing with specifics in LLS activity system. The relationship between goals and actions deal with specifics. These are the first line of attack in problem solving where activities initiate particular action order. LLS motives are:

- Enable senior learners to take responsibility, help in decision-making, recognise needs, develop organisational and social skills, and feel a sense of ownership of the school.
- Develop awareness of the needs of all learners and create a family environment.
- Create a link between learners and teachers for greater support.

The learners are the *subjects* of the LLS activity system whose *object* is the development of sociocultural values — specifically to serve the community and in the process they learn how to serve, provide leadership as well as to be good leaders. The *rules* are explicit as well as implicit. These regulate the social relationships with the school between the members of LLS and the rest of the community of learners. These include school rules, school pledges, class pledges (*see Figure 9)*, group pledges and documents that regulate LLS system among others, which were compiled by the learners. The *community* supporting LLS includes special interest groups such as Pastoral Care Committee, members of the different Committees constituting LLS, learners from other classes, Grade Six R.C., teachers and the Principal. The *division of labour* of LLS includes Rosaline who is the mentor and the in-charge overall of the LLS. The different "educators" (Picas, 2004, p. 41) have specific job descriptions and are in-charge of

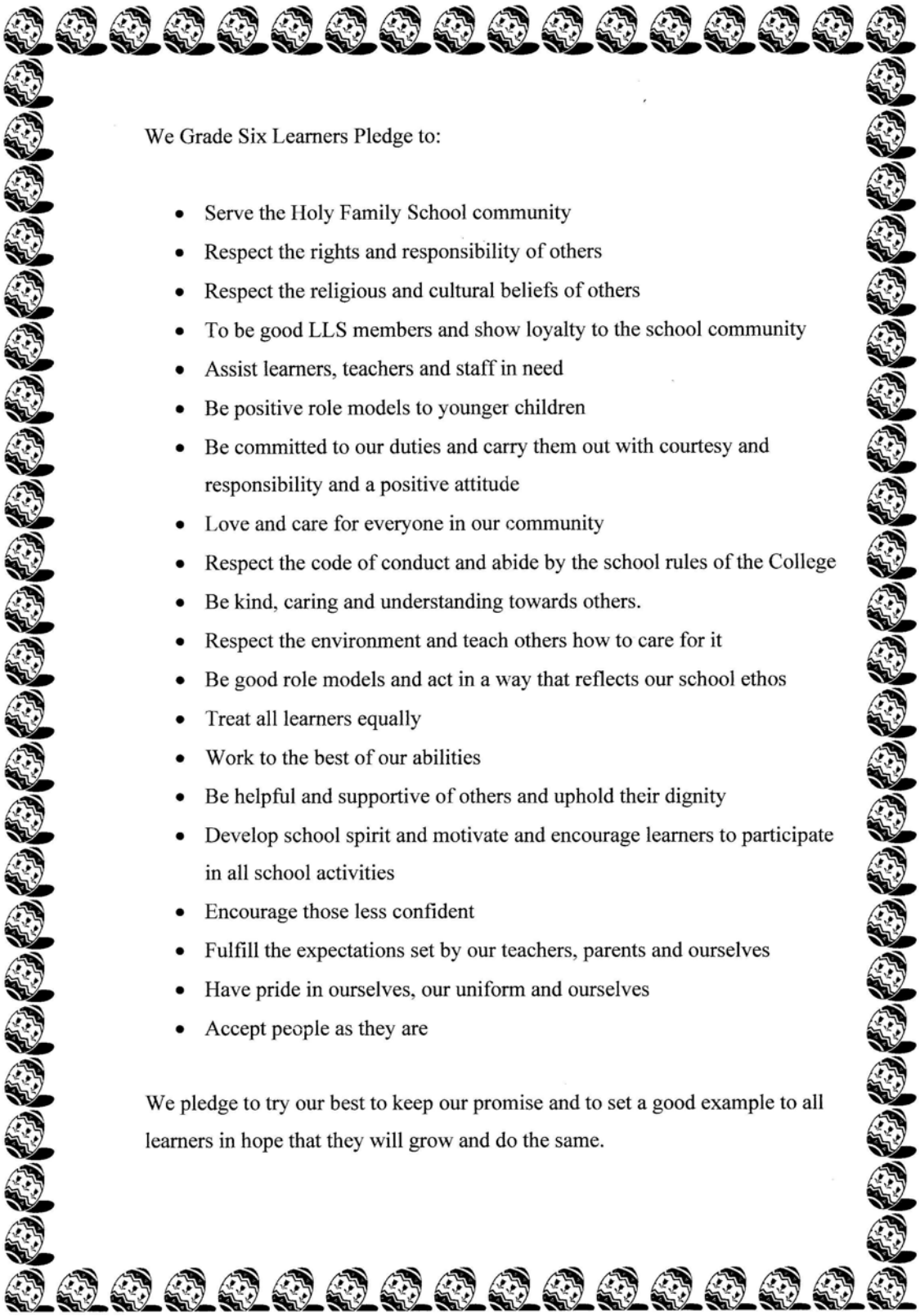
specific committees for example the Sports Committee and the First Aid Committee and the respective members of these Committees. Even with such an activity system, there are many other activities systems depending on what the learner(s) wants to accomplish. Actions are subordinated to activities; they are object oriented and are directly given conscious goals. Because of their nature, the research speaks of them in general terms (Leont'ev, 1981). This embedded activity system takes into account the sociocultural context (the school). Embedded activities arise because the *objects* (sociocultural) manifest how activities defined by the *division of labour* relate to the members of the school community; and how *rules* govern these relationships (Engeström, 1999a).

Figure 9 (*overleaf*) is a picture of Grade Six pledge sheet. These pledges are a collective activity of the whole class mediated by the classroom teachers. The first pledge is to serve the community of the school; all the others build on this one. The pledges reflect the sort of sociocultural values the school desires the learners to appropriate.

4.4. (c) Learners' Leadership Structures Workshops

Holy Family Primary School took Grade Six learners' leadership training seriously that at the beginning of each term they scheduled a 2–3 hours workshop for training (Picas, 2004, p. 81). This workshop was a collective learning activity with defined motives that cover the content of the subject matter (*ibid*). To learn:

- Leadership qualities and behaviour
- Learners' Leadership Structures
- How to prepare and chair a meeting
- How to participate in a meeting
- How to take minutes in a meeting
- Select a committee of your choice
- Setting up a time, venue, chairperson and secretary for the first meeting of the year.



We Grade Six Learners Pledge to:

- Serve the Holy Family School community
- Respect the rights and responsibility of others
- Respect the religious and cultural beliefs of others
- To be good LLS members and show loyalty to the school community
- Assist learners, teachers and staff in need
- Be positive role models to younger children
- Be committed to our duties and carry them out with courtesy and responsibility and a positive attitude
- Love and care for everyone in our community
- Respect the code of conduct and abide by the school rules of the College
- Be kind, caring and understanding towards others.
- Respect the environment and teach others how to care for it
- Be good role models and act in a way that reflects our school ethos
- Treat all learners equally
- Work to the best of our abilities
- Be helpful and supportive of others and uphold their dignity
- Develop school spirit and motivate and encourage learners to participate in all school activities
- Encourage those less confident
- Fulfill the expectations set by our teachers, parents and ourselves
- Have pride in ourselves, our uniform and ourselves
- Accept people as they are

We pledge to try our best to keep our promise and to set a good example to all learners in hope that they will grow and do the same.

Figure 9: Grade Six Pledge Sheet

As pointed out previously, these motives do not conflict or contradict the global motives of the school that children learn sociocultural values of their school community and this is what permits embeddedness of activity systems.

The works were mediated by the teacher in-charge with all the teaching resources at her disposal such as speech, texts, handouts, A3 size papers. These workshops are task-oriented. There are a number of smaller activities involved to be done by the learners who were divided into groups of eight to nine learners. The learners are the *subjects* and the *object* is to learn sociocultural values — "competent leadership" (Picas, 2004, p. 81). Since there are so many activities under this section, one activity example will suffice: How to prepare for and run a meeting. The subjects are the learners in a collective activity. The object is learning the value of how to prepare for and run a meeting. The *outcome is* that the learner can conduct a meeting efficiently. The *rules* are time, duration of the meeting, norms that govern a meeting, venue, who are participating and agenda. The *community* are the learners, teacher in–charge and other supporting teachers. The *division of labour* includes chairperson, secretary, members and teacher who are supervising the workshop. Actions within this activity depends on the specific activity for instance the chairperson welcoming the members of the Committee. The goal is to say the welcome words. Goals and actions are subordinated to activities.

Learning at Holy Family School is always oriented towards equipping the learners with knowledge and skills of a specific desired outcome. The teachers gradually relinquish control of running the Committees to the learners. The internalisation of the dynamics of LLS will have occurred if the subsequent externalisation of this knowledge in real life situations and experiences will constitute evidence that learning has taken place. The researcher's view is that outcomes cannot be anticipated with any accuracy.

4.5. GRADE SIX R.C. DISCOURSE BETWEEN THE TEACHER AND THE LEARNERS ON VALUES (DVD ANALYSED)

There is ample evidence to show that classroom discourse between the teacher and the learners and among the learners constitutes an important aspect of learning activities (sociocultural values). Gallimore and Tharp (1990) have explored the notion of discourse: *verbal discourse* and *written discourse*[51]. The key issue in these notions is that these play an essential part in cognitive development, specifically concept formation (*see Section 2.7. (b)).* This is a learning process of creating new knowledge which occurs at different levels. In the literature, reference is made to 'everyday concepts' and 'scientific concepts' (*ibid).* Whereas the former is linked to specific everyday phenomena (*ibid*), the latter stems from socio-historical development of formal schooling (Vygotsky, 1987a) and both develop through language use in collective activity (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990).

This section concerns Grade Six R.C. discussing some of the sociocultural values as experienced in their classroom. These learning activities lead to concept formation through the internalisation and externalisation of sociocultural values. Activities are social practices oriented towards the object of sociocultural values. An entity becomes an object of activity when it meets a human need — the need in this case is to teach and to learn sociocultural values. The subject constructs the object (values), "singles out those properties that prove to be essential for developing social practices using mediating artifacts [debates, discussions and texts] that function as forms of expression of cognitive norms, standards, and object-hypotheses existing outside the given individual" (Lektorsky, 1984, p. 137). Rosa uses debates, discussions and texts in the classroom as learning activity to teach sociocultural values. The division of labour assumes that the learner is a participant in the affairs of the school. On this basis, the learner makes an input in the learning process. The fact that learners can candidly discuss and debate issues of concern with their teacher, points to the fact that they have a forum to contribute their ideas on the sort of school in which they are members.

[51] Italics in original wording

For years in traditional setting of schools in South Africa, and perhaps because of Apartheid, (Fieldnotes, at 8:45 a.m. on Friday, 9th July 04) the teacher in the school context was the source of knowledge so that learning was characterised by a top-down approach of teaching sociocultural values. This relationship presumed a passive learner doing classroom chores: reading assigned books or texts, writing quizzes, completing worksheets and writing assignments. The traffic of knowledge was unidirectional from the teacher to the learner. In the Vygotskian (1978) theory of education, children co-construct knowledge. In attempting to understand child's development, it is necessary to know the sociocultural context in which the child develops.

> Cognitive skills appear twice… First it appears on the social plane and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the children as an intrapsychological category (*ibid*, 1978, p. 163).

If children were not participating in constructing knowledge, one can only imagine the sort of implications this would mean. It is still the case that adult behaviour is learnt and understood through observation without much need for verbal explanation, since children are exposed to activity functions of their sociocultural milieu (Pettit, 1946). One learns through *assisted performance* (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990). One means for assisted performance is primarily language. This is not to say that all assisted performance is restricted to this. Gallimore and Tharp (*ibid*) propose the following modes of assisted performance: *modelling* (imitation), *contingency management* (assisted performance through reward and punishment), *feeding back* (assisted performance through giving back information), *instructing* (following instructions as assisted performance) *questioning* (brings to the surface what is underlying) and *cognitive structuring*[52] (provision of a structure for thinking and acting). Whichever strategy of assisted performance the child requires for learning, the four stages in *Section 2.7. (d)*, apply. In other words, there will be learners who invariably need help in performing learning tasks, First Stage. Learners in the Second Stage still need some help because they have started to internalise and to take some responsibility of the learning task. Those in the Third Stage do not need any assistance since

[52] Italics are in original

they have internalised and taken full responsibility of the learning task. Those in the de-automatised performance stage (Forth Stage) have initially learnt the task but lost this capacity. The learning task has to be re-taught and re-learnt (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990).

The point of consequence here is that the essence of schools is to assist learners through the learning processes at whatever stage they are (*ibid*, p. 188). In teaching sociocultural values, Rosa mediates between the learning activity and the learner through *assisted performances* among the learners in conceptualising the sort of sociocultural values they need to learn. The example of the discussion below puts matters in perspective. The core issue concerns unrestrained self-expression manifesting itself for instance in wearing different hairstyles:[53]

> *Teacher*: If everybody had different types of hairstyles? (From 0:12:19.18, Jaki, 2006, DVD).[54]
>
> *Learner A*: But it is like sometimes yes we have to wear hair styles properly because we have got visitors, but we don't always have visitors...
>
> *Teacher:* Where is the value of accepting who you are and not having to change your appearance…?
>
> *Learner A*: But Ms….it is like hair dye … it is a way of expressing yourself. I am not saying we should always be allowed to relax it, bright paint and highlight…
>
> *Teacher*: Please tell me what your parents would say about it…
>
> *Learner A:* Ms. I am not saying that…
>
> *Teacher*: This is what I am trying to show you that if you are allowed to just express yourself so freely, would your parents then send you to this school?
>
> *Learner A:* You express yourself in a way that is appropriate you know, not like oh, today I feel like being naked, so I am going to come to school naked… that is inappropriate (0:13:28.08, *ibid*).
>
> *Teachers:* Now let us stick to the hairstyle…ok (0:13:37:00, *ibid*). What would your parents say? Answer my question.
>
> *Learner A*: My parents wouldn't like it (0:13:46.20, *ibid*).
>
> *Teacher:* Exactly! That is why this school has decided that you may — and we give a lot of freedom guys because I promise you go to High School and you will see.

[53] This extended quotation is analysed in detail below.
[54] The number indicates the timeline where the clip begins.

> You want rules, you gonna have rules. Ok! At this School, we try to make an African school — a truly South African School. That is the difference. If we allow everybody to express themselves as freely as they want, am sorry we not gonna have any parents here because your parents sent you here for specific reasons. They want you to mix with this big diversity of population. They want you to have a certain amount of responsibility and freedom. That is why in the High School some people actually have to leave — they have to go to a school with many rules because they cannot mend themselves. Basically it is your behaviour that determines whether you are going to stay in this school or not, because you are not gonna go off the rails and…when you have got all that freedom… because you have already experience a certain amount of freedom here at school. It is these people who have had these rule oriented schools who get there, have the freedom — go and ask Wits lecturers…you fit in with everyone. There is no racial problem. The other thing is they know how to have fun and they know when to stop and this is what you guys got to learn is that this freedom thing is giving you're a choice and you got to make the responsible choice. It is okay to go and have fun but have it at an appropriate place, at an appropriate time. Ok! The same thing with hair, you may wear your hair and look very nice, you are expressing yourself. Good! But it mustn't go too exotic… (0:13:49.15, Chapter Three, Jaki, 2006, DVD).

The analysis of the discourse above shows the following: Firstly is the relaxed ambience in which the learners discuss with their teacher. There is no tension or more aptly, any fear in the relationship between the teacher and learners — such a healthy relationship between teacher and learner is requisite for learning. Secondly, *Learner A* coherently articulates her mind given the issues in question. This inquiry takes for granted that she speaks for the rest of the class. Thirdly, this discourse is a negotiation in process on whether certain sociocultural values are acceptable or not at Holy Family Primary School; albeit it seems that the negotiation is on unequal terms. One can see that the teacher's mind is decidedly set on the kind of sociocultural values she deems the learners need to accept as given. However, one cannot fault her for embracing this position. Call to mind that this activity system is multi-voiced. As unpleasant as it might seem, the teacher's voice is dominant because she mediates the stance of the school and of the parents. Moreover, as she appropriately points out, the parents have specific reasons for sending their children to the school.

Yet, the researcher does not think that hers is a futile effort. In allowing the learners to discuss sociocultural concerns, she provides the learners with a forum upon which to discuss their own issues. In this respect, she learns from the learners. She can tell what sort of viewpoints they hold and how to guide them. She can tell from their participation as to who needs *assisted performance.* This gives her the occasion to manoeuvre them through their door and exit through her door at least for a time being. When they begin to see the grand picture of phenomena and to understand why learners — children for that matter — cannot just do as they wish. It might seem like manipulation, but in the researcher's view, this is not the case. It is laying the foundation upon which learners will find a basis for learning sociocultural values and as adults the basis upon which they will make responsible choices. This manifests the relative power of the teacher and rightly for a purpose. The power and authority of the teacher derives from many sources. One of them is the school. This supposes that the teacher is the executor of the school's policies. The argument is that children aught to be taught acceptable sociocultural norms and values[55] at least initially. There will come a time when they will make their own choices, but first they need to learn from the culturally more able, the sort of sociocultural values that are accepted in their school and broader community.

By discussing the concepts of responsibility and freedom, she is taking them through the process of concept formation — it is part of their development and growth — by giving them concrete situations where these apply, their interrelationships, how they connect with their lives and giving them a specific view of these concepts — the socioculturally accepted views. It is about making meanings and meanings are made through negotiations with the parents through fostering specific sociocultural values that constitute the school's ethos. This is underlined by the rules of relationship in the school's activity system, which governs the interaction among the various participants. The researcher holds the

[55] This is a controversial issue. Who contributes to the norm of what is considered 'accepted' sociocultural values? Basically in a school it involves the owners, the political authorities at both local and national levels to provide broad educational and management policies, the board of governors and the community of the school. In sociocultural theory, children learn from what knowledge already exists within their sociocultural contexts. They do not initially come up with what to learn even though this might be the case at a later stage.

view that children be given a voice in constituting rules that affect their lives. But this is a debatable and contested issue. The reader can come to his or her own conclusion. Remember that children come into a community that already exists. Their entry into the sociocultural milieu marks the starting point where they begin relating to this world. This *ipso facto* embodies tensions and conflicts because of various participants, views, experiences and concerns. From an ontological viewpoint, Activity Theory assumes change since activity embodies tensions and contradictions. Therefore, change in activity is a natural process. Yet, change is not always instantaneous, self-declaring or ostentatious. Holy Family Primary School is not exempted from this process. The learners and the teachers in co-operation with the parents negotiate over the sociocultural values that should constitute or should not constitute the values system of the school.

In teaching sociocultural values, Rosa uses debates, discussions and texts to assist in concept formation. By asking the learners to write out their speeches and subsequently reading them out, this allows for *responsiveness*, *joint productive activity* between teacher and learner and the *building of common meanings and values* (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990). One cannot eliminate the urge to *direct* and *evaluate* children as an aspect of mediation. Some element of this will always endure because the child comes into a world that already exists in which there are traditions and fossilised practices. The child is inevitably inducted into learning sociocultural values from the perspective of the adults. Hence, one sense of saying that mind is socioculturally formed (Vygotsky, 1978). In any case, any sociocultural values learnt are not autonomous of the sociocultural context. In addition, the transmissions of these values rely on the intersubjective relationship between the culturally more able and the learner (Lonergan, 1957).

Inevitably assisted performances as discussed in *Section 2.7. (d),* are pivotal in the learning of sociocultural values (*see Footnote 55*). Learners initially need assistance until such a time that they have internalised and can externalise the accepted sociocultural behaviour without needing further assistance. Rosa's use of written text, debates and discussions in the class is consistent with Cultural Psychology. Her assisted performance flows from the culturally more competent (herself) to

the learners because of her experiential advantages (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990). Learning activities such as anti-bullying activity, leadership learning activity, debates, discussions and the use of texts incorporate forms of assisted performances. These learning activities are embedded within the school system and relate to each other by way of sociocultural values (object).

Vygotsky considered word meaning to be the basic unit of analysing consciousness because its occurrence is both intermental and intramental. Word meaning is the stuff of verbal thinking[56]; it resides in the language spoken as a collective activity of the community. Through the mediation of language, the learners develop discourse competencies while simultaneously learning socio-cultural values. The focus is not on the technicalities of the word concept but on children learning sociocultural values through dialogue, discussions and negotiations with the teachers through the medium of language and texts. *Effective instruction* with learners involves continuous integration of language (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990) (free expression with action) free expression is a condition and process of acquiring meaning and of learning.

4.5. (a) Historical Thread

For Rosa, teaching is not just about textbook principles but also about a vision, consciousness, personality, a calling, devotion and commitment to the learners. Rosa believed in the power of her work. She observes:

> Then I realised the power of education and that is when I thought — no child in my class will not (sic) be able to think for themselves when they go out… If you get the kids to think critically that is all that you need to teach them. I mean then they can use their own brain to sort out anything and… not the shallow thinking. Kids like to think superficially and not think of the real things. So teachers have to attach effort to teach that [critical thinking] (Fieldnotes, at 8:45 a.m. on Friday, 9th July 04).

The teacher acknowledges that in education is power to transform the learner's mind through the activities of teaching and learning. This realisation set her to

[56] This became a written discourse when people developed the science of writing.

teach learners to 'think critically'. Holy Family Primary School in its global motives desires that learners passing through its academic corridors receive an integrated holistic education. However, the actualisation of this vision needs to be objectified in the teacher who is mediating the learning process. The teacher embodies the vision of the school, believes in it and is the symbol of its very essence as well as being a role model. This explains why she plays a dominant role by mediating the teaching-learning process. The view of this inquiry is that learners need guidance in their growth and development. This is not to mean that learners do not contribute to their own growth and development in the form of nascent sociocultural values. It means that there is a process of induction into the practices of society, which is consistent with sociocultural theory.

Rosa allows the learners the fora to discuss and debate their thoughts as a means of learning sociocultural values. This classroom activity enables the learners to play an active part in co-constructing knowledge. Thus, discussions are both a means and a tool for learning — a means for learning sociocultural values and a tool for enhancing critical thinking. Gallimore and Tharp have pointed out, "productive interactions occur in goal-directed activity settings, which are undertaken by apprentices and experts" (1990, p. 200). When learners discuss issues that concern them, the response of the teacher is to *converse* with them. It is conversation that negotiates between the positions of the learner and the teacher. The mediator's knowledge extends beyond what the learners know given her experiential advantage. This aspect makes it requisite for her to provide *direction* and *evaluation* granted she represents many voices within the community (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990).

In this discussion and debate, the teacher needs to *listen* to the learners — this means taking their point of view and engaging them by way of reason, explanation and persuasion. In so doing, she is *communicating* meaning much more effectively because she can elicit their *responses* and further the negotiation process. This process leads to concept formation on sociocultural matters hence learning occurs (*ibid*, p. 197). According to Goodlad (1984), the teacher should not ignore the learners or dominate the discourse. When she is discussing with

the learners, she needs to assume a relaxed mood that gives her objectivity; yet, leaves her firmly in control of the discussion. The learners should be able to see this and that she means well in her intentions.

The context of these debates is the classroom. The teacher asked the learners the question: "If I were the president at Holy Family Primary School what would I do for the learners?" (Fieldnotes, at 8:09 a.m. on Monday, 12th July 04). Observe that the focus of this study is the discussion of sociocultural values and not leadership *per se*. The learners prepared their manifestos; they presented their points of concern to the class, followed by the discussion of emergent issues. These mock campaigns constitute the bulk of the content on the DVD.

The DVD is entitled *Grade Six R.C. Using Texts, Debates and Discussions as Means of Learning Sociocultural Values.* It has four chapters: *Chapter One* begins with a typical day at school — an assembly that begins with prayers, followed by some meditation from the Assistant Principal, thereafter the giving of sports awards and medals to the various participants. The chapter concludes by wishing and singing Happy Birthday for the learners celebrating their birthdays during this particular week (Duration — about 5 minute from 00:0:37.03 — 0:04:57.12). *Chapter Two* begins Grade Six R.C. day's class sessions — this is the focus. The lesson is on learners delivering their mock campaign manifestos to the electorate (Duration — about 32 minutes from 0:04:51.03 — 0:36:52.00). *Chapter Three* is a continuation of Chapter Two; it deals with the responses from the parents. During the first part of the discourse contentious issues emerged. The teacher asked the learners to seek their parents' opinions on emergent issues. These were later discussed in class (Duration — 21 minutes from 0:36: 54. 12 — 0:58:08.14). *Chapter Four* is the conclusion. Its content includes voting results, acknowledgements and addresses (Duration — about one and a half minute from 0:58:11.23 — 0:59:53.21). With this background, it need be underlined that this DVD represents different sets of data of sociocultural values.

It is impossible to discuss every aspect of the activities on the DVD in this dissertation. Selected episodes represent the relationships and positions of the

learners, the teacher and the parents in the teaching-learning process of socio-cultural values. The study demonstrates the role each of those engaged plays in the learning process, the tensions and conflicts that arise owing to the positions taken by the community of persons involved in the learning process.

The use of texts, debates and discussions are embedded in the classroom as a form of learning activities. Tensions and conflicts are inherent in activity systems, specific embedded activity systems (anti-bullying activity and LLS activity) keep changing. This influences the global motives of the school's activity system, which also changes in keeping with the needs and goals of teaching and learning of sociocultural values — the object that motivates by shaping and directing activities mediated by the school's ethos.

The activity model advanced here purports to illustrate the notion of embedded activity systems. Since this assumes multiple embedded activity systems that depend on specific needs, these needs may change along with their motives, goals, and the sort of actions and operations required to meet those needs. Yet it is necessary to underline that meaningfully embedded activity systems serve their purpose if they are oriented towards the object of the school's activity system since this is the reason for their very existence. To put this into perspective, an anti-bullying serves the school's needs (activity system). Any activity ceases to exist if it no longer serves the needs for which it was intended. New activities come into existence to serve new needs. This circle of the 'old' dying and the 'new' being born is a normal occurrence in an activity system. For example, if bullying is no longer a problem in a school, then anti-bullying activities will no longer be required.

Activities are specific to a context because they serve specific needs in that context. For this reason, they remain embedded in specific sociocultural contexts. Global *rules* of the school's activity system change but over time. However, in the specific embedded activity systems of the classroom, verbal and written discourses, and specific sets of rules namely grammatical rules and rules of language usage must apply. The school *community* is comprised of parents

(tacit support) who send children to school and are supportive of it. The members of this community constitute the classroom teacher who mediates the discourses and the learners who are the members of the class. The *division of labour* consists of the teacher who mediates between the class, learning activities and the learners' participating in the discourses (Engeström, 1999a).

4.5. (b) Analysis of Specific Episodes of the Debates cum Discussions

These discussions originally began as an assignment to the class to answer the question: What would you do for the learners if you were the class president? In answering the question, the learners were required to make an outline of their key points and writing these in some logical form. It is noticeable watching the DVD that the learners present their manifestos from prepared scripts. These speeches are not just about leadership and their plans of action; they are topical issues that influence the learners' lived experiences as children. They are out to challenge some of the sociocultural values. This represents a significant portion of the debates and discussions. In the process, such concepts as free expression, freedom and responsibility among others emerge. The teacher explains these in the context of the school value system and discusses their application.

In Chapter Two of the DVD, after the morning salutations, the class begins with the first learner presenting his manifesto. The general procedure is for the learners to read their speeches. The teacher would interject with questions requiring or giving clarification, explanation or information. Prepared texts allow the learners to organise their thoughts and thus to be articulate in their speeches. The range of issues debated and discussed are diverse but school rules seem to feature prominently. This allows for conversation, dialogue and negotiation over contentious sociocultural values between the teacher standing in *loco parentis* and the learners. Bear in mind that among other things the focus is the 'schooling of the heart' as well as 'critical thinking'.

One of the main concerns some of the learners have is the desire to be able to express their views without restraint for example in wearing various hairstyles,

earrings and attire among others. This causes tension, in light of compliance with the school rules. The notion of unrestrained expression runs through the remainder of this section. This issue is contentious because the teacher does not agree with the learners' conceptualisation of unrestrained expression. Learners are not paying attention to the notion of responsibility, how it fits in their experiences of life and within the school ethos. The tension and conflict is between the experience of unrestrained expression and responsibility. For the teacher, there is no such thing as absolute freedom. She explains, persuades and discusses with the learners on this and related matters, standing in *loco parentis*. If there were dissonance between the object of the learner and the object of the school, what would be the global outcome of this activity system? Will this lead to the breakdown of the school system or just some aspect of it (*see Footnote 63*).

To re-visit the notion of unrestrained expression, the following excerpt is timed from 0:17:14.04 to 0:23:25.20 (DVD). This excerpt demonstrates the actual discussions, their significance to the learning of sociocultural values, tensions, contradictions, conflicting positions of the learners on the one hand and the teachers and parents on the other hand and some reflections. Thus:

> *Learner B:* Ms. If we can do it on the weekend, right then we should be allowed to …
>
> *Teacher:* (*interjects*). No! No! Different place…
>
> *Learner B:* But are we still allowed over the weekend?
>
> *Teacher*: Yubu's[57] parents' will not appreciate.
>
> *Learner B*: But then we respect your views and then she is not allowed to do it…
>
> *Teacher:* No! That is why we have this rule at school. That we have decided that hair is a certain amount of freedom that you are going to be given and that is it. If you abuse it, we will make that rule that you all cut it short in size…
>
> *Learner B:* What about earring for girls...?
>
> *Teacher:* What about it?
>
> *Learner B*: What about boys wearing earrings…
>
> *Teacher*: So why don't you [boys] wear skirts first?
>
> *Girl Learners*: Yeeees!
>
> *Teacher and Girl Learners:* Why don't you wear skirts?

[57] Name disguised.

Learner B: Yes we wanna wear skirts.

Teachers: Ok, right. ….Just put down your hands. Let us finish this topic quickly…Right; you can see that gender equality. Number one the reason why you don't wear earrings is because most guys that wear earrings follow a certain lifestyle and that is not a lifestyle that is aligned to our values, Ok? And I watched the lifestyle of any body wearing earrings — not nowadays in my days; those people were the ones who smoked *dagga*[58]. That is not a value that I would promote. ...And slowly slowly (sic) other people would then just wear it to get the message that they do but they don't. Ok! Now those people are fathers and they have children at school. Now those children want to wear the earrings. So if you look at the history of the earring. The other thing is if you were wearing the earring in another…ear, you were gay.

Learner B: Hoooo!

Teacher: Yes! That was in my time when we were growing. It was a sign to other people that hey I am gay. I am available — alright! So, that is the history of the earring — and that is why there is a bit of reaction with earrings.

Learner B: …So you are saying that if I were gay, am I imperfect or am I satanistic (sic)? …it's unfair.

Teacher: No I wouldn't say that. But what I am saying is that is why it gets this negative reaction from people. Right, if you wear black and you wear, you put white powder on you whatever; you are doing it as a form of rebellion. You think I am stupid — I went through it myself…

Learner B: … but it also depends on what people see you for….like if you…

Teacher: (*Impatiently*). But why are you trying to do this when I have told you that the short cut of life is to follow these [rules].

Learner B: So we [boys] are not allowed to wear earring. Why? Why are they allowed to wear earrings?

Teacher: Because girls' earrings have always been there. Girls' earrings have always been for decoration…

Learner B: What about rings...?

Teacher: Alright what I would like you to do is, take your little arguments home. Discuss with your parents, and come and speak with me tomorrow. Tell your little points. Take them home; take these same things — hairstyles, earrings. Ask your parents. What do they think about boys and girls earrings — that issue and exotic about hairstyles …as an expression of your human rights. Go home and we meet tomorrow. I want honest answers from your parents.

[58] Marijuana.

Learner B: Can I go talk to Mrs. Busisiwe[59] and ask...

Teacher: No! It is not negotiable. I want you first to go and ask your parents, and we see what the majority of your parents say. Your parents are in-charge of you, ok? So you come back and if … experience saying yes and twenty-two other people saying no, we will then have to go with the democratic vote, which says twenty-two to one John[60] got to go to another school where that is allowed and the twenty-two who want to stay with these values will stay here, ok?

Learner B: (*Persistent*). But if the majority says earrings?

Teacher: If the majority says earrings then I think the Principal needs to have a discussion with the parents that they can decide.

Learner B: (*Insisting*) …And the children…

Teacher: The parents — because they are the ones who are in-charge of you…

Learner A: (*many learners talking concurrently*) — Ms. It's not democratic because you can't vote for something because your parents are…

Learner B: Why do we have to follow the value of our parents?

Teacher: Because you are still a minor my darling…you don't have enough information to make … informed decisions that are going to impact on the rest of your life. When you are, eighteen you may make those decisions.

Learner E: Maybe they should give us the freedom, freedom (*sic*) to make our own values and our own decisions.

Teacher: Not as a child!

Learners: Why?

Teacher: Accept that you are children, and when you are a big person, you will do what you want to do.

The *object* of this discussion concerns unrestrained expression — a sociocultural value. This will manifest itself in concrete experiences such as hairstyle, wearing of earrings, rings among others. At the core of this issue, is the question: To what extent should learners (children) be allowed to express themselves in these matters? Inevitably, there are schools of thought that will argue that children should be allowed to do as they wish, others will take a moderate stance and yet others will argue that children cannot just do as they wish. Sometimes, these matters cannot be determined arbitrarily and universally. Issues of this nature need to be determined according to time, place, the occasion, event, and by the

[59] Name disguised
[60] Name is disguised

community of participants (learners, parents, and teachers). This agrees with sociocultural theory (contexts). In the discussion above, one may argue that the object of the discussion by the teacher is the transmission of a particular conservative type of sociocultural value system. In the view of this study, this is a simplistic way of seeing the issue. Just because youths have a voice does make what they say or demand right. While it is essential to listen and to address their issues, it is the view of this study that a relative view of phenomena for children is unhealthy. If not taught the proper value system, they will learn another value system because there is no such thing as a vacuum in the learning of values. Children have the right to growth and development that is healthy and responsible for their welfare. Who determines what is best for them? This research leaves this as an open question for debate. However, it points to certain should-be inputs by the community of parents, the state and other interested stakeholders who share a common vision and *global outcomes* for children.

In this section, the *subjects* are the learners of Grade Six R.C. The *mediating context* and artefact between the learners and the global object and motives is the ethos of the school. The *global rules* are those that constrain social relationships among the various members of the community (school rules), but of course, these have nested rules that govern particular activities as in the case of the debates and discussion: politeness, rules of grammar and those that generally govern such discussions. The *division of labour* has to do with each member's contribution to the productive activity. The teacher is the facilitator of the activities in the classroom. The learners are interested parties who contribute to the discourse by giving their arguments. This discussion is in the context of the macro-picture of learning sociocultural values (Engeström, 1999a).

In learning sociocultural values, should the children's context be a factor in determining what sort of sociocultural values they should follow? In other words, at school, they follow a different set of values and at home or elsewhere, they follow yet another set of values. This seems to me as the point 'Learner B' is making when he says, "If we can do it on the weekend, right then we should be allowed to …" (0:17:14.04 — Jaki, 2006, DVD). The teacher does not commit

herself to this but to say that it is a different place even though she appeals to the authority of the parents by observing that "Yubu's parents will not appreciate" (0:17:26.00, *ibid*). These different positions create tension and contradictions. So, if changes were called for, what system would change? Is it the school system or the home system or both? The learners seem to notice this tension when 'Learner B' makes the observation that "But then we respect your views and then she is not allowed to do it…" (0:17:38.13, *ibid*). It is for this reason that the researcher mentioned earlier that although this debate and discussion seem, in part, a negotiation, it is one between unequal parties. The teacher confirms this in what she says next. "No! That is why we have this rule at school…" (0:17:32.04*, ibid).* As it were, this is the nature of societies. In other words the school — a socio-cultural institution determines the extent to which certain things may or may not be done. This is true to the extent those institutions: the family, political, religious, educational among others constrains the scope that participating members within their communities may or may not act. In activity systems, rules norms and the like set these boundaries. These rules are themselves sociocultural. Society teaches children that if they wish to fit into the system this is what they must learn, this is how they need to act. Children develop and grow up in this sort of constrained milieus. The question remains: Where does one draw the boundary between what children may do or not do? One thing is certain that there will always be boundaries put in place by political, social or cultural institutions.[61]

[61] The researcher knows of a parent who provided and taught her 10 year old daughter to use a condom. Was it a morally good thing to do? Who determines what is best for this little girl? If Holy Family Primary School teaches a brand of sociocultural values that it knows through experience to have worked in the best interest of the school and the learners and has been tested over years, is the moral implication of this experience good or bad? For growing up children, the world is a hive of new experiences. But wisdom and knowledge comes with experience and age; so does the balance between the heart and the mind. Because of these new experiences, children will always challenge the *status quo*. In the view of this study, this is healthy, to be expected but not to be accepted in all instances. Otherwise, where does the moral responsibility of parents, teachers and schools lie to bequeath to the youngster sociocultural values that prepare them to relate with others in the world? When they are adults they will choose a particular life style; it is okay. But as children, parents and teachers need to teach them to appreciate that which is good for the common good. A relative view of culture spells doom. The following example underlines this point. One day a friend complained that Catholics baptise their children at infancy. "Why don't the children grow up and choose what religious faith to follow." The researcher responded cynically: "What language do your children speak?" "My language," the friend responded. The researcher said to him: "Why did you not wait for the children to grow up and let them choose the language they want to speak?"

The example of Learner B asking: "Why don't you wear skirts?"… (0:18:21.00, *ibid)* demonstrates how rules govern social actions, social relations and social behaviour. By explaining the history of the earring, Rosa allows the reader to see how the rules that govern the wearing of earring have changed including the meanings they embody — from adornment of women to identification of gay persons or as a lifestyle. The teacher's reason for drawing this to the reader's attention is to show where the frontier lies and what is included or excluded as acceptable sociocultural values within a specific community. Learner B argues that it is about 'perception' — in his words "but it also depends on what people see you for…" (0:20:30.05, *ibid*). This is another area of tension and conflicts. There are as many perceptions as there are minds (relative view of phenomena). The position of the teacher points to rules and norms as phenomena governing social behaviour. There is nothing wrong with rules yet this emphasis shows just how much social mind is shaped by culture. The tension here is not between the teacher's and the learner's position, but between the school rules and the desire of the learner(s) to be rid of these rules. Therefore, to attack the teacher's position is to aim the gun at the wrong person. The shortcut is, follow the rules and you will fit into the system the teachers claims (0:20:33.10, *ibid*). Is the teacher right or wrong? This is left for debate. To cement her position the teacher takes the discussion back to homes, families as basic cultural structures where all things seem to begin (0:21: 18.23, *ibid).* Three points to consider: First, Rosa appeals to the authority of the community of parents to inform the learners that the sort of sociocultural values fostered by Holy Family Primary School emerge from tacit and explicit negotiations with the community of parents. In this sense, they are multi-voiced.[62] Secondly, that there are rules which govern any community of those who share a common object.[63] The phenomena of responsibility and freedom also function within the constraints of these rules. Thirdly, that children as young members of any community are the responsibility of the adult members of that community until they obtain a certain age. The adult members of the

[62] Holy Family Primary School is not a school pursuing an isolationist policy from the larger community. It has owners, it has a board of governors, it has parents and teachers association, the Catholic Church plays a role in it and the government both local and national and above all the learners constitute stakeholders and therefore multiple voices that constitute the school community.

[63] If a community does not share a common object the possibility of anarchy becomes a reality (*see Figure 3B*). The sharing of a common object does not imply conformity. A common object may still be shared where the people in the community have different perspectives on issues.

community have the duty of creating the environment within which the learners are inducted into and learn acceptable sociocultural values for the common good. This research has consistently asked— should children have a voice in sociocultural values that concern their lives? The position of this study points to Rosa. This is the forum she has provided to the children to share their views. It is also her responsibility to help the learners in her class to understand and to learn why things are as they are at Holy Family Primary School. This is a way of involving learners in their own affairs.

The responses from the parents — Chapter Three of the DVD — were measured. Generally, they sided with Holy Family's. For instance, one can do hairstyles provided this does not flout the ethos of the school by breaking rules or compromising its morals. Leaner F said, "Mom said yes to gel provided [the hair] is neat…no to highlight…" (0: 39: 45. 00, *ibid*). Learner E reported that her parent said that "when he was the age of his daughter, he had a similar attitude and he thinks that those people need extra rules …" (0:47:16.00, *ibid*). Rosa agrees — learners' need the culturally more able to guide and to steer them through the 'gray areas' of life. She makes an important point in suggesting that individuals and societies need some restraint. In this response, there is an admission that children should have a say in matters affecting them, which she is doing. Were restraints to be unessential, there would be no need for laws, rules, norms, moral codes and principles that regulate relationships in sociocultural settings? The purpose of restraints is not to deprive learners of the delights of freedoms but to school them in making responsible choices, in appreciating their limits to act, allowing for co-existence and the primacy of the common good.

The reader is reminded that within the Engeströmian model of activity systems, tensions and contradictions necessarily engender change. But does this in essence imply throwing out the baby with the bath water? Can it not be that through explanation, negotiation and conversation, understanding is created and that the system is retained for the moment? Is it possible that only some aspects of it are changed? The view of this study is that the co-construction of knowledge takes many facets and does not solely imply absolute radical change. It needs to be

emphasised that the very notion of *assisted performances* imply co-construction of knowledge. This need not be confused with simply accepting all the youths' signals and granting what they want. The choice of the type of knowledge co-constructed is important for the welfare of learners (children). Not every type of knowledge is requisite and good initially. A rhetorical question is, in learning sociocultural values, to what extent learners should be involved in choosing the sort of values they want to live. Cultural Psychology answers this question affirmatively in Gallimore and Tharp's (1990) *assisted performance* models. Furthermore, it is answered in the processes of internalisation and externalisation of sociocultural values (Vygotsky, 1978). That children should learn from adults, Rosa is merely underscoring what has always been the norm. Children are the responsibility of adults and the question of "*culturing*" them is the obvious responsibility of the culturally more able (Cole, 1996, p. 143). Do children agree with this position? This is answered in the discourse in *Section 4.5. (b)*.

So far, the teacher has taught sociocultural values, the learners have been learning them. Evidently, the learners have views on the sort of values they want to live. The teacher stands for the school ethos. In activity systems, these different histories, contradictions result into tension and may lead to reconceptualising the sort of sociocultural values that are desirable and hold the community in concert. Therefore, negotiations, conversations, dialogue to create new meanings are requisite (Engeström, 1999a). As learners form concepts of the various aspects of life that impinge on them, they have to learn sociocultural values that make them better folks of the community.

4.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Three learning activities are discussed in detail here:
    - Anti-bullying activity.
    - Leadership activity.
    - Written and verbal discourse as means of learning sociocultural values analysed using Activity Theory, multiple-voices, historicity, and tensions.

Chapter Five

The Conclusion

"No human is self-made — each one is the artwork of many hands".

Patrick Odwora Jaki

5.0. SUMMARY OF KEY CHAPTERS

5.0. (a) Chapter Two

Cultural Psychology is a discipline that attempts to understand the human psyche in the context of culture and cultural units (Cole, 1996). It is an academic field within which this study attempts to understand, explain and describe human nature from a psychological viewpoint. In doing so, this inquiry has specifically focussed on aspects of cognition and emotions as phenomena that influence any human activity — in this study 13 -14 year olds learning sociocultural values, which are goal-directed activities, mediated, historical and seek to transform them and are transformed in turn (Engeström, 1999a). In learning sociocultural values, the researcher is arguing that children's values, motives, goals and beliefs are crucial cognitive and emotional characteristics that influence their learning activities — based on the thinking that cognition and emotions are constituted by culture (Vygotsky, 1978). Culture makes humans the sort of beings they are because it is "a shared organisation of ideas: intellectual, moral and aesthetic standards in a community and in the meanings of communicative actions" (Shweder and Levine, 1984, p. 67).

Since culture in some way delineates human existence, this research uses it to analyse human activities. Holy Family Primary School is embedded in a larger cultural context. Bruner (1996) calls it a formal cultural context where learning occurs as a social experience as well as an individual experience (Vygotsky,

1978). The thinking is that cultural contexts influence behaviour as well as activities of the learner (Wentworth, 1980). Cole's (1996) notion of context as that which 'weaves' and 'surrounds' points to the psyche working with artefacts, individual human actions, collective activities, the interdependence and inter-action of these actions and activities in specific sociocultural contexts point to the reality that activities are *embedded,* that is, they constitute one another. Seen in this light, the notion of context therefore constitutes relationships, activities, time and spatial meanings. These phenomena make up the ethos of Holy Family Primary School because they admit to a way of being that is collectively lived and experienced; and shapes human perception, attitudes, behaviour and activities.

All human activities are embedded in a context. Learning for example is an object-oriented activity — a key canon of Activity Theory. This inquiry uses Activity Theory to study learning problems because Activity Theory differentiates between internal and external activities — mental and practical physical activities respectively as manifestations of things that people do. In this way, Activity Theory is used to explain why people do things. The essence is that artefacts mediate transformation, manipulation and interaction between subjective and objective reality. This relationship is a complex relationship where the *subject* (learners) and the *object* (sociocultural values) are mediated by *artefacts* (tool/signs): culture, school, ethos and Catholic education in which there is a reciprocal interaction between subject and object. Adapting the Engeström's model of Activity Theory (*see Figure 2),* the study explains the learning activities of Holy Family Primary School, which are multivoiced, diverse, dialogical and exhibits tensions and contradictions that all constitute human activity and are ideal for instantiating individual and social transformation. In the Engeström's model (1999a, 1999b); the *community* is those who share in the common object. Whereas *rules* govern the social relationships among the participants, *division of labour* constitutes what each participant does in the productive activities of the community. Activity Theory is an important paradigm of studying human phenomena because in its breadth and depth it allows for multiple voices, accounts for historicity, provides for tensions and conflicts, which are instruments that engender change of a human systems.

Engeström's model is central to this study because this inquiry has used it to develop a new model — the concept of *embedded activities (see Figure 4*). A school is a learning zone where the young are inducted into the practices of society (Bruner, 1996). Furthermore, a school is path for development (Hedegaard, 2001) through which specific activities and practices are taught to the young, practices and activities (explicit or tacit) that are the extension of the larger community since both entities share a common object of teaching and learning sociocultural values. Consider that a school is a global integrated activity system. This allows the researcher to explain activities that occur within it as embedded activity systems: the assembly, the classroom and the lesson that share a common object of teaching and learning of sociocultural values.

At Holy Family Primary School, the common object shared at all different levels of learning are sociocultural values. These are mainly taught through the intersubjective interaction between the teacher and the learners in the contexts of the school ethos. The ethos provides the environment within which teacher and learner interact, relate, act and practice sociocultural values. Hence, the integrated holistic growth of the learners through intellectual and effective development and growth begin to be objectified through the *zone of proximal development*. The learning activities mediated by the teacher or the culturally more able member of the community prepare the learner to mature from the stratum of assisted performance to the point where the learner can live the experiences of unassisted performance (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990). It need be said that children's learning is contingent upon the intersubjective interaction with the culturally more able. This sort of interaction is an important avenue of learning sociocultural values — "[through] *assisted performances*" (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990, p. 177).

Analysing data collected for this study yielded the following range of socio-cultural values: academic/learning values, those specific to the class, for instance, Grade Five R.S.: pledges, beliefs, and personal principles, moral values, personal values, religious values, and Holy Family School values, that is, those that give the school its identity — the preserve of ethos, whose outcomes are mediated.

These values are comprised of those aspects, which develop the intellectual persona as well as those that develop the affective persona of the child. Holy Family's ethos in its quintessence supposes change because this is the meaning derived from maintaining that culture is *acquired, learned, constructed and reconstructed* by people (Miller, 1987, p. 192). Human activities are invariably interactive and transformative. When children learn *sociocultural* values through the activities they perform in the process of transforming themselves, they also transform those very sociocultural values, since the object and motives of those values are reinterpreted to encompass new horizons and new needs. Learning, more so education, is not delineated by some invariable template controlling human behaviour. In the paradigm of Activity Theory, object-oriented activities transform and are in turn transformed and are contextualised in culture.

Cognition and emotions are properties of the human consciousness in which values, belief, goals and motives are manifest in human activity. The highest forms of activities — socialised activities — are exclusively a human attribute (Leont'ev, 1981). They are multiple, distinguished by objects (motive) and constitute the very essence of how the individual functions and interacts with the environment. This is in response to possible needs through actions and goals (*ibid*). Motives being constitutive rudiments of the human consciousness make learning a phenomenon that is not uniform across the learning spectrum, since humans function differently even though they may have the same attributes. This is to say that learning is accomplished at different levels for different reasons. This can be explained by *assisted performance* (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990). Human activities play a part in the learning competencies of children through values, beliefs, goals and motives. The basis of any activity to be fully executed depends on the extent to which that activity has been internalised and is externalised (Leont'ev, 1981). Within any activity operates many cognitive and emotional processes necessary for the fulfilment of a motive when they inform, arouse and maintain activity processes. According to Motivational System Theory — the principle of "Unitary Functioning" (Ford, 1992, p. 22) — illustrates how beliefs, goals, values and motives function in concert as cognitive and emotional phenomena. This does not contradict sociocultural theory, which

maintains that human capacities are internalised from social action to become individual action (Vygotsky, 1978). Values, beliefs, goals and motives interrelate through action — actions are the observable phenomena of human consciousness. Through actions, patterns of activities are perceived which are context specific and goal-oriented (Ford, 1992). Thus, any activity is characterised by three things: success, failure or pending for various reasons (*ibid*).

Goals have a directive cognitive utility hence they are evaluative and anticipatory. Any single activity can have a range of goals and even sub-goals. The hierarchy expands until the action is accomplished. The import of this in the learning process is that clear goals are good for learning since they are immediate, easier to handle, generate less boredom, anxiety and show best results in the here and now.

Beliefs are cognitive states that regulate behaviour by processing information about an object and its outcomes. When a problem arises, beliefs function by anticipating and evaluating the learner's ability to solve it within the existing conditions (Ford, 1992, 74). Beliefs work with goals, which are in turn appended to some sort of value (*ibid,* p. 125). In sociocultural theory, the content of beliefs is derived from culture. The learner in any activity system needs to believe that they can do something for an activity to be accomplished.

Values are linked to emotions — which are constituents of any learning activity. Values equip the learner with evaluative information (judgement) about problems and opportunities. They keep the learner in a state of 'action readiness' (Fridja, in Ford, 1992). They are a vital source of energy in motivation.

Cognition and emotions meet when information is presented to cognition to evaluate. Through selective attention, the mind, via reason and feelings chooses what is relevant. Vygotsky says in this regard, "behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency which holds the answer to the last why in the analysis of thinking" (1986, p. 252). The key issue in these circumstances is that choice and decision making require both cognition and emotions. They acquire expression and meaning in concrete activities or life experiences.

5.0. (b) Chapter Three

This qualitative ethnographic study purports to say how phenomena are known. This study investigated the ethos of Holy Family Primary School — to study how this mediates the teaching of sociocultural values through the cognitive and emotional entities of values, beliefs, motives and goals.

Although each learner is an individual, this individuality is obtained culturally and socially. At Holy Family Primary School (a cultural context) the target group of Grade Five and Grade Six community of learners were observed in a naturalistic study where the researcher was inserted *in vivo* to study learning in learners out of local material which describes, explains and interprets phenomena in keeping with the "thick description" (Geertz, 1973b). Various data collecting methods were used to capture activities that would reveal sociocultural values such as participant observation, interviews, collecting documents, records and artefacts and visual imaging — still and video photography. The essence of ethnography in this case was to interpret the information collected in light of understanding the reality of the experience under investigation.

5.0. (c) Chapter Four

Having been inserted *in vivo* in the local context of Holy Family Primary School, three local learning activities were selected because they represented specific sociocultural values that provided for learning opportunities: anti-bullying activity, Learners' Leadership Structures and text, debates and discussions between teacher and learners on values as learning activities. Activity Theory is used because it allows this study to explain why the school community does what it does. Using the Engeström's model of Activity Theory (*Figure 2*) a new theoretical model was constructed to illustrate the concept of *embedded activity systems (Figure 4)*. This idea maintains that in a school's activity system the propensity is for activity systems to be embedded because all strata of the school activity system share the same object — sociocultural values — beginning from the macro-level — the school where the object is distributed inwardly to micro-entities of the school such as the assembly, classroom and lesson among others.

Every level of the school activity system is driven towards teaching and ensuring the learning of fundamentally similar sociocultural values.

Each local activity was analysed after a spending time exploring the theory relevant to Cultural Psychology: culture (ethos), context, mediation, concept formation, the ZPD learning, internalisation and externalisation in light of Engeströmian model of Activity Theory that offers theoretical basis requisite for describing, understanding and interpreting human practices/ activities and ultimately human nature.

This study was not a result of a *priori* prescriptions but that of instruments that grew out of the emic needs of the research project through the unfolding of events through being inserted *in vivo* in the context. The anti-bullying activity is a learning activity that is accorded much space in school's curriculum. So is Learners' Leadership Structure offering leadership training activities as well as giving a service to the school community. So is the verbal discourse and written discourse that are used as learning strategies and constitute important learning activities with the purpose of learning sociocultural values. This study describes and explains these in the context of activity systems. These activities represent part of the diversity of sociocultural and historical context of Holy Family Primary School contributing to the instruction of its young in the South African education system.

The aim of this study was not to draw universal conclusions that represent and purport to apply to the world over, but rather which represent and apply to unique local activities as manifesting aspects of sociocultural phenomena that learners need to learn as part of their epistemic legacy through concept formation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Each local learning activity was considered a unique and a novel activity. This is in keeping with Cultural Psychology, which prizes individual sociocultural contexts, explains and describes activities in terms of local contexts rather than being judged against the backdrop of some universal benchmark (Cole, 1996).

5.1. SOME REFLECTIONS

For fieldwork, the researcher initially went in without a specific focus. At the end of fieldwork, the research had generated so much data that it was a problem to sift the grain from the chaff. As a result, to date a lot of data still sits on the computer that it could be used to write another one or more dissertations.

In view of data analysis, the researcher was at a loss as to the 'focus of inquiry' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). Where was he supposed to start? The mass of data was overwhelming. This problem was compounded by the fact that this was the first time he had attempted such a rigorous qualitative ethnographic inquiry and using Atlas.ti qualitative research software. At no time did he attend formal classes where he learnt how to conduct qualitative research and how to use Atlas.ti. If he were able to proceed with this inquiry, it was because of sheer will power, determination and the decision to accomplish the study supported by a very patient and understanding supervisor.

He needed to be widely exposed to reading sources in Cultural Psychology, qualitative and ethnographic literature and to learn how to use computer assisted data analysis software — Atlas.ti. This gave him the direction to find his way through the mass and maze of data. At some point, through brainstorming and mind mapping in Atlas.ti, he was able to identify a topic of interest — socio-cultural values — from then on he made progress in analysing the research data and writing the dissertation.

In the new model of activity system (*see Figure 4)*, the researcher thinks that if there were dissonance between the school and the class values then the embedded activity system would probably be inappropriate or would be appropriate only to a limited extent (*see Figure 3B*) and the standard network of activity system will apply. The researcher has taken a risk in this piece of work in changing the classical Engeström's networks of activity systems. However, he believes that in education embedded activity systems exist provided the appropriate conditions hold. Academia can only progress if there are risk takers. The researcher believes he is one of them.

5.2. THE WAY FORWARD

No human is self-made — each one is the artwork of many hands. Vygotsky (1978) acknowledged this reality many decades ago when he observed that human minds are constituted by culture. This dissertation affirms this reality. Cultural Psychology, which deals with this specific issue of understanding psychological phenomena from a cultural viewpoint, provides the necessary framework to accomplish such a task. It deals with the relationship between the human mental and emotional capacity to regulate behaviour and activities through interacting with culture. In this sense, it grants on the one hand that human psyche emerges in mediated activity between culture and human consciousness and on the other hand between the learner and the culturally more able in the context of the ZPD.

From above, mediation forms the core to all knowledge co-construction when social and individual connects the internal and the external cognitive and emotional phenomena. Thus, mediation is core in understanding how human psyche connects to institutional, cultural, and historical phenomena granted that these shape psychological tools that are mastered by individuals to constitute their psychological functioning (Leont'ev, 1981).

Cultural Psychology provides an interpretative framework, within which local cultural phenomena and activities can be explored, understood and explained. This demonstrates the interdependence of psyche and culture — that culture and the psyche reciprocally constitute each other. In the process of learning socio-cultural values, learning initiates internal developmental processes that are conditional on the learner interacting with the culturally more able. In doing so, learning results in mental development; for instance, critical thinking. This makes learning a necessary universal aspect of the process of developing human psychological functioning based on sociocultural phenomena.

This dissertation presents a Cultural Psychological approach of learning and its outcomes for school learning and teaching. In sociocultural theory, it is not uncommon to see the advocacy of joint discovery, co-participation and

cooperative learning as forms of co-construction of knowledge between the teacher and the learners. Accordingly, it is imperative to examine not only how the school ethos makes it possible to impart knowledge but also how teachers go about imparting knowledge through *assisted performances*. A major area of this research was to show how this happens. The researcher constructed a theoretical model of *embedded activities* to demonstrate the co-construction of knowledge at the school level, but also at the level of individual learning activities. The focus was on three local activities *viz*: anti-bullying activities, Learners Leadership Structures activity and verbal and written discourses as learning activities. The question is how do these local but different activities shape learners' mental development and influence their school experiences? In one way, it empowers learners. Rosa hoped to achieve this by teaching learners to 'think critically'. Therefore, education is a cultural tool that empowers learners, which tool needs to be harnessed to release its powers.

In a second way, it 'oppresses silence' (see Jaki, 2006, DVD). As observed previously, the learners move about the classroom, talk freely to their teacher and among themselves, converse and argue with their teacher. Oppressive silence is perceptibly absent from the class which according to the ethos of Holy Family Primary School is something to be cultivated. Oppressive silence in the researcher's view creates timidity and inhibits learning.

In the third way, it develops a culture of communication. This has consequences for the learner that is good for individuals as well as societies. From the discussion in the classroom, one can see the range of issues raised by the children. Openness in discussing issues cultivate a culture of communication — a quality of modern relationships among individuals, institutions or nations.

The fourth way is the continuity of sociocultural values from the home ethos to the school ethos and perhaps beyond these institutions through values, motives, goals and beliefs the learners hold.[64] The outcome intended by Holy Family Primary School is for the children passing through its school to grow and develop

[64] The learning of sociocultural values does not begin at school but at home when parents teach children basic values. For instance, politeness starts at home and cuts across social strata. This is evidence of continuity in the learning of values from the home ethos to the school ethos.

to be good citizens and to keep the common good in focus. It is assumed that values learnt at school have been internalised during schooling days and beyond are externalised in the present and later everyday experiences of the learners.

It is the researcher's belief that a goal for sociocultural theorists is to find approaches to psychological and learning research that focuses on processes that transform. An emerging theme in both theory and practice is the collaborative and transformative way in which knowledge is co-constructed. Sociocultural theoretical constructs are core in understanding how sociocultural values are learnt in view of values, motives, beliefs and goals. Vygotsky's ideas continue to influence how learning and teaching should be conceptualised and shaped so that children are given the sort of schooling that meets their needs given they are culturally diverse and informed. A sociocultural viewpoint provides a deeper comprehension of learning since schools are a part of learning intervention. This study is a contribution to understanding the link between mind and culture — a vast span of this relationship remains unexplored.

Children need to learn from the culturally more able what is expected of them. This explains why education cannot be confined to the head but also ought to descend to the heart. There is a supposition here that children cannot be expected to become moral persons and good citizens when they are adults. Their maturation begins at the earliest opportunity and continues throughout their primary and post primary school life. Children's cognitive development needs to go hand in hand with their emotional as well as ethical development; this remains a core duty of the parents and teachers to ensure that it happens.

Finally, there is a need to do more research on schools and the sort of sociocultural values each school promotes. How this will come to pass remains for others to explore. This study has merely pointed out that an interesting issue exists and it is researchable.

List of References

Allder, M. (1993) The Meaning of 'School Ethos'. *Westminster Studies in Education* 16, 59-69.

Angrosino, M. V. & Pérez, K. A. (2000) Rethinking Observation from Method to Context. In: N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Anscombe, G. E. M. (1957) *Intention*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Arganbright, J. L. (1983) Teacher Expectations--A Critical Factor for Student Achievement. *NASSP BULLETIN* 67 (September) 93-95.

Aristotle (1976) *The Ethics of Aristotle. The Nicomachean Ethics.* Revised edition. London: Penguin Books.

Asad, T. (1994) Ethnographic Representation, Statistics and Modern Power. *Social Research* 61, 55-88.

Atkinson, P. (1992) *Understanding Ethnographic Text.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Baerveldt, C. (1996) Manifesto of a Cultural Psychology. <http://members.shaw.ca/ncpg/manifesto.html>. Downloaded, 24th April 2005.

Bakhurst, D. & Sypnowich, C. (1995) Introduction. *The Social Self: Inquiries in Social Construction.* London: Sage.

Bandura, A. (1986) *Social Foundation of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Banister, P. E. Burman, I. Parker, M. Taylor & C. Tindall. (1994) *Qualitative Methods in Psychology: A Research Guide.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bannon, L. (1997) Activity Theory < http://www-sv.cict.fr/cotcos/pjs/TheoreticalApproaches/Actvity/ActivitypaperBannon.htm>. Downloaded, 20th April 2004.

Barley, N. (1983) *The Innocent Anthropologist.* London: British Museum Publications Ltd.

Barley, N. (1986) *A Plague of Caterpillars.* London: Viking Publishers.

Bernard, H. R. (1988) *Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Blatchford, P. Battle, S. & Mays, J. (1982) *The First Transition: Home to Pre-School.* Windsor, UK: NFER-Nelson.

Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1992) *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Bourdieu, P. (1990) *Photography: A Middle-brow Art.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Boyle, J. S. (1994) Styles of Ethnography. In: J. M. Morse (Ed.) *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974) *Two Worlds of Childhood. US and USSR.* Harmonds: Penguin Education.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1960) *The Process of Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1985) Vygotsky: A Historical and Conceptual Perspective. In: J. Wertsch (Ed.). *Culture, Communication and Cognition: Vygotskian Perspectives.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of Meaning.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1996) *The Culture of Education.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Burgess, R. G. (1989) Grey Areas: Ethical Dilemmas in Educational Ethnography. In: Burgess. R.G. (Ed.) *The Ethics of Educational Research*. East Sussex: The Falmer press.

Burke, K. (1969) *A Grammar of Motives.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

California's Class Size Reduction<http://www.wested.org/policy/pubs/full_text/class_size/sect4.htm>. Downloaded, 5th June 2007.

Cleave, S. Jowett, S. Bate, M. (1982) *And so to School: A Study of Continuity from Pre-school to Infant School.* Windsor, U.K.: NFER-Nelson.

Coffer, C. N. & Appley, M. H. (1964) *Motivation: Theory and Research.* New York: John Wiley.

Cole, M. & Scribner, S. (1978) Introduction. In: L. S. Vygotsky (Ed.), *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Process* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cole, M. (1996) *Cultural Psychology: A Once and Future Discipline.* Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Cole, M. (1997) Cultural Mechanism of Cognitive Development. In: Amsel, E & K. A. Renninger, (Eds) *Change and Development.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Crick, R. D. & Wilson, K. (2005) Being a Learner: A Virtue for the 21st Century. *British Journal of Educational Studies* 53: 3, 359-374.

Dancy, J. (1979) The Concept of the Ethos of a School, *Perspective 1.* University of Exeter.

Daniels, H. (1996) (Ed.) *An Introduction to Vygotsky.* London: Routledge.

Daniels, H. (2001) *Vygotsky and Pedagogy.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Davydov, V. V. (1988) Problems of Developmental Teaching: The Experience of Theoretical and Empirical Psychological Research. *Soviet Education* Part 1 30: 8, 15-97; Part II 30: 9, 3-38; Part III 30: 10, 3-77.

Davydov, V. V. (1999) Content and Unsolved Problems. In: Y. Engeström, R. Miettinen & R-L Punamäki (Eds.) *Perspectives on Activity Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

De Corte, E. (1990) Acquiring and Teaching Cognitive Skills: State of the Art of Theory and Research. In: P. J. D. Drenth, J. A. Sergeant, & R. J. Takens (Eds.) *European Perspectives in Psychology* (Vol.1) London: Wiley.

Denzin, N. K. (1994) The Art and Politics of Interpretation. In: Denzin, N.K. & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* London: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2000) Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In: N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *A Handbook of Qualitative Research.* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

DiPardo, A. & Potter, C. (2003) Beyond Cognition. In: A. Kozulin, B. Gindis, V. S. Ageyev & S. M. Miller (Eds.) *Vygotsky's Educational Theory in Cultural Context.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Díaz, R. M., Neal, C. J. & Amaya-William, M. (1990) Social Origins of Self-Regulation. In: L. C. Moll (Ed.) *Vygotsky and Education: Instructional Implications and Applications of Sociohistorical Psychology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Donnelly, C. (2000) In Pursuit of School Ethos, *British Journal of Educational Studies* 48: 2, 134-154.

Durant, W. (1953) *The Story of Philosophy*. New York: Pocket Books.

Eccles, J. S. & Wigfield, A. (2002) Motivational Beliefs, Values and Goals. In: *Annual Review of Psychology* 53: 109-133.

Eisenhart, M. A. & Howe, K. R. (1992) Validity in Educational Research. In: M. D. LeCompte, W. L. Millroy and J. Preissle, (Eds.) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*. San Diego: Academic Press, Inc.

Eisner, E. W. & Peshkin, A. (1990) Closing Comments on a Continuing Debate. In: E. W. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.) *Qualitative Inquiry in Education.* New York: Teachers' College Press.

Elkonin, D. B. (1971) Towards the Problem of Stages in the Mental Development of the Child. *Soviet Psychology* 10: 538-653.

Encyclopaedia Britannica DVD 2004.

Engeström, Y. (1987) *Learning by Expanding*. Helsinki: Oreinta-Konsultit, Oy.

Engeström, Y. (1993) Developmental Studies of Work as a Testbench of Activity Theory. In: S. Chaiklin, S. and J. Lave (Eds.) *Understanding Practice: Perspectives on Activity and Context* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp. 64-103).

Engeström, Y. (1999a) Activity Theory and Transformation. In: Y. Engeström, R. Miettinen & R-L Punamäki (Eds.) *Perspectives on Activity Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Engeström, Y. (1999b) *Changing Practice through Research: Changing Research through Practice.* Keynote Address at the 7th Annual International Conference on Post-Compulsory Education and Training. Griffith University, Australia.

Fetterman, D. M. (1984) *Ethnography in Educational Evaluation.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Fetterman, D. (1998) *Ethnography: Step by Step* (Vol. 17). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Fontana, A. & Frey, J.H. (2000) The Interview from Structured Questions to Negotiated Text. In: N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Ford, D. H. (1987) *Humans as Self-constructing Living Systems: A Developmental Perspective on Behaviour and Personality.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ford, M. E. (1992) *Motivating Humans: Goals, Emotions, and Personal Agency Beliefs.* London: Sage Publications.

Frolov, I. (1984) (Ed.) *Dictionary of Philosophy*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Gallimore, R. & Tharp R. (1990) Teaching Mind in Society: Teaching, Schooling and Literate Discourse. In: L. C. Moll (Ed.) *Vygotsky and Education: Instructional Implications and Applications of Sociohistorical Psychology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gamage, D & Lova, T. (2005) Sociocultural Influences and Current Trends in Teacher Education Programs in Australia. *Education and Society* 23: 1, 75-90.

Gardner, H. (1999) Assessment in Context. In: P. Murphy (Ed.) *Learners, Learning and Assessment*. London: Paul Chapman.

Geertz, C. (1973a) *The Interpretation of Cultures.* New York: Basic Books.

Geertz, C. (1973b) Thick description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In: C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected essays.* New York: Basic Books.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory.* Chicago, IL:Aldine.

Glick, J. (1983) Piaget, Vygotsky and Werner. In: S. Wapner & B. Kaplan (Eds.) *Towards a Holistic Developmental Psychology*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Glover, D. & Coleman, M. (2005) School Culture, Climate and Ethos: Interchangeable or Distinctive Concepts? *Journal of In-Service Education* 31: 2, 251-271.

Goetz, J. P. & LeCompte, M. D. (1984) *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Goodlad, J. (1984) *A Place Called School*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Grace, G. (2002) *Catholic Schools. Mission, Markets and Morality*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Griffin, P. & Cole, M. (1984) Currently Activity for the Future: The zoped. In: B. Rogoff & J.V. Wertsch (Eds.) *Children's Learning in Zone of Proximal Development.* San Francisco: Josey-Bass.

Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1981) *Effective Evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1995) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice.* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Harper, D. (2000) Reimagining Visual Methods. In: N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Hedegaard, M. (1988) Situated Learning and Cognition: Theoretical Learning of Cognition. *Mind, Culture and Activity* 5: 2, 114 -126.

Hedegaard, M. (1999) Activity Theory and History Teaching. In: Y. Engeström, R. Miettinen & R-L Punamäki (Eds.) *Perspectives on Activity Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hedegaard, M. (2001) Learning through Acting within Societal Traditions: Learning in Classrooms. In: M. Hedegaard (Ed.) *Learning in Classrooms*. Oakville: Aarhus University Press.

Hodder, I. (2000) The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture. In: N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Hoffman, M. L. (1970) Moral Development. In: P. H. Mussen (Ed.) *Carmichael's Handbook of Child Psychology* (Vol.2). New York: Wiley.

Horn, J. & Wilburn, D. (2005) The embodiment of Learning. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 37: 5, 745-760.

Hutchins, E. (1990) The Technology of Team Navigation. In: J. Galegher, R.E. Kraut, & C. Egido (Eds.) *Intellectual Teamwork: Social and Technological Foundation of Cooperative work.* Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Il'enkov, E. V. (1977) The Problems of the Ideal. *Philosophy in the USSR: Problems of Dialectical Materialism.* Moscow: Progress.

Jaki, P. O. (2006) *Grade 6 R.C. Texts, Debates and Discussions as Means of Learning Sociocultural Values*, DVD: Johannesburg.

Janesick, V. J. (1994) The Dance of Qualitative Research Design: Metaphor, Methodolatry, and Meaning. In: Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* London: Sage Publications.

Johnson, A. & Johnson, O. R. (1990) Quality into Quantity: On the Measurement Potential of Ethnographic Fieldnotes. In: R. Sanjek (Ed.) *Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

John-Steiner, V. & Mahn, H. (1996) Sociocultural Approaches to Learning and Development: A Vygotskian Framework. *Educational Psychologist* 31, 191-206.

Jpeg <http://www.faqs.org/faqs/jpeg-faq/part>. Downloaded, 14th February 2006.

Klaine, E. L., Kantor, R. & Fernie, D.E. (1988) What Do Young Children Know About School? *Young Children* (July) 32-39.

Klausmeier, H. J. (1990) Conceptualising. In: Jones, B. & Idol, L. (Eds.) *Dimensions of Thinking and Cognitive Instruction.* Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Kozulin, A. (1998) *Psychological Tools: A Sociocultural Approach to Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Kroeber, A. L. and Kluchkhohn, C. (1952) Culture: a Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions. *Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology* 47: 1.

Kuhl, J. & Beckmann, J. (1985) (Eds.) *Action Control: From Cognition to Behaviour.* Berlin: Springer Verlag.

Kuhn, T. S. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lantolf, J. P. & Pavlenko, A. (2001) Second Language Activity Theory: Understanding Second Language Learners as People. In: M. P. Breen (Ed.). *Learner Contributions to Language Learning. New Directions in Research* Harlow, England: Person Education.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lazarev, V. S. (2004) The Crisis of the "Activity Approach" in Psychology and Possible Ways to Overcome it. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology* 42: 3, 35-58.

LeCompte, M. D. & Preissle, J. (1993) *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research (*2nd ed.). New York: Academic Press.

Lee, C. D. & Smagorisky, P. (2000) (Eds.) *Vygotskian Perspectives on LiteracyRresearch: Constructing Meaning through Collaborative Inquiry.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lektorsky, V. A. (1984) *Subject, Object, Cognition*. Moscow: Progress.

Leont'ev, A. N. (1981) The Problems of Activity in Psychology. In: J. V. Wertsch (Ed.) *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology.* Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Leont'ev, D. A (2005) Three Facets of Meaning. *Journal of Russian and Eastern European Psychology* 43: 6, 45-75.

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry.* London: Sage Publications.

Lompscher, J. (1999) Activity Formation as an Alternative Strategy. In: Y. Engeström, R. Miettinen & R-J. Punamäki (Eds.) *Perspectives in Activity Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lonergan, B. J. F. (1957) *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. New York: Longmans.

Lovibond, S. (2002) *Ethical Formation.* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Macdonald, C. A. (2005) *Using Activity Theory to Examine the Concept of Sustainable Change: A Case study from South African Primary Education.* Paper Presented at ISCAR Conference: Seville, September.

Macdonald, C. (2006) Mediated Action in Three Literacy Context. *Theory and Psychology* 16: 1, 51-80.

Malinowski, B. (1922) *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guine*a. New York: E.P. Dutton.

Matusov, E. (1998) When Solo Activity is Not Privileged: Participation and Internalization Models of Development *Human Development* 41: 326-349.

Matusov, E. (1/Feb/2004) "Motives and goals" XMCA Email Discussions.

Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research: a Philosophic and Practical Guide.* London: Routledge & Falmer.

McDermott, R. P. (1993) The Acquisition of a Child by a Learning Disability. In: S. Chaiklin & J. Lave (Eds.) *Understanding Practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mead, G. H. (1934) Mind*, Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist.* Chicago*:* University of Chicago Press.

McLaughlin, T. (2005) The Educative Importance of Ethos. *British Journal of Educational Studies* 53: 3, 306-325.

Meece, J. L., Wigfiled, A. & Eccles, J.S. (1990) Predictors of Math Anxiety and its Influence on Young Adolescents, Course Enrolment Intentions and Performance in mathematics. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 82: 60-70.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=ethos&x=21&y=13/>. Downloaded, 26th November 2005.

Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods,* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Miller, R. (1987) Methodology: A Focus for Change. In: K. F. Mauer & A. I. Retief (Eds.) *Psychology in Context.* Pretoria: HSRC.

Moll, L. C. (1990) Introduction. In: L. C. Moll (Ed.) *Vygotsky and Education: Instructional Implications and Applications of Sociohistorical Psychology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Muhr, T. (2004) *Atlas.ti Version 5.0 User's Guide and Reference*. Berlin: Scientific Software Development (PDF file in the software).

Noddings, N. (1995) Care and Moral Education. In: W. Kohli (Ed.) *Critical Conversations in Philosophy of Education.* New York: Routledge.

Norman, D. A. (1988) *The Psychology of Everyday Things.* New York: Basic Books.

Oakeshott, M. (1990) Learning and Teaching. In: T. Fuller (Ed.) *The Voice of Liberal Learning. Michael Oakeshott on Education.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

O'Connor, L. (18-10-2006) 7-8 Year Olds Involve in Violence, *On 702 Radio Talk Show News Bulletin at 7:00 a.m.* Johannesburg: Prime Media.

Pervin, L. A. (1991) Self-regulation and the Problem of Volition. In: M. L. Maehr & P. R. Pintrich (Eds.) *Advances in Motivation and Achievement,* Greenwich, CT: JAI 7.

Pettit, G. A. (1946) *Primitive Education in North America.* University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 43: 1.

Piaget, J. (1962) The Relationship of Affectivity to Intelligence in the Mental Development of the Child. *Bulletin of Menninger Clinic* 26: 129-137.

Picas, R. (2004) *Educate with Mind and Heart.* Johannesburg: Sacred Heart College.

Ratner, C. (1991) *Vygotsky's Sociohistorical Psychology and its Contemporary Applications.* New York: Plenum.

Ratner, C. (2000) A Cultural-Psychological Analysis of Emotions. *Culture & Psychology* 6: 1, 5-39.

Reason, P. & Rowan, J. (1981) *Human Inquiry. A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research.* Chichester: Wiley.

Rist, R. C. (1973) *The Urban School: A Factory for Failure.* Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press.

Rogoff, B. (1981) Schooling and the Development of Cognitive Skills. In: H. C. Triandis & A. Heron (Eds.) *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Vol.4). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Rogoff, B. & Gardner, W. (1984) Adult Guidance of Cognitive Development. In: B. Rogoff & J. Lave (Eds.) *Everyday Cognition: Its Development in Social Context.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rogoff, B. (1990) *Apprenticeship in Thinking: Cognitive Development in Social Context.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Rosa, A. & Montero, I. (1990) The Historical Context of Vygotsky's Work: A Social Historical Approach. In: L. C. Moll (Ed.) *Vygotsky and Education: Instructional Implications and Applications of Sociohistorical Psychology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosen, M. (1991) Coming to Terms with the Field: Understanding and Doing Organisational Ethnography. *Journal of Management Studies* 28: 1-24.

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., Ouston J. & A., Smith (1979) *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Effects on Children*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Scribner, S. (1975) Situating the Experiment in Cross-cultural Research. In: K. F. Riegel and J. A. Meacham, (Eds.) *The Developing Individual in a Changing World: Historical and Cultural Issues.* The Hague: Mouton.

Serpell, R. (1993) *The Significance of Schooling: Life Journeys in an African Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shotter, J. (2006) Vygotsky and Consciousness as Con-scientia, as Witnessable Knowing along with others. *Theory & Psychology* 16: 1, 13-36.

Shweder R. A. & Levine, R. A. (1984) (Ed.) *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self And Emotion* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shweder, R. A. (1990) Cultural Psychology – What is it? In: J. W. Stigler, R. A. Shweder, and G. Herdt (Eds.) *Cultural Psychology: Essays on Comparative Human Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shweder, R. A. (1991) *Thinking through Cultures: Expeditions in Cultural Psychology.* Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press.

Solvason, C. (2005) Investigating Specialist School Ethos…or do you Mean Culture? *Educational Studies* 31: 1, 85-94.

Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory.* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stewart, A. (1998) *The Ethnographer's Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Strathern, M. (1992) Parts and Wholes: Refiguring Relationship in a Post-plural World. In: A. Kuper (Ed.) *Conceptualising Society*. London: Routledge.

Tappan, M. B. (1998) Sociocultural Psychology and Caring Pedagogy: Exploring Vygotsky's "Hidden Curriculum." *Educational Psychologists* 33: 1, 23-33.

Taylor, S.T. & Bogdan, R. (1984) *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: The Search for Meanings* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.

Tharp, R. G. & Gallimore, R. (1988) *Rousing Minds to Life: Teaching, Learning and Schooling in Social Context.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tharp, R. G. (1989) Psychological Variables and Constants. *American Psychologist* 44: 349-359.

The Jesuit Conference (2000) *What Makes a Jesuit High School Jesuit?* Chicago, IL: Loyola Press.

Thornton, R. (1988) The Rhetoric of Ethnographic Holism. *Cultural Anthropology* 3: 285-303.

Triangulation, Http://www.tele.sunyit.edu/traingulation.htm, Downloaded, 6th June 2007.

Van Maanen, J. (1988) *Tales of the field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Vavrus, F. (2005) Adjusting Inequalities: Education and Structural Adjustment Policies in Tanzania. *Harvard Educational Review* 75: 2, 174-201.

Vygotsky, L. C. (1962) *Thought and Language.* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) *Mind in Society.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1981) The Genesis of Higher Mental Functions. In: J. V. Wertsch (Ed.) *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology*. Armonk: Sharpe.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1986) *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, Ma: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1987a) *Thinking and Speech*. New York: Plenum.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1987b) Lecture 4: Emotions and Their Development in Childhood. In: R. Rieber & A. Carton (Eds.) *The Collected Works of L. S. Vygostky.* (N. Minick, Trans.) New York: Plenum Press (Vol. 1.).

Wade, C. and Tavris, C. (1987) *Psychology*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Wartofsky, M. (1979) *Models— Representation and Scientific Understanding.* Dordrecht and Boston: D. Reidel.

Weiner, B. (1990) History of Motivational Research in Education. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 82: 616-622.

Wentworth, W. M. **(**1980) *Context and Understanding*. New York: Elsevier.

Wells, G. (1999) *Dialogic Inquiry: Towards a Sociocultural Practice and Theory of Education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Werner, H. (1948) *Comparative Psychology of Mental Development*. Chicago: Follett.

Wertsch, J. (1981) The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology: An Introduction. In: J. Wertsch (Ed.) *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Wertsch, J. V. (1985) *Vygotsky and the Social Formation of Mind.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1991) *Voices of the Mind: A Socio-cultural Approach to Mediated Action,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1998) *Mind as Action.* New York: Oxford University Press.

William, K. (2000) Understanding Ethos – A Philosophical and Literary Exploration. In Furlong, C. and Monahan, L (Eds.) *School Culture and Ethos Cracking the Code.* Dublin: Marino Institute of Education.

White, L. A. (1959) The Concept of Culture. *American Anthropologist* 61: 227-251.

White, S. (1989) Foreword. In: D. Newman, P. Griffin, & M. Cole (Eds.) *The Construction Zone: Working for Cognitive Changes in School.* New York: Cambridge University Press (pp. ix-xiv).

Winell, M. (1987) Personal Goals: The Key to Self-direction in Adulthood. In: M. E. Ford & D.H. Ford (Eds.) *Humans as Self-constructing Living Systems: Putting the Framework to Work* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum *(pp. 261-287).*

Wolcott, H. F. (1980) How to Look like an Anthropologist without Really Being one. *Practicing Anthropology* 3: 2, 6-59.

Wolcott, H. F. (1990) *Writing Up Qualitative Research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Wolcott, H. F. (1992) Posturing in Qualitative Inquiry. In: M. D. LeCompte, W. L. Millroy, & J. Preissle (Eds.) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*. New York: Academic Press.

Wolcott, H. F. (1995) *The Art of Fieldwork.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.

Wolcott, H.F. (2001) *The Art of Fieldwork.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Zinchencko, V. P. (1985) Vygotsky's Ideas about Units of Analysis for the Analysis of Mind. In: J. V. Wertsch, (Ed.) *Culture, Communication and Cognition: Vygotskian Perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Zuckerman, G. (2003) The Learning Activity in the First Years of Schooling. In: A. Kozulin, B. Gindis, V. S. Ageyev & S. M. Miller (Eds.) *Vygotsky's Educational Theory in Cultural context.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sample Interview Questions

General Questions

1. "You are in Grade Six (Grade Five); next year you are going to Grade Seven (Grade Six) and the year after are to Grade Eight (Grade Seven). Tell me about your dreams."

2. "Why are these dreams important to you?"

3. "What do you think about your school? Why do you like it; why don't you like it? ".

4. "If you left this school, what values will say you have taken with you?"

5. "Why are these values important?"

6. " Your teachers speak of the values of honesty, service, responsibility and so forth during assembly. How are these important to you?"

7. "In the learning environment in the classroom how do you find your friends helping you?"

8. "Why do you value friendships?"

9. "You are leaving Grade Six at the end of the year, what memories will you carry with you?"

10. "As youth, you fall and fail many times, how do you: the learner, the class, the teachers and the school go about sorting out issues of disputes and discipline?"

11. "This school has pupils from different religions. How is that important to you?"

12. "During Religion Day, parents were invited to the function; was this important to you and why?"

13. "When you were preparing how did your parents play a part in the preparations? What questions did you ask you parents about religion?"

14. "After the function, what were some impressions you got and shared with your parents?"

15. "Apart from the fact that the parents came, what other effects do you see resulting from different parents coming together at school?"

16. "You have a Grandparents Day at school, why is this occasion important to you?"

17. "What would you say is a school spirit for you?"

18. "Tell me the importance of your teachers in your life as a learner."

On Learners Leadership Structures

19. "Tell me about your participation in leadership roles. What kind of learners' leadership structures do you have?"

20. "How do these committees function?"

21. "Now within the committee do you have a leader; how does it work?"

22. "What are the roles and responsibilities learners and teachers have to play?"

23. "What are your thoughts about leadership structures - committees?"

24. "Some of you wear badges. Let us talk about them?"

25. "When you play your role in a committee, how do you think this is helping you towards your aspiration to be a better citizen of this country?"

On Bullying

26. "How do you deal with issues of bullying at school?"

27. "If you bully what happens to you?"

28. "Why do learners bully?"

29. "In your view, is conscientising learner on bullying working?"

University of the Witwatersrand

School of Education

Informed Consent Sheet - Parents

I, Mr. Patrick Odwora Jaki, of the School of Education at the Witwatersrand University request your permission to allow your child to participate in the research project at Sacred Heart Primary School. My supervisor is Dr. Carol Macdonald.

The study involves describing how values, beliefs, motives and goals are factors of teaching and learning. To be able to accomplish this goal I need to observe as well as talk to your child in the school environment.

To the best of my knowledge, this study is risk free. However, should risks arise because of unforeseen circumstances; I will consult with the school authorities and all involved on the nature of the risk and how to resolve the problem.

The Society of Jesus and Mr. PO Jaki sponsor this study under the patronage of the University of the Witwatersrand. There are no pecuniary benefits received or given. However, we envisage a growth of academic knowledge, which we will gladly share.

The success of this study depends on your free consent and cooperation. I do request and hope that you will grant me the opportunity to carry out this study. However, as much as this study requires your kind cooperation, no one is obliged to participate. One may freely choose to participate or not to participate; no form of coercion, intimidation, or deceit will be used in persuading anyone to participate.

I pledge to be at the service of the school and all those who may be involved. I will answer any queries regarding this study, for this kind of transparency will dispel any doubts, misunderstanding or lack of information. In addition, I undertake to keep the identity of the children, teachers and the school anonymous. Further permission will be sought if any part of the study is published in a scholarly journal.

I, Prof. Dr. Mr., Mrs. Ms. ……
have permitted my son/daughter to participate in the research project.

Signature: ……

Date:……

Phone: 011-618-1390, Mobile: 072 507 1440, email: aummajaki@yahoo.co.uk

University of the Witwatersrand

School of Education

Informed Consent Sheet - Teachers

I, Mr. Patrick Odwora Jaki, of the School of Education at the Witwatersrand University request your permission to allow me interview you. My supervisor is Dr. Carol Macdonald.

The study involves describing how values, beliefs, motives and goals are factors of learning and teaching. To be able to accomplish this goal I need to interview you in the school environment.

To the best of my knowledge, this study is risk free. However, should risks arise because of unforeseen circumstances; I will consult with the school authorities and all involved on the nature of the risk and how to resolve the problem.

The Society of Jesus and Mr. PO Jaki sponsor this study under the patronage of the University of the Witwatersrand. There are no pecuniary benefits received or given. However, we envisage a growth of academic knowledge, which we will gladly share.

The success of this study depends on your free consent and cooperation. I do request and hope that you will grant me the opportunity to carry out this study. However, as much as this study requires your kind cooperation, no one is obliged to participate. One may freely choose to participate or not to participate; no form of coercion, intimidation, or deceit will be used in persuading anyone to participate.

I pledge to be at your service and the service of the school and all those who may be involved. I will answer any queries regarding this study, for this kind of transparency will dispel any doubts, misunderstanding or lack of information. In addition, I undertake to keep the identity of the children, teachers and the school anonymous. Further permission will be sought if any part of the study is published in a scholarly journal.

I, Mr., Mrs. Ms. ……
have accepted to be interviewed.

Signature:
……..

Date:……

Phone: 011-618-1390, Mobile: 072 507 1440, email: aummajaki@yahoo.co.uk.