

https://dspace.org/

Teachers' attitudes and (low achieving) learners' engagement in learning.

Buys, Estelle Priscilla

2015-05-08
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/17686

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

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

The copyright of this thesis vests in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, in accordance with the University's Intellectual Property Policy.

No portion of the text may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including analogue and digital media, without prior written permission from the university. Extracts of or quotations from this thesis may, however be made in terms of Section 12 and 13 of the South African Copyright Act No. 98 of 1978 (as amended), for non-commercial or educational purposes. Full acknowledgement must be made to the author and the University.

An electronic version of this thesis may be found via the library's online catalogue.

For permission requests, please contact the University Legal Office or the University Research Office (www.wits.ac.za).

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND (LOW ACHIEVING) LEARNERS' ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

ESTELLE PRISCILLA BUYS

A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Johannesburg
2013

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND (LOW ACHIEVING) LEARNERS' ENGAGEMENT IN THEIR LEARNING

ABSTRACT

Education has undergone much change in post-apartheid South Africa. New school policies and curricula are some of the changes that have impacted education in significant ways. An important consequence of all this is that classrooms have become more racially mixed and/or culturally diverse. Teachers have also had to adjust to the changes in their classrooms not only in pedagogic terms, but also in terms of perceptions of learners and more importantly, their attitudes towards learners. The study was conducted at three Co Ed schools in the Gauteng South district. The schools are all situated in Eldorado Park. The aim of the research was to investigate ways in which teachers' attitudes, as perceived by learners, affect learners' engagement in their own learning. A case study methodology within the qualitative paradigm was employed. Data was collected through learner focus group interviews. The main research question was: In what pedagogical ways, as perceived by high and low achieving learners, do teachers transmit attitudes of care, trust and expectations to learners. The findings indicated that there are differences in learners' perceptions and experiences of teachers' pedagogical ways, particularly with regard to low achieving learners. Moreover, the low achieving learners had significantly different, mainly negative, experiences of pedagogical ways. The study concluded that in order for learning to be facilitated, certain pedagogical means/ways are required to transmit attitudes of care, trust and expectations. This study suggests that there is room for further research in this field.

KEY WORDS .

Engaged Pedagogy

Pedagogical Ways

Pedagogic Dialogue

Attitudinal Quality

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

_____

Estelle Priscilla Buys

26 August 2013

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents who have sacrificed so much to give us, their children, a good education. Mom and dad, you have always encouraged me to follow and capture my dreams. Thank you for your encouragement, support and prayers. May God continue to bless you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the following people:

- Professor Yael Shalem – words cannot express my eternal gratitude to you. Thank you for your patience, encouragement and extraordinary guidance. You are an exceptional woman.

- My sister, Angela, for the constant encouragement and long distance motivational calls.

- Mrs. Nicolaou and the SMT at Mondeor High School, for their support and consideration.

- The Principals and educators of the three schools in Eldorado Park, thank you for allowing me to conduct my research at your schools. I wish you all the best for the future.

- And finally, my family: My husband, Alex, for all the support, love, patience, assistance and encouragement.

  My children: Adele, Bronwyn, Nadine and Kyle, for all your love and words of encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ……..iii

DECLARATION……...iv

DEDICATION……v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS……..vi

CHAPTER 1…...…….1

1.1 INTRODUCTION……1

CHAPTER 2……6

2.1 Literature Review……..……6

2.2 Warmth, Care and Empathy…….……..7

2.3 Trust and Respect……15

2.4 Teachers' High Expectations……..19

2.5 Dialogue……...……..25

2.5.1 The Relevance of Dialogue……27

2.5.2 Dialogue and Authority…….28

2.5.3 Approach to Knowledge……31

2.5.4 Approach to Social Relationships…….32

Conclusion……..33

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction……..35

3.2 Research Design……36

3.2.1 Case Study……..36
3.2.2 Validity……37

3.3 Sampling……..38

3.4 Instruments for Data Collection……40

3.4.1 Data Collection Procedure……..40

3.5 Data Analysis……..42

3.5.1 Themes and Sub-themes……..42

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction……45

Theme One: "Warmth, Care, Empathy"…… 46

4.1 Introduction…….……47

4.1.1 Reciprocal Active Engagement……47

School A: High Achievers
School A: Low Achievers**…… 48**
Summary of School A
School B: High Achievers**…… 49**
School B: Low Achievers
Summary of School B
School C: High Achievers**…….……50**
School C: Low Achievers
Summary of School C**……51**
Summary Across Schools
Table: Number of Utterances**…….……52**
Table: Utterances of Learners**…….……...53**
.

4.1.2 Show Warmth, Kindness While still Being Fair and Firm

Introduction…….……54

Introduction
School A: High Achievers
School A: Low Achievers**…….……....55**
Summary of School A**……..……57**

School B: High Achievers
School B: Low Achievers…….59
Summary of School B……..……..60
School C: High Achievers…….……61
School C: Low Achievers……...……62
Summary of School C……..……..65
Summary Across Schools
Table: Number of Utterances……..……...66
Table: Utterances of Learners…….67

4.1.3 Learners Valued as Individuals and Supported in Learning Goals

Introduction……..…….71

Introduction
School A: High Achievers
School A: Low Achievers……...72
Summary of School A…….73
School B: High Achievers……...73
School B: Low Achievers……74
Summary of School B…… 75
School C: High Achievers……...76
School C: Low Achievers……76
Summary of School C……. 77
Summary Across Schools……77
Table: Number of Utterances……...78
Table: Utterances of Learners……..79

Theme Two: "Trust and Respect"……81

4.2 Introduction…….81

4.2.1 Can Rely On The Teacher To Act In The Best Interest Of The Learner

School A: High Achievers……82
School A: Low Achievers
Summary of School A……..83
School B: High Achievers
School B: Low Achievers
Summary of School B…….....84
School C: High Achievers
School C: Low Achievers
Summary of School C……...85
Summary Across Schools
Table: Number of Utterances……...86

Table: Utterances of Learners……87

4.2.2 Create Secure, Safe Relationships and Learning Environments

Introduction……..88
School A: High Achievers
School A: Low Achievers……..89
Summary of School A…….....91
School B: High Achievers…….....92
School B: Low Achievers……...,…....93
Summary of School B…….....94
School C: High Achievers…….95
School C: Low Achievers……..96
Summary of School C…….....97
Summary Across Schools……..98
Table: Number of Utterances…….....99
Table: Utterances of Learners…….……....100

4.2.3 Maintain Mutual Regard/ Respect

Introduction…….103
School A: High Achievers
School A: Low Achievers.....104
School B: High Achievers……....105
School B: Low Achievers
Summary of School B
School C: High Achievers
School C: Low Achievers……106
Summary of School C
Summary Across Schools
Table: Number of Utterances……..107
Table: Utterances of Learners……..108

Teachers High Expectations

4.3 Introduction……..109

4.3.1 Effective Instructional Contact/Communication……..110

School A: High Achievers
School A: Low Achievers**…….111**
Summary of School A**……..112**
School B: High Achievers
School B: Low Achievers**…….113**
Summary of School B**…….....114**
School C: High Achievers**……114**
School C: Low Achievers**…… 115**
Summary of School C**……...116**
Summary Across Schools**…….... 117**
Table: Number of Utterances**……...118**
Table: Utterances of Learners**……...119**

4.3.2 Feedback About Performance……121

Introduction**…….121**
School A: High Achievers
School A: Low Achievers
Summary of School A**……..122**
School B: High Achievers
School B: Low Achievers
Summary of School B**……..122**
School C: High Achievers**.....123**
School C: Low Achievers
Summary of School C**……...123**
Summary Across Schools**……124**
Table: Number of Utterances**……124**
Table: Utterances of Learners**…….....125**

4.3.3 Opportunities To Respond and Ask Questions……..126

Introduction**……...126**
School A: High Achievers
School A: Low Achievers
Summary of School A**……128**
School B: High Achievers
School B: Low Achievers**……..129**
Summary of School B
School C: High Achievers
School C: Low Achievers
Summary of School C**……...130**
Summary Across Schools
Table: Number of Utterances**……131**
Table: Utterances of Learners**……131**
4.4 Summary …….133

Chapter 5: Discussion of data……..134

5.1 Busyness…….……135

5.1.2 Teachers' Pedagogical Ways and Attitudes…….138

5.2 Value……...139

5.2.1 Teachers' Pedagogical Ways and Attitudes……142

5.3 Opportunity……143

5.3.1 Teachers' Pedagogical Ways and Attitudes……145

5.4 Humiliation…….146

5.4.1 Teachers' Pedagogical Ways and Attitudes……147

5.5 Differences In Learner Perception……148

Chapter 6: Conclusion……...151

6.2 Limitations of Study……..153

6.3 Recommendations For Future Research……..153

References……...155

Appendices……..158

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule for Focus Group……..158

Appendix 2: Parental Consent Form……160

Appendix 3: Request For Permission to Conduct Research……...161

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Education has undergone much change in post-apartheid South Africa. New school policies and curricula are some of the changes that have impacted education in significant ways. An important consequence of all of this is that classrooms have become more racially mixed and/or culturally diverse. Teachers have also had to adjust to the changes in their classrooms not only in pedagogic terms, but also in terms of perceptions of learners and more importantly, their attitudes towards learners.

A large number of learners in "township" schools (where I have conducted my research and have taught for several years), come from impoverished communities where unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence and crime are rife. There is often a total breakdown of family life, communication and values. Having taught at two different "township" schools, my experience has been that at school, learners often appear disinterested in their schoolwork. In some cases learners are less committed to participating in lessons. They also appear less motivated to participate in some form of critical engagement during lessons. Instead, for various reasons, a number of learners prefer not to express opinions, ideas or their points of view when encouraged to do so. Instead, in most cases, they wait for the teachers to explain or provide answers.

International literature (Bruner,1972; Hargreaves & Fullan,1998; Collins, Harkin & Nind, 2002; Cornelius-White, 2007) shows that effective learning takes place within a particular kind of teacher-learner relationships and stresses the importance of creating safe and caring environments in which learners can be actively engaged in learning. The approach to learning as espoused by Carl Rogers (1951), emphasizes teacher empathy (understanding), unconditional positive regard (warmth), genuineness (self-awareness), non-directivity (student-initiated and student-regulated activities) and the encouragement of critical thinking, as opposed to traditional memory emphasis (Cornelius-White, 2007). Rogers (1969, cited in Cornelius-White, 2007,

p.114) holds that the facilitation of significant learning rests fundamentally upon "certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal relationships between the facilitator and the learner". Similarly Hargreaves & Fullan (1998) show that for many learners establishing relationships of respect and care is a necessary foundation for intellectual as well as social development. The authors contend that it is not always easy to care for all learners, especially when they show "an active disrespect for teachers", or a "sullen lack of interest" in the classroom. However, it is argued that change of standards, technology, curriculum or the introduction of new designs for schools need to be accompanied with good relationships between teachers and learners (Hargreaves & Fullan).

A qualitative study done by Poplin & Weeres (1994, cited in Cornelius-White, 2007), investigated the question "What is wrong with school"? Participants from four multi-ethnic districts in California were involved and every aspect of school life (students, teachers, cafeteria workers, security guards, parents and administrators) was examined. The number one problem was relationships. The authors wrote:

> Participants feel that the crisis inside schools is directly related to human relationships. Most often mentioned were relationships between teachers and students. Where positive things about schools were noted, they usually involve reports of individuals who care, listen, understand, respect others and are honest, open and sensitive. (p.12)

Also

> Students desire authentic relationships where they are trusted, given responsibility, spoken to honestly and warmly, and are treated with dignity. (p.20)

To this end Bruner (1972, cited in Collins et al, 2002), states that learning does not only depend on teachers' skills, but also on the type of social relationship between the learner and teacher within the school context.

This study is focused on three key constructs of "attitudinal qualities" that, are shown by the literature to facilitate learning within the context of nurturing relationships in a classroom setting. My aim is to investigate, through the perceptions of learners, to what extent teacher attitudes affect learner engagement in their learning. In South Africa, in the literature on school reform, there has generally been an under emphasis on the study of teacher attitudes, and how these may

effect learners' engagement in their own learning. The main argument of authors like Taylor & Prinsloo (2005) and Van der Berg (2006), is that accountability and management need to improve in order to create a school culture in which both teachers and learners engage productively with the learning process. Soudien (2007) looks at issues of culture at school and how this affects learner performance. Morrow (2007) argues that it is not "curriculum reform" or "notions of accountability" but teaching that should be placed at the centre of educational transformation in South Africa. Other studies have investigated teacher attitudes towards: the abolition of corporal punishment, the problems of integrated schools and inclusive education (Cicognani, 2004; Meier, 2002; Nel et al, 2011).

Although this study accepts the importance of a holistic approach, one which looks at both the socioeconomic and the school-related factors that may influence learning, its main emphasis is towards a description of what constitutes a web of teacher attitudes by looking at three constructs: "warmth, care, empathy", "trust and respect" and "teachers' high expectations". The aim of the study is to investigate the differences and similarities in learners' perceptions of teachers' attitudes, specifically how teachers' attitudes affect learners' engagement in their own learning. It is important to emphasize that the research is not focused on learner performance/achievement, but rather their perception of their engagement with learning, including their motivation, confidence and self-reflection in the course of their learning. The analysis of learners' perceptions will be followed by an unpacking of the pedagogical ways that according to the learners, teachers use to transmit attitudes of care, trust and high expectations.

The aim is thus to investigate ways which teachers' attitudes, as perceived by learners, affect learners' engagement in their own learning. The main research question is:

In what pedagogical ways, as perceived by high and low achieving learners, do teachers transmit attitudes of care, trust and expectations to learners?

The sub questions include:

1. What pedagogical ways are used by teachers to transmit care, trust and expectations to high achieving learners and to low achieving learners.

2. In what ways are these pedagogical ways, as reported by learners, different and in what ways are they similar?
3. In what ways low achieving and high achieving learners perceive pedagogical ways as motivating them or de-motivating them to learn?

Pedagogical ways of attitudinal qualities refer to teachers' verbal actions and teaching activities reported during learner interviews in this project – that, according to learners, indicate differential or equal treatment of high and low achievers (Good & Brophy, 1991).

A qualitative research design was selected for this project. The type of study employed was a case study involving 36 learners from three Co Ed secondary schools. 12 learners from each school were divided into two groups – high achieving and low achieving learners. The schools are all situated in Eldorado Park, where the learner population – consisting of black, coloured and a few Indian learners – share similar socioeconomic status, that is, learners come from poor, working class backgrounds and from communities with high levels of unemployment and crime. Data collection took place by means of learner focus group interviews.

The balance of this research report is organized as follows:

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of the literature and the theoretical framework that has informed this study. International and South African literature in the field of education is examined. Three key constructs of "attitudinal qualities" that may facilitate learning, are identified from the literature. The idea that effective learning takes place within a context of nurturing relationships with rich and open communication is explored. Engaged pedagogy is defined and discussed as an approach to teaching and learning. Pedagogic dialogue is presented as the framework underlying this approach to learning and teaching.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter provides an outline of the research design and sampling. The data collection procedure is explained and a detailed account is given of the data analysis process. The issue of validity is also addressed.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

This chapter presents the data, which are analyzed according to themes and sub-themes. The data is coded and categorized. The categories are used to sum up the views of the learners relating to their perceptions and experiences of the pedagogical ways used by teachers.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Data

In this chapter the data are discussed with reference to the research questions. Similarities and differences in the perceptions and experiences of learners with regard to teachers' pedagogical ways are documented and discussed.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This chapter summarises the study. The findings are presented and discussed. The limitations of the study are noted. Recommendations for further research are outlined. A reflection on the study is also presented.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Literature Review

One of the principles of good learning is that it takes place in the context of nurturing relationships and open communication. Collins, Harkins & Nind (2002) state that learners learn more effectively when they feel valued and secure, trust their teachers and both understand and accept the full range of classroom demands.

Fullan (2001) also makes the point that it is only when schooling operates in a way that connects learners relationally in a relevant, emerging and worthwhile experience that substantial learning will occur. The author states that:

> The more (that) accountability systems become focused only on cognitive achievement, the greater the gap will become between those students who are doing well and those who are not. This is because the main problem with disengaged students is that they lack a meaningful personal connection with teachers and others in school; in other words, they lack the motivational capacity to become engaged in learning. (p. 152)

The aim of the study is to investigate the differences and similarities in learners' perceptions of teachers' attitudes, specifically how teachers' attitudes affect learners' engagement in their own learning. Inter alia, "engagement" refers to learners' motivation and confidence and their ability to take risks in the process of learning.

The study examines the teachers' verbal actions and teaching activities – reported during learner interviews in this project – that, according to the learners, indicate differential or equal treatment of high and low achievers (Good & Brophy, 1991). "Verbal actions" may include how often and the ways in which the teachers: praise or criticize learners; ask questions; probe learners' perceptions, ideas, opinions; repeat questions; offer information; provide feedback. "Teaching activities" may include the ways and how much time the teachers devote to learners during lessons (opportunities-to-learn); how involved teachers are in tasks and instructional activities.

Drawing on the work of Burbules (1993), bell hooks(1994), Hargreaves & Fullan (1998), Collins, Harkins & Nind (2002), Moloi et al(2010) and others, three constructs of key "attitudinal qualities" are identified that may facilitate learning within the context of nurturing relationships in a classroom setting. These are "warmth, care and empathy"; "trust and respect"; and "teachers' high expectations". The next section examines these constructs and explores the relationship between them with the view to build up the construct of "teacher attitude".

2.2 Warmth, Care and Empathy

Collins and her colleagues (2002) report on two projects: the Quali-Teach and Communications Styles projects which were run in six European countries. The Quali-Teach project elicited the perceptions of effective teaching of 240 learners. Their ages ranged between 16 and 17 and they were on different educational programmes. The project was initiated to find out from young adults, in different countries, what characterized a "good teacher". It highlighted how important to effective education is the quality of the relationship between teachers and learners. The findings show that young adult learners share very similar views on what constitutes effective teaching. According to these learners, the principal factor in effective teaching is warmth – shown by for example, teachers knowing learners by name, having time for them outside of the programme and being patient when they do not understand (Collins et al, 2002). Some of the views of "good teaching" held by the learners include:

> Someone who'll let you be relaxed with, but can make it more enjoyable to learn rather than just stand at the front and write on the blackboard … treating you as an individual rather than just as a class. (Collins et al, p.80)

> Someone who(m) you can actually learn from … and also comes over not so authoritarian, more as fun … not too friendly. Someone who is not so detached from the students. (Collins et al, p.80)

These findings illustrate that learners learn best when they feel comfortable, "relaxed", with the teacher, lessons are interesting and there is reciprocal active engagement during lessons, ". . . making it more enjoyable to learn rather than stand at the front and writing on the blackboard".

Learners felt being treated as an individual "rather than just a class" was another characteristic of a "good teacher". Also, teachers who show warmth and kindness towards learners, while still being firm and fair "not so detached from the students". These are all aspects of "attitudinal qualities" of warmth, which according to this study, may enhance learning.

It has previously been stated that effective learning takes place within the context of warm, nurturing relationships. Richardson (1990, cited in Collins et al, 2002), identifies what he believes every learner (and indeed every teacher) requires, namely, to be noticed, to be attended to, to be valued, to be affirmed. It is out of this attention and affirmation that relationships grow and learners can develop the confidence to learn (and teachers to teach) (p.33). "Warmth" in education is not seen as a "touchy-feely" experience, nor is it the same as friendship or counselling. Instead it is about establishing a belief among learners that they are valued as individuals and supported in their learning goals.

> . . . what we say and how we listen to others are important, but so too are many non-verbal behaviours, which may include how much time we devote to others, how engaged we are in tasks and how committed we are. (Collins et al, p.158. Emphasis in the original)

The Communications Styles project, run by Joe Harkin (co-author with Collins & Nind, 2002), which set out to help foster more equitable relations between learners and teachers by providing a "wider repertoire" of language use in the classroom setting, found agreement between teachers and learners as to what constitutes effective teaching. Over one hundred teachers and learners, from eight different schools and colleges, took part in the project at various times, by completing a Communication Style questionnaire, and, more challengingly, having learners complete the questionnaire too. In this way, the authors argue, the perceptions of both teacher and learner were disclosed and the questionnaire "gave all participants a vocabulary to discuss the results" (p.100).

For each teacher who participated, there were different aspects of teaching and learning upon which to reflect. There were distinct patterns in both teacher and student views, and a great deal of fundamental agreement about the characteristics of good teaching (Collins et al., 2002). Both parties referred to achieving a balance between (teacher) "leadership" and "warmth".

> Warmth (It) . . . is closely bound up with the concept of "leadership" and a perception that a teacher understands the subject or learning content and its assessment and is able to shape learning to meet the needs of *these* individual learners. (Ibid. p.158)

Teachers need to design learning activities with a particular group of learners in mind while offering a suitable level of challenge and at the same time provide a climate wherein which the individuals feel valued and safe (Collins et al., 2002). Leadership carries with it elements of warmth as opposed to authoritarianism which can be exerted without positive regard. Warmth exhibits elements of leadership because if you really care about the welfare and development of learners, you will shape the learning experience to meet the needs of students (Ibid). Collins and her colleagues conclude that:

> Leadership translates into the setting of high standards, while warmth translates into understanding the students and giving them opportunities to become independent learners. (p.100)

The significance of both "warmth" and "leadership" in education, more specifically in the context of classroom interaction, is conducive to good learning. When learners feel that they are in "safe", dependable hands; that they are valued both in their role as learners and beyond, learning may be substantially enhanced. In addition, teachers who understand their subject and its assessment; have an optimistic view of learners as people who are capable of learning successfully; and are prepared to change tack, by for example, drawing on learner experience and interest; are all aspects of "warmth" and "leadership" that may enhance learning.

The Communications Styles project highlights the importance of quality relationships and the existence of rich communication between learners and teachers. The main ideas that emerge in this project are that through achieving a balance between (teacher) leadership and warmth, teachers give learners the opportunity to become independent learners. Moreover, listening to and engaging learner perspectives may further enhance learners' engagement in their own learning.

The authors argue that by allowing the learners *with* their teachers to, in bell hook's (1994) phrase, "talk back", may be potentially frightening for some teachers and threatening for institutions. "Talk back" in this context refers to engaging learners' on what constitute effective teaching and learning. Nevertheless, when asked for their opinions, learners, some of whom had also been labelled as having educational and behavioural difficulties, generally knew a great deal about effective teaching and learning, which may differ from the perceptions held by teachers and institutions. Listening to learners' voices may not be as threatening as may have been assumed, and it is possible for teachers and learners to be engaged in "genuine dialogue" to improve teaching and learning (Collins et al., 2002).

Collins et al (2002) show that achieving a balance between leadership and warmth is conducive to effective teaching. "Warmth" in a learning context is shown when a teacher, for example, knows learners by name; have time for learners outside the classroom; is patient, understanding; notice, attend to, value learners; provide learners with the opportunity to become critical thinkers. Leadership in the classroom context is shown when teachers set high standards for all learners, know their subject matter and are able to change tack when needed. The combination of warmth and leadership, in a classroom environment, contribute to what bell hooks (1994) refers to as "engaged pedagogy".

bell hooks (1994) shows that by using an interactive and holistic approach to teaching, the marginalized voice can be validated. She further states that teachers' work is not merely to share information, but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of learners:

> To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can deeply and intimately begin. (p.13)

hooks explains that for education to be the "practice of freedom", learners need to be active participants in the learning process – "to link awareness with practice" – rather than passively consume knowledge fed by the teacher. Drawing on the work of Paulo Freire, who declared that "education can only be liberatory when everyone claims knowledge as a field in which we all labour" (p.14), she sought to challenge, during her college years, the "banking system" of education, the approach that regard learners as "consumers of information" (hooks 1994, p. 15).

She subsequently used the term "engaged pedagogy" to describe teaching and learning where everyone's presence is acknowledged. Engaged pedagogy requires a flexible agenda, spontaneity, interaction and critical reflection. It emphasizes well-being. hooks is convinced that in teaching to empower learners, teachers have to be "actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being" (p. 15). The interaction should be mutually enriching for both learners and teachers, in that teachers, like learners, need to be open and take risks, if they too are to grow and be empowered by the process (hooks, 1994).

In South Africa, a study by Moloi et al (2010) attempted to investigate the educational effectiveness of three schools – despite their conditions of dire poverty – by probing the perceptions of their learners. The study reveals, amongst other things, the pedagogical ways used by teachers to show aspects of "attitudinal qualities" like warmth, care and empathy towards learners. Successful pedagogical dialogue was identified as one of the factors that contributed to the educational success of these schools (Moloi et al 2010). The authors refer to earlier studies (Creemers et al, 2002; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2009) that showed that the classroom level is more important than the school level in terms of the performance of the learner.
They further state that:

> In the final analysis, it is the quality of teacher-learner interactions that determines learner progress. (Creemers et al. 2002:292; cited in Moloi et al, p. 477)

Moloi and her colleagues point out that in South Africa a large proportion of schools are failing as institutions of learning and teaching (Johnson 2009 cited in Moloi et al, 2010). The authors state that what remains a cause of concern is that historically white schools are (still) effective while the majority of historically black schools are (still) ineffective (p. 475). Some historically black schools do however quite well in spite of circumstances such as abject poverty. The aim of their study was thus to investigate firstly, what these schools were doing right in terms of their educational effectiveness, and secondly, to explore the perceptions of *learners* when studying educational effectiveness.

Three schools, in the deep rural Mpumalanga, were identified that had managed to succeed academically in spite of the odds stacked against them: the community has a high unemployment

rate; the socio-economic status of the community is low; most of the learners interviewed were being financially assisted by teachers to buy uniforms; some came from single-parent households, while others were in child-headed households. Schools also had to cope with a high influx of learners from Mozambique which led to learners struggling with the medium of instruction. In addition, there was also a lack of basic learning and teaching resources, and the school was under-staffed (p.479).

An important finding of this study was that the success and effectiveness of these schools could be attributed to "their adherence to authentic pedagogic dialogue", an essential feature of authentic pedagogy (p. 481). The evidence suggests that learners and their teachers find themselves in a secure pedagogical relationship: one in which educator and learner are intrinsically connected to each other (p. 481). Learners spoke about the support, love, care that is shown, especially to orphaned learners, and how teachers made sure that they felt protected. Moreover, the inter-communication that exist between learner and teacher is indicative of firstly, the principle of "willing communicator and eager listener" and secondly, the principle of reciprocal engagement. One of the participants points out: "*Our teachers really listen to us, they don't look away and they don't interrupt us"*. Another adds: "*Because they (teachers) always listen to us, we really want to listen to them when they talk to us"* (p.482). The authors argue that it is this dialogue, this reciprocal act of listening and responding, that is fundamental to the academic success of these three schools (p. 482).

Other accounts given by participants of their interactions with their teachers, included:

"Mr.Ndlala often talks to the children".

" Mr.Ndlala, when you behave in an unbecoming manner, he counsels you".

"Orphans feel welcomed, loved and protected at our school".

"Our teachers always make sure us learners are protected".

The findings of both the Quali-Teach and Communications Styles projects suggest that learner perceptions of "good teachers" are similar to the perceptions of learners in the study conducted by Moloi and her colleagues. Teachers who show warmth, genuine care, who are able to listen to

learners, show affirmation and value learner contributions during lessons, are all factors that may enhance learning.

The findings of the research conducted by Moloi et al (2010) further show that the teachers and their students are mutually approachable, available, tolerant and devoted. Their interactions create and maintain "an atmosphere of nearness, belonging, genuine caring, transparent participation (co-operation/collaboration), mutual acceptance and selfless reciprocity" (p. 483). The learners, the authors contend, are guided, accompanied and equipped (by teachers and pedagogic dialogue) to strive continuously towards "exhibiting the image of authentic, independent thinkers and of an independent ability to judge, so that their being-guided by their teachers may gradually become redundant" (Ibid).

Learners' perceptions of teachers as warm and caring human beings may have a bearing on their commitment to learn. Teachers who show patience when learners do not understand; know learners by their name; who are able to balance warmth and (teacher) leadership, as opposed to authoritarianism; who make lessons enjoyable, but at the same time suitably challenging, may positively influence the learners' engagement in their learning. As stated earlier, learners learn more effectively when they feel valued and secure.

Rudduck, Day & Wallace (1997, cited in Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998) conducted a study during which they interviewed 800 learners from English secondary schools to find out which teachers were most likely to increase their commitment to learn. The teachers identified by learners were the ones who enjoy teaching students and particularly enjoy teaching their subject; who make lessons interesting and link lessons to learners' lives outside of school. Also, teachers who will have a laugh, but know how to keep order; are fair, easy to talk to and do not go on about things (e.g. How much better an older brother or sister was). Learners also identified teachers who do not humiliate, belittle or give up on learners when they fail to understand things, as those who have a positive influence on their commitment to learn.

The above study again reaffirms what previous studies have revealed: learners' learning is enhanced when it takes place within a context of nurturing relationships and open communication. Effective learning is positively influenced by good teacher-learner relationships, one that is rooted in authentic pedagogic dialogue. The basis for these relationships is found in "empathy", which may be defined as showing concern for others.

Goleman (1996) defines empathy as "understanding others' feelings and concerns and taking their perspectives –appreciating the differences in how people feel about things". Empathy may also be regarded as the ability to understand another's anger, share their joy or feel their sorrow. When these abilities are established in early childhood, they lay the foundations for a strong sense of social justice in adolescence and childhood (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). In educational settings, if learners are invited into an authentic, warm relationship, through which trust is built, then empathy – teacher for learner – and equally important, learner for teacher – will be established (Collins et al, 2002). It is essential for teachers to seek and value the perspectives of and build relationships with, learners. As mentioned, empathy is the basis for relationships and through these relationships, learners develop a deeper sense and meaning of their learning.

The collection of studies illustrates that an active and interactive approach to learning and teaching is required that may contribute to both the intellectual and spiritual growth of learners. Engaged pedagogy, consisting of a balance between leadership and warmth, has been shown to enhance learners' engagement in their learning. The findings of the Communications Style project, demonstrated the importance of firstly, an active participation in learning, and secondly, the importance of rich communication in a learning environment. In this regard, pedagogic dialogue – which is characterized by elements like opportunities-to-learn, motivation, support, care, trust – was identified as one of the factors that contributed to educational effectiveness in schools.

The next section examines the construct "trust and respect" and explores how these "attitudinal qualities" may facilitate learners' engagement within the context of nurturing relationships in a classroom setting.

2.3 Trust and Respect

Good teaching and learning starts with the construction of trusting relationships and works continually to build on the foundation of trust (Noddings, 1992). A study conducted by Hoy (2002, cited in Hoy et al, 2006), examined the trust-achievement hypothesis in high schools. Based on the findings, Hoy was able to theorize that trusting others is a fundamental aspect of human learning because learning is typically a co-operative process, and distrust makes co-operation virtually impossible.

Hoy et al (2006) define trust as "one's vulnerability to another in terms of the belief that the other will act in one's best interest". Trust involves the belief that you can rely on someone or something where there is an element of risk. It also involves a feeling, a commitment that underlies and strengthens the belief that one can depend on another's goodwill (White, 1990. cited in Burbules, 1993, p.37). A degree of effort usually needs to be made initially in a relationship based on trust, in order "to create a context of feeling and commitment in which both parties feel safe to offer up their beliefs and the experiences or feelings that accompany them" (White, 1990. cited in Burbules, 1993, p.37).

Relational trust and co-operation among students and teachers play a significant role in the improvement of teaching and learning. What is important is to identify the elements of "trust", and the ways in which these are mediated in a classroom setting, as well as to what extent they enhance learners' engagement in their learning.

The South African study conducted by Moloi and her colleagues (referred to earlier, 2010), that investigated the educational effectiveness of three schools, in spite of their conditions of dire poverty, revealed among other things, the existence of trusting relationships between teachers and learners. Learners could rely on teachers to act in their best interest. One participant said:
"The principal assists us to apply for (sic) higher institutions. She brings us application forms and assists us with bursaries. She is the cornerstone".

Another added: “The teachers wish the best for us. They are lovely people. Ma’am Ngoleni (deputy principal) and the principal have adopted children who stay far away from school”.

Moloi and her colleagues identified trust as one of the themes that emerged from their coding process. Evidence from the research project suggested that relational trust was a prominent feature in the relationships between the learners and teachers of these schools. Based on the findings, the researchers were able to theorize that

> (Our) . . . analysis of the data seem to point to the conclusion that all eleven themes (onticities) – trust being among them – can be ontologically traced to the phenomenological essence of pedagogical dialogue *per se*. Several of the participants referred specifically to pedagogical dialogue. (p. 481)

One participant said: “Mr.Ndlala, when you behave in an unbecoming manner, he counsels you”. Another response from the same school was: “Mr.Ndlala often speaks to the children”.

Moloi et al (2010) point out that relational trust coupled with successful pedagogic dialogue may be attributed to the educational success of these schools. The authors state that the evidence suggests that “the learners and teachers find themselves in a secure pedagogical relationship, one in which educator and learner are intrinsically connected to each other” (p. 481).

It can be stated that trust is one of the conditions for successful pedagogic dialogue to take place. Learners, in a classroom context, should feel that they can rely or depend on their teachers, to act in their best interests. Pedagogic dialogue requires that a significant measure of trust exists in the learner-teacher relationship.

Good learning is both active and interactive. In order for effective learning to take place, learners need to be actively engaged in the learning process. bell hooks (1994) used the term “engaged pedagogy” to describe teaching and learning where everyone’s presence is acknowledged. Engaged pedagogy requires interaction and more importantly critical reflection, and this may be achieved by engaging learners in successful pedagogic dialogue. It entails a particular kind of relationship and interaction. From this perspective, the dialogic relation is not just a form of

communication based on questions and answers, but "at heart a kind of social relation that engages its participants" (Burbules, 1993, p. 19). Dialogue requires listening, a genuine respect for the partner in dialogue, and a mutual commitment to inform, learn and make decisions (Noddings, 2006, p.80). Trust and respect are among the virtues that are fundamental to dialogue, a concept that will be discussed later.

In the same vein, Meier (2002) draws our attention to the educational value of trust. She argues that for children to become "thoughtful, responsible and intellectually accomplished adults", they need to be in the company of adults "who exercise these qualities" (p. 31). She further asserts that the "key building block" of such a relationship is trust. The more complex the learning, the more children need genuine adult company, and the more trusted adults must be (p.13).

Similarly, a 3-year longitudinal study in 12 Chicago elementary schools, conducted by Bryk & Schneider (2002, cited in Hoy et al, 2006), shows that relational trust is a prime source of school improvement. Their study shows that trust and co-operation among students and teachers influenced regular student attendance, persistent learning and faculty experimentation with new practices (p. 430). The authors concluded that trust among teachers, students (and parents) produced schools that showed marked gains in student learning whereas schools with weak trust relationships showed virtually no improvement (Bryk & Schneider 2002 cited in Hoy et al, 2006).

The above studies indicate that trust is fundamental to learning and teaching. The creation of secure, trusting relationships and learning environments are factors that may enhance learning. Learning is typically a co-operative process that is positively influenced by trusting relationships. Moreover, aspects of schooling like regular student attendance, persistent learning and experimentation with new practices are markedly increased where relational trust exists. As "trust and respect" are inter-related, I will now move on to discuss "respect" and how this "attitudinal quality" may enhance learners' engagement in their learning.

One of the findings of the Quali-teach project, referred to earlier, which set out to probe the perceptions of learners regarding "good teaching", was that learners wish to be respected by their

teachers, and given emotional as well as cognitive support to learn. The learners were of the opinion, for example, that they expect teachers to explain work clearly, but they also "value the friendship of teachers – not as equals or buddies – but as fellow human beings with whom they find mutual regards and shared interest" (Collins et al, 2002, p. 80). A view expressed by one learner was:

> Someone who is able to mix a lesson with letting us learn stuff but at the same time not doing so in a patronizing way . . . you've got to respect them but at the same time they've got to respect you, you've got to be able to talk to them, not necessarily about the subject but outside the lesson . . . (Collins et al, p.80)

Benhabib (1989, cited in Burbules), argues that respect, particularly with regard to the dialogical relation, or classroom reciprocity, is more important than equality or sameness, in maintaining an "egalitarian reciprocity" among participants. People will not always know the same things or the same amount, nor will they always agree with one another. In these instances respect for one another can sustain the relation even in the face of sharp differences in knowledge, values or beliefs. Respecting one's partner, within the context of a dialogue, and more importantly, respecting oneself, Burbules argues, are the conditions that make dialogue worthwhile. While there may be differences between partners in conversation, the process can go on if there is mutual regard. It involves a commitment to being fair-minded, opposing degradation and rejecting exploitation (Burbules, 1993).

The literature illustrates the following elements that are important in relation to the "attitudinal qualities" of trust and respect: relationships characterized by benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty and openness; creating safe and trusting learning environments; showing mutual respect; and maintaining reciprocity. These aspects, it has been shown, positively affects learner-teacher relationships and may enhance learners' engagement in learning.

The study conducted by Collins et al (2002), showed that both teachers and learners agreed that achieving a balance between (teacher) "leadership" and "warmth" was one of the characteristics of good teaching. In this regard, "leadership" entails the setting of high standards for all learners

in spite of their level of achievement. When teachers have an optimistic view of learners who are capable of learning successfully, and they are able to communicate it effectively to learners, it may enhance learners' engagement in their learning.

In the next section, teachers' high expectations are examined.

2.4 Teachers' High Expectations

Teacher expectations are inferences that teachers make about the future behaviour or academic achievement of learners, based on what they currently know about these learners (Good & Brophy, 1991). Teacher expectation *effects* are effects on student outcomes that occur because of the actions that teachers take in response to their expectations (p. 110). Research suggests that when teachers set high expectations for every student from the start, students gain independence and confidence with each goal they meet. Setting high expectations raises students' motivation, self-perception, confidence and achievement (Anderson, 2005). When a student gains intrapersonal motivation s/he may become an independent thinker who is more self-motivated to succeed without outside encouragements or consequences (Anderson, 2005). Moreover, the author argues that, teacher expectations have an effect on learner outcomes – which include school achievement, positive attitudes towards school, interest in learning – because of the actions that teachers take in response to their expectations.

It has been found that teachers form contrasting expectations for different learners and that they communicate these contrasting expectations by treating learners differently (Good & Brophy, 1991).

Researchers (Cooper & Good, 1983 cited in Good & Brophy, 1991) have identified two types of teacher expectation effects, namely, "self-fulfilling prophecy effects" and "sustaining expectation effects". The self-fulfilling prophecy effect is created when an originally erroneous expectation leads to behaviour that causes the expectation to become true. In addition, the self-fulfilling prophecy effects can be either positive or negative. Robert Rosenthal and Leonore

Jacobson's *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (1968, cited in Good & Brophy, 1991), draws much attention (and controversy) to self-fulfilling prophecies. Their book describes research in which teachers' expectations for learners' achievement were manipulated, by supplying teachers with false information about the participating learners, to see if these expectations would be fulfilled. Teachers were led to believe that, based on the results of supposedly specially developed tests, the learners were about to "bloom intellectually" and could therefore be expected to show unusually good progress during that coming year. In reality, the learners were randomly selected rather than on the basis of test scores, and there was thus no reason to expect any unusual achievement gains. However, the "bloomers" showed an improvement in test scores at the end of that year. Rosenthal and Jacobson interpreted these results in terms of the self-fulfilling prophecy effect of the teachers' expectations. They argued that as a result of the expectations they had created, teachers had treated the "bloomers" differently which subsequently led to the learners' unusually high achievement gains that year (Good & Brophy, 1991). The reaction to this conclusion was one of initial enthusiasm. Critics however, later began to attack the study and an attempt at replication failed to produce the same results. In their efforts to do related studies, Good & Brophy (1991) report that attention shifted from the original study as researchers attempted to make sense of the growing literature on teacher expectations and related topics. Moreover, the authors contend that there is widespread agreement that teacher expectations can affect teacher-learner interaction and student outcomes and more importantly, that the processes involved are much more complex than originally thought (Good & Brophy, 1991).

The second type of teacher expectation, according to Cooper & Good (1983) is the sustaining expectation effect. In this regard, teachers expect students to sustain previously developed patterns, to the point that they take these patterns for granted and fail to see and/or capitalize on changes in learner potential. In an earlier study conducted by Brophy and Good (1970, cited in Good & Brophy, 1991), the classroom behaviour of four first-grade teachers towards high- and low-achieving learners, were studied. Only minor differences in the frequency of teacher contact between these groups were noted, but important variations in the quality, were identified. It was found that when high achievers gave a right answer, they were praised 12 percent of the time, while low achievers were only praised 6 percent of the time. Even though low achievers gave fewer correct answers, they received proportionately less praise. Low achievers were however

more likely to be criticized for wrong answers (18 percent of the time compared to 6 percent for high achievers). In addition, teachers tended to pay more attention to high achievers (in terms of repeating a question, providing a clue or asking a new question) when they failed to respond (or said "I don't know", or answered incorrectly).

Research (Cooper & Good, 1983; Brophy & Good, 1974 cited in Good & Brophy, 1991), however shows that not all teachers behave differently towards high and low achievers. It is argued that:

> teachers vary widely in the extent to which they are influenced by their expectations and treat low achievers inappropriately. Many teachers develop appropriate expectations for low achievers and treat them fairly . . . many others, however, especially those who are unaware of their behaviour, favour high achievers. (p. 28)

Various studies cited in Good & Brophy (1973), have indicated that the *quantity* and *quality* of teacher-learner interaction at classroom level may vary according to the achievement levels of different learners.

Mendoza, Good & Brophy (1972) and Horn (1974, both cited in Good & Brophy, 1973), have reported that high-achieving students in secondary schools receive more response opportunities than low-achieving students. Jones (1971, cited in Good & Brophy, 1973) who studied high-achieving students in secondary schools, also reported that high-achieving students received more teacher questions than did low-achieving students.

In addition to the frequency of teacher contacts, differences also exist in the quality of teacher-student interactions in relation to the achievement level of the student. Row (1969, cited in Good & Brophy, 1973) reports that teachers waited significantly longer for more capable students than for students who were less capable, before giving the answer or calling on another student. Also less capable students had to respond more quickly to avoid losing their turn (Row 1969, cited in Good & Brophy, 1973). "Quality" in the above studies refers to "the way in which the teacher interacts with the student" – what type of question is asked, a difficult or simple one? How long

does the teacher wait for the learners' response? Does the teacher probe for more information or give the answer?

Both of the above studies illustrate how teachers treat high-achieving students in ways that are likely to "insure" their continued success, while treating low-achieving students in ways that are likely to slow their progress even further (Good & Brophy, 1973). The authors show that achievement is not simply a matter of the child's ability, but that teacher expectations are also involved.

The significance of how teachers form their expectations cannot be overlooked, although the focus of this project is on how teachers communicate these expectations to their learners and how these may enhance learners' engagement with their learning. According to Brophy & Good (1970, cited in Good & Brophy, 1991), teachers form differential achievement expectations for different learners at the beginning of the school year. Various studies cited in Good & Brophy (1991), which have investigated the nature of the information that teachers use to form these expectations and the degree of accuracy of this information, have found that firstly, teachers will not accept "false" information if it contradicts reliable information they might have from, for example, test scores, assignments or interaction with their learners. Secondly, although evidence of teacher bias with regard to physical or other status characteristics have occasionally been reported, most teachers' perceptions of learners are generally accurate, and thirdly, where inaccuracies exist, most of these will be corrected when more dependable information becomes available. The possibility for self-fulfilling prophecy effects are thus limited, whereas sustaining expectation effects are more likely to occur.

Davenport & Anderson (2002), in their book, *Closing the Achievement Gap: No Excuses,* narrate the increases in student achievement that occurred in the Brazenport Independent School District in Texas during the 1990's. The authors state that the cornerstone of the Effective Schools philosophy was the belief that they could teach *all* students. Teachers questioned their beliefs and behaviours with regard to expectations: how were they communicating high/low expectations; were their expectations different for high, average and low achievers? Teachers began to examine the subtleties of body language and classroom questioning. To this extent the

Teacher Expectation and Student Achievement programme (TESA, cited in Davenport & Anderson, 2002) helped sensitize teachers to harmful practices that they had been engaged in when interacting with students, e.g. when questioning students who could not give a right answer and not giving them enough time or coaching, to get to the correct answer. The programme also taught teachers how to convey high expectations to every child who walks into the classroom. The research, the authors concede, is overwhelming: "if you believe students can learn and if you set high goals, they will respond accordingly". Moreover, it was shown that teachers should have consistent high expectations.

In a report, supported by 46 documents which offer research evidence about the relationship between expectations and student outcomes (achievement, IQ scores and attitudes), Cotton (1989) argues that, merely holding expectations for learners has no "magical power" that will affect their performance or attitudes. It is the translation of these expectations into behaviour that influences outcomes. She further shows that the most important finding to emerge from this investigation is that teacher expectations can affect students' achievement and attitudes. The aim of the report was to identity the "crucial components in effective schools", and it shows that most of the studies list high expectations for learners among the essential elements of such schools. Other related factors include strong administrative leadership, a safe and orderly environment and frequent monitoring of student progress (Cotton, 1989). Low-achieving schools were found to lack several of the aforementioned elements. Also, staff members in these schools generally see learners as being quite limited in their learning ability and do not consider it their responsibility to raise those learners' academic performance. Moreover, low achievement levels are usually attributed to learner characteristics rather than to the school's managerial and instructional practices (Cotton, 1989).

In reviewing the research on "mediators of teacher expectation effects", Rosenthal (1974, cited in Good & Brophy, 1991), identified four general factors. Focusing on positive self-fulfilling prophecy effects, he suggested that teachers will maximize learner achievements if they: firstly, create warm social-emotional relationships with their learners; secondly, give them more feedback about their performance; thirdly, teach them more (and more difficult) material; and fourthly, give them more opportunities to respond and ask more questions (p. 122). Although the

authors regard Rosenthal's summary as useful, they argue that a more comprehensive list (cited below) of "potential mediating mechanisms" is required. This is needed so that teachers and teacher educators can use the more detailed list as a basis for observation in classrooms. It may also be used to reinforce positive expectation effects by placing an emphasis on ways that teachers minimize the learning progress of low-expectation learners through negative or undesirable expectation effects; and, so that teachers are presented with a variety of more subtle ways of communicating their expectations, rather than the more direct forms of communication proposed by the Rosenthal model (Good & Brophy, 1991).

Much can be done, based on the findings of the report (Cotton, 1989), to improve the ways teachers form and communicate expectations, especially to learners they perceive as having limited potential. Some of the recommendations listed, include: the use of heterogeneous grouping and cooperative learning activities whenever possible; concentrating on extending warmth, friendliness and encouragement to all learners: feedback should be given in terms of useful information as opposed to evaluation of success or failure, also, emphasis should be placed on continuous progress in relation to prior work rather than on comparisons to required norms or to other individuals; when learners do not understand an explanation or demonstration, after a diagnosis of the problem, the task should be broken down or retaught in a different manner, rather than repeating the same instruction or giving up (Cotton, 1989).

The literature demonstrates the importance of the teacher expectations, more specifically, teachers' high expectations. What is crucial though is the translation of teachers' high expectations into behaviour that will positively influence teacher-learner interactions as well as learner outcomes. Some of the studies showed that teachers form contrasting expectations for different learners. High-achieving and low-achieving learners are treated differently by teachers.

The three main constructs identified in the literature, namely:"warmth, care and empathy", "trust and respect" and "teachers' high expectations" (with their specific indicators) build up the main conditions for a mode of pedagogy, namely, engaged pedagogy, in which the main form of interaction is dialogue. Dialogue is thus a form, a framework or an educational approach that

places all the ideas of the three constructs into a unified pedagogy, i.e. dialogue is a frame that combines the key ideas of the key constructs and enable them pedagogically.

2.5 Dialogue

bell hooks (1994) uses the term "engaged pedagogy" to describe teaching and learning where everyone's presence is acknowledged. This form of pedagogic practice requires a critical awareness and approach of both learners and teachers to be active participants in the classroom context (p.14). Moreover, the approach to learning is rooted in the idea that for education to be "the practice of freedom", learners need to be critical investigators – who question and analyze their knowledge and understanding, and the learning process. Progressive, holistic education, "engaged pedagogy" views good learning as interactive, with active, collaborative problem-solving and engagement (hooks, 1994; Collins et al, 2002). At the heart of this approach to learning, is the engagement of learners in successful pedagogic dialogue: a mode of pedagogic engagement that is best able to promote learning, autonomy and an understanding of one's self in relation to others (Burbules, 2000).

The concept of dialogue has long been prevalent in Western views of education. A range of pedagogical approaches, from constructivist scaffolding to Socratic instruction to Freirean liberatory pedagogy, all point to the significance of an interactive engagement of questions and answers in the shared pursuit of knowledge and understanding (Burbules, 2000). More importantly, the aim of teaching with and through dialogue, it is widely assumed, serves democracy, promotes communication across difference, and enables the active co-construction of new knowledge and understanding (Burbules, 2000, p. 1). Burbules states that:

> Dialogue represents, to one view or another, a way of reconciling differences; a means of promoting empathy and understanding for others; a mode of collaborative enquiry; a method of critically comparing and testing alternative hypotheses; a form of constructive teaching and learning; a forum for the deliberation and negotiation about public policy differences; a therapeutic engagement of self- and other-exploration; and a basis for shaping uncoerced social and political concensus. (p. 2)

Dialogue is an activity or mode of communication that may serve a multitude of purposes in the social, political and educational sphere. Through dialogue, differences can be addressed though not necessarily to reach consensus, but rather to engage social and political issues in a civil, non-violent manner. It enables communities to empathize with and/or understand one another irrespective of difference. Politically, it is a means of communication that addresses differences of opinion on a range of issues, in a constructive, uplifting manner. In schools, dialogue is an enabler at all levels, more especially at the classroom level. Teachers engage learners in meaningful instructional activities that allow active participation of both learners and teachers.

Burbules contends that the ideal of "dialogue expresses a hope in the possibility of open, respectful, critical engagements from which we can learn about others, about the world, and about ourselves" (Burbules, 1993). The status of dialogue – as a source of knowledge and understanding, as a medium for interpersonal discourse and as a pedagogical relation – has long been the central topic of both interest and dispute (Burbules, 1993).

Burbules (1993) sees dialogue as a pedagogical communicative relation: a conversational interaction directed intentionally towards teaching and learning. It is "an activity directed towards discovery and new understanding" aimed at improving the "knowledge, insight or sensitivity of its participants" (p.8).

In *Dialogue in Teaching*, Burbules (1993), suggests an approach to dialogue that:

> … challenges hierarchies and traditional conceptions of teacher authority; that is tolerant and supportive of diversity; that does not rely on teleological presumptions of right answers and final truths; that does not rest on isolated individual efforts, but on mutual and reciprocal communicative relations; and that keeps the conversation open, both in the sense of open-endedness and in the sense of inviting a range of voices and styles of communication within it. (p.7)

Burbules' conception of dialogue foregrounds three aspects: authority, knowledge and social relationships. His approach to dialogue can be examined with reference to these three aspects of his conception of dialogue: his approach to authority; his approach to knowledge; and his approach to social relationships. The following discussion elaborates on each of these.

2.5.1 The Relevance of Dialogue

Open communication is essential in a society built on democratic principles. Dewey (1916, cited in Burbules 1993) states that an important feature of a democracy is its social organization based on equality, respect and public discourse. He strongly argues in favour of open communication, within and across social groups in a democracy, about issues of common concern. The fabric of society, Dewey believes, is strengthened where the opportunity exists for the discussion of a variety of concerns, within the public domain. Such discussions create the possibilities for "the establishment of relations of negotiations, co-operation, mutual tolerance, the pursuit of common interests (where they exist), and the nonviolent resolution of conflicts" (p.13). Such an ideal is especially desirable within the present context of cultural diversity and in situations where "certain traditional categories of unification (such as national identity)" have begun to break down (Burbules, 1993).

Education is inherently a political undertaking. Burbules argues that no account of education can legitimately claim to be entirely separate from political assumptions and commitments (p.18). What is needed is an identification and critical examination of the "power relations and ideological barriers" that undermine dialogical possibilities in schools and in society generally. He proposes an account of dialogue that explicitly involves and enables all people as participants in a democratic society. Moreover, he declares that educational institutions "seriously flawed as they are, still constitute one potential starting point for fostering and reinvigorating that dialogue" (Burbules, 1993).

2.5.2 Dialogue and Authority

Burbules (1993) argues that critical engagement around the issues of authority between students and teachers should not be inhibited. Many feminist authors have questioned whether "there is any conception of legitimate authority that is compatible with the spirit of egalitarian teaching and learning"(Friedman, 1985; cited in Burbules, 1993, p.31). The author also cites Ellsworth (1989) who further raises issues related to authority in education: firstly, she questions the concept of "emancipatory authority" that legitimizes the special role and status a teacher may have within critical pedagogy; and secondly, she argues that teacher authority is based in an

institutional history and social context that ascribe privileges and status to the teacher to which s/he may not be entitled. Burbules points out that although the teacher, in some instances, may not desire these, it is the *presumption* of authority, and the privileges and status that go with it, that should be avoided, even though that authority is justified on the basis of special knowledge, experience or expertise (p. 32).

Burbules admits that in every educational endeavour – no matter how hard we strive for egalitarian communicative relations – some sort of authority is unavoidable. Moreover, authority is not necessarily a threat to such egalitarian relations:

> We often seek information from a better-informed source, advice from an experienced mentor, insight from a friend who knows us well, direction from a group facilitator and so on. These are all instances of authority. (p. 32)

What needs to be guarded against, the author argues, is that credible authority be taken for granted. Even though this authority may be "periodically scrutinized and re-established", (p.32) this scrutiny cannot take place continuously. Furthermore, such authority will, at particular moments, become "an unstated element within the dialogical relation" (Burbules, 1993). The issue of authority, Burbules suggests, may critically be examined by posing the question: What *types* of educational authority are justified?

The justification of authority, on the basis of institutional roles and privileges or on the basis of unexamined assumptions about "expertise" are problematic criteria for authority. Burbules thus proposes that thinking about dialogue relationally, may provide useful criteria for evaluating authority (p. 32).From this perspective, Burbules argues that firstly, authority can have legitimacy when it emanates from an ongoing communicative interchange that acknowledges differences in knowledge, experience or ability without reifying them (p. 34). The fact that participants are unequal in terms of knowledge, experience or intelligence should not be an impediment to dialogue. Burbules states that:

> While a broadly egalitarian commitment and mutual respect ought to frame our pedagogical outlook, these should not obscure the ways in which participants clearly

> stand to benefit from an opportunity to learn from (not only *with*) others who know, understand, or can do things that they themselves cannot. (p.22)

In addition, within the dialogic relation, open, honest discussions in a climate of trust and respect can acknowledge differences in knowledge, insight or expertise without elevating them into inflexible and authoritarian status or role identities (Burbules, 1993). Moreover, it is argued that in many educational contexts, critical examination of authority can facilitate and assist the re-examination of educational aims and methods.

Secondly, according to Burbules, authority has legitimacy in the context of an ongoing dialogical relation that allows for changing authority relations over time or from topic to topic. Burbules describes the nature of the dialogical relation over time, as fluid: patterns of interaction change, roles shift back and forth. In dialogue particularly, the author contends, teaching moments and learning moments become indiscernible: even when the exchanges are unequal, both parties stand to learn. Also, topics within a dialogue change - this may result in a reversal of roles whereby a partner more knowledgeable in one area stands to learn from the other in a different area. This does not mean that there is no authority, but simply that "authority cannot singularly be attached to one participant" (p. 33).

Thirdly, legitimate authority stems from an ongoing communicative relation that manifests reciprocity and respect by allowing either party to speak as well as listen. Burbules argues that listening not only enables one to learn something new but represents a "concrete relational activity that alters the status of one's authority" (p. 33). Listening demonstrates respect, interest and concern for one's partner:

> It's a specific way of enabling another's voice to be heard. When it is an active effort, and not just a passive receptivity, it can encourage others to develop and express their own point of view. (p.33)

Burbules further states that the dialogical relation also requires sensitivity to the environmental circumstances, institutional contexts, personal histories or interpersonal dynamics that might

impede dialogical participation. One would therefore not just need to listen, but work at creating an environment "in which a silenced voice feels the confidence or security to speak" (Burbules, 1993).

Finally authority within a dialogical relation must be to some degree self-undermining over time, that is, authority no longer needs to be a necessary or appropriate status for *either* participant (p.35). Burbules warns that this will not be easy to achieve in the face of "institutional and historical definitions of an authority role" (p. 35) even when these are met with resistance. However, the author argues that authority, properly conceived and sensitively exercised, can itself be a helpful element in making authority within the dialogical relation, superfluous. Dialogue, as a pedagogical communicative relation, by its very nature, rejects a hierarchical conception of authority (p. 35).

To summarise: Authority may be seen as unavoidable, whether it is credible authority based on knowledge or experience; or authority based in institutional roles and privileges or unexamined assumptions about expertise. The latter should be avoided, while credible authority should not be taken for granted. Authority may thus be justified when, according to Burbules, it is thought of relationally. In other words, authority has legitimacy when, first, it stems from an ongoing communicative interchange that acknowledges differences in knowledge, and experience or ability, and this relation is based on an open, honest climate of trust and respect. Second, authority has legitimacy when it is fluid over time or from topic to topic, that is, authority is not attached to one person all the time, but roles may change. Third, the relation must show reciprocity and respect. Each person must be allowed to speak as well as listen. Moreover, factors that might impede dialogue – which may include environmental circumstances, personal histories or interpersonal dynamics – should be acknowledged. Fourth, authority within a dialogical relation should be to some degree self-undermining over time.

2.5.3 Approach to Knowledge

Burbules views dialogue as a pedagogical communicative relation. This conception of dialogue as a mode of pedagogical communication is able to promote effective learning and challenge narrow concepts of "teaching" and "learning".

The combination of schematic models of comprehension and constructivist theories of knowledge, have lead to the idea of teaching as "scaffolding" (p.10). Burbules describes it as

> Working with students to build up levels of understanding appropriate to their state of readiness, and helping to draw their attention to the explicit processes by which ideas are related to one another as new information is provided. (p. 10)

"Scaffolding" will thus provide the student with the necessary support needed to incorporate the new information into an existing frame of reference. Dialogue or "reciprocal teaching" as it is sometimes referred to, is one form of instruction that is used in this work. In other words, reciprocal teaching is a current approach to instruction that uses dialogue as a mode of pedagogical communication. Palincsar (1986, cited in Burbules 1993) states that:

> The term reciprocal was chosen because in reciprocal exchange one party acts by way of response or reaction to the other party. Reciprocal teaching is best represented as a dialogue between teachers and students in which participants take turns assuming the role of teacher. (pp. 77-78)

It may be described as a "give-and-take" process that is planned and directed by one of the parties in order to assist and guide – as opposed to leading or exclusive questioning – the other through the steps of complex and developmentally novel cognitive processes (Petrie, 1981, cited in Burbules, 1993). In addition, as reciprocal teaching draws on constructivist views of knowledge and Vygotskyan models of development, it involves the teacher and student in a highly interactive process of questioning, modelling and "scaffolding" (p. 122). Burbules contends that:

> It is concerned not simply with providing new information but with fostering an explicit understanding of how knowledge is made. (p. 10)

More importantly, Burbules asserts that through this process an independent and autonomous learner is developed. Also, dialogue plays a central role in the highly interactive scaffolded instruction. It facilitates the collaboration between the novice and expert in order for the novice to acquire the cognitive strategy or strategies (Palincsar, 1986, p. 95; cited in Burbules, 1993).

2.5.4 Approach to social relationships

As stated earlier Burbules (1993) defines dialogue as a kind of pedagogical communicative relation. He argues that people often mistakenly think that dialogue is essentially like any other kind of conversation and that, since we all know how to have conversations, we should know the basics of dialogue. Good, effective dialogue however, is much more difficult than ordinary conversation, even though there are overlapping elements. Effective dialogue, the author contends, depends on the establishment and maintenance of a particular kind of relation among its participants (p.15).

Also, dialogue is fundamentally not a "specific communicative form of question and response". Rather, Burbules proposes, dialogue is best thought of as a type of communicative relation: it is a relation we enter into, one that we are "caught up in" or sometimes "carried away by". It is at heart a kind of social relation that engages its participants:

> Considering dialogue as a kind of relation (with one or more other people) emphasizes the aspects of dialogue that are beyond us, that we discover, that we are changed by. (p.xii)

A successful dialogue involves a willing partnership and co-operation in the face of likely disagreements, confusions, failures and misunderstandings (p.19). Moreover, Burbules states that what underlies and shapes the patterns of interaction in a dialogue are the attitudes, emotions and expectation that the participants have regarding not only each other, but also the value of dialogue itself:

> The creation and maintenance of a dialogical relation with others involves forming emotional bonds, such as respect, trust and concern; as well as the expression of character traits or virtues such as patience, the ability to listen, a tolerance for disagreement, and so on. (Ibid)

What further sustains dialogue over time is the commitment to one's partner in dialogue: a commitment that might not necessarily exist beforehand, but one that gradually arises "in the spirit of the engagement"(p.15).

Burbules does however make the point that not all people feel safe in or are drawn into the process of dialogue, even though there may be principles or rules to ensure reliability and consistency, and allow participants to engage confidently in open exchange. In addition, institutional and ideological contexts within which the dialogue takes place may also act as an impediment to successful dialogue. The author states that:

> . . . these factors often impede the dialogical possibilities for specific participants in particular situations, and they are not always remedial. (p.16)

Good, effective dialogue, Burbules asserts, depends on the establishment of a particular kind of relation. It is a relation we enter into, one that we are "caught up in" or "carried away by". The attitudes, emotions and expectations of participants play a significant role in shaping the patterns of interaction in a dialogue, especially in the face of disagreements, confusion or misunderstandings. A certain level of commitment is also required in order to sustain dialogue over time. Again Burbules draws our attention to the impediments of successful dialogue. These may include institutional and ideological contexts, which may not always be remedial.

Conclusion

The aim of the study is to investigate the differences and similarities in learners' perceptions of teachers' attitudes, specifically how teachers' attitudes affect learners' engagement in their own learning. The literature shows that one of the principles of good learning is that it takes place in the context of nurturing relationships and rich, open communication. Learners, who feel that they

are valued, noticed, attended to or affirmed by their teachers, may develop the confidence to learn. Moreover, learners' perceptions of teachers as warm and caring human beings may enhance learning substantially. In addition, the significance of both warmth and leadership – engaged pedagogy – in the classroom context, may be conducive to learning. Relational trust and mutual respect between teacher and learners are found to play a significant role in the improvement of learning (and teaching). When learners feel that they can rely on teachers, that teachers may be trusted, learning may be substantially improved. Noddings (1992), states that good learning starts with the construction of trusting relationships. As learning is typically a cooperative process, relational trust and mutual respect are key ingredients to successful learning.

The literature shows that when teachers set high expectations for all learners from the start, learners gain independence and confidence with each goal they achieve (Anderson, 2005). More importantly, it has been shown that it is the communication of teachers' high expectations that may enhance learners' engagement in their learning and allow learners to develop into independent thinkers.

Underlying the three key constructs of teachers' "attitudinal qualities" is a dialogical approach to teaching and learning. Progressive, holistic education, "engaged pedagogy", view learning as interactive, with active, collaborative problem-solving and engagement (hooks, 1994; Collins et al, 2002). This approach to learning is rooted in learners' engagement in successful pedagogic dialogue, a mode of pedagogic engagement that, according to Burbules (2000), is best able to promote learning, autonomy and an understanding of one's self in relation to others.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is referred to by various authors as a systematic, purposeful framework for operationalising the conceptual core of a research project. It focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. Moreover, it focuses on the individual (not linear) steps in the research process and the most "objective" (unbiased) procedures to be employed during this process (Babbie & Mouton, 1998; Freebody, 2003; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

The aim of this project is to investigate the differences and similarities in learners' perceptions of teachers' attitudes, specifically how teachers' attitudes affect learners' engagement in their own learning. Learners' perceptions will firstly be analysed and this analysis will be followed by an unpacking of the pedagogical ways that according to the learners, teachers use to transmit attitudes of care, trust and high expectations. . Inter alia, "engagement" refers to learners' motivation and confidence and their ability to take risks in the process of learning. The main research question of this project is: In which pedagogical ways, as perceived by learners, do teachers transmit attitudes of care, trust and expectations to learners, particularly to low achieving learners.

Pedagogical ways refer to teachers' verbal actions and teaching activities – reported during learner interviews in this project – that, according to learners, indicate differential or equal treatment of high and low achievers (Good & Brophy, 1991).

The sub questions include:

1. What pedagogical ways are used by teachers to transmit care, trust and expectations to high achieving learners and to low achieving learners.

2. In what ways are these pedagogical ways, as reported by learners, different and in what ways are they similar?
3. In what ways low achieving and high achieving learners perceive pedagogical ways as motivating them or de-motivating them to learn?

The type of study I have employed is a case study involving 36 Grade 10 English learners from three Co Ed secondary schools in the Gauteng South district. The schools are all situated in Eldorado Park, where the learner population, consisting of blacks, coloureds and a few Indians, share similar socioeconomic status, that is, learners come from poor, working class backgrounds, and from communities with high levels of unemployment and crime. As I am interested in understanding and documenting reality "as it is naturally" (Babbie and Mouton, 1998), a qualitative research design has been selected for this project, which I will elaborate on in the next section. Thereafter I will examine Sampling, Instruments for Data Collection, Data Collection Procedures and Limitations of the Study.

3.2 Research Design

A qualitative research design was selected for the following reasons: research is conducted in the natural setting of social actors; the focus is on process rather than outcome; the primary aim is in-depth description and understanding of perceptions (Babbie & Mouton, 1998). The goal of this approach to research is thus based on an insider's perspective, defined as describing and understanding, rather than the explanation or prediction of, human behaviour (Ibid.).

3.2.1 Case Study

Numerous case study definitions exist in the literature on educational research. Anderson (1998), describes a case study as a "holistic research method" that utilizes "multiple sources of evidence to analyze or evaluate a specific phenomenon or instance" (p. 152). It may also be described as "the study of an instance in action" or a method that focuses on attempting to document the story of a "naturalistic-experiment – in –action" (Adelman et al, cited in Cohen et al, 2000; Freebody, 2003). The single instance is that of a bounded system, e.g. a child, a class, a school or a community. Case studies, it is argued, provide a "unique example of real people in real situations", as opposed to merely being presented with abstract theories or principles (Cohen et al,

2000. p. 181). They strive to portray "what it is like" and closely describe the lived experiences, thoughts and feelings of participants in a situation. It is important, the authors point out, that events and situations "speak for themselves" instead of them being largely interpreted, evaluated or judged by the researcher (Cohen et al, 2000). These are some of the characteristics of case studies that fit the nature of my research, which was to investigate the ways in which learners perceive teachers' attitudes and what effect these might have on learners' engagement in their learning.

The perceptions of 36 learners from three different schools, used in the study, may be regarded as "multiple sources of evidence" (Anderson 1998). Learners were interviewed in a natural setting, at their respective schools, and what was presented were "real people in real situations" as pointed out by Cohen et al (2000). Moreover, learners gave an account of their "lived experiences", including their "thoughts and feelings" during the data collection stage of the project. These are some of the characteristics of case studies that fit the nature of my research, which was to investigate the differences and similarities in learners' perceptions of teachers' attitudes and what effect these attitudes might have on learners' engagement in their learning.

3.2.2 Validity

McMillan & Schumacher (2006), state that validity of qualitative designs is the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher. Anderson (1998) defines validity as "the extent to which what we measure reflects what we expected to measure". Validity to the qualitative researcher, the author contends, generally refers to the extent to which the stated interpretations are in fact true. Cohen et al (2000) argue that validity should be seen as a matter of degree rather than an absolute state. The authors point out that in qualitative data validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached or the objectivity of the researcher. However, in qualitative data, it is argued, the subjectivity of respondents, their opinions, attitudes and perspectives together contribute to a degree of bias (p. 105). Two forms of validity exist in qualitative research, namely, internal and external validity. Internal validity relates to the issue of truthfulness of responses, accuracy of records or authenticity of historical artefacts. External validity refers to the

generalizability of the obtained results, for instance, can the results of school effectiveness in one province be generalized to schools in another province.

For the purposes of this study, only one means of data collection, learner focus groups, was used. The study could have made use of teacher interviews, but the scope of the study was limited, hence the perceptions of learners were only utilized. The responses of learners, during the focus group interviews were varied. There were many similarities, but also differences with regard to learners' experiences and their perceptions of their teachers' pedagogical ways. In addition, both positive and negative perceptions of learners were considered in the study. In hindsight, the participants in the focus group interviews came across as sincere and honest in relation to their responses. Once the initial apprehension subsided, learners were spontaneous and spoke openly about their experiences and perceptions of their teachers' pedagogical ways in the classroom environment.

3.3 Sampling

The population for a study is that group (usually people) about whom we want to draw conclusions (Babbie & Mouton 1998). A sample is selected from the population. It therefore refers to the group of subjects or participants from whom the data is collected. The nature of the sampling procedure used in a particular study is usually described as random, convenience or stratified sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

In consultation with the respective school principals, I requested two teachers to assist in the selection of the learners for the focus group interviews, at each school. These were English teachers who taught English as a Home or Additional language and who were regarded as good teachers, that is, teachers who were academically strong. The reason for selecting academically strong teachers is that these teachers would, it is assumed, show a greater awareness of the importance of good teacher-learner relationships and how they affect learner engagement with their learning. The 36 learners from the 3 different schools were selected as a stratified sample. In consultation with the teachers who assisted in the selection of the learners, high(achieving 70%or more) and low(close to or at risk of failing) achieving learners were distributed into groups as follows:

School A: 2 groups of 3 high achieving learners each (for Teacher 1 and Teacher 2)
School A: 2 groups of 3 low achieving learners each (for Teacher 1 and Teacher 2)

School B: 2 groups of 3 high achieving learners each (for Teacher 3 and Teacher 4)
School B: 2 groups of 3 low achieving learners each (for Teacher 3 and 4)

School C: 2 groups of 3 high achieving learners each (for Teacher 5 and Teacher 6)
School C: 2 groups of 3 low achieving learners each (for Teacher 5 and Teacher 6)

The groups were racially mixed, but varied from one school to another. They were made up of black, coloured and Indian (at one school only) learners. At most of the schools, both the high and low achieving groups were made up of more boys than girls. At one school though, the low achieving group had more boys, while, at the same school, the high achieving group consisted of more girls than boys.

The following **Table 3.1**illustrates the composition of the different groups of learners at each school:

	Boys	Girls	Black	Coloured	Indian
School A: L/A	4	2	1	5	__
H/A	4	2	2	3	1
School B: L/A	3	3	1	5	__
H/A	4	2	2	4	__
School C: L/A	4	2	1	5	__
H/A	1	5	4	2	__

Table 3.1

It must be pointed out that the aim of the study was not to compare the learners in the different schools or to examine their experiences in view of different institutional and contextual conditions

of the schools. The comparison that is important for the study deals with the differences between the high and low achieving learners with regard to their experiences of their teachers' pedagogical ways.

The objective was also not to find out what teachers were doing or not doing and if learners were speaking the truth or if learners were consistent about teachers' experiences. The aim was to understand first, learners' experiences (see below Stage A of the data analysis) and what pedagogical ways do the learners refer to when they are discussing the variety of issues in relation to "warmth care and empathy", "trust and respect" and "teachers' high expectations" (see below Stage B of the data analysis).

3.4 Instruments for Data Collection

For this study, I used a single data collection strategy to collect data. Freebody (2003) describes case studies as "empirically omnivorous": the data that make up a case study can entail observation, interviews, field notes or documents. In this study, I made use of focus group interviews. The data collection took place over a period of six weeks, distributed evenly between the 3 schools.

3.4.1 Data Collection Procedures

Babbie & Mouton(1998) point out that the usefulness of focus groups is that the researcher may use the group to find information s/he would not otherwise be able to access. Also, data are obtained mainly from the interaction between the participants in the group rather than from the backwards and forwards questioning between the interviewer and the group (Collins et al, 2000). The authors state that focus groups are "contrived settings" in which a particular sector of the population is brought together to discuss a particular theme or topic (p. 288). For my purposes, learners were not given a topic or theme per se to discuss, but were required to respond to a number of open-ended questions about their perceptions and experience of teacher behaviour and interaction and what impact these have on their motivation to and engagement with, their own learning.

The interviews explored a variety of issues related to learners' experiences within the classroom context. The full interview schedule is attached as Appendix 1. Learners were asked how teachers related to them – if they felt that teachers cared about them, or treated them kindly, or if teachers were fair in their treatment of learners. Questions about teachers' availability to learners for consultation were also directed at learners. Classroom and conflict management as well as discipline issues were discussed during the interviews. Learners were also questioned about teachers' pedagogical ways, i.e. the verbal actions and instructional activities utilized by teachers. Issues of trust and respect were also discussed

The focus group interviews involved six groups of six learners each: two groups at each of the three schools. The high achieving and low achieving learners were interviewed in their respective groups. The feeling was that learners would be more at ease and comfortable to speak about their classroom experiences if they were interviewed in homogeneous groups. At the beginning of the interviews learners were relatively quiet and seemingly apprehensive. A number of learners wanted to know if their teachers will be told what they had said. Some learners asked if this was some kind of test. I explained the purpose of the focus group interviews and had to assure them that their identities would be kept confidential and that they could withdraw from the interview at any time if they did not feel comfortable. No learner withdrew and once they were sufficiently convinced that I was doing a research project, they seemed more relaxed and willingly participated in the proceedings. Some learners were naturally more spontaneous than others and I often had to intervene and ask them for their opinion or thoughts.

The learners from both the high and low achieving groups at the three schools reacted and spoke about their teachers very differently. At School A, the high achieving learners pointed out that they felt that their teacher could not control the class and battled to maintain discipline in the classroom. Other learners in the same group felt that learners were extremely disrespectful towards their teacher and they felt that it was because the teacher was not strict enough. At School B, both groups of learners spoke very passionately about their teachers, more especially the low achieving learners. These learners felt that their teacher was a very spiritual person who really cared about the welfare of the learners. They gave many examples of the teacher not just being kind and caring, but who also, according to the learners, worked very hard in class. The

learners at School B really trusted and believed in their teachers. At School C, the two categories of learners had opposing views of their teachers. The high achieving learners felt that their teacher understood them and they felt motivated by her positive disposition. The low achieving learners, on the other hand, felt that their teachers did not understand them and humiliated and insulted them most of the time. They felt that their teachers were very critical of and impatient with them during lessons.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Themes and Sub-themes

A review of the literature, produced three key constructs of "attitudinal qualities" that were shown to facilitate engagement with learning. These were "warmth, care and empathy", "trust and respect" and "teachers' high expectations". The constructs formed the main themes used in the discussion of the data. A close reading of the learner data generated three sub-themes for each theme. These sub-themes represented the main elements of each of the three broad themes. They were meant to capture the essence of what each theme embodied. I divided "Warmth, care and empathy" into the following sub-themes: reciprocal active engagement (reciprocal); show warmth, kindness while still being fair and firm (fair); and value individuals and support learning goals, opportunity to become independent thinkers (individual). I divided "Trust and respect" into the following sub-themes: can rely on teachers to act in the best interest of learners (rely on); create secure, safe relationships and learning environments (safe); and maintain mutual respect/regard (respect). Lastly, I divided "Teachers' high expectations" into the following sub-themes: effective instructional contact/communication (instructional); feedback about performance (feedback) and opportunity to respond and ask questions (opportunity). Altogether, then, I worked with nine sub-themes. I refer to this as Stage A of the data analysis.

The next step in the stage of the analysis was to code the data. Coding may be described as dividing the data into "small units of meaning" which are then systematically "named" (Henning, 2004, p.102).There were two coding processes. Firstly, learners' utterances, obtained from the focus group interviews at each school as per high and low achieving group, were coded, using the key word of each of the above sub-themes. For example, with regard to the first theme, the

codes used were “reciprocal”, “fair” and “individual.” These coded utterances referred to the learners’ experiences in the classroom context. The learner utterances were kept verbatim and both positive and negative responses were coded.

Secondly, in order to obtain a deeper more concise description of the pedagogical ways experienced by the low and high achieving learners across all the schools, the utterances were coded again. I refer to this as Stage B of the data analysis. The first step in Stage B was to tabulate the coded responses of the learners. This was done at the end of the description of each sub-theme. The tables contained the learner responses (coded in Stage A) across all the schools, divided into high and low achievers. The related codes, as listed in the tables, were grouped or categorized. An example of one of the tables used in this stage of the data analysis is shown below as Table 3.1.2.

In the second step of Stage B, I needed to condense the categories in order to arrive at four final categories. These needed to be four distinct categories that went to the heart of the three main constructs – care, trust and expectations –and would deepen our understanding of what learners refer to as pedagogical ways. I identified four categories to ascertain what pedagogical ways both groups of learners were referring to: “Busyness”, “Value”, “Opportunity” and “Humiliation”. “Busyness” incorporated involvement, participation and enjoyment. “Value” included elements like acknowledgement, respect, professionalism, equality, accountability and privacy. “Opportunity” included feeling safe, extra time, patience, trust and courage. “Humiliation” incorporated elements like bias and being inconsiderate. These categories were thus used to sum up the views of learners about the pedagogical ways used by teachers to transmit “warmth, care and empathy”, “trust and respect” and “teachers’ high expectations”. The second stage of coding then was trying to identify what is implied in learners’ experiences.

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive responses included: will speak to offending learners after class is dismissed (privacy) he calls you one side (privacy) he won't embarrass you (respect) treats all learners the same irrespective of ability (equality) solves conflict in the best way he can (support) keeps students behind to solve problems (privacy)	**Positive responses included:** good marks are acknowledged (acknowledgement) teacher thinks something good of you (respect) something good about teacher (benevolent) talks politely to learners about behaviour (respect) makes time to listen to learner problems (support)
Negative responses included: the teacher will embarrass the learner (lack of respect) will always take the girls' side (sic) (bias) think girls are always right (bias) sides with academically strong learners (bias) accuses academically weak learners of starting arguments (bias)	**Negative responses included:** praise only when giving correct answers (lack of support) criticize only when talking something off the topic (relevant) compared to other learners (lack of respect) the teacher takes his frustration out on us (inconsiderate) he's angry and shouts at you for unnecessary things (inconsiderate) learners make teacher mad, he takes it out on other learners (inconsiderate) teacher does not respond to questions (disregard) puts you off in class (humiliation) teacher will shout at you … confuse you (disregard)

Table 3.1.2

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis

Introduction

Based on the literature review three constructs of key "attitudinal qualities" that may facilitate learning within the context of nurturing relationships in a classroom setting were identified. The discussion of the data was organized across these three themes. They are: "warmth, care and empathy"; "trust and respect"; and "teachers' high expectations". Each theme was divided into three sub-themes which illustrated the salient elements of each theme. "Warmth, care and empathy" was divided into the following sub-themes: reciprocal active engagement (reciprocal); show warmth, kindness while still being fair and firm (fair); and value individuals and support learning goal, opportunity to become independent thinkers (individual). "Trust and respect" was divided into: can rely on teachers to act in the best interest of learners (rely on); create secure, safe relationships and learning environments (safe); and maintain mutual respect/regard (respect). "Teachers' high expectations" was divided into: effective instructional contact/communication (instructional); feedback about performance (feedback) and Opportunity to respond and ask questions (opportunity).

The sub-themes are discussed with reference to the focus group interviews for both the high and low achieving groups at the different schools, named School A, B and C. It must be stated again that the comparisons and differences will not be drawn between the different schools, but between the high and low achieving learners at the different schools. The learners' utterances, both positive and negative, are coded according to the sub-themes. After all the responses, for both high and low achieving learners have been coded, it is followed by a summary of the responses for that particular school. For example, for School A, the high achieving and low achieving responses are coded, followed by a summary of the responses at School A. This process is repeated for each sub-theme until all the sub-themes, nine in total, have been discussed in relation to the focus group interviews and all the utterances have been coded. At the end of each sub-theme a summary across all the schools, i.e. School A, B and C is compiled. Learners' utterances were tabulated, firstly, to indicate the number of positive and negative responses for each sub-theme at the three schools. The responses were divided into high and low achieving

learners for each school. The second table was used to list and code the utterances of the high and low achievers at each school, according to the different sub-themes. The second table will be used to place the coded responses into categories, which in turn will be used to ascertain the learners' perceptions and experiences of the pedagogical ways used by their teachers. This will be done in Chapter 5.

Theme One: "Warmth, care and empathy"

The literature shows that effective learning takes place within a context of warm, nurturing relationships and rich communication between learners and teachers. The Quali-Teach project conducted by Collins, Harkins & Nind (2002), which set out to examine what, according to the 240 participating learners, characterized a "good teacher" produced significant results. The findings underlined the importance of quality relationships between teachers and students in a learning context. These learners shared very similar ideas in relation to effective teaching. The principal factor in effective teaching is warmth – shown, for example, by teachers knowing learners' names, having time for them outside the programme, and being patient when they do not understand (Collins et al, 2002). In addition to warmth, the Communications Styles project run by Harkins (2002), identified that (teacher) leadership is another essential characteristic of good teaching. Leadership, in this context, exists when teachers understand their subject and its assessment and is able to shape the learning process to meet the needs of their students. The authors argue that obtaining a balance between "warmth" and "leadership" in the context of classroom interaction, is conducive to good learning. bell hooks (1994) uses the term "engaged pedagogy" to describe teaching and learning where everyone's presence is acknowledged. The author explains that for education to be the "practice of freedom", learners need to be active participants in the learning process. Engaged pedagogy requires a flexible agenda, spontaneity, interaction and critical reflection. It emphasizes the well-being of both learners and teachers.

The section that follows will analyze the focus group interviews in relation to the first construct, "warmth, care and empathy".

4.1 Warmth, Care, Empathy

Introduction

Within the theme of "warmth, care and empathy", three sub-themes are included. These are: reciprocal active engagement during lessons (RECIPROCAL); show warmth, kindness while still being fair and firm (FAIR); and learners valued as individuals and supported in learning goals, opportunities to become independent thinkers (INDIVIDUALS).

4.1.1 Reciprocal Active Engagement

The first sub-theme (reciprocal) refers to instances when both the teacher and learners are actively involved in lessons and teachers make lessons enjoyable rather than just stand in front and talk and write on the board. An example of this is suggested by comments like: "… makes us comment about things that are happening around us … we get a chance to express how we feel about things".

The sub-theme "reciprocal" is discussed with reference to the learner focus group interviews of both the high and low achieving groups at the different schools. The responses of the different groups of learners (H/A and L/A) from the different schools, in some instances, were similar with regard to their perception and experience of their teachers' approach to classroom interaction, while in other instances, the variation was more apparent. Also, the perceptions and experiences of the two different groups of learners – based on their responses during the interviews – at the same school, often varied considerably.

School A: High Achievers

The responses of the H/A group of learners were all positive at School A. A learner - when asked what they liked most about the way their teacher presented his/her lesson – replied: "… he's always full of action, he wants to make you feel the lesson. Like he's preaching … something like that" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: RECIPROCAL). Another learner reiterated that the teacher "wants you to be part of the lesson … he wants you to know what's going on" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: RECIPROCAL). One learner said that the teacher wants "your mind not to be somewhere else, to be in class … your mind must proceed with his mind. Must be together"

(FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: RECIPROCAL). Other learners reaffirmed what was said earlier about the teacher "making certain actions to make you understand" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: reciprocal). Another response was: "He walks around in class and asks if you … do you understand, or don't you understand? Can I explain it over for you (sic)"? (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: RECIPROCAL).

School A: Low Achievers

Remarks made by learners in the low achieving group (L/A), at School A, expressed their ideas of "reciprocal active engagement" in the classroom context in the following ways. A learner explained that their teacher would hand out "papers" and tell the class to read it "for five minutes". Thereafter "he's going to tell us about the work. And then we're going to do the work together" (FGI-2 L/A SEPT 2008: RECIPROCAL). A learner from the same group, stated that he enjoys lessons when they are called upon to read aloud in class, instead of the teacher doing all the reading, "because that also makes the class more exciting, not to sit in class and just listen all the time … it makes it exciting in class, that you want to be in class" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: RECIPROCAL). One learner commented that she enjoyed it when "we debate in class." She continued: "It's like you're talking, that one is talking … and the teacher will also comment, even when you're wrong, she puts something to make you right (sic) … that's alright, that is lekker (fun)" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: RECIPROCAL).

Summary of School A

At School A, the H/A had 4 positive and no negative responses. Learners' perceptions and experiences of reciprocity during lessons were relatively similar. Learners alluded to the teacher ensuring that they followed what s/he was saying at all times, "… your mind must proceed with his mind … must be together" and "… wants you to be part of the lesson". More that one learner also referred to his/her teacher being "full of action" and that this made lessons exciting and interesting.

Learner responses within the L/A group at this school reflected different ideas and experiences with regard to reciprocity. There were 3 positive and no negative responses. A learner referred to debates that took place during lessons, "…you're talking, that one is talking and the teacher will also comment", while others felt that being given the chance to read aloud in class instead of just

"sit(ting) in the class and just listen(ing) all the time" made lessons "exciting". The L/A group also had no negative responses.

School B: High Achievers

The experiences – with regard to reciprocity during lessons – of the H/A learners at School B yielded 1 positive response. There were no negative responses from this group. A learner indicated that during poetry lessons the teacher would constantly make sure that all learners understood the work: " … and when she explains, she always asks must she explain it again … she won't just carry on, she'll come to everyone and explain it to the whole class again" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: RECIPROCAL).

School B: Low Achievers

Learners from the L/A group at the same school referred to different forms of involvement during lessons. When these learners were asked what they liked best about their teacher's lessons, they responded by saying: "He makes it exciting. He doesn't bore us" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: RECIPROCAL). Another added: "… he always has actions on which (sic) he explains things" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: RECIPROCAL). A learner pointed out that their teacher "almost every day brings new words to us". He will then write them "repeatedly" on the board and they will also do lots of dictionary work, "… like he tells us to look up certain words and so forth" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: RECIPROCAL). A learner mentioned that they were also allowed to read in class instead of the teacher doing all the reading, "He also allows us is to read in class" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: RECIPROCAL).

Summary of School B

The responses of both the high and low achieving learners at this school reflected different classroom experiences. Whereas the H/A had only 1 positive response, the L/A learners had 4 positive responses. Both groups had no negative responses. Learners from both the L/A and H/A groups referred to the way in which their teacher presented lessons. The H/A indicated that the teacher would not move on unless all learners understood the work, "… she'll come to everyone and explain … again". Learners in the L/A group added that in their classes learners would also

do dictionary work in class. Other learners in this group, found it "exciting" to read aloud in class, instead of the teacher doing all the reading.

School C: High Achievers

The H/A learners at School C had 2 positive responses in relation to the sub-theme "reciprocal active engagement during lessons". When these learners were asked what they liked most about their teacher's lessons, learners responded by saying that they would also read newspapers and the teacher would "make us comment about the things that are happening around us. We talk about social issues sometimes" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: RECIPROCAL). Other learners in the same group (H/A), agreed that they found the lessons enjoyable because "… we get a chance to express how we feel or think about certain things that are happening around us" and "… we also get a chance to raise our points on what's going on …" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: RECIPROCAL).

School C: Low Achievers

The L/A learners had more positive than negative responses. When the low achieving group, at the same school, was asked what they liked most about their teacher's lessons, one learner stated that she actually pays attention in class because she finds the lessons exciting: "… there's always a presentation in the way the educator will give it in actions, or explain it to you like the way that things happen in reality … he'll give you a perspective like where you can picture it (sic) in reality actually happening". She continued by saying that "… it makes it more exciting to sit in class and actually pay attention to what the sir is saying" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: RECIPROCAL). A learner made a similar remark about their teacher saying: "… when the teacher is explaining, she is explaining with actions. She makes sure that you understand the work. That's why we like her class" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: RECIPROCAL). Another learner added that she also appreciated the "actions and stuff, with jokes included" as it also encourages learners to attend classes instead of bunking. This learner made an example of the home economics class, which students enjoyed and all attended, because "that teacher when she explains she will always make fun of things. And she will explain it nice and stuff like that … and we know how she goes on and stuff, then everybody is there in the class" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: RECIPROCAL). She continued by pointing out that "… when you get to other classes,

they don't come because they don't explain it so (sic)" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/RECIPROCAL).

Summary of School C

The H/A group had 2 positive, while the L/A had 3 positive responses at this school. There were no negative responses from the H/A learners, while the L/A group had 1 negative response: "they don't explain". The positive responses from both groups were different: the H/A group referred to learners commenting and discussing social issues, "… we get a chance to express how we feel or think about certain things that are happening around us". The positive responses from the L/A, on the other hand, were relatively similar in that the majority of the learners in this category of achievement alluded to the teacher "making actions" in order to make lessons interesting. A learner also commented on the teacher explaining work clearly and making examples that they were relevant to their lived experiences.

Summary across Schools

There were more positive responses, 18 in total, in these three schools from both categories of achievement. The data on reciprocity shows that learners attached more value to lessons when they were actively involved as opposed to merely sitting and listening to the teacher. They wanted to be involved, "part of the lesson", whether it included expressing ideas or opinions, asking questions, reading aloud or looking up words in a dictionary. Many learners, again from both categories of learners, also commented on the teacher's ability to make lessons entertaining and fun by stating that teachers were "full of actions". Both the H/A and L/A groups of learners remarked that some teachers were in this way able to capture and hold their attention throughout the lessons, and tried to ensure that all learners understood the work.

Although the majority of learner responses were positive regarding "reciprocal active engagement during lessons", negative experiences were found at one school. The comment emanated primarily from the L/A group and related to teachers' ability to capture the attention and minds of learners.

The **Table 4.1** below illustrates the number of positive and negative responses for the sub-theme "reciprocal" at the three schools:

	Positive responses	Negative responses
School A: H/A	4	none
L/A	3	none
School B: H/A	1	none
L/A	4	none
School C: H/A	2	none
L/A	3	1

The **Table 4.2** below lists and codes utterances made by high and low achieving learners under the sub-theme, "reciprocal active engagement during lessons".

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learner
School A **Positive responses included:** he's always full of action (busyness) learner's mind must proceed with teacher's (involvement) wants you to be part of the lesson (involvement) teacher makes certain actions (busyness) teacher willing to repeat explanation (patient) **Negative responses included:** none **School B:** **Positive responses included:** she'll ask everyone if they understand (equality) **Negative responses included:** none **School C:** **Positive responses included:** learners talk about social issues (relevant) express how they feel or think about things (involvement) **Negative responses included:** none	**School A** **Positive responses included:** teachers and learners do worksheets together (involvement) learners given opportunity to read aloud(participation) learners participate in debates during lessons (involvement) **Negative responses included:** none **School B:** **Positive responses included:** makes lessons exciting (enjoyment) always has actions (busyness) introduces new words, learners use dictionaries (participation) learners read aloud in class (involvement) **Negative responses included:** none **School C:** **Positive responses included:** lesson bears semblance to reality (relevant) teacher explains with actions (busyness) she will make fun of things (enjoyment) **Negative responses included:** Teachers do not explain, no examples (lack of involvement)

Table 4.2

4.1.2 "Show Warmth, Kindness While Still Being Fair and Firm

Introduction

The second sub-theme (fair) refers to instances when learners feel that teachers understand them, are not detached from students, can have a laugh, but know how to keep order and display fairness. An example of this is reflected in comments like: "… he doesn't criticize the class in particular if a learner does something wrong in class, he will particularly speak to that learners after the class is dismissed".

This sub-theme shows different permutations of characteristics, for example, teachers may be firm but not fair; could show warmth and kindness but not be firm.

School A: High Achievers

At School A, high achieving learners responded in the following ways. When asked how their teachers praise or criticize them, a learner stated that the teacher does not criticize the entire class if one learner did something wrong, but "… he will particularly speak to those learners after the class is dismissed" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: FAIR). This comment was repeated by a learner who remarked that when the teacher criticizes them, it is not done in front of the whole class, but that "… he calls you one side (aside)". The learner also said that the teacher criticizes them for their "attitude and behaviour" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008:FAIR). Another learner added that when a learner tries to be the "main man" in class, the teacher will embarrass him. She continued by saying that "… if they're funny in class and they don't get good marks, then he's like going to embarrass him" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008:N/FAIR).

When asked how the teacher reacts to a wrong answer, the reply was: "He won't embarrass us"(FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: FAIR). Another learner, when asked if the teacher treats everyone in class the same, responded positively and added, "… if my progress wasn't good, he will still treat me the same way as the others who did progress well in the exam" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: FAIR).

A learner pointed out that their teacher will always try to solve a conflict between learners "… in the best way he can" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008:FAIR). Another added that "… he will keep those two students behind and talk with them, and make them settle down … and maybe shake hands or hug each other" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008:FAIR). A different learner did however declare that if there is a disagreement between a boy and girl, "… then the teacher, I find, will always take the girl's side". He continued by saying, "I don't know why they won't take the boy's side. They didn't (sic) even listen to the boy, then they just say the boy's wrong, why he's arguing with a girl (sic). Because they always think the girl is always right (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/FAIR). When asked how the teacher solves conflict between academically weak and strong learners, a learner responded by saying that the teacher would "take the part of the stronger one … because they think the stronger one will know better than the weaker one. He thinks the learner that is weaker would have started the argument because of little things … material things" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/FAIR).

School A: Low Achievers

The low achieving (L/A) learners at School A had relatively more negative responses to this sub-theme. Learners pointed out that the only time they are praised is "when you give the right answers in class" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/FAIR) and criticized "when you talk something that's off the subject you're talking about" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/FAIR). Another learner added that if your marks are low and you play the fool in class, the teacher will also use that as a form of criticism. He continued by saying that even though there is acknowledgement for good marks "… when your marks is up in class the teacher will say, well done" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: FAIR), they are compared to other learners: "… or can't you be like that boy or that girl in class" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008:N/FAIR). Other learners explained that their teacher hardly ever praised them and felt that they were unfairly subjected to the teacher's anger and/or frustration: "… most of the time children make the teacher angry … he'll come here and then the teacher takes his frustration out on us" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/FAIR). Another comment was, "Maybe we get him a double period … first period is nice, afterwards someone comes in class and disrupts us, then he's going to be angry and he's going to shout at you for unnecessary things in class" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/FAIR). Yet another learner added that "… the previous class

were there and that class did like disappoint the teacher or made him mad … and he'll take it out on us" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/FAIR).

When the same group of learners were asked how their teacher reacted when they were unsure of what to do or did not know the answer to a question, one learner reported that because they knew that all their answers were not correct, they would ask the teacher, who, according to the learner would say that she did not know, "I don't know", and then she "want to put you off in class, or like that" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008:N/FAIR). A different learner said that although the teacher tries to encourage them to "look deep into the answer", she would then "shout you … after that you'll be confused". He continued: "… it's the way she's saying it" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/FAIR).

In response to the question, "Do you think your teacher treats you the same as other learners?" one learner said that, "… if you're every day in the teacher's class, and you do her work, she will treat you the same as other children". He continued by saying that by coming to class every day, "you can feel that the teacher at least, she's thinking something good of you" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: FAIR). Another learner responded: "I like this teacher, there's something good of her. Her work, everything is good" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: FAIR). One learner stated that his teacher will sit him down and say, "Listen here, this is wrong what you're doing in class, and this is wrong. Stop behaving like that" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: FAIR).

When asked how teachers respond when learners approach them with personal or academic problems, one learner replied that there are certain teachers who will say "you can come and speak to me." He added that "… maybe the teacher knows you already. Why is this guy so quiet? He's then never so quiet". The learner explains that the teacher will then "call you to sit there" and talk about the problem (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: FAIR).

Summary of School A

In School A, there were 6 positive responses from the H/A group and 5 positive responses from the L/A group of learners. In addition, the responses of both the H/A and L/A groups were relatively similar. Learners made comments such as: "he won't embarrass you" (H/A) and "talks politely to learners about behaviour" (L/A). Another was "keeps students behind to solve problems" (H/A) and "makes time to listen to learners' problems" (L/A). Ideas were often repeated, respectively, within the two groups. The H/A learners stated that teachers "will speak to offenders after class is dismissed"; "he calls you one (a)side"; "keeps students behind to solve problems".

The L/A learners had 8 negative responses, while the H/A had 5. Comments included: "the teacher takes his frustration out on us"; "he's angry and shouts at us"; "teacher will shout at you". Some of the negative responses of the H/A learners were quite interesting. They felt that teachers were unfair because they were seen to "side with the academically strong learners" and "accuse academically weak learners of starting arguments". Most of the negative comments made by the L/A group referred to them being humiliated and treated harshly by their teachers. Comments in this regard included: "…compared to other learners"; "angry and shouts you for unnecessary things"; "puts you off in class"; and "teacher will shout at you … confuse you". These types of comments were notably absent in the responses of the H/A learners at this school.

School B: High Achievers

At School B, the high achieving (H/A) learners gave both positive and negative responses. One learner said that the teacher "makes us stand up and then he's going to read a bible verse, he's going to praise us and say good stuff about us" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR). The same learner also mentioned that they found it embarrassing when the sir calls out their names and points out mistakes even though they ask him not to call out their names; "… and then he's still going to call out names. He says, bad mistake don't do it again. And that's embarrassing" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR). Another learner pointed out that they have a number of learners, in their class, who are repeating the grade and that "we talk to them a lot … and when we didn't do well in a certain subject, sir thinks that they influence us … which isn't true". In response to another

question, the same learner added that, "… he does kind of know us better than them, so he treats us much more differently" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR).

When asked how their teacher reacts when they give an incorrect answer, one learner remarked that, "He doesn't shout when you give a wrong answer, as long as you try" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR). However, a different learner remarked that, "Our teacher she will joke on it (sic)" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR). This was confirmed by another learner: "Like she said, if you give a wrong answer, the teacher will joke about it" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR).

Learners had mixed responses when asked how they felt when their teacher read out their marks in class, especially when they have not done well in a test A learner said that for him it doesn't "feel too bad" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR). Another learner remarked that it is good when the teacher reads out your mark, especially if you have done well, and added "…but even if you do bad (sic), I like it" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR). A different learner felt that it was even better if the teacher read out bad marks, "… because then she can help you" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR). A previous speaker added that the sir would also call you to his desk, if you really did not want your mark. He will then write the mark on a piece of paper, "then you can go sit down, knowing it's confidential" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR). Three different learners indicated that they would prefer that the teacher not read out their marks: "It's not nice" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR). They added that even when "you ask him, sir, please don't read it out … he still reads it out (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR) and "I feel embarrassed" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR).

Responses were varied when learners were asked if they thought that their teacher treated all learners the same. A learner felt that their teacher treated her the same as he treated others, except maybe for "those that struggle a bit". She continued by saying but for "those cases", most of the time "he treats us fair" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR). A learner disagreed with the previous speaker by pointing out that he does not think that the teachers can treat all learners the same because "we all have different needs". He added that they have many learners who are repeating the grade, in their class, and who are not as familiar as they are with the teacher. So according to the learner, "… he does kind of know us better than them, so he treats us more

differently" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR). One learner was more specific: she explained that the teacher treated them as a class the same, but he treated different classes differently, "So he doesn't treat all the classes the same. But in the class as a whole, he treats everyone the same" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR). When this learner was asked how differently the teacher treated the class, she replied that the teacher would give "different information" to different classes, like for example, one class will be told to write a summary, whereas the other class will be given the summary. The learner remarked, "I think maybe he thinks that we are better than the other classes" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR). Yet another learner indicated that the teacher "likes the classes to be level". He pointed out that the teacher would worry when their class is "a lesson behind" and the other classes "are a lesson ahead". He repeated though that the teacher "likes us all to be on the same level of learning, with the other classes" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR).

When asked how a teacher would handle conflict between a strong and weak learner, a learner had this to say: "It depends on what type of person it is … if it's a quiet person and they do their work, he won't take you to the office … he won't like expel you … he knows that you wouldn't get into something like this often" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR). The learner added: "But if it's someone that gets into a lot of trouble, he'll take you to the office and sort it out there" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR). Another learner said that their teacher would "take the learner to the office" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FAIR) or have an outburst and express her disappointment in the entire class "whoever (who) did it" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR), or "… she will just make you kneel in front of the class for the whole period" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR). Another response was: "When it's verbal in our class, he just tells them to sit down and keep quiet, and then it's finished" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/FAIR).

School B: Low Achievers

The low achieving learners at School B had more positive than negative responses. A learner remarked, "I've never heard Mr. K criticize anybody in his class. It's not his style" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: FAIR). This was reiterated by a learner: "He praises us all the time if we do good (sic), but I never heard him criticize us before" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: FAIR). It was pointed out by another learner that perhaps they do not see it as criticism but as encouragement: "Sir doesn't criticize, he rather encourages" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: FAIR). One learner mentioned that the

teacher had given her a lot of encouragement especially after she had failed grade 10: "… so he actually gave me a lot of encouragement … yes. I can say I passed because of him" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: FAIR). Other comments were: "Mr. K treats everybody the same, there's no inferior and superior pupils in his class. Everybody is equal" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: FAIR) and "He calls on me when I'm disruptive of the class (sic)" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: FAIR).

When asked what the teacher does when there's conflict between a strong and weak learner, the same group of learners had varied responses. One learner said that the teachers will take them to the office. Another said that "… he will like speak to both of the people that fought … and let them maybe apologize to each other, so that we can go on" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: FAIR). Yet another learner pointed out that the teacher would make them kneel in front of the class either for five minutes or for the whole period: "… if the stronger person must just, you know, like overpowering (sic) the weaker one, he'll sort the situation out and if you were at fault, he'll tell you to kneel" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: N/FAIR). This was substantiated by another learner: "… he would separate the weak one from the strong one, for the benefit of the weaker one … for that one to say, no, you don't want to behave, you want to be a strong person, so you might as well take that role instead of that role" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: N/FAIR). A different learner stated that their teacher "will go the root of the problem … like to solve the whole thing … where the problem started and so forth, and then find a solution" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: FAIR).

Summary of School B

The positive responses from the H/A (12) and L/A (9) learners at School B suggests that learners had similar perceptions and experiences of their teachers' approach to classroom interaction. There were however more positive responses from the L/A group. Learners from both groups indicated that their "teacher says good things about us" (H/A) and "praises us all the time if we do well" (L/A). Also, "doesn't shout learners when giving wrong answers" (H/A) and "sir doesn't criticize, he rather encourages" (L/A).

The L/A learners often referred to their teacher as being "nice" to them: "… treats everybody the same, no inferior or superior". These learners (L/A) only had 2 negative responses as opposed to 12 negative responses from the H/A group. Examples of these were: "… he'll tell you to kneel"

(L/A) and "… if you give a wrong answer, the teacher will joke about it" (H/A); "… she will make you kneel in front of the class for the whole period" (H/A) and "I think he thinks that we are better than the other class" (H/A).

School C: High Achievers

The responses of the high and low achieving learners at School C demonstrated a striking difference between the perceptions and experiences, of these two groups, regarding their teachers' approach to classroom interaction. High achieving learners had this to say: "She always praises us and always believes in us" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). Another said that, "She sometimes does criticize us when we don't do our work or when there's noise in the class, and we don't follow her procedures" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). Some learners felt that it was not really criticism and regarded it more as encouragement. A learner noted that often the teacher "kind of expected different things from us but when we give her what she need or what she wants to hear, and then she'll praise us in a good way". She continued by saying that the teacher would "tell us that she didn't expect this from us, it just shows that we're growing. It's good, she praises us a lot" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). A different learner remarked, "She normally doesn't react strange or in an ugly way" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR).

When the same group of learners were asked what they liked most about the way in which their teacher presented lessons, a learner indicated that "… she tries to make us feel at home, make us feel free and laugh about things. I don't think she believes in being serious all the time. She makes us feel free" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). Another added: "I think the way she teaches … she's being more herself … she includes her personality. She's a good person and a teacher because there are some teachers when they teach, you feel, even if they're teaching the right thing but you feel that there's something wrong with it because of the way that person is … but our teacher, she is just amazing" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). These learners also had the impression that their teacher "teaches with love for the subject" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). "She doesn't only teach because she is getting paid and doing her work, she also teaches because she likes teaching, she wants to teach, she wants to help us" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). One learner remarked: "Ja, we don't only take her as our teacher. We also take her as a friend, a mother and a mentor" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). Another response was: "… she knows

how to handle things at a certain time and she just understands. It's as if she knows everybody, everybody's strength and weaknesses" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). In response to a question about the teacher varying her pace, style or activities to suit the needs of diverse groups of learners in class, a learner pointed out that the teacher "is an equal person … I don't think she has that mentality that because they are maybe Indians, let me go a little slower, she has an equal pace for everyone" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR).

The H/A learners' responses to the question, "When there's conflict between a strong and weak learner in the class, how does your teacher react?" were as follows: "She listens to both sides of the story" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). A different learner explained that "… a lot of times the strong learners think they know too much, and then when the weak one knows that they … you know you're weak but you don't always want to be weak, and then you're going to try and be heard. And then she's going to listen to both sides" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). This was followed by "She doesn't usually comment she just listens and tells who is right and why that person is right" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR). Yet another learner added that "… she normally tells the strong learner not to be overconfident, you know. Just to resolve the matter immediately, because sometimes the strong learner may be overconfident, and the weak learner might feel inferior. So I think she tries to resolve the matter before it gets worse" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FAIR).

School C: Low Achievers

There was considerable variation in the responses of the low achieving (L/A) group of learners at School C when compared to the responses of the H/A group at the same school. The majority of the L/A learners felt that there was more criticism in their classes. One learner stated that "… when you perhaps didn't do your assignment or so, then she criticize you in front of everybody by giving you names like 'pinky in the brain' and all those things" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). Another stated that their teacher says "stuff like you won't be able to do nothing" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). One learner remarked that although sometimes the teacher would praise them, "… this boy he's doing stuff in class that I like about him, this and that …" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: FAIR), he continued by saying, "… but in certain ways it comes down when they criticize you in class and say you're a useless boy" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR).

Another learner spoke about their teacher having favourites, especially amongst the girls, in class. He felt this way because the teacher would not "punish" them when they do not have their work: "… just one day hit this one, hit that one, but when this specific one that they like and worship, like and praise, they come around in class but they leave everything like that" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). A similar response was: "In our class the teachers praise their favourite learners. They don't praise us … and they accuse the learners who are not working for something, like bunking and stuff, when you haven't been" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). Another learner added: "And after accusing you, then she's going to call you names, funny names" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). Yet another learner reported that "Our sir don't (sic) criticize one person only in class. When one did wrong, everybody falls … everybody has to pay for one person who did wrong" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). A learner pointed out that he sees criticism as encouragement and that learners should understand it (the criticism) in that context: "… he tells us if we don't work he will make us pay or so" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). He added: "Obviously for me it's like when he says that he wants us to do his work so that we cannot fail at the end of the day, it's just for us to understand that he wants us to pass. So I don't think it's criticism" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: FAIR). When asked how the teacher reacts when they are unsure of what to do or do not know the answer to a question, one learner responded by saying:

"Some teachers react in a bad way by calling you names. They tell you that you are dumb, you're not paying attention in class. They explained the work, when she didn't explain it" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). Another said: "Ja, when you don't know something the teacher will scream at you" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR).

When the same group of learners was asked how their teachers respond when they give an incorrect answer, one learner remarked: "Telling us (sic) stupid, because you haven't done your work" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). Another learner indicated that his teacher preferred that you give an incorrect answer than no answer at all, because "if you give no answer, then he screams at you or give you that funny names and things" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). The following comments indicate that learners in this group also had the impression that teachers treated them differently: "… some learners are slow and some learners are hardworking and all that, so the hard workers she treats them better, and the others she don't (sic) treat better" (FGI-6

L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). A learner agreed by saying: "… there's this situation when the teacher thinks to himself, these learners are too slow, I'll go with the ones that first answer, because I don't want to waste my time on the slow learners that don't want to learn quickly because they're just wasting my time and all that" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008; N/FAIR). A number of learners agreed by saying that "they show it" because "they usually work with the people that work hard, and if you're slow, then she won't notice you" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). One learner disagreed: "I don't know, but from my side, most of the teachers in the class, it's like everybody is equal." She continued by saying: "It's not because you're clever and you know your work the teacher is going to like you more or accept you more in class. It's up to you to show every individual that you want to work" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: FAIR).

Learners in this group indicated that some teachers are too serious: "I do like all my classes that I go to but I do get some of the teachers there are too serious, they don't laugh, they don't make jokes and stuff like that" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). Another said: "… that's why you find bunkers because they don't like to be in that class, the teacher always puts them off" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). When asked how their teacher responds when there is conflict between a weak and strong learner, one learner said that "He usually takes them to the office. That's the only thing he does, or either hit them both, if they're fighting" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). Another said that if learners are fighting in class, "most of the time teachers they just call in their parents and rather talk to the parents than talk to the learners" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR). An account was also given of a boy and girl who fought with each other in class while the other learners were working: "… and both of them were wrong because they both used strong language and stuff, so the sir expelled them and they were not allowed into his class. After that the parents came to school and they sorted out the problem" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: FAIR). When there is a verbal disagreement between two learners, "the teacher will look at which point is more suitable and then make a decision". The learner added that if the weak learner "maybe supplies a more suitable answer, she will support the weak learner instead of the strong learner" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: FAIR). Some learners felt that teachers would often listen to both points of view, while others felt that "they usually accuse the weaker one sometimes" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/FAIR).

Summary of School C

The H/A group at School C had more positive responses (10) than the L/A learners (6 positives). Both groups referred to their teachers as: "an equal person" (H/A) and "treats everybody equal" (L/A); "wants to help us" (H/A) and "he wants us to pass" (L/A). Both groups stated that their teacher "listens to both sides of a story". Interestingly at this school the H/A had no negative responses, whereas the L/A group had 20 negative responses. Again the L/A learners, as in School A, felt that teachers often belittled them and was unjust in their treatment of these learners. Comments included: "gives you names like pinky in the brain"; "they tell you that you are dumb"; "calls us stupid"; "you are a useless boy"; "teacher has favourites, especially amongst the girls"; "teachers praise their favourite learners"; "usually accuse the weak learners".

Summary across Schools

The positive responses of both categories of learners at the three different schools suggest relatively similar ideas and experiences of their teachers' approach to classroom interaction. Learners frequently mentioned that teachers treated everybody equally and with dignity. Teachers were approachable, sympathetic and understanding. They made themselves available to learners who had problems, whether they were personal or academic. Learners also felt that teachers were fair when dealing with conflict in the classroom. At School A and School C, the H/A group had more positive responses, whereas the L/A group at School B had more positive responses in relation to the sub-theme, being "fair".

There was much more variation with regard to the negative responses of both groups within and across the different schools. In school A, the H/A group had 5 negative responses while the L/A group had 9. In School B, the H/A group had 7 negative responses, while the L/A had 1. In School C, the H/A had no negative responses, while the L/A had 22. School C thus had the most negative responses and all these responses emanated from the L/A learners. School B, on the other hand, had a significant amount of negative responses that came from the H/A learners. The negative responses from learners at School A were 14 in total, with less than half obtained from the H/A group of learners.

The following **Table 4.3** illustrates the number of positive and negative responses for the sub-theme "show warmth and kindness while still being fair and firm".

	Positive responses	Negative responses
School A: H/A	6	3
L/A	5	8
School B: H/A	12	12
L/A	9	2
School C: H/A	10	0
L/A	6	20

Table 4.3

The following **Table 4.4 – Table 4.6**below list and code the utterances made by high and low achievers at Schools A, B and C, under the sub-theme, "show warmth, kindness while still being fair and firm (fair)":

School A:

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive responses included: will speak to offending learners after class is dismissed (privacy) he calls you one side (privacy) he won't embarrass you (respect) treats all learners the same irrespective of ability (equality) solves conflict in the best way he can (support) keeps students behind to solve problems (privacy)	**Positive responses included:** good marks are acknowledged (acknowledgement) teacher thinks something good of you (respect) something good about teacher (benevolent) talks politely to learners about behaviour (respect) makes time to listen to learner problems (support)
Negative responses included: the teacher will embarrass the learner (lack of respect) will always take the girls' side (sic) (bias) think girls are always right (bias) sides with academically strong learners (bias) accuses academically weak learners of starting arguments (bias)	**Negative responses included:** praise only when giving correct answers (lack of support) criticize only when talking something off the topic (relevant) compared to other learners (lack of respect) the teacher takes his frustration out on us (inconsiderate) he's angry and shouts at you for unnecessary things (inconsiderate) learners make teacher mad, he takes it out on other learners (inconsiderate) teacher does not respond to questions (disregard) puts you off in class (humiliation) teacher will shout at you … confuse you (disregard)

Table 4.4

School B:

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive responses included: teacher says good things about us (value) doesn't shout learners when giving wrong answers (patient) advises learners to speak about problems (support) offers help in solving personal/academic problems (support) takes offenders to office (accountability) fair in dealing with problems and punishment(equality) learners are comfortable with teachers calling out marks (value) feels good when teacher calls out marks(value) teachers can help if marks are bad(support) marks are kept confidential(privacy) learners treated fairly most of the time(equality) class as a whole treated equally(equality) wants classes to be at the same level of learning(equality)	**Positive responses included:** never hears teacher criticize – not his style(value) praises us all the time if we do well (value) sir doesn't criticize, he rather encourages (value) treats everybody the same, no inferior and superior(equality) treats all learners the same(equality) calls on me when I'm disruptive(accountability) he's very nice with us (value) takes offenders to the office (accountability) will speak to both learners in conflict situation – makes them apologize to each other (support) will go to the root of the problem (support)
Negative responses included: embarrass learners (lack of respect) blames learners, who are repeating grade, for negatively influencing other learners(bias) treats learners differently (those who passed and failed) (bias) teacher will joke about wrong answers(lack of respect) shouts in conflict situation(no support) makes learners kneel in front of class (humiliation) when verbal conflict occurs, teacher tells learners to sit down and keep quiet(no support) not nice when marks are read out (x3)(humiliation) teacher ignores learners protest against calling out marks(no support) learners find teacher reading marks	**Negative responses included:** makes learners kneel in front of class (humiliation)

embarrassing(humiliation) learners treated differently, according to ability(bias) learners not given the same instruction for task (bias)	

Table 4.5

School C:

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive responses included: always praises us and believes in us (value) criticizes us when we don't so our work or follow instructions or make a noise (accountability) she praises us in a good way (value) praises us a lot about our progress (value) knows everybody's strengths and weaknesses (value) is an equal person (equality) listens to both sides of the story (support) just listens and tells who is right and why (equality)	**Positive responses included:** praises when learners do "the right stuff" (value) he wants us to pass (support) treats everybody equal(equality) takes learners to the office (accountability) talk to both learners and parents (support) listen to both sides of a story (equality) learners will pay if they don't work (accountability) he (teacher) hits them both if they're fighting (equality)
Negative responses: none	**Negative responses included:** gives you names like 'pinky in the brain' (humiliation) you won't be able to do anything (lack of trust) they criticize you in class and say you are a useless boy(humiliation) teacher has favourites, especially amongst the girls (bias) teachers praise their favourite learners (bias) falsely accuse learners of bunking (lack of respect) she's going to call you funny names (humiliation) everybody has to pay for one person who did

	wrong (no support) they tell you that you are dumb (humiliation) the teacher will scream at you (lack of support) calls us stupid (humiliation) he screams at you or gives you that funny names (humiliation) she treats the hardworking learners better (bias) others (weak) she don't treat well don't want to waste time on slow learners (no support) if you're slow, she won't notice you (no support) teachers are too serious, don't laugh (lack of trust) the teacher always puts them off (humiliation) rather talks to the parents than talk to the learners (lack of trust) usually accuse the weak learners (bias)

Table 4.6

4.1.3 "Value Learners and Support Learning Goals, Opportunity to become Independent Thinkers".

Introduction

The third sub-theme, (individuals), refers to instances where learners are noticed, attended to, affirmed, teachers have an optimistic view of learners as people who can learn successfully. An example of this is suggested by comments like: "The teacher will help put you on the tight path, so that you can finish the school and do good (well)" and "… he'll know where you struggle with some areas and then he'll work on that with you".

School A: High Achievers

At School A, the H/A group of learners made the following responses. A learner stated that "… if he asks us a question and we answer it wrongly, then he will help us right" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). A learner explained that the teachers know that English is not their first language, Afrikaans is, so as a result they "find English very difficult in some learning areas … so the teachers will correct us when we're wrong" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). One learner said that "… maybe you have a problem, you didn't understand something in class, he will keep you behind when the class dismiss or after hours … then he will explain you the work (sic), so that you can understand the work" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). Another response was: "… he tries to correct you when you give a wrong answer in class, when you don't understand something … he tries to correct you" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL); and "… the teacher always helps me" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). A learner commented that the teacher would "only work with those that show they are eager to learn" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). However, a learner pointed out that "the children that don't like to work, that walk in and out of the class, he doesn't worry with that people" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/INDIVIDUAL).

When asked how often their teacher calls on them to provide an answer, or to demonstrate their work to others in class, the same group of learners provided the following responses**.** One learner commented: "Maybe today it's me, then tomorrow, if he did his work, then sir will ask him … not everyday the same person" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). A learner explained that their teacher takes notice of who is paying attention, and that if finds a person who seems not to

be paying attention, "… staring out of the window," then the teacher would "… refer to that person to give him an answer, … just to test his listening skills" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). Another added: "… those who don't give notice in class, who don't actually want to be there, he's always on their case." He continued by saying that the teacher is basically "trying to get them on the same level as those who are taking note in class of what is going on (sic)" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). A learner also commented that "he pressurizes the children that don't do their work" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

In response to questions about their teachers' style of teaching – what they liked about the way lessons were presented and whether or not the teacher varies the pace, style and activities to cater for diverse groups of learners – comments were relatively similar. Learner responses included: "Like he will ask the class if they don't understand, then maybe there are one or two hands, then he will … make an example of something … just to make them understand. He'll go out of his way just to help them" (FGi-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL); "… he slags [slacks] for those that don't understand clearly, that's maybe finding it hard to understand" (FGI-2 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL); "… they must tell him if he's going too fast, then he will do his utmost best just to … accommodate them … they not just slow learners, but just slow minded … he's like trying his utmost best just to accommodate their understanding" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

When learners were asked how their teacher responds when they have not done well in a test, a learner remarked: "Some of them like pressurize children just to motivate them to do better … so they will do their utmost best to perform" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

School A: Low Achievers

Responses from the L/A at School A in relation to the sub-theme 'individual' were as follows: "Sometimes you feel like teachers treat you differently, when a teacher is strict on you … because teachers want only the best for you. And they'll force you into working hard … and sometimes you feel that the teacher is pressuring you, no the teacher doesn't like you". This learner stated that he felt this way the previous year – that the teacher did not like him – "… but this year I can see that, no, this teacher wants only the best for me" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008:

INDIVIDUAL). Another response was that teachers would tell learners to be more attentive in class, "Don't always make jokes … jokes you can do it now and then. Don't, most of the time (sic), make jokes. The English and most of the other teachers will encourage you" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). A learner pointed out: "The teachers will help put you on the right path. So then you can finish school and do good (sic). Then work for yourself" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). One learner said that teachers often called on learners who like to "talk a lot in class … so by me, I always get to answer questions. Sometimes it's not that the teacher is being funny, but sometimes I can say that I'm learning from it" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL). Other responses were: "… and then he will come and tell you how and help you to understand the work" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL) and "… he calls me on my name, and then he asks for my work" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

Summary of School A

In School A, there were significantly more positive responses from the H/A (16) than from the L/A (6) learners. Both groups had only 1 negative response. The positive responses from both categories of learners were relatively similar. Also, within the H/A group, learners often had similar responses. These included: "he will help us right"; "teachers will correct us when we wrong"; "tries to correct you when you don't understand". Other examples were: "pressurize children who don't work"; "pressurize children just to motivate them". Learners in the L/A group also had similar responses: "teacher wants only the best for you"; "most teachers will encourage you"; "will help you on the right path".

School B: High Achievers

Learners of the H/A group at School B commented on how often their teacher would praise them. One learner said that their teacher "praises us when we've done well in a specific exam and so forth, he makes us stand and he points out that you got a distinction, which is very nice" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL). Another added: "He'll criticize you basically if you haven't done at your best, if he thinks you can do better and you are capable of much more" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL).When this group was asked if they felt that their teacher treated them the same as the other learners in the class, one learner pointed out that she feels that the teacher treats her the same as other learners, but that "other people, maybe those that struggle

a bit, he'll know where you struggle with some areas and then he'll work on that with you" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL)

The H/A group commented as follows, when asked whether their teacher varied her/his pace, style and activities to cater for the diverse groups of learners in class: "…he'll go over things that he went with us last year so that they're (learners repeating grade) on the same place as us" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL). Another stated: "… if you understand better than the rest of your class, then she would like talk to them individually" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

In response to "How often does your teacher call on you?" a learner explained that when they are not paying attention, the teacher would ask that particular learner a question because "he can see you're not listening, you don't know what's going on" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL).. Another learner added that the "noise maker" will also always be in trouble as "sir will always see you doing wrong and he'll always ask for your answers and stuff" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

Responses from the same group of learners included: "…but eventually she'll tell you that you must pull up your socks, it's near the end of the year and so you must work hard" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL). Also "… she would help you. She would like arrange after classes with you, during break you can go to her and she will explain the work to you" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL). One learner pointed out that "… if I've done bad (sic), he'll be disappointed in me because he knows that I can do better, I know that I can do better". She added that "he'll go on and like preach over and tell me that you can do it … and why he thinks I can do better and he'll just preach" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

School B: Low Achievers

At School the responses of the L/A group were as follows: "… we had to come after classes for an essay … so he was explaining how we should write. He makes time to help you" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL); "… even though you fail, he won't put you down. He will tell you

that you will pass … it's not the end of the world" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL). Another learner indicated that the teacher frequently calls on her to provide an answer in class. She pointed out that "it's not because he's picking on me or anything, it's just to help me understand the work" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

When asked how their teacher responds when learners approach her/him with a personal or academic problem, learners made the following comments: "She's open to that … especially academic. Like last time we had a whole period just on putting your studies in order, like how you should study" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL); "… if you fail, he will call you and maybe he will make a timetable for you or both of you will make a timetable of studying, how you must study, how you must go about it … like be able to know work and pass at the end of the day" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL). Other responses were: "… he sees that okay, I can boost this child's confidence if I tell him … you can do that. It will encourage you to do better in your school work and exams" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL) and "… he speaks about your behaviour and what you must do in order to pass" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

Summary of School B

At School B, the H/A group had 10 positive responses, while the L/A had 8 positive responses. Both groups of learners had no negative responses. In addition, both groups made reference to their teachers being considerate and accommodating, and that they would clarify certain sections to ensure that all learners understood the work: "he'll know where you struggle, he'll work on that with you" (H/A); "he'll go over things so that learners repeating the grade are on the same place" (H/A); "… can go to her and she will explain the work to you" (H/A); "he makes time to help you" (L/A); "he knows there are slow learners who need to understand" (L/A); "… it's just to help me understand the work" (L/A). Learner responses in both categories also suggested that their teachers were supportive and encouraged them to work hard in order to obtain good results: "encourage … especially near the end of the year" (H/A); "focuses on both strong and weak … to pass exams" (L/A). Learners in the L/A group commented on their teacher assisting them with drawing up study timetables and discussing proper study methods: "… he helps you draw up a

study timetable and how you must study" and "… devoted a whole period on how you must study correctly".

School C: High Achievers

There were more positive responses from the H/A group of learners at School C. They made the following comments: "… she emphasizes on the fact that we should take the subject more seriously" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INDIVIDUAL). Another response was: "… some cases she does focus more on the children that don't work because they're problem children" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INDIVIDUAL). One learner remarked that if a teacher tells a learner that s/he "is unimpressed" with their work, that learner "is going to try and work harder" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INDIVIDUAL). A learner indicated that "To the children who normally don't want to work, it feels like she doesn't need to waste a lot of time on them" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/INDIVIDUAL).

When asked how their teacher responds when they have not done well in a test, a learner explained that if you are a hardworking person and there is a sudden drop in your marks, the teacher "will question that particular learner and let you know that they are unimpressed". She added that this " will motivate the learner to work harder … we're going to do our best" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

School C: Low Achievers

The L/A group of learners at School C had the following responses in relation to this sub-theme. A learner stated: "… and some they show you that they're there for you to help you through" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: INDIVIDUAL). One learner felt that the teacher spends more time with the clever learners, "… with the good people, the clever ones … then if you don't know your work then you're wasting [our] their time" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/INDIVIDUAL).

When these learners were asked how their teacher reacts when they do not do well in a test, a learner stated that the teacher will tell them to come and rewrite the test after school "so that he will come and help you" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: INDIVIDUAL). Another indicated: "… if you

did bad, they will actually tell you, you have to come to him in your own time, so that they can come explain it to you" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: INDIVIDUAL).

Summary of School C

The H/A group at School C had 4 positive responses while the L/A had 3. Most of the comments from both groups indicated that teachers were willing to help all learners and motivate them to attend extra classes to improve their marks. Comments included: "… will motivate the learners to work harder … we're going to do our best" (H/A); "… they show that they there foe you to help you through" (L/A) and "… she emphasizes that we should take the subject more seriously" (H/A); "… you have to come in your own time so that he can explain to you" (L/A).

The negative responses from both groups – each group had I negative response – showed a difference in learners' understanding of their teachers' behaviour. The H/A learners felt that the teachers did not need to "waste" their time on learners who did not want to work. The L/A learners felt that teachers spent more time with the "good people … the clever ones" and that if "you did not know your work, then you're wasting their time".

Summary across Schools

There were more positive responses at all schools from both the H/A (30) and L/A groups (19). Learners generally felt that teachers were genuinely concerned about their progress within the classroom context and would take time to ensure that all learners understood the work. Learners' comments included: "… he will help us right" (H/A); "… the teachers always helps me" (H/A); "… she helps you to understand the work" (L/A) and "… he makes time to help you" (L/A). A considerable number of comments alluded to teachers motivating learners to work hard to achieve good exam results. Responses included; "… he pressurizes children to help them to do better (H/A) and "… he devoted a whole period on how you must study correctly" (L/A). The majority of learners from both categories of achievement felt that teachers were willing to help all learners and in this way, learners felt that they were being treated as individuals. Some of the comments were as follows: "… teacher wants only the best for me" (L/A) and "… he knows I can do better, I know that I can do better" (H/A).

The following **Table 4.7** illustrates the positive and negative responses for the sub-theme "individual", at the three schools:

	Positive responses	Negative responses
School A: H/A	16	1
L/A	8	1
School B: H/A	10	None
L/A	8	None
School C: H/A	4	1
L/A	3	1

Table 4.7

The following **Table 4.8 – Table 4.10** list and code utterances of both the High and Low achieving learners in relation to the sub-theme "value individuals and support learning goals, opportunity to become independent thinkers" (INDIVIDUAL).

Sub-theme: individual

School A:

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive responses included: he will help us right (support) they will help us understand it better (support) teachers will correct us when we wrong(support) will keep you behind to explain the work (support) tries to correct you when you don't understand something (support) does not ask the same person everyday (opportunity) test his listening skills (opportunity) he's always on their case (accountability) pressurizes children who don't work (accountability) tries to make you understand (support) the teacher always helps me (support) slows down for those who don't understand clearly (patience) tries his best to accommodate their (slow learners') understanding (patience) makes sure everybody understands him (patience) push you on your level (support) pressurize children to motivate them (support)	**Positive responses included:** teacher wants only the best for you (value) most teachers will encourage you (support) will help you on the right path (support) often calls on learners to provide answers (opportunity) repeats explanations (patience) will come and tell you how and help you understand the work (support)
Negative response included: He doesn't worry with that people (no support)	**Negative responses included:** they don't slow down (lack of support)

Table 4.8

School B:

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive responses included: points out to the class that you have a distinction (value) he thinks that you can do better and you are capable of much more (value) he'll know where you struggle, he'll work on that with you (support) he'll go over things so that learners repeating grade fully understand work (patience) she would talk to them individually (support) encourages you to pull up your socks, especially near year end (support) can go to her and she will explain work to you(support) he knows that I can do better (value) tells you that you can do it (value) calls you to his desk, explains where you went wrong (support) **No negative responses**	**Positive responses included:** he makes time to help you (extra time) he will tell you that you will pass (support) it's just to help me understand the work (support) he knows there are slow learners who need to understand (patience) focuses on both strong and weak learners to understand the work/pass exams (equality) used period to explain effective study methods to learners (support) he helps you draw up study timetable and explains how you must study (support) teachers boost learner' confidence through encouragement (support) **No negative responses**

Table 4.9

School C:

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive responses included: we should take subject more seriously (respect) focus more on the children who don't work (accountability) will question that particular learner opportunity) will motivate learner to work harder (support) **Negative responses included:** doesn't need to waste a lot of time on them (lack of support)	**Positive responses included:** they're there to help you through (support) he will come and help you (support) you have to come to him, he will explain the work (patience) **Negative responses included:** you don't understand, but they still want the answers (lack of support) if you don't know the work, then you're wasting their time (lack of support)

Table 4.10

Theme Two: Trust and Respect

Introduction

This section will discuss the second construct, "trust and respect", with reference to the learner focus group interviews. The literature shows that relational trust and co-operation between students and teachers play a significant role in the improvement of teaching and learning. One of the findings of a study conducted in South Africa by Moloi et al (2010) is that the existence of trusting relationships between teachers and learners, coupled with successful pedagogic dialogue, contribute to the educational success of the schools that formed part of their study. Moving abroad, Noddings (1992) argues that good teaching and learning starts with the construction of trusting relationships. Also, based on the findings of a study conducted by Hoy (2002), the author was able to theorize that trusting others is a fundamental aspect of human learning because learning is a typically co-operative process, which in turn is positively influenced by trusting relationships. The Quali-teach project conducted by Collins, Harkins & Nind (2002), which set out to probe learners' perceptions of "good teaching", highlighted the importance of mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship. Similarly Benhabib (1989, cited in Burbules, 1993) argues that respect, particularly with regard to the dialogical relation (or classroom reciprocity), is an important element in maintaining "egalitarian reciprocity" among participants.

4.2 Trust and Respect

Introduction

Three sub-themes are included within the theme of "trust and respect". These are: can rely on the teacher to act in the best interest of learners (RELY ON); create secure, safe relationships and learning environments (SAFE) and maintain mutual regard/respect (RESPECT).

4.2.1 Can Rely on Teacher to Act in Best Interest of Learner

The first sub-theme (rely on) refers to instances when teachers provide both emotional and cognitive support to learners and learners can depend on teachers' goodwill. It also refers to instances of teachers going the extra mile to assist learners. An example of this is suggested by

comments like: "… if you don't understand, then he consults other teachers to come and help us" and "… will try his best to help you with your problem".

School A: High Achievers

The responses of the H/A learners at School A were all positive and relatively similar. One learner pointed out that their teacher will go out of his way to ensure that learners understand the work. He will "consult other teachers from the other class if he can't explain it like you want him to explain". The learner added: "… he will just ask of the other teachers to explain it, like you would understand (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: RELY ON). Another learner confirmed this by saying that "… if we don't understand, then he consults other teachers to come and help us (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: RELY ON).A learner also mentioned that "… he will maybe organize after (extra) classes for us to understand better" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: RELY ON).

When asked how their teachers respond when learners approach them with a personal or academic problem, a learner stated that whether it is personal or academic, the teacher will "try his best to help you with your problem. He will try to solve your problem" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: RELY ON). A different learner responded by saying that if it is a "personal problem at home", the teacher will ask the learner if he may contact her parents and "ask them maybe to give him more information on what the problem is all about". He will even have a meeting with the parents "when everybody is dismissed … on solving the problem (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: RELY ON).

School A: Low Achievers

The L/A learners at School A had only three responses to this sub-theme and two were in stark contrast to each other. When asked if their teachers make themselves available for consultation, 2 learners replied that "They do" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: RELY ON), whereas 3 learners said "He won't" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/RELY ON). Yet another learner indicated that if there are learners who do not understand the work "when the periods are too short", then the teacher will tell them "come back when the periods are over … then you can come to him" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: RELY ON).

Summary of School A

In School A, there were more positive than negative responses. The H/A group had 5 positive and no negative responses, while the L/A learners had 2 positive and 1 negative response. The comments across the two groups were relatively varied. In the H/A, more than one learner indicated that their teacher would consult other teachers if he was unable to explain work sufficiently for learners to understand: "… if we don't understand, then he consults other teachers to help us". Learners in this group also stated that their teacher would contact their parents if the need arises, in order to sort out personal or academic problems. These types of teacher actions were not experienced by the L/A group. Both groups did however refer to teachers "organizing after (extra) classes" in order to assist learners with their school work.

School B: High Achievers

The H/A learners at this school had two similar positive responses and one negative response related to this sub-theme. They were as follows: "He usually says, come see me at break, if you don't understand" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: RELY ON) and "She would arrange after classes with you … during break you can go to her and she will explain the work to you" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: RELY ON). The negative response was, "… I do sometimes but not anymore because if you tell him something and then sometimes it can come out, maybe he'll write it in your report or something" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/RELY ON).

School B: Low Achievers

All the responses from the L/A group made reference to the teacher consulting the learners' parents: "… or if you fail, then he will say, we must just call in your parents. Then he'll speak to your parents and also he will show the report to your parents" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: RELY ON). Another was, "… he'll call your parents, and when your parents come, you must also be there so that the communication to whatever things that Mr. K is saying everyone must be there and understand what's happening" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: RELY ON), and "… and he will like call in your parents" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: RELY ON).

Summary of School B

There were more positive than negative responses at School B. The H/A learners had 2 positive and I negative response, whereas the L/A group had 3 positive and no negative responses. The H/A were similar in that both comments referred to teachers explaining work after the class had been dismissed, "… come see me at break" and "… during break you can go to her and she will explain the work". All the positive L/A responses referred to teachers consulting parents to discuss their children's progress or lack thereof, "… if you fail, he will call in your parents".

School C: High Achievers

The responses from the H/A learners were quite varied. A learner indicated that she had confided in her teacher and that the teacher "handled the matter in a very professional way" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: RELY ON). Another learner, when asked would they have the courage to speak to their teacher about a problem outside of school, replied that it depended on the problem because the teacher is "so soft and maybe sometimes she won't understand the problem" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/RELY ON). This learner however added that the teacher is faced with different problems from different learners, so "you don't expect her to solve each and every problem … she's not superwoman or anything" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: RELY ON). One learner explained that if the teacher notices a change in attitude towards the subject as a result of your friends, "she's going to make you aware of the fact that your marks are dropping because of the people you are hanging out with" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: RELY ON).

School C: Low Achievers

There were more responses from the L/A learners at School C, in comparison to the H/A at the same school. In response to a question about teachers' availability for consultation, the comments of 3 different learners were, "Sometimes … they will help you sometimes" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: RELY ON). Another response was: "… most of the time most teachers respond very positively. They act upon what you say and they there to help out" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: RELY ON). A learner made the following comment: "The teacher will tell you that you must come write it (test) over after school so that he or she will come and help you" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: RELY ON). Another learner responded to a negative comment about learners not being able to trust teachers with personal information, by saying: "I don't think that they will just

expose you in the class like that … they're more mature and they also parents, so they know how you feel as a young person" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: RELY ON).

The negative responses of the L/A group included comments to the effect that teachers will often only call out the names of "the children with the least marks … it's almost like to embarrass you in front of the class" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/RELY ON), and another comment was that sometimes you think that you can trust the teacher, but after you've confided in him, "they'll make fun of you and tell it to all of the children in the class"(FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/RELY ON).

Summary of School C

At School C, there were more positive than negative responses. The 3 positive comments of the H/A learners and 4 positive comments emanating from the L/A group of learners were similar in content. The learners in both categories referred to teachers being helpful and understanding, and would sometimes go out of their way to assist learners with personal or school-related problems. Comments from both groups included: "… handled it in a very professional way" (H/A); "… she's going to make you aware that your marks are dropping" (H/A); "… they act upon what you say and will help you out" (L/A).

The H/A group had 1 negative comment, whereas the L/A had 2 negative comments. In addition, the comment between the two groups showed considerable variance. While the H/A group merely felt that their teacher might not understand their problems because "she is so soft", the L/A learners' comments suggested that these learners could not rely on teachers to act in the best interest of learners. L/A learners pointed out that they were often embarrassed or let down by their teachers, "… to embarrass you in front of the whole class" and "they'll make fun of you … tell it to all the children".

Summary across schools

There were more positive responses from the H/A and the L/A groups at all 3 schools. Learners generally felt that teachers did provide both emotional and cognitive support to learners when needed. Comments included: "… he will call your parents … you must also be there" (L/A); "…

he consults other teachers to come and help us" (H/A). In most instances learner responses also indicated that teachers were prepared to go the extra mile to assist them in both personal and academic contexts. Learner responses included: "He will maybe organize after (extra) classes" (H/A) and "… during break you can go to her … will explain the work to you" (L/A). The negative responses (7) were significantly less than the positives (19). Also, the majority of the negative responses (5) came from the L/A group, and in these instances learners felt strongly that they could not rely on their teachers to act in learners' best interests. Comments included: "… after you've confided in them, they'll make fun of you … tell it to all the children in the class" (L/A). When these learners were asked if their teacher is available for consultation, three learners replied: "No, he won't" (L/A).

The **Table 4.11** below illustrates the number of positive and negative responses for the sub-theme "rely on", at Schools A, B and C:

	Positive responses	Negative responses
School A: H/A	5	none
L/A	2	1
School B: H/A	2	1
L/A	3	None
School C: H/A	3	1
L/A	4	2

Table 4.11

The following **Table 4.12** list and code the utterances of both the H/A and L/A groups of learners at the three schools, in relation to the sub-theme "can rely on teacher to act in best interest of learners". (rely on)

Sub-theme: rely on

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
School A: **Positive responses included:** consult other teachers to explain work (support) consult other teachers to help us (support) organize extra classes (extra time) try his best to help solve your problem (support) contact parents, have meeting (accountability) **Negative responses included:** none	**School A:** **Positive responses included:** available for consultation (x2) (support) can come back when period is over (extra time) **Negative responses included:** not available for consultation (x3) (no support)
School B: **Positive responses included:** can see teacher during break to explain work (extra time) arrange extra classes (extra time) **Negative responses included:** do not trust teacher enough to share problem (lack of trust)	**School B:** **Positive responses included:** will call in parents if you fail (accountability) consult parents, learner must be present (accountability) will call in parents (accountability) **Negative responses included:** none
School C: **Positive responses included:** handles matters in a professional way (professionalism) doesn't expect teacher to solve everything; not superwoman teacher will tell you that marks are dropping (accountability) **Negative responses included:** teacher too soft to understand the problem	**School C:** **Positive responses included:** will help sometimes (support) teachers respond positively and act on what learners say (support) allowed to rewrite tests to improve marks (extra time) teachers seen as mature adults – won't betray learners' confidence (professionalism) **Negative responses included:** teachers make fun of learners after learners confide in them (lack of professionalism) call out low marks only – embarrassing (lack of respect)

Table 4

4.2.2 Create Secure, Safe Relationships and Learning Environments

Introduction

The second sub-theme (safe) refers to instances when teachers are not patronizing within the learning context, teachers and learners are willing to experiment with new practices, learners are able to talk to teachers (also outside of lessons). An example of this is suggested by comments like: "… so if you have a problem that you want to talk about, then you can like go to the teacher you trust … you can like come together and tell him the basic problem you have".

School A: High Achievers

The responses of the H/A learners at School A were considerably similar within the group.

In response to the question, "Do you risk yourselves and present your answers out loud, even if you know that they are not correct?" a learner replied, "Yes, I always do it" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: SAFE). A second learner remarked that even though she knew that her answer was wrong, she'll "say it out loud. So those who laugh, I know I'll be incorrect, but then the teacher always helps me. Always, always, always" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: SAFE). A third learner said, "… it's best to … even if you are incorrect, to say your answer …yes, I have the courage" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: SAFE). Another learner added: "I would say yes, I also have the courage to do it, to answer the teacher" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: SAFE). Yet a learner pointed out that "not everyone, only certain people have the courage … like girls, they are shy in class, they don't want to speak." He added that even if "it is for marks, they just sit there, like take a zero or something like that" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE). Other learners confirmed that they are often given oral assignments or have to do presentations, and that some would rather forfeit their marks: "… people who don't want to talk, they just take a zero" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE). One learner indicated: "… sometimes children found it embarrassing because they don't want to answer … if they answer, like the class is going to laugh at them" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE).

When learners were asked if they had the courage to speak to their teachers about a problem outside of school, a learner indicated that the first thing he'll do would be "to find a teacher that [I] he trusts." He continued by saying that not all the teachers are the same and that he might confide in a particular teacher, "… then I [told] him my whole problems and maybe break, he

could tell his friend". The learner concluded by saying: "I must find a particular teacher that I trust and I must be open with" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: SAFE). Another learner agreed with the previous speaker: "… so if you have a problem that you want to talk about, then you can like go to the teacher you trust … then you can ask him if he can't lend you some of his time … you can like come together and tell him the basic problem that you have" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: SAFE). One learner remarked that she would not have the courage to go to her teacher with a personal problem as "it won't be in our culture to do that" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE). She did however point out that she will approach the teacher with "a school problem". She mentioned that, "… if I can't like read then I'll go to the sir and ask him for help" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: SAFE).

School A: Low Achievers

The L/A responses at School A, suggested that learners had more positive experiences in relation to this theme. A learner stated that most of the time when their teacher asks a question, "you're like unsure to answer the question, but you want to answer because he has asked the question, you want to answer the question" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: SAFE). One learner remarked: "… now and then you're scared to ask questions" (FGI-2 L/a Sept 2008: N/SAFE).

When this group of learners (L/A) was asked how they felt when they have to demonstrate or call out their answer to the rest of the class, a learner replied that in their class "children will jump up to answer a question" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: SAFE). Learners felt comfortable to call out answers and interact with other learners. They had fewer inhibitions in these classes and did not feel insecure, "scared" or "nervous" or "shy" to participate in lessons. A learner added that "sometimes you have a class that no-one wants to answer a question". She continued by saying that it is not "exciting" for one person to always answer questions and that "some people are very nervous to answer a question" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE).A different learner remarked: "when the teacher asks something, the whole class is quiet (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE).

The following responses were provided by the same group of learners: "I'm not shy in class, I like standing up, telling my answer … I don't care you can laugh here next to me, because you're not as correct as me standing up and telling my answer to the teacher' (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008:

SAFE); “We like have a jokey class, so it’s not hard for us to answer the questions … it’s not hard to stand up. You can stand up anytime … even though you know you’re wrong” (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: SAFE); “I prefer a small class so that when you have a wrong answer, there’s not so much comedians in the class” (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE); “… most of the learners are shy in class. They’re shy to ask questions and tell the teacher they don’t understand” (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE).

When asked if they would have the courage to speak to their teacher about a problem that’s not school related, the same group of learners indicated that, “It depends on if you can trust that teacher … who you trust? Who can you speak to most of the time?” The learner continued by saying, “Like teachers that I can say you can speak your problems with and stuff like that, is Mr. B. I won’t say Mr. N because with him it’s mostly work” (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: SAFE). Another learner remarked “My personal stuff, I won’t” (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE). A learner stated that often teachers will, when speaking to the class, indirectly refer to a problem that a learner has spoken to him/her about and that makes learners feel uncomfortable: “That’s why sometimes you don’t go to teachers because we’re scared that they will throw it back into your face” (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE).

The L/A learner responses highlighted not only safe relationships with their teachers, but a particular sense of feeling safe which is derived from the teacher creating a secure learning environment. Learners feel safe with the knowledge that teachers are prepared for their lessons, that they enter their classrooms knowing that they will do work, that there is a sense of continuity in terms of the prior lessons and that they can depend on and trust the teacher to present lessons that, according to these learners, are adequate and effective. They feel that they are in a safe space. This may be contrasted with comments made by learners: “… when we sit with our books at home, teachers aren’t there, so who’s going to explain to us, because our parents don’t know” and “… sometimes they do know some things, but they don’t know how we do it in class” (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE). These aspects of the sub-theme “safe” were evident when the L/A at School A, were asked what they liked most about the way their teacher presents lessons. Responses were as follows: “I can say most of the time, all the teachers I get, they’re prepared to us (sic). When you come in class, they have work for you, most of the time”. The learner added

that "… they tell you 'class take out your books, and the work we did yesterday, take it out'" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: SAFE); "When you come in class you see the teacher is busy on the board, you know now we're going to work" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: SAFE); "… not come in class, the teacher is sitting there, doing her own things, scratching here and there, and you know, we're not going to work this period" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/SAFE); "… most of the time when I come in class we work" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: SAFE). "… you come in class, stand and pray, after that you sit, you can see that the teacher is prepared. His things are on the table … it's not that he's doing this and doing that, and he's running to the office and he's not coming back. No, he will stay in the class, he knows what to do, every step … he takes his step, step one, we're doing this, step two, we're doing this, tomorrow we're doing that" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: SAFE).

Summary of School A

At School A, there were 21 positive responses altogether from the H/A and L/A groups, and 12 negative responses. The H/A accounted for a third of the positive responses. These learners had relatively similar experiences. Four learners indicated that they will risk giving incorrect answers because they know that the teacher will correct and encourage them. Comments included: "… I know I'll be incorrect, but then the teacher always helps me. Always, always, always" and "I will say yes I also have the courage". Three H/A learners felt that they sufficiently trusted teachers to discuss personal and/or academic problems with them. Comments included: "I must find a particular teacher that I trust and I must be open with" and "… if I can't like read, then I'll go to the sir and ask him for help". The rest of the positive responses (14), emanated from the L/A group. These comments ranged from firstly, learners having the courage to call out their answers even though they may be incorrect, "You're like unsure to answer the question, but you want to answer the question", to secondly, learners having a sense of feeling safe in a learning environment where teachers are well-prepared for lessons and learners know that they have work to do, "… when you come in class they have work for you", and "… he knows what to do … step one, we're doing this, step two, we're doing this, … tomorrow we're doing that". Thirdly, comments from these learners suggested that they will speak to teachers about personal or academic problems, "Like teachers … you can speak your problems with is Mr. K. I won't say Mr. N because with him, it's mostly work".

The H/A group had 4 negative responses, whereas the L/A had 8 negative responses. The comments of both categories of learners were considerably similar. Both groups – 8 responses in all – referred to learners not feeling secure/confident to answer questions or contribute to lessons, "… only certain people have the courage … like girls, they are shy in class … they don't want to speak" (H/A); "… if they answer, like the class is going to laugh at them" (H/A); "… now and then you're scared to ask questions" (L/A) and "some people are very nervous to answer a question" (L/A). Both sets of learner comments indicated that they will not discuss personal and/or academic problems with their teachers: "… it won't be in our culture to do that" (H/A); "My personal stuff, I won't" (L/A) and "… we/re scared that they will throw it back into our faces" (L/A). One learner commented that when teachers come unprepared, no work is done, "… the teacher is sitting there doing her own things … we're not going to work this period".

School B: High Achievers

The responses of the H/A learners at School B in relation to the sub-theme "create secure, safe relationships and learning environments" suggested that learners had similar positive and negative experiences.

When asked if they would risk themselves and present their answers out loud even if they were not sure that the answers were correct, a number of learners replied "Yes" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: SAFE) and "… if I think it's right, then I just say it … ja, I do have the courage to say the answers out loud" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: SAFE); while some responded negatively: "I don't think I have the confidence to just say an answer if I'm not sure" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/SAFE). Another was: "I think I have a fear of embarrassment and how the teacher will react, you just don't know, so it's better not to answer if you're not sure" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/SAFE).

The question, "Would you have the courage to speak to your teacher about a problem outside of school?" elicited the following responses: "… our teacher she's very open to what she tells us stuff about her family. So she makes us like we can also say our personal things with her" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: SAFE); "I do kind of talk to the sir about my personal issues maybe sometimes. Maybe I have like problems at home (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: SAFE); "I don't think I'd go to him

… it's personal things that I want for myself, and I don't even feel comfortable with the sir knowing what's going on in my personal life" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/SAFE); "I also wouldn't trust sir because maybe some of this stuff I'm not telling my mother … then it's personal stuff that I'd like to deal with on my own, and then maybe it would slip out and I wouldn't like that" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/SAFE); "I don't think so. I know that it will remain confidential but I still wouldn't want the teacher knowing personal details about me, because I feel that's my business" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/SAFE).

Other comments included: "… she would like advise you to come and speak to her if you feel comfortable speaking to her … she will say you can come talk to her, and if there's anything she can do to help you" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: SAFE) and "I feel embarrassed because sometimes I didn't do well in a subject, and then the children will tease you" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: N/SAFE).

School B: Low Achievers

The responses of the L/A group at School B indicated that learners had very different experiences when compared to the H/A learners at this school. There were mixed comments in response to whether learners would present their answers out loud even if they were not sure that they were correct. One learner mentioned, "I would risk … I did risk before, because I know that Mr. K will eventually correct you if you're wrong. And yes … I won't see it as a risk, I just see it as getting clarification if you're wrong" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: SAFE). A different learner remarked that she would also risk calling out her answer: "… because even like Mr. K he gives me the correct answer and he tells me where I went wrong" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: SAFE). Another comment was: "… everybody has a keen understanding of the way he teaches and his style and so forth" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: SAFE).

A learner said that he did not have the courage to do that, "I don't" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: N/safe). Another indicated: "… you find that children in the class are very rude so sometimes … I'm actually shy, so it will be difficult for me to answer, because I know they're going to make a joke out of me." A learner added, "I don't usually answer if it's wrong, I only answer when I know that my answer is accurate" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: N/SAFE). Yet another learner stated

that he would not risk it, “No … sometimes I don’t listen, or I think my answer is wrong, but most of the time it’s right actually” (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: N/SAFE).

When asked how their teacher responds when approached with a personal or academic problem, a learner pointed out; “He’s open to that … especially academic” (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: SAFE), but added that “… as far as personal problems, I don’t really know about that because I never confronted Mr. K with personal problems” (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: N/SAFE). Other comments included: “Yes, I would trust Mr. B with personal problems outside school” (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: SAFE); “… you feel comfortable with him already, so we trust him to tell him our things” (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: SAFE); “I think the best part is that he’s very nice with us, so in the class we sit, we don’t feel neglected” (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: SAFE). A different learner remarked: “I won’t say I don’t trust him, he’s a very good man, but really, I don’t trust anyone” (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: N/SAFE).

Summary of School B

At School B, the responses, both positive and negative, were relatively evenly spread across the H/A and L/A groups. There were 12 positive responses – 5 from the H/A , and 7 from the L/A group. The negative responses were 11 in total – 6 responses from the H/A, and 5 from the L/A. In addition to this, all the positive responses were considerably similar to one another. These included: “I will risk answers even if I’m unsure” (H/A); “I will risk answering. I know that Mr. K will correct/clarify the answers” (L/A); “She will advise you to come and speak to her if you feel comfortable (H/A) and “… you feel comfortable with him, so we trust him to tell him our things” (L/A).

The negative responses of both groups were also similar: “I don’t think I have the confidence to answer if I’m unsure” (H/A); “I don’t have the courage to do that (present answers if unsure)” (L/A); “I don’t want teachers knowing my personal stuff” (H/A) and “I have never confronted Mr. K with personal things” (L/A).

School C: High Achievers

The responses from the H/A at School C were overwhelmingly positive with learners sharing similar experiences. When learners were asked if they would risk themselves and present their answers out loud even if they were not sure that the answers were correct, the majority of the learners said that they would, "Yes, always" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE), and that they do not feel ashamed or shy. Another learner said that it depends because "children are going to laugh about it and maybe she'll also laugh about it" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/SAFE).

When asked if learners would have the courage to speak to their teacher about a problem outside of school, comments were varied and included the following: "I would definitely have the courage" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE); "Yes, I will" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE); "… there are some people you can tell your problems to … someone that you told your problems to before and that person understands" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE); "It depends on what it is, like for instance, on what the problem is" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE). Other responses included: "… she made sure that it was between me and her … I think I'm used to her" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE); "We don't only take her as a teacher … also as a friend and a mother and a mentor" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE) and "… she just understands. It's as if she knows everybody, everybody's strengths and weaknesses" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE).

Negative comments from the same (H/A) group included: "I don't think so … it depends on what the problem is" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/SAFE); "I don't think I'd tell the teacher my problems, no I don't think so" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/SAFE); "For me it depends which (sic) kind of a problem it is … if it's like very, very difficult and a very, very personal problem, I won't go" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/SAFE); "I'd go to a teacher if it's a problem that links to schoolwork … but if it's something totally far away from school, then … a lot of times I handle it with my family" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/SAFE).

Comments related to what learners liked most about their teachers' lesson presentation demonstrated that learners felt safe because they could trust that the teacher knew what she was doing. The literature shows that trusting relationships between teachers and learners may play a critical role in the improvement of learning and teaching (Noddings, 1992). In this case learners

felt that they could trust their teacher to cover work that they would be tested on in the exams and they thus felt that they would be prepared for the examination. This gave them a sense of feeling safe with this teacher, they were in safe hands. Their comments were as follows: "We know exactly what we're doing, so when we face the exams, we won't say ma'am, you did something that we didn't do in class, so that's what I like about her" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE); "… she tries to make us feel at home, makes us feel free and laugh about things. I don't think she believes in being serious all the time … she makes us feel free" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE). A learner pointed out that "… the way she teaches, she's being more herself. She includes her personality in teaching. She's a good person and a teacher also" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE). Learners felt secure because they sensed that the teacher was being authentic in her approach to classroom interaction. Also, the comments suggest that learners felt their teacher created a safe and secure learning environment. Yet another response was "… some teachers when they teach, even if they're teaching the right thing but you feel that there's something wrong with it because of the way that person is" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/SAFE); "She's just amazing" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: SAFE).

School C: Low Achievers

There were considerably more negative responses from the L/A group at School C with reference to the sub-theme, "create(ing) secure, safe relationships and learning environments". A learner pointed out that in some classes there are learners who would make fun of others and as a result "some of the children are now scared of answering the question because those guys are going to laugh me out (at me)" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/SAFE). One learner added; "… but if you say a wrong answer, they think you are making a joke … so the class will be laughing at me making the wrong answer. That's what you're scared of" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/SAFE).

However, another learner argued that some learners are too sensitive and tend to think that other learners are always laughing at them, whereas, according to this learner, they are simply having fun by fooling around in class while the teacher explains the work. And if you happen to answer a question incorrectly during this time, it does not mean that the class is laughing at you: "… it's not like they are discriminating [against] me or they go against me (sic) … no, it will be a joke because everybody is laughing so why should I be upset because of it?" She continued by saying

that “So I think I’ll take a chance of just giving an answer if I have [to]” (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: SAFE).A different response was: “I won’t say all of them, but some of the people won’t actually just say out the wrong answer loud (sic), or maybe if he has a suggestion he won’t say it out loud (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/SAFE). Another learner explained that in their class “… they sort you out. The hard workers they put it on that side, the non-workers they put it on that side, and if you are average then you get to sit in the middle of the class” (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/SAFE).

There were mixed responses to the question: “Will you approach your teacher with a personal problem?” A learner indicated: “… from my side there’s a lot of teachers that I can look up to and say, okay, I’ll take this teacher as my mother. I can share my personal life with them” (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: SAFE). One learner pointed out that you have to be able to trust the teacher, “It depends if you trust the educator to keep that confidential … so it depends if you can trust the teacher’ (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: SAFE). Another learner explained that she has built up a relationship over the years with one of her teachers, “so I’m open with her and I can speak to her and I can tell her everything” (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: SAFE). Again reference was made to building trusting relationships with the teacher, “… you should first learn to trust the next person before just telling your personal life to that person … that’s how it’s basically supposed to be with the teacher” (FGI-6 L/A April 2008:SAFE).

A learner gave an outright, “No” (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/SAFE). Another stated: “I wouldn’t go, because I don’t know what the teacher would think of me if I tell her my problems … she might think of me in a bad way or she might take it in a good way. So I just rather keep it to myself” (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/SAFE). Still another learner indicated that she would not go and tell the teacher her problems because she felt that the teacher might just, under certain circumstances, “throw that in front of you. That’s also the other thing” (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/SAFE).

Summary of School C

At School C, there were 23 positive responses – the H/A had 15, while the L/A had 5. There were 13 negative responses – the H/A had 6, while the L/A had 7. The H/A group has considerably more positive responses than the L/A learners. More H/A learners (4), indicated

that would risk giving and answer even when they were unsure of the answer, as opposed to the 2 L/A learners. Responses of both categories of learners were similar: "Yes always" (H/A) and "… I'll take a chance of just answering. …"(L/A). The positive learner responses for both groups were similar when learners were asked if they would speak to their teacher about a problem inside or outside of school. Comments included: "I would definitely have the courage" (H/A); "… from my side there's a lot of teachers that I will share my personal life with" (L/A); "… someone that you told your problem to before … that person understands" (H/A) and "I'm open with her and I can speak to her and I can tell her everything" (L/A).

The H/A group of learners also referred to feeling safe in classroom context by virtue of trusting that the teacher knows what s/he is doing. Learners feel that they are in "safe hands" as far as their relationship with the teacher is concerned: "We know exactly what we're doing …when we face the exams, we won't say we did something that we did not do in class"; "she makes us feel free". None of these types of comments were forthcoming from the L/A group of learners.

There were 13 negative responses – the H/A had 6, while the L/A had 7. These comments were similar and dealt firstly, with learners not having the confidence to take risks in a learning context, and secondly, with learners not trusting their teachers sufficiently to discuss personal or school problems with them. Responses included "… children are going to laugh … and maybe she'll also laugh about it" (H/A); "Some of the children are now scared of answering … those guys are going to laugh at me" (L/A) and "I don't think I'll tell the teacher my problems, no I don't think so" (H/A); "I wouldn't go … so I just rather keep it to myself" (L/A), respectively.

Summary across Schools

There were more positive than negative responses at School A and School B for both H/A and L/A groups. At School A the L/A had double the amount of positive responses (10), as opposed to 7 H/A positive responses. This was due to the L/A group at School A referring to a different kind of feeling safe. For these learners feeling safe was also experienced when teachers came prepared for lessons and learners had work to do as opposed to sitting idly or not knowing what to do during lessons. The number of positive responses for H/A and L/A groups at School B were identical – seven each – and responses were equally similar. At School C, the number H/A

positive responses were 18, while the L/A positive responses were 6. The H/A learners at School C, like the L/A at School A, referred to a different kind of feeling safe. In this instance, learners felt safe in the knowledge that their teacher knew what s/he was doing

Substantial variance was evident in the negative responses, as opposed to the positive responses of the L/A at School A and C. At School A there were 12 negative responses compared to 21 positive responses, while at School C there were 13 negative responses compared to 24 positive responses. This was due to the added dimension of feeling safe as indicated by the responses of the L/A and H/A groups at Schools A and C, respectively. Minimal variance was found in the negative responses (as opposed to the positive responses) at School B.

The following **Table 4.13** illustrates the number of positive and negative responses for the sub-theme "safe", at the three schools.

	Positive responses	Negative responses
School A: H/A	7	4
L/A	14	8
School B: H/A	5	6
L/A	7	5
School C: H/A	12	6
L/A	5	7

Table 4.13

The following **Tables 4.14 – 4.16** list and code the utterances of both the H/A and L/A learners at Schools A, Band C with reference to the sub-theme, "create secure, safe relationships and learning environments" (safe):

School A

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive comments included: always risks saying answer out loud, even if incorrect (courage) says answer out loud, teacher always helps (courage and safe) even if answer is incorrect, learners will say it has courage to answer teacher (courage) will confide in teacher they can trust (courage) tell teacher, who can be trusted, their problem (trust) will only go to teacher with school-related problem (trust)	**Positive comments included:** learners want to answer when teacher asks questions (courage) teacher s encourage learners to answer even if answers are wrong (trust) learners not shy to answer, even if others are laughing at them (courage) stand up anytime to answer even if answer is wrong (courage) teachers work in class – well-prepared (safe) learners enjoy classes when working (safe) find classroom context "exciting" when there is interaction (enjoyment) teachers busy on board – learners know they will work (safe) teachers are prepared, have work for learners (safe) learners have confidence in teacher (trust) learners trust teachers- talk about school and personal problems (trust)
Negative responses included: learners who are shy, do not have courage to speak out in class (lack of courage) people don't want to talk (do orals), just take zero (lack of involvement) children find it embarrassing – class laugh at them (humiliation) not part of culture to speak to teacher about personal problems (privacy)	**Negative responses included:** learners are scared to answer questions (lack of courage) some people are nervous to answer questions (lack of courage) when teacher asks something, whole class is quiet (lack of involvement) learners prefer small classes – spared humiliation (humiliation) learners shy to ask questions and tell teacher they don't understand (lack of courage) won't discuss personal stuff (lack of trust) afraid teacher will betray learner confidence (lack of trust) teachers come unprepared – no work (lack of professionalism)

Table 4.14

School B:

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive responses included: will risk and present and present answers even if unsure (x3) (courage) will speak about personal things (courage) talk to the teacher sometimes (trust) will encourage learners to speak if comfortable (trust)	**Positive responses included:** will risk presenting incorrect answers, knows teacher will correct (courage and safe) will risk, teacher will give correct answer (courage and safe) learners have keen understanding of teacher's style of teaching (trust) teacher open to discussing problems, especially academic (trust) will trust teacher with outside problems (trust) feels comfortable, trusts teacher (trust) teacher is "very nice" – learners do not feel neglected (support and safe)
Negative responses included: do not have the confidence if unsure that answer is correct (lack of courage) do not have the courage to answer especially if unsure answer is correct (lack of courage) have fear of embarrassment and how teacher will react (lack of trust) feel embarrassed, children will tease her (lack of courage) don't want teacher knowing personal busyness (privacy)) don't feel comfortable with teacher knowing personal things (privacy) fears that teachers will divulge personal stuff (lack of trust)	**Negative responses included:** do not have courage to present answer if unsure that it is correct (lack of courage) afraid of being humiliated by learners (lack of courage) will not confront teacher with personal problems (privacy) doesn't trust anyone (lack of trust)

Table 4.15

School C: Table 4.16

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive comments included: learners would risk giving answer even when unsure (x4) (courage and safe) will have courage to speak to about outside problems (safe) learners will speak to teachers about problems (trust) feels comfortable with teacher (trust) will talk to teacher, depends on problem (courage) can trust teacher (trust) takes teacher as friend, mother, mentor (trust) teacher understands everyone's strengths and weaknesses (support) learners know exactly what they have to do (safe) teacher is not so detached from learners (support) teacher is amazing (trust) teacher is committed to helping learners (value)	**Positive comments included:** will take a chance and answer even if unsure (x2) (courage and safe) trusts teacher, will share personal things (safe) depends on whether teacher can be trusted (trust) built up relationship over years – feels safe (trust) must first learn to trust person (trust)
Negative responses included: other learners will make fun of learner answering the question (humiliation) will not speak to teacher about problem (lack of trust) will not tell teacher her problems (lack of trust) it depends – will not discuss difficult, personal problems (privacy) outside problem – handle with family (privacy) teachers too detached from learners (lack of involvement)	**Negative responses included:** will not answer, scared of being laughed at (humiliation) other learners will joke about answer (lack of respect) other learners just won't give a wrong answer (lack of courage) learners are seated according to ability (bias) will not discuss problems with teacher (privacy) unsure of how teacher will react to learner after sharing problem (lack of trust) teacher might betray learner's trust (lack of trust)

4.2.3 Maintain Mutual Respect/Regard

Introduction

The third sub-theme (RESPECT) refers to instances when both learners and teachers are fair-minded, oppose degradation and maintain reciprocity. An example of this may be suggested by comments like: "The most important thing is respect and if you respect the teacher, the teacher will respect you" and "… when the teacher comes in class, you must be quiet, you must give (show) your respect".

School A: High Achievers

The responses of the H/A group of learners at School A with regard to this sub-theme, were mainly negative. The positive comments, respectively, referred to learners respecting strict teachers and teachers respecting certain learners: "… if they are at a strict teacher, then the class is orderly" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: RESPECT) and "… the teacher will only work with those that respect him and do his work" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: RESPECT). A learner felt that their teacher was not being respected because "… in his class, especially in his class, they (learners) start putting out their rudeness, misbehave in class, walk[ing] in and out of the classroom … even while the teacher is teaching" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT). However, another learner indicated that if the class goes to a teacher "who don't take notice of them walking in and out, then they just do what they feel like doing" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT). This was confirmed by another learner who also referred to learners "walk(ing) in and out of the class" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT). A learner stated that "they don't take the English teacher seriously." Again mention was made of learners walking in and out of the classroom while the teacher was teaching. The learner added "Even if he tells them to sit down, they don't want to listen" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT). Another learner remarked:"… they don't respect the teacher" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT). This was repeated by a different learner who said: "Particularly in our class, they don't respect Mr. M, our English teacher, honestly, don't respect" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT). The learner gave examples of what learners would do to show disrespect for the teacher: "… they don't take out their books, they don't take down the notes on the board". She mentioned a presentation that the class had to do the previous day, but "only about 8 of us did the presentation, and there are 26 learners in the class"(FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT).

Two learners made reference to the race of the teacher who was being disrespected. The first said that she had noticed that "the coloured children, they always treat the African teachers differently from the coloured teachers" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT). The learner continued by saying that when learners "get to a coloured teacher, then they will respect them". She said that to her it seems as if it is because he is coloured that "they can relate to coloureds. But they don't think that the African teacher can also relate to them. Because he' also a human being. That's why they treat him like he's nothing" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT). The second learner stated that, "They're like classifying that African teacher with their garden boy(?!) at home because he's also like an African person. It's like they don't respect the African teachers. They stereotype" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT)

School A: Low Achievers

The L/A group at the same school had substantially less responses related to this sub-theme, "respect". Learners spoke about knowing when to stop fooling around in class and being respectful towards the teacher: "I like making jokes in class, but when it comes to work, when it comes to the teacher putting papers down, then you must work … then I don't like making jokes". He continued by saying that, "… but when the teacher comes in class, you must be quiet, you must give your respect" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: RESPECT). Other learners pointed out that their teacher was not very strict and that learners often took advantage of this, "… he's not so a strict sir … they want to make him a fool or something like that in class … most of the time the children don't do his work" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/RESPECT). These learners did not seem to think that their behaviour was disrespectful towards the teacher.

Summary of School A

There was a significant difference in the number of responses from the H/A as opposed to those from the L/A. The H/A has 2 positive and 10 negative responses, while the L/A learners had 1 positive and I negative response. Within the H/A group, the negative responses could almost be divided into two categories: the first deals with the way learners behaved towards teachers and the second deals with negative attitudes of learners in relation to their teachers. Frequent mention was made by the H/A learners, for example, of an almost complete disregard for the teacher: "…

walk in and out of the classroom … even while the teacher is teaching" and "Even if he tells them to sit down, they won't listen". The other quite disturbing response was that teachers were disrespected based on their race. Learners indicated that the coloured children tended to respect coloured teachers more than the African teachers: "…get [to] a coloured teacher, then they will respect him … they don't think that the African teacher can also relate to them … that's why they treat him like nothing". The L/A learners' negative comment alluded to learners' lack of respect: "… they want to make him a fool" and "… most of the time they don't do his work".

School B: High Achievers

There were no responses from the H/A group of learners at School B relating to this sub-theme, "respect".

School B: Low Achievers

There was one negative response from the L/A group at School C that was relevant to the sub-theme "respect". A learner pointed that some learners were disrespectful in class, "… you find that children in the class are rude …" (FGI-4 May 2008: N/RESPECT).

Summary of School B

The only response at School B came from the L/A group and referred to learners being unmannerly: "… children in the class are rude".

School C: High Achievers

Learners in this group commented on the behaviour of students and their responses were negative with regard to this sub-theme. One learner remarked that "… some learners are very rude in class and are refusing to do their work, so she stresses about that too much" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/RESPECT). Another learner confirmed this and added, "… being rude, not doing their work, noise, not paying attention …" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/RESPECT). A learner felt that "… they wasting the teacher's time and our time" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/RESPECT).

School C: Low Achievers

The responses of the L/A group indicated relatively similar learner experiences and perceptions. One learner simply stated that, "The most important thing is respect and if you respect the teacher, the teacher will respect you" (FGI-6L/A April 2008: RESPECT). A learner pointed out that there are some learners in class who do not respect one another, "… you get some learners in class who are just … the guys who are just making fun of you in class" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008:N/RESPECT) and "… the class will be laughing at me making (giving) the wrong answer" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008:N/RESPECT).Other comments referred to learners disrespecting learners and teachers:"… when they (teachers) give the work, there's some of the learners that write, the others are talking there, making fun of the teachers or making fun of each other, or start teasing each other" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008:N/RESPECT); "… they always want to make jokes, they always want to laugh in the class … so then they start when the teacher explains the work" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008:N/RESPECT).

Summary of School C

The H/A group of learners at School C had considerably less responses than the L/A group. There were 3 negative H/A comments as opposed to 1 positive and 4 negative L/A comments. All of the negative responses from the H/A referred to learners' behaviour in class; "… being rude, not doing their work, not paying attention, [making a] noise". The L/A group referred to learners disrespecting their peers and their teachers: "… the guys who are just making fun of you in class" and "… making fun of the teachers". It was also noteworthy that learners often referred to the others, "they", when talking about their behaviour in class, especially towards the teacher.

Summary across Schools

There were considerably more negative (19) than positive (4) responses related to the sub-theme "respect". School A had 11 negative responses: 10 from the H/A group of learners and 1 from the L/A learners. Learners responses from the H/A learners were relatively similar and often referred to learners' bad behaviour, complete disregard for the teacher and racist attitudes of learners with regard to their teachers. The 4 negative comments made by the L/A group at School C, all pointed to learners' bad behaviour in class towards their peers and teachers, most happening while the teacher was teaching.

The positive comments of both categories of achievers, referred primarily to how learners behaved in class: learners respected, in some cases, the stricter teachers; and some learners made a conscious effort to show all teachers respect.

The Table below illustrates the number of positive and negative for the sub-theme "respect", at the three schools:

	Positive responses	Negative responses
School A: H/A	2	10
L/A	1	1
School B: H/A	none	none
L/A	none	1
School C: H/A	none	3
L/A	1	4

The following **Table 4.17** lists and codes the utterances of both the H/A and L/A learners at Schools A, Band C, in relation to the sub-theme, "respect".

Sub-theme: respect

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
School A: **Positive responses included:** if teacher is strict, class is orderly (respect) teacher works with learners who show respect (value) **Negative responses included:** learners show disrespect (lack of respect) learners take advantage of teacher (x2) (lack of respect) learners don't listen to teacher's reprimands (lack of respect) learners don't respect teacher (x2) (lack of respect) learners refuse to do presentations (lack of involvement) disrespect black teachers (x2) (bias) coloured learners don't relate to black teachers (bias)	**School A:** **Positive responses included:** learners show respect (support) **Negative responses included:** teacher is not strict – learners take advantage (lack of respect)
School B: **Positive responses included:** none **Negative responses included:** None	**School B:** **Positive responses included:** none **Negative responses included:** learners are rude (lack of respect)
School C: **Positive responses included:** none **Negative responses included:** learners are rude and refuse to do work (lack of respect and involvement) learners display unacceptable behaviour (lack of respect) learners waste teachers and other learners' time (inconsiderate)	**School C:** **Positive responses included:** mutual respect is shown (respect) **Negative responses included:** learners, especially boys, make fun of other learners (humiliation) laugh at other learners (inconsiderate) some learners make fun of teacher and other learners (lack of respect) learners fool around while teacher explains work (lack of respect and involvement)

Table 4.17

Theme Three: "Teachers' High Expectations"

This section will examine the third construct, "teachers' high expectations" with reference to the learner focus group interviews. The literature defines teacher expectations as inferences which teachers make about the future behaviour or academic achievements of learners, based mainly upon what teachers currently know about these learners (Good & Brophy, 1991). It is essential that teachers create high expectations and goals for all students. When teachers set high expectations for every student from the start, students gain independence and confidence with each goal they meet. This raises students' motivation, self-perception, confidence and achievement (Anderson, 2005).

Good & Brophy (1991) argue that teacher expectations have an effect on learner outcomes – which may include school achievement, positive attitudes towards school, interest in learning – because of the actions that teachers take in response to these expectations. Moreover, the authors argue that achievement is not simply a matter of a child's ability, but that teachers' expectations are also involved. Cotton (1989), points out that, merely holding expectations, more importantly high expectations for learners, will not automatically affect learners' performance or attitudes. It is the translation of these expectations into behaviour that influences outcomes. The focus of this section of the findings is on how, from the perspectives of the learners, teachers communicate expectations to their learners and how this may enhance learners' learning.

4.3 Teachers' High Expectations

Introduction

Within the theme, "teachers' high expectations", three sub-themes were identified. These are "effective instructional contact/communication" (instructional); "feedback about performance" (feedback/specific or feedback/general); and "opportunities to respond and ask questions" (opportunities).

4.3.1 Effective Instructional Contact/Communication

The first sub-theme (instructional) refers to teachers who understand their subject matter and its assessment, have good subject content knowledge and are able to actively engage learners in lessons to enable them to become critical, independent thinkers. An example of this is suggested by comments like "… he will stay on that topic until everybody understands it … he brings it down to your understanding and makes it easier for the exams … for you to understand and actually do it".

Learners' views on instruction, feedback and opportunities were used to infer their views on teacher expectations. One thing that has emerged from the data is that learners want to feel that they are being taken seriously, that they are being appreciated. When teachers come prepared for lessons, explain work thoroughly, give learners opportunities to ask questions, in other words, when they take the needs of learners seriously, learners in turn feel appreciated and that they are being taken seriously by their teachers. I have therefore had to firstly, rely on learners' views to questions that do not directly address the issue of "teachers' high expectations", and secondly, I've had to infer learners' views on "teachers' expectations" by examining their views on instruction, feedback and opportunities.

School A: High Achievers

Learners had the following responses when asked how their teachers react when learners are unsure of what to do or do not know the answer to a question. One learner said, "If we don't know the meaning of the question, then they like help us to understand it better" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). A learner indicated that "… if you answer, then the teacher will tell you no, you're wrong or you're right. Then he'll move on to the next person (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: N/INSTRUCTIONAL).

When asked what they liked about how their teacher presents her lessons, learners had the following to say: "I think he tries to the best of his ability, he tries to make you understand" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL); "… and if you don't understand, then he'll draw something on the board to make it more clearly for you" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL); "Maybe when he presents something, when he's teaching, sometimes he

goes slow … and for those who understands clearly he'd maybe go fast, but it's normally on the same level" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008:INSTRUCTIONAL); "I would say most of the times he does his lessons slow to make sure everyone understands him" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL) and "… then it's like reading the poem over and over for the people that don't understand" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL).

School A: Low Achievers

The L/A learners at School A had more negative responses in relation to this sub-theme. A learner had this to say about their teacher, "… most of the time he does his work, he gives you the opportunity to do your work in class, and to prepare yourself for a speech or something" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL).Another learner explained that their teacher gives them "papers" that they have to read. He added that the teacher does not explain the work, "… you must read through the papers, he don't explain nothing … you don't know what to do there", and that learners are simply required to "put [this] in your book". He continued by saying that the teacher "just sits there with his phone in his hand. I don't know what he's doing, writing things down, you don't work in class". The same learner added that "… you can't go to him and ask him, sir what must I do or can I come after class, because he say you must read that thing and it's like that … maybe not even six papers, maybe so eight paper … and after that, he don't come around and look at your books" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008:N/INSTRUCTIONAL). Another learner confirmed this by saying, "He doesn't come and look if the work is in your book" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008:N/INSTRUCTIONAL).

When asked whether their teacher varied her pace when presenting lessons, one learner pointed out that "The only time they're slow is when someone tells them, no, I don't understand this question, so please explain it over for us FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008:INSTRUCTIONAL). Another added: "They don't slow down, they go on and on and on, and they think the children understand" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/INSTRUCTIONAL). A learner agreed with the previous comment, but added that "… for you to understand, you must lift up your hand and tell the teacher no, I don't understand this. That's the only time he'll slow also down (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). One learner indicated that most learners are shy to tell the teacher

that they don't understand so the teacher assumes that they understand and "they just go on"(FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008:N/INSTRUCTIONAL).

Summary School A

At School A, there were significantly more positive than negative responses. The H/A group had 7 positive responses, while the L/A had 3 positive responses. These positive comments from both groups were, however, relatively similar. Both categories of learners constantly referred to their teachers ensuring that learners understood the work being taught: "… tries to the best of his ability to make you understand" (H/A); "… he'll draw something on the board to make it more clear for you" (H/A); "… does his lessons slow to make sure everyone understands" (H/A) and "… they slow down when someone tells them I don't understand the question" (L/A).

The L/A group had 4 negative responses while the H/A had 1 negative response at this school. The negative L/A comments referred to teachers not doing work in class, "… he don't explain nothing … you don't know what to do there," and "He doesn't come and look if the work is in your book". Other negative comments from this group referred to the fast pace of lessons, "They don't slow down. They go on and on and on and they think the children understand"; and to teachers assuming that learners understand the work, "… the teachers assume that they understand and they just go on".

School B: High Achievers

The responses of the H/A were all positive in relation to this sub-theme. A learner had this to say about their teacher: "… he goes over things so thoroughly and he'll go over it with you quite a few times. He'll spend a long time, not just go over it quickly and then you don't understand one aspect or something. He'll go over everything properly so you will understand it" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). Another learner added that especially with poetry, their teacher will ensure that learners understand before he moves on to the next section, "… he will stay on that one topic until everybody understands it" and "… he will go into every detail … before he goes to the next thing" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). One learner explained that the teacher would repeat things "over and over again so you'll get it" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL).

School B: Low Achievers

The L/A group of learners had considerably more positive responses than the H/A group of the same school. When learners were asked how their teachers would react when they (learners) are unsure of what to say or they do not know the answer to a question, one learner said that their teacher normally does a "detailed lecture". He explained that, "Mr. K does a broad scale and the lesson takes up almost the whole period, so he makes you understand". He added that everybody understands when Mr. K gives a lesson: "I don't know of people who don't understand after Mr. K has given a lesson" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). Another learner, however, indicated that when learners don't answer, "he will tell you the right answer … he'll just tell you the right answer" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: N/INSTRUCTIONAL).

When this group of learners, the L/A, was asked what they liked most about their teacher's lessons, a learner said, "He brings it down to your understanding". This learner gave an account of their first encounter with the literary essay. He says that "it was a bit mind boggling". But it was their teacher would "bring it down to your understanding and [he] makes it easier for like when we have exams … for you to understand it and actually do it" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INSTRUCTION). A different learner explained that one lesson might take two days to complete, "so that all the other people can understand". He continued by saying that "even though the intelligent ones understand … he knows that there are slow ones in the class that must still understand. He doesn't just carry on with the lesson. It must take maybe two days for us to understand" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INSTRUCTION). Another learner agreed with the previous speaker that the lessons do take long, "so that you do understand the work … and for you to pass the exams at the end of the day" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008:INSTRUCTION). Still another response was: "… he has to obviously break it down for some other children to understand … that takes up time as well" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INSTRUCTION). A learner pointed out that "… he explains things that are deep. When we do poetry, he really goes into detail" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL).

In response to the question related to their teachers varying their pace, style or activities to suit the needs of the diverse groups of learners in the classroom, learners had this to say: "… in our class there's not much diversity …we're mostly just…we're kind of, you know, race and so

forth. So everybody has a keen understanding of the way he teaches and his style and so forth … so there's no real need for him to vary his pace" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). An earlier comment was repeated to corroborate the previous learner's statement: "I never came across anybody in our class that has a problem with English, as far as Mr. K's explaining is concerned. This learner also repeated that the teacher goes into much detail during lessons and that "he brings it out to your understanding" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL).

Summary School B

At School B, there were considerably more positive responses from the L/A group of learners. The H/A had 3 positive and no negative responses, while the L/A had 8 positive responses and 1 negative response. Both groups referred to teachers giving detailed lessons and ensuring that learners understood the work. Comment included: "He goes over things thoroughly … not just go over it quickly and then you don't understand" (H/A); "… he'll go into every detail before he goes to the next thing" (H/A); "Mr. K does a broad scale and the lesson takes up the whole period" (L/A) and "… he brings it down to your understanding … for you to understand it and actually do it".

The one negative response from the L/A group referred to the teacher simply giving learners the correct answer without any explanation or discussion. Instead of engaging the learner or probing for more information, which would have been more beneficial for the particular learner and the entire class, the teacher simply *gives* the learners the answer: "He'll just tell you the right answer".

School C: High Achievers

This group of learners had more positive responses in relation to this sub-theme, "effective instructional contact/communication. The comments included: "When we do corrections or anything, we won't go through to the next question unless we're done with the first one" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). Two other learners agreed, and added, "Unless we understand the first one, we won't move on" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). When asked if the teacher is available for consultation, a learner replied; "…we don't need her consultation because when she explains, we all understand her and what she says" (FGI-5 H/A

April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). Other responses were: "We understand the work" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL) and "She makes sure that by the end of the day we understand what we're doing" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL).

When this group was asked what they liked most about how their teacher presents her lessons, a learner stated that her teacher "teaches with love for the subject. She makes you fall in love with English". She added that at first she did not like English, but her teacher has established in her a love for English, "She makes you love the subject" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). Another learner felt that it helped that their teacher planned ahead and usually worked according to the timetable: "… so if we need to be working on a certain section for two weeks, for example, then it's going to happen that way" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). Other comments included: "… she'll give you clues to the right answer" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL) or "she'll give you the right answer" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/INSTRUCTIONAL). This previous positive response was basically repeated by another learner: "She helps, yes, so if you're wrong, she's going to give you the clues to the right answer", but more importantly, this learner pointed out that "she's going to give you the right answer with an explanation and understanding" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL).

School C: Low Achievers

There were substantially more negative responses from the L/A group of learners. A learner felt that some teachers were not always helpful when approached by learners, "… some will be like wait after I do this, wait after I do that". The learner continued by pointing out that the periods are also too short, "… not enough time in the period for you to understand." According to this learner, teachers then expect them to have all the answers the following day, "…and when you come back the next day they want all the answers which you supposed to have" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/INSTRUCTIONAL). This was affirmed by another learner who also spoke about their teacher who expects them to complete work even though he has not explained the work to them, "… yesterday he didn't tell us properly, he didn't explain us properly, but today he wants us to do it exactly the way he wants it to be done" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008:N/INSTRUCTIONAL). Other teachers were though, more willing to help, "… some they show you that they there for you to help you through. Ja, they help you out" (FGI-6 L/A April

2008:INSTRUCTIONAL), while other teachers were not, as indicated by the next two responses: "…so she just goes ahead with the work, even if you don't understand the work, she doesn't worry, she just goes ahead" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/INSTRUCTIONAL) and " You can even ask a question, she won't answer you" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/INSTRUCTIONAL). The learner, however, also felt that learners should "not always just ask and ask and ask" because "that's why some teachers get angry for telling the same thing over and over, repeating" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/INSTRUCTIONAL).

Another learner stated that it is not always easy to follow what the teacher is saying when he explains the work on the board, "… the way they pronounce the words or the way they speak, it's like you don't get what they say" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/INSTRUCTIONAL). A different learner pointed out that sometimes it works to have a peer explain the work, because "it's not easy to understand a teacher when he's talking in his perspective. Explaining stuff in his perspective" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/INSTRUCTIONAL). He continued by saying that most teachers "should explain on the level that we are. Like how we can understand it properly" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL).

When asked what they liked about the way their teachers present their lessons, one learner replied that "the teacher explains very good (sic)" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL). Two other learners mentioned "making more examples" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: INSTRUCTIONAL).

Summary School C

At School C, there was a significant difference in the number of positive and negative responses from both categories of achievers. On the one hand, the H/A had 9 positive responses, whereas the L/A had 1. On the other hand, the H/A had 1 negative response to the 7 negative responses from the L/A learners. The H/A positive responses covered quite a range of different aspects of instructional interaction and referred to teachers giving detailed lessons, doing thorough remedial work and planning lessons according to the time table. Comments included: "She makes sure that by the end of the day we understand what we're doing" (H/A); "… if we need to work on a certain section for two weeks, then it is going to happen that way" (H/A).

In contrast to the H/A positive comments, the L/A positive comments referred mainly to teachers ensuring that learners understood the work: "… some show you that they there to help you" and "… the teacher explains very [good]".

The only negative response from the H/A group referred to the teacher "just giving you the right answers". There were 7 negative responses from the L/A category of learners and these ranged from learners finding it difficult to follow what teachers were saying, to not enough time allowed for learners to understand, and teachers being impatient with learners. Responses included: "… the way they pronounce the words or the way they speak, it's like you don't get what they're saying"; "… not enough time in the period to understand … the next day they want all the answers which you supposed to have" and "… some teachers get angry for telling the same thing over and over, repeating".

Summary across Schools

There were more positive than negative responses at Schools A and B from both the H/A and L/A groups. At School A, the H/A had 7 positives, while the L/A had 3 positive responses. Learners' responses included: "… most of the times he does his lessons slow to make sure everyone understands" (H/A) and "… most of the time he does his work" (L/A). At School B, the H/A had 3 positive responses, while the L/A had surprisingly more, 8 positives. At School C, the H/A group also had 10 positives and 1 negative, but the L/A learners at this school had 4 positive and 9 negative responses. The negative responses included: "… she'll just give you the right answer" (H/A) and "He doesn't come and look if the work is in your book) (L/A).

The following **Table 4.18** illustrates the number of positive and negative responses for the sub-theme "instructional", at the three schools:

	Positive responses	Negative responses
School A: H/A	7	1
L/A	3	4
School B: H/A	3	None
L/A	8	1
School C: H/A	10	1
L/A	4	9

Table 4.18

The following **Tables 4.19 – Table 4-20** list and code the utterances of High and Low achieving learners in relation to the sub-theme "effective instructional contact/communication" (instructional), at Schools A, B and C: (instructional):

Table 4,19

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
School A **Positive responses included:** helps learners understand questions better (support) tries to make learners understand (support) draws on board to aid explanation (support) varies pace to ensure understanding (support) does lessons slowly most of the time (patience) reads poem repeatedly (patience) **Negative responses included:** moves to next person to answer, without prior explanation (lack of support)	**School A** **Positive responses included:** **t**eacher and learners work together (support) teacher slows down when learners indicate that they don't understand (x2) (patience) **Negative responses included:** teacher does not explain work (lack of involvement) does not check learners' books (lack of support) teacher does not slow down (lack of support) teachers assume learners understand (lack of involvement)
School B **Positive responses included:** goes through work thoroughly (patience) gives detailed lessons (involvement) repeats things to ensure understanding (patience) **Negative responses:** none	**School B** **Positive responses included:** gives "detailed lecture," makes sure learners understand (support) brings work down to learners' understanding (involvement) ensures all learners understand before moving on (equality) lessons take longer – learners must understand (patience) breaks down topics (involvement) goes into detail (support) everybody has understanding (equality) goes into much detail (involvement) **Negative responses:** teacher tells you the answer without explanation (lack of involvement)

School C

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
Positive responses included: does thorough corrections (x3) (involvement) learners understand lessons (x2) (support) teachers make sure learners understand work (support) teacher makes learners want to learn/ love subject (participation)) teacher plans and teaches according to time-table (professionalism) provide clues for correct answers (x2) (support) gives right answers with explanation and understanding (support)	**Positive responses included:** helps learners out/understand work (support) explains well (involvement) gives more example (x2) (support)
Negative responses included: will just give the right answer – no explanation (lack of involvement)	**Negative responses included:** not enough time to understand – periods too short (lack of support) teacher expects work to be done – no explanation (lack of involvement) goes ahead with work despite learners not understanding (x2) (lack of respect) no response to questions (lack of respect) teachers become angry for having to repeat themselves (lack of support) not always easy to understand teacher's accent(lack of understanding) not easy to follow teacher's perspective (lack of understanding) teacher does not explain on learners' level (lack of understanding)

Table 4.20

4.3.2 Feedback about Performance

Introduction

The second sub-theme (feedback) refers to instances when teachers provide learners with useful information that will assist in continued progress in relation to prior work. An example of this is suggested by comments like, "… he calls you to his desk and maybe explains to you where you went wrong, maybe your spelling". The feedback was primarily about written work, e.g. when learners wrote a test or an examination. Learners did however indicate that teachers would on some occasions merely call out their marks as feedback after they have written a test.

School A: High Achievers

The learners in this group, the H/A, had more negative responses in relation to this sub-theme. Most of the comments made by learners about teachers' feedback related to a focus on learners' marks or the people they associate with and how that apparently negatively impacts their marks and progress. Very little or no feedback was given with reference to the specific task, for example, how to improve sentence construction or writing more coherent paragraphs. Teachers merely gave vague, sweeping comments as feedback. One learner said, "… he tells you what he thinks of your marks" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: FEEDBACK/GENERAL). Another learner stated that, "He will just tell you to work hard, to push you on your level to improve your marks, to focus in class." (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: FEEDBACK/SPECIFIC). The learner added that the teacher will tell them "not to worry about their friends," because during the exams, "when you have that pen and that paper, it's only you, it's not your friend." (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: FEEDBACK/GENERAL). The teacher will, according to the learner, "just try to push you to just improve your marks" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: FEEDBACK/GENERAL).

School A: Low Achievers

There was one response related to this sub-theme, "feedback", from the L/A group of learners at School A. Although the feedback did not specifically refer to the learner's "performance", it was feedback relating to an answer the learner provided. He indicated that if his answer is incorrect, the teacher will explain why by saying that "you're right here but there must be so and so in your answer"(FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008:FEEDBACK/SPECIFIC).

Summary School A

At School A, there were more general than specific responses. The H/A group had 1 specific response and 3 general responses, while the L/A learners had 1 specific and no general responses. The feedback that H/A learners were discussing were mainly comments about their marks and their friends: "… he tells you what he thinks of your marks" and "not to worry about their friends … during the exams … it's only you, it's not your friend". The specific comments of the H/A and L/A groups of learners were fairly similar in that both teacher comments were more directed at addressing problematic areas and progressing on that basis, "… to push you on your level … to focus in class" (H/A) and "… there must be so and so in your answer" (L/A).

School B: High Achievers

A learner pointed out that the sir would sometimes "call you to his desk and maybe explain to you where you went wrong" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FEEDBACK/SPECIFIC). Another learner remarked that the teacher will also point out areas that may need improvement, "… and tell you how you could pick it up, maybe your spelling (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FEEDBACK/SPECIFIC).Learners indicated that after a test they would prefer it if they were given back their scripts so that "you can see where your mistakes were" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: FEEDBACK/GENERAL). Some learners said that this does not always happen as the sir would merely read out their marks after they've written a test, "… sometimes sir reads it out when it's bad marks" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008:FEEDBACK/GENERAL).

School B: Low Achievers

There were no responses related to this sub-theme from the L/A group of learners at School B.

Summary of School B

At School B, the H/A had 2 specific and 2 general responses. There were no responses from the L/A group in relation to this sub-theme. The specific responses referred to teachers being more particular when giving feedback, "… tell you how you could pick it up, maybe your spelling".

School C: High Achievers

A learner explained that when there is a drop in test marks, the teachers will tell the learners that they are "unimpressed" and this would usually encourage learners to work harder, "… they'll let you know that they are unimpressed" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008:FEEDBACK/GENERAL). Another learner indicated that sometimes teachers would tell learners who are failing repeatedly that it is because of their bad behaviour, "… she'll tell you it's because of the behaviour and not being interested in school work" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008:FEEDBACK/GENERAL). One learner remarked that sometimes the teacher will notice a decline in your marks and blame it on the "people you are hanging out with" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FEEDBACK/GENERAL). However, this learner conceded that the teacher will call the particular learner and "ask you what don't you (sic) understand?" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: FEEDBACK/SPECIFIC).

School C: Low Achievers

The L/A responses at School C were all negative. The feedback these L/A learners received, often only made reference to the marks learners obtained. When asked how their teacher responds when they do not do well in a test, a learner said that their teacher won't comment on "how we have achieved in a test," they will merely call out your mark and "just look at you like that" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: FEEDBACK/GENERAL). He added that sometimes the teacher would ask "Why don't you do your work, you're always a lazy boy" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: FEEDBACK/GENERAL). Another learner stated that "she won't forget your past mark. She's always going to tell you about it, all the time "(FGI-6 L/A April 2008:FEEDBACK/GENERAL). A different learner said that the teacher will call out your name, then your mark, and then "they will just like tell you it's up to you what you're going to do about this marks, how are you going to improve on this mark" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008:FEEDBACK/GENERAL).

Summary of School C

The H/A and L/A categories of learners at School C, had 3 and 4 general responses, respectively. The H/A group had 1 specific response, while the L/A group had none. The general responses of both groups were relatively similar. Both groups of learners mentioned that teachers would comment on their behaviour: "… it's because of your behaviour and not being interested in school work" (H/A); "… you're always a lazy boy" (L/A). The other comments were all far

removed from the actual work done or progress made by learners. Comments included: “They’ll let you know they’re unimpressed” (H/A); “… blame people you are hang out with” (H/A) and :… she won’t forget your past mark. She’s always going to tell you about it” (L/A).

Summary across Schools

There were more general responses at all the schools from both the H/A and L/A groups of learners. The H/A had 8 general responses, while the L/A had 4.There were 5 specific responses: 4 from the H/A and I from the L/A group.

Most of the learner comments related to teachers’ feedback either referring to comparisons of marks or comparisons to other learners, as opposed to more useful information regarding, for example, continuity of progress based on prior work. Teachers’ comments, in most cases, were merely an evaluation of success or failure, or comments about required norms, and thus in most cases failed to provide learners with actual way of improving on previous mistakes in order to make meaningful progress.

The following **Table 4.21** illustrates the number of positive and negative responses for the sub-theme “feedback”, at the three schools:

	Specific responses	General responses
School A: H/A	1	3
L/A	1	none
School B: H/A	2	2
L/A	none	none
School C: H/A	1	3
L/A	none	4

Table 4.21

The following **Table 4.22** lists and codes the utterances of the High and Low achieving learners, in relation to the sub-theme, "feedback about performance", for Schools A, B and C (specific feedback/general feedback):

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
School A **Specific feedback responses included** push you on your level (support) focus in class (involvement) **General feedback responses included:** focuses on marks obtained in test/exam (inadequate) makes reference to friends (irrelevant) push you just to improve your marks (inadequate)	**School A** **Specific feedback responses included:** teacher gives detailed corrections (support) **General feedback responses included:** none
School B **Specific feedback responses included:** teacher explains where learners went wrong(relevant) point out specific aspect that need improvement (support) **General feedback responses included:** scripts not returned (lack of involvement) marks are merely read out after a test (inadequate)	**School B** **Specific feedback responses included:** none **General feedback responses included:** none
School C **Specific feedback responses included:** ask learners what they don't understand (involvement) **General feedback responses included:** teachers merely say that they are unimpressed(lack of involvement) blame bad behaviour for failure (inadequate) blame friends for failure (inadequate)	**School C** **Specific feedback responses included:** none **General feedback responses included:** will just call out marks (lack of involvement) tell learners they are lazy (inadequate) always refer to past marks (lack of support) teacher will just say that it's up to learner – no other information (inadequate)

Table 4.22

4.3.3 Opportunities to Respond and Ask Questions

Introduction

The third sub-theme (opportunities) refers to learners being critically engaged in lessons, having the confidence to participate in lessons, express themselves and question the teacher and learning material. An example of this is suggested by comments like, "I like standing up, telling my answer … I want to hear from the teacher if my answer is correct or not".

School A: High achievers

The H/A group of learners at this school had only positive responses and they were as follows: When asked how their teacher would react if learners were unsure of what to do or did not know the answer to a question, a learner responded by saying, "…if we answer it wrongly, then maybe he will help us right (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). Another explained that if you do not "say what's on your mind, like the answer that is rolling around in your head," you will never know the answer. She added that it is best to "say your answer even if it is incorrect" and that "you will just receive the correct information" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). In response to being asked how often the teachers calls on learners to provide an answer, a learner pointed out that their teacher gives everyone a chance and does not call on the same person all the time: "Maybe today it's me, then tomorrow … then sir will ask him. Not every day the same person" (FGI-1 H/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITIES).

School A: Low Achievers

There were more negative than positive responses from the L/A learners at School A. A learner indicated that when their teacher asks a question, he feels that he wants to answer the question because "Mr. N has asked the question, you want to answer". He continued by saying that he often feels unsure of his answer, but that the teacher would say that "you must tell what's on your mind, what you think". He added that the teacher "will be the one that tells you if you are wrong or not", and "that is the only time you know when you are wrong or right" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITES). One learner remarked that most of the time all their answers are not right in class, but when they ask the teacher, "Ma'am, is this right? Then most of the time the teacher says she don't know, maybe she's stressed or something" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/OPPORTUNITIES). Another learner indicated that he is often confused by the teacher's

response to his answers because she does not explain clearly what she wants them to do and she would "put them off" if they did not answer the question correctly: "… she won't explain why is that not an answer" (FGi-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/OPPORTUNITIES), she'll say to you, look deep in the answer, don't just think and say things, go deep into the answer, like that" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). A different learner made a similar comment: "… sometimes the answers we have are sometimes wrong and sometimes right. But if the teacher will tell us how to answer, we will know" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/OPPORTUNITIES). Another learner, however, felt that even if teachers correct learners' answers, the learners need "to take it further, it's for you to look deeper into it … sometimes we as children want teachers to give us the answers" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/OPPORTUNITIES). A learner agreed by saying that "…we shouldn't wait, we must look." He added that teachers ask questions so that learners "can take it up and use it, so yes, we shouldn't wait for her" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). Another response was that the teacher would "wait for someone else to answer" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITIES).

In response to question: "How often does your teacher call on you to provide an answer or to demonstrate your work to the rest of the class", a learner commented that he sits at the back and often talks a lot, so the teacher will always ask him questions: 'Like when you sit at the back … or when you talk a lot, they always ask you questions. So by me, the teachers always get to ask me questions" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). Another learner mentioned that the teacher would also often call on her, "… he calls every time on my name, and then he asks for my work. Most of the time I have the correct answers" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). A learner pointed out that it varies from one class to another. She explained that in their class children would "jump up to answer a question" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITIES), while in other classes this would not happen, "… when the teacher asks something, the whole class is quiet" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: N/OPPORTUNITIES). Another learner added that he "likes standing up, telling my answer, because I want to hear from the teacher if my answer is correct or not" (FGI-2 L/A Sept 2008: OPPORTUNITIES).

Summary School A

At School A, the H/A had 3 positive responses, while the L/A had 9. The responses of both categories of achievers were relatively similar. Both groups referred to teachers being patient, encouraging and fair. Learners comments included: "If we answer wrongly, he will help us right" (H/A); "… he will tell you if you are wrong or not" (L/A); "… not every day the same person (H/A) and "Learners enjoy standing up and giving their answers" (L/A). The number of L/A responses suggested that these learners were given more opportunities to respond and ask questions, than the H/A group. The L/A learners were given opportunities to figure out answers for themselves instead of the teachers just giving them the answers. Positive responses also suggested that L/A learners showed enthusiasm when given opportunities to respond to and ask questions during lessons.

The H/A group had no negative responses, while the L/A had 5 negative responses. These learners' negative comments were similar in that most learners referred to teachers not explaining answers to learners

School B: High Achievers

There were only positive responses from this group of learners. Comments included: "They'll tell you the answer is wrong if you give an incorrect answer and they'll tell what the correct answer is. And they'll tell you why your answer is wrong" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). A second learner affirmed what the previous speaker had said: 'When I ask a question, he asks me to explain what I think is my answer." The learner added that the teacher will then tell her if it's right or wrong and give reasons why: "… and then he'll give the answer, the correct answer, and then he'll tell me why I was wrong" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). Another learner indicated that their teacher "responds immediately" and helps them when they struggle. She added: "So she explains if we don't understand" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). One learner stated that even if the teacher had repeated something and learners still do not understand, "you can always ask him again, gladly he'll explain it" (FGI-3 H/A May 2008: OPPORTUNITIES).

School B: Low Achievers

When asked how their teacher responds to a wrong answer, a learner said that he usually moves to the next person. He added that when a row of people have it wrong, the teacher will "give an overall correct answer" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). Another learner pointed out that their teacher does not ask the same people every day, "… today he might ask certain people and tomorrow he might ask different people" (FGI-4 L/A May 2008: OPPORTUNITIES).

Summary of School B

At School B, the H/A had 3 positive responses, while the L/A had 2 positive responses. The learner comments for both groups were similar. Learners indicated that teachers would explain why answers were correct/incorrect and would give different learners an opportunity to respond during lessons. Comments included: "When I ask a question, he asks me to explain what I think is my answer" (H/A); "… the teacher will give an overall correct answer" (L/A); "… you can always ask him, gladly he'll explain it" H/A and"… today he might ask certain people and tomorrow he might ask different people" L/A.

School C: High Achievers

The H/A learners at School C had varied responses in relation to the sub-theme, "opportunities". One learner mentioned that their teacher gives them "chances to try" and that if the answers are wrong, "she'll give you the correct answer, but she explains before correcting the answer" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). Yet another learner indicated that when they give a wrong answer the teacher will simply "let you know that it's not the right one and then she tells you the right one" (FGI-5 H/A April 2008: N/OPPORTUNITIES). In these instances teachers do not give learners the opportunity to respond and ask questions as they are merely "giving" learners the answers.

School C: Low Achievers

A learner stated that their teacher would always motivate them "to say something, instead of just sitting there". She continued by saying that her teachers have taught her to say the first thing that comes to mind when you've been asked a question. According to the learner, she was told not "to keep it to yourself because it might be the right answer" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008:

OPPORTUNITIES). Another learner remarked that "… half of my classes the teachers are serious, and half they made it interesting … making us ask questions and making more examples" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: OPPORTUNITIES). Another learner however commented that their teacher tends to work with the "good" learners and that "you can even ask a question, she won't answer you" (FGI-6 L/A April 2008: N/OPPORTUNITIES).

Summary School C

At School C, the H/A and L/A each had 1 positive response. Both groups of learners indicated that the teacher would motivate them to answer as well as ask questions: : "… chances to try" (H/A) and "… say something instead of just sitting there" (L/A).

Summary across schools

There were more positive responses from both categories of achievers at all the schools. In total there were 7 positive H/A responses across the schools, while the L/A learners had 13 positive responses across all the schools. At School A, the L/A group of learners had 9 positive responses, whereas the H/A at the same school only had 3 positive responses. Responses from learners included: "Maybe today it's me, then tomorrow sir will ask him" (H/A); "… he calls every time on my time on my name" (L/A) and "When I ask a question, he'll ask me to explain what I think is the answer" (H/A).

School A had the most negative responses, all from the L/A group of learners. At School B, there were no negative responses, while School C had only 1 negative response from the H/A learners. Some of the negative comments included: "… she won't explain why that is not an answer" (L/A); "When the teacher asks something, the whole class is quiet" (L/A) and "… you can even ask a question, she won't answer you" (L/A).

The following **Table 4.23** illustrates the number of positive and negative responses for the sub-theme "opportunities to respond and ask questions" (OPPORTUNITIES), at the tree schools:

Table 4 23

	Positive responses	Negative responses
School A: H/A	3	none
L/A	9	5
School B: H/A	3	none
L/A	2	none
School C: H/A	1	1
L/A	1	none

The following **Table 4.24 – 4.26** list and code the utterances of High and Low achieving learners in relation to the sub-theme, "opportunities to respond and ask questions" at Schools A, B and C (opportunities):

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
School A; **Positive responses included:** if learners answer wrongly, teachers help right (support) learners give answers even if incorrect (courage) teacher does not call on same person all the time (participation) **Negative responses included:** none	**School A:** **Positive responses included:** teacher encourages learners to say what's on their minds (participation) learners must figure out answers themselves (involvement) teacher waits for someone else to answer (participation) teachers always ask learners who are vocal in class (participation) learners are often called upon for answers (participation) learners are enthusiastic to answer questions (enjoyment) learners enjoy standing up and giving their answers (participation) learners are encouraged to analyze questions (support) learners must take initiative and answer questions (involvement) **Negative responses included:** teacher does not respond to learners' questions (lack of support)

	she won't explain why it is not an answer (lack of respect) teacher does not explain how learners should answer questions (no support) learners wait for teachers to give them the answer (lack of involvement) learners do not respond when teacher asks questions.(lack of involvement)

Table 4.24

School B: **Positive responses included:** teachers will tell learners why answers are wrong (support) teachers explain correct answers (support) teachers are willing to explain (support) **Negative responses included:** none	**School B:** **Positive responses included:** teacher explains answer (support) teacher asks different learners every day (participation) **Negative responses included:** do not pay attention during lessons (lack of involvement)

Table 4.25

Utterances of High Achieving Learners	Utterances of Low Achieving Learners
School C **Positive responses included:** teacher gives learners chances to try (participation) **Negative responses included:** teachers merely tell learners the correct answer (lack of involvement)	**School C** **Positive responses included:** learners are motivated to say something instead of just "sitting there" (value) **Negative responses included:** none

Table 4.26

4.4 Summary

The literature review produced three main constructs of "attitudinal qualities" that were shown to facilitate engagement with learning. These were "warmth, care and empathy", "trust and respect" and "teachers' high expectation." These constructs formed the main themes in the analysis of the data. The sub-themes were generated from a close reading of the learner data. Each main theme was divided into three sub-themes. I then worked with the nine sub-themes to code the learner responses obtained during the focus group interviews. This is referred to as Stage A of the data analysis.

The coded utterances referred to the learners' experiences in the classroom context and were divided into high and low achievers across the three schools. The data showed many similarities and differences between the two categories of learners in relation to their experience and perception of teachers' pedagogical ways in the learning environment .The aim is to understand from the learners' perspective, the pedagogical ways used by their teachers to transmit attitudes care, trust and expectations. The learner data will thus undergo a second coding process, Stage 2 of the data analysis, whereby the coded utterances of the learners will be reduced to four categories. These categories will then be used to gain a deeper understanding of a more concise description of the pedagogical ways referred to by the learners. In Chapter 5, I will thus attempt recognize or identify the pedagogical ways that, according to the learners, teachers use to transmit attitudes of care, trust and expectations.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion of Data

In Chapter 4, the coded learner utterances referred to learners' experiences in the classroom context across all schools, and were divided into high and low achieving groups of learners. In this chapter, I intend to identify the pedagogical ways learners are referring to, based on their perceptions of their classroom experience. The focus of this chapter is thus to gain a deeper understanding of how learners understand the detail of the three constructs, "warmth, care and empathy", "trust and respect" and "teachers' high expectations." The aim is to understand, from the learners' perspective, the pedagogical ways that are used by teachers to transmit attitudes of care, trust and expectations. For this purpose, I generated four key categories – "busyness", "value", "opportunity" and "humiliation" – from the coding process of the learners' utterances (Methodology Chapter, page 42) that will be used to unpack the pedagogical ways as referred to by the learners. The learner quotes used in this section are not new quotes. Since they have been referenced in the previous chapter, I use inverted commas when referring to them in this chapter.

"Busyness" includes sub-categories like involvement, participation and enjoyment. It refers to learners and teachers actively participating and being involved in lessons. "Busyness" also suggests that reciprocal engagement occurs during lessons. The literature shows that engaged pedagogy calls for the active engagement of both teachers and learners during lessons. It furthermore requires a flexible agenda, spontaneity, interaction and critical reflection (hooks, 1994, p.15). For learning to be effective, it is argued, it needs to be both active and interactive. In this regard, pedagogic dialogue is seen as a mode of pedagogy that may promote effective learning and teaching. The category, "value", comprises acknowledgement, respect, professionalism, equality, accountability and privacy. The literature shows that if learners are valued as individuals, if teachers have an optimistic view of learners as individuals who are able to achieve their learning goals, and learners are treated with dignity and respect, learners' engagement in their learning may be enhanced. Collins et al (2002) show that effective learning takes place within a nurturing environment. The category, "opportunity", includes extra time, patience, feeling safe, courage and trust. Learners are said to be more motivated when they are provided with opportunities to become independent thinkers. When learners are encouraged to take risks during the learning process by having the confidence to respond to and ask questions,

when they feel safe, they learn to become independent thinkers. The literature indicates that learning is a co-operative process that requires trusting relationships (Hoy, 2002). The author argues that when there is trust among teachers, students and parents, marked gains in learning could be achieved. The creation therefore of secure, trusting relationships, and learning environments are factors that may enhance learners' engagement in their learning. The category, "humiliation", includes elements like bias, embarrassment and being inconsiderate. When learners are subjected to humiliation, it is unlikely, based on the learners' perceptions in this study and on the literature, that effective learning may take place.

I start the analysis of the data by answering the first two research question. To answer the first question, "*What pedagogical ways, as reported by learners during the focus group interview, are used by teachers to transmit care, trust and high expectations to high and low achieving learners?* I identify the pedagogical ways, i.e. the verbal actions and instructional activities, as well as the attitudinal qualities of the teachers, as mentioned by each group. The second question – "*In what ways are these pedagogical ways, as reported by learners, similar, and in what ways are they different?"* – is answered in two parts: I first discuss, after each category, the similarities between the strong and weak learners' perceptions of the pedagogical ways identified in the first question. The differences in learner perceptions, between the high and low achieving learners, are discussed separately, thereafter. This was done to clearly show the difference in perception and experience of teachers' pedagogical ways, as reported by the high and low achieving learners and how these elements may influence their (learners') engagement in learning.

The pedagogical ways, as reported by learners during focus group interviews, used by teachers to transmit "warmth care and empathy", "trust and respect" and "teachers' high expectations" to high and low achieving learners, are discussed with reference to the above-mentioned four categories.

5.1 Busyness

The study conducted by Moloi (2010) and her colleagues into the educational effectiveness of three Mpumalanga schools in spite of their dire poverty, highlighted the importance of mutual active involvement – engaged pedagogy – of both teachers and learners in a learning environment. More importantly, their adherence to authentic pedagogical dialogue was identified

as one of the factors that could have contributed to the educational success of these schools. The authors argue that it is dialogue – this reciprocal act of listening and responding – that was fundamental to the academic success of the three schools.

High achieving learners

The data shows that high achieving learners regard mutual involvement during lessons, promotion of discussion and well planned lessons as encouraging their engagement with learning.

High achieving learners referred to the teacher wanting them to be part of the lesson, "Your mind must proceed with him". The teacher, according to these learners, encouraged learners to stay focused throughout lessons. The teacher would intermittently pause and ask learners if they understood and followed. S/he would, as stated by learners, point out specific aspects that learners may have difficulty with. If some learners did not understand, the teacher would then, according to the learners, make a diagram on the board to clarify her explanations. In some instances, learners felt that the teacher also varied his/her pace to accommodate all learners. These learners also indicated that the teacher would do thorough corrections of work. It is evident that learners felt that they actively participated in lessons. High achieving learners reported that teachers promoted discussion, for example about social issues, and were always full of action. Learner participation was often fostered by the teacher calling on different learners during lessons. This group of learners felt that their teachers would plan and teach according to the time-table. Learners indicated that teachers gave detailed lessons. In addition to this, they also felt that their teacher makes them want to learn and has developed in them a love for the subject.

The high achieving learners also referred to, what they perceived as, the lack of learner as well as teacher involvement in lessons. Learners would refuse to participate by not doing their oral presentations and would "just take a zero". According to these learners, lack of teacher involvement in the lessons referred to teachers giving learners the correct answers without any explanations or teachers just saying that they were not "impressed" with learners' marks. It also referred to scripts not being returned after tests had been written and marks being merely called out to learners. If scripts were handed back to learners, it was stated by these learners, that some

teachers would give learners feedback that was either inadequate or irrelevant, for example, learners' bad behaviour or friends are blamed for failure.

Low achieving learners

Low achieving learners reported on teachers' busyness in slightly different ways to high achieving learners. Like the latter, they too indicated that they enjoyed working when teachers came to class prepared. Learners indicated that when they enter the class and the teacher "is writing on the board" they know they will be working that period. Some learners felt that teachers came well-prepared to class most of the time. They enjoyed classes when the teacher had work for them.

More specifically to this group, low achieving learners felt that their teacher would "bring the work down to the learners' understanding". These learners also felt that the teachers would "break down" topics and go into much detail in order for learners to understand. These learners indicated that they enjoyed lessons when teachers related subject content to learners' real life experiences. In addition, these learners mentioned doing worksheets together, instead of, as the data shows, in some cases, teachers handing out worksheets and telling learners to complete them, without any explanation. In sum, low achieving learners preferred the following modes of learner participation: learners reading aloud in class, participating in debates, doing dictionary work.

These learners indicated that they were encouraged by their teachers to figure out answers for themselves. Most of the learners in this group stated that they enjoyed and were enthusiastic to answer questions in this type of learning environment. They found it exciting when the teacher interacted with them during lessons, either through questions or just asking for their comments. Learners also enjoyed lessons when teachers occasionally made fun of things instead of always being serious.

The low achieving learners referred to, what they felt, indicated, a lack of involvement from both learners and teachers. Some learners, it was stated, do not respond when teachers ask questions, instead they merely sit and wait for answers. Learners also, it was said, do not pay attention during lessons. A few learners in this group indicated that their teacher does not explain work and, according to these learners, just assumes that learners understand the work, and then expects

learners to complete the exercises in their books. Some teachers, it was stated, just gave learners the answers without explanations, and would not respond to learners' questions. Teachers also, according to the learners, did not check learners' books.

Lack of teacher involvement, according to the learners, also entailed teachers providing learners with inadequate feedback after tests or examinations. These learners stated that teachers will just call out marks and not do any corrections after learners have written a test. Or teachers will label learners as "lazy" and say that it is up to them to improve their marks, or teachers will always refer to past marks.

5.1.2 Teachers' pedagogical ways and attitudes common to both groups of learners (" Busyness").

Both the high achieving (H/A) and low achieving (L/A) learners referred to the teacher explaining with actions – teacher busyness. Mutual involvement and participation were evident from both categories of achievers. bell hooks (1994) uses the term "engaged pedagogy" to describe an approach to classroom interaction where everyone's presence is acknowledged. According to hooks, in order for education to be the "practice of freedom", learners need to be active participants in the learning process, rather than passively consume knowledge fed by the teacher. It is evident from the data that learners, in this instance, felt that they were active participants in lessons and that reciprocal active engagement prevailed during lessons. Both groups of achievers reported that there was mutual interaction during lessons as learners felt that teachers wanted them to understand and stay focused during lessons. Learners indicated that teachers would go into much detail during lessons and continually ask learners if they were following or understood the work. Learners and teachers, in this learning environment, seemed to be engaged in successful pedagogic dialogue, which, according to Burbules (2000), is the mode of pedagogic engagement that is best able to promote learning autonomy and an understanding of one's self in relation to others.

Both categories of learners emphasize the importance of clear explanations even though they reported different methods used by the teachers. The high achieving learners referred to their teacher "drawing on the board" to help learners understand. These learners also spoke about their teacher varying her pace, which the learners felt was done to assist those who were struggling to understand the work. Some low achieving learners indicated that their teacher would do detailed

lessons and ensure learners understood by questioning them and encouraging learners to ask questions.

Although learners felt that there was reciprocal engagement during most lessons, it was pointed out by both the high and low achieving groups that lack of both teacher and learner involvement also existed during lessons. Lack of teacher involvement for both groups referred to teachers just giving learners answers without explanations. Learners also felt that teachers were giving them inadequate feedback and mainly focused on the marks obtained or personal remarks about learners instead of doing more constructive remediation. Lack of learner involvement was also mentioned by both groups of learners. For the high achieving learners, it referred to learners not doing assigned tasks, and for the low achieving learners, it referred to learners waiting for the teachers "to give the answers", instead of learners working out the answers for themselves.

5.2 Value

As mentioned earlier, the literature shows that when learners feel that they are being treated and valued as an individual rather than just another class; when teachers show warmth, kindness, respect and genuine care while still being firm and fair; and when teachers do not appear so detached from learners, then learners' engagement in their learning may be enhanced. These studies (Rudduck et al, 1997, cited in Hargreaves & Fullan; Collins et al, 2002; Moloi et al 2010), maintain that teachers who are able to listen to learners, show affirmation and value learners contributions during lessons, are all factors that may enhance learning.

High achieving learners

These learners felt that when teachers said "good things" about learners, for example, praising them, especially about their progress, they believed in them. Learners in this category discuss value in terms of their teacher knowing their strengths and weaknesses, showing respect and being treated with fairness. Teachers would tell learners that they are capable of doing much better and would motivate and encourage learners to work hard. The teacher, learners stated, would call out a learner's name when s/he obtained a distinction. Most of these learners felt comfortable with the teacher calling out their marks, with some learners stating that it felt good when teachers called out their marks.

High achieving learners emphasize respect for learners. They stated that they felt respected when their teachers did not embarrass learners in front of the whole class. The teachers would call offenders aside or speak to them once the rest of the class is dismissed. Moreover, according to this group of learners, the teacher only worked with learners who were respectful and would "not worry about rude learners". Learners also felt that if the teacher was strict, the class was orderly and there was mutual respect. According to these learners, their teacher handles matters in a professional manner.

These learners also foreground the importance of fair and equal treatment. They felt that most of the teachers were fair in dealing with problems and punishment. Teachers would, according to the learners, criticize them when they, for example, did not do their work, follow instructions or make a noise. Learners indicated that sometimes the teacher would listen to both sides of a story and other times the teacher would just listen and, according to the learners, then say who is wrong and why. Learners indicated that bad behaviour was often reported to the office and/or parents, who were also consulted when learners' marks dropped considerably. Also, the learners stated that offenders were not just reported, but that teachers will remove them from the class and take them to the office.

Learners in this category mostly felt that they were being treated equally by teachers, irrespective of their ability. The teacher will ask all learners questions and, according to these learners, treat the class as whole, equally. The learners indicated that the teacher wanted all his classes to be at the same level of learning.

Some learners in this group did however feel that the teachers were not always respectful and caring towards all learners. According to this group teachers did not "worry with slow learners". Learners felt that their teachers showed that they "did not waste a lot of time on them" (slow learners). The learners in this group did mention that learners were also disrespectful towards teachers. According to these learners, they would take advantage of teachers, not do their work and not pay attention in class. These aspects do however fall outside of the parameters of this study which is not focused on learner behaviour, but rather on learners' perceptions of teachers' pedagogical ways and how these might influence their engagement with their learning.

Low achieving learners

Low achieving learners express the idea of value in relation to teacher praise, being given an opportunity to answer questions, spoken to in polite ways and being treated fairly. The data shows that these learners felt that the teacher praises rather than criticizes them and praises them when they do the right stuff. Some learners indicated that the teachers praise them when they've done well. The teacher also encouraged learners to answer even though learners felt that their answers were wrong. These learners felt that the teacher wanted only the best for them. They also indicated that their teacher made them "feel nice and not neglected".

Specific pedagogical ways used by teachers emerged from the data of this category of learners. These included teachers acknowledging good marks and showing respect towards learners by talking to them politely about their behaviour. Teachers' professionalism was alluded to, as learners saw teachers as mature adults who would not betray their confidence. These learners also referred to their teacher treating all learners equally, "no inferior or superior": he makes sure that both strong and weak learners understand the work before moving on and everyone is able to pass examinations. Also, teachers, according to the learners, treat them fairly in a conflict situation by listening to both sides of a story.

These learners felt that teachers cared about them as individuals when they were held accountable for their behaviour and progress or lack thereof. Learners stated that their teacher would "call on me when I'm disruptive". Others indicated that learners, who continuously misbehaved, were taken to the office, while those who did not do their work were punished. The teacher, according to these learners, also showed their value of learners and their care by calling in learners' parent(s) if they failed or were not "working in class".

Learners in the low achieving group also made constant reference to, what they perceived as, a lack of concern, care or kindness and a lack of professionalism from their teachers. Some learners mentioned that they were often criticized in front of the entire class and called embarrassing names. Others indicated that the teacher would scream at them and then "give you names". These learners also felt that teachers were disrespectful towards them. The teachers, according to the learners, often compared them to other learners, would not respond to their questions during lessons and would falsely accuse them of misdemeanours, like bunking. For

learners in this group, lack of professionalism referred to firstly, teachers making fun of them after learners have confided in them, and secondly, when teachers came unprepared to class. Again, as with the high achieving learners, mention was made of learners disrespecting teachers as well as other learners in the class.

5.2.1 Teachers' pedagogical ways and attitudes common to both groups of learners ("value").

The data shows that when learners experience that teachers treat them as individuals and in equal ways to others, they feel valued. The teachers generally are perceived to praise learners more than being critical of them. The L/A group of learners very strongly asserted that their teacher doesn't criticize them, but rather encourages them. The literature shows that effective learning takes place within the context of warm, nurturing relationships. Learners (and teachers), it is argued, require to be noticed, to be attended to, to be valued, to be affirmed (Richardson, 1990, cited in Collins et al, 2002). The H/A learners reported that teachers treated all learners the same, irrespective of ability. Similarly the L/A learners indicated that the teacher "talks politely" to learners about their behaviour and treats everybody the same. Both groups indicated that the teacher would praise them when they completed tasks, and that the teachers showed that they believed in learners. The literature shows that it is out of this attention and affirmation that relationships grow and learners develop the confidence to learn (and teachers to teach). "Warmth" in education, it is argued, is not regarded as a "touch-feely" experience. Instead it is about establishing a belief among learners that they are valued as individuals and supported in their learning goals (Richards, 1990). The teachers in this instance showed learners that they believed in them and that they cared about their well-being within the classroom context and beyond. Learners indicated that teachers would reprimand learners and/or report bad behaviour to the office. Teachers also spoke to parents about learners' behaviour and progress or lack thereof. Learners' perceptions of teachers as warm and caring human beings may be connected to their commitment to learn.

Both groups of learners referred to, what they experienced as teachers being disrespectful and uncaring towards them. Both groups however referred to different ways in which the teachers would show disrespect. These will be discussed under the section that looks at the differences in learner perceptions of teachers' pedagogical ways.

5.3 Opportunity

High achieving learners

High achieving learners perceive the idea of opportunity in terms of teachers giving learners a variety of opportunities to learn and discuss their academic or even personal problems with their teachers. Learners in this group felt that they were given more than one opportunity to ask and answer questions. They also suggested that their teachers questioned learners who did not do their work. High achieving learners spoke about teachers using time outside of class time to arrange extra lessons/classes aimed at assisting learners with work that they found difficult to understand. These lessons would either take place during break or after school.

Most of these learners indicated that they do trust their teachers enough to speak to them about personal or academic problems. These learners emphasized the importance of being able to trust their teachers and having the courage to confide in them. High achieving learners felt that their teachers were committed to helping them. Teachers also, according to these learners, displayed patience with learners during lessons, especially with learners who found it difficult to understand the work. Learners of this category felt that their teacher would slow down for the slow learners and, according to these learners, try her best to accommodate "their understanding". The teacher would repeat explanations or re-read a poem, to make sure that everybody understood. The teacher would also, according to these learners, consult other teachers to explain the work to learners if s/he was unable to do so. The majority of these learners stated that they had the courage to present their answers out loud even if they were incorrect, or if learners were unsure of the answers.

The idea of opportunity, according to the data about these learners, also refers to a safe learning environment as well as secure teacher-learner relationships. A learner indicated that the teacher gives learners chances to try to answer a question. According to the learner, he felt that the teacher would know their "weak points" and would work on them. The teachers would also not shout at learners when they gave an incorrect answer. The learners indicated that the teacher will go over things so that learners repeating the grade may fully understand the work.

Some learners reported that when they were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions in class, they were too shy or did not have the courage and/or confidence to speak out in class or

call out their answers. A learner indicated that she felt too embarrassed to call out her answer as the children in the class will tease her. Other learners felt that the teacher was too detached from the learners. There were learners in this group who felt that they would not discuss their personal matters with their teachers for fear of the teachers betraying that trust, or quite simply that they did not see the need to discuss personal matters with their teachers. One learner stated that it was not part of her culture to discuss personal matters with her teacher, while other learners indicated that they took their teacher as "a friend, a mother and a mentor".

Low achieving learners

The data shows that low achieving learners perceive the idea of opportunity in much similar terms. The learners mentioned that teachers often call upon them to provide answers and make comments during lessons. Learners reported that their teacher encouraged them "to say what's on their minds". They felt that they were encouraged to analyze questions and take the initiative to stand up and answer questions. According to this group of learners, they want to answer when the teacher calls upon them, but do not always have the courage to do so. Learners felt that the teacher encouraged them to answer even if their answers were incorrect. They stated that they felt motivated to say something instead of "just sitting there". Like the high achieving group of learners, these learners also felt that they were given the opportunity to learn when teachers came to class prepared. These learners indicated that the teachers would make extra time outside of the lesson, in order to help them understand the work and would allow them to rewrite tests in order to improve their marks.

Another idea, foregrounded by the low achieving learners in relation to opportunity, is teachers exercising patience with learners. Teachers would repeat explanations or slow down when learners indicated that they did not understand. According to the learners, they felt that teachers knew that there were slow learners that needed to understand. Learners explained that even if lessons took longer, their teacher would not move on unless all learners understood the work.

Some of the low achieving learners had a very negative experience of "opportunity," than the rest of this group of learners. These learners felt that the teacher would use any opportunity to blame them for things that happen in the classroom: "… you won't be able to do anything, then she calls you these names". They seemed to be aware that they were being treated differently

from other learners. They felt that the teacher would treat the "hard-working" learners better but not treat "the other" learners well. These learners reported that the teacher "don't waste time on slow learners, 'cause if you're slow, she won't notice you". Some learners indicated that they were "scared" or "nervous" to answer questions. They were also "shy" to ask questions and/or tell the teachers that they did not understand.

Some of the low achieving learners indicated that teachers were also not available for consultation. These learners stated that they won't discuss personal stuff with their teacher as they did not trust their teacher and were afraid that the teachers will betray their confidence. Of these learners stated that they did not trust anyone.

Other learners in this group referred to the teachers who just carried on teaching even though learners would indicate that they do not understand. Learners stated that they did not always understand the teacher's accent. They also indicated that they could not follow "the teacher's perspective" and that the work is not explained on the "learners' level". According to these learners the teacher would still want the answers even though the learners did not understand:"If you don't know the work, then you're wasting their time".

5.3.1 Teachers' pedagogical ways and attitudes common to both groups of learners ("opportunity").

The data shows that when teachers, according to both groups of learners, call on different learners to analyze questions, provide answers, make comments during lessons, "to say what's on their minds", learners feel that they are given an opportunity to learn. According to both categories of learners, when teachers exercised patience with them by repeating explanations or slowing down so that all learners understood, learners felt that they were given an opportunity to learn. Both groups of learners referred to the teachers providing learners with academic support by conducting extra lessons either after school or during breaks (intervals). The literature refers to the Communications Styles project run by Joe Harkin (co-author with Collins & Nind, 2002), which set out to investigate what, according to teachers and their students, characterized a "good teacher". The findings highlighted that there was fundamental agreement between both parties about the characteristics of good teaching. Reference was made to teachers achieving a balance between (teacher) "leadership" and "warmth". Leadership in this instance referred to the teacher understanding their subject and being able to provide learners with a suitable level of challenge,

while warmth refers to providing a nurturing environment in which learners feel secure and safe. This was evident in the pedagogical ways employed by some of the teachers in this study. The L/A learners indicated that their lessons would take longer as the teacher would make sure that all learners understood before moving on. Teachers would repeat explanations, question learners and encourage them to answer. Learners indicated that they would subsequently feel motivated to answer. The H/A group of learners also referred to teachers slowing down to accommodate, according to these learners, the "slow-minded" learners and "their understanding".

It is evident that the high and low achieving learners value the idea of teachers giving learners opportunities to ask as well as answer questions during lessons. Some learners, from both categories of achievers, had the courage to answer questions even if they were incorrect. Other learners indicated that they were "shy" or "nervous" to answer or ask questions during lessons.

A number of learners from both high and low achievers, reported that they will not discuss their personal matters with their teacher as they did not trust their teachers and feared that teachers would betray their trust. Only the low achieving learners had negative experiences of opportunity.

5.4 Humiliation

High achieving learners

High achieving learners perceive the idea of humiliation in terms of personal embarrassment in class and teacher bias. The data shows that learners felt that teachers were embarrassing them when they are made to kneel in front of the class as punishment. Learners indicated that they also found it embarrassing when teachers read out their marks, especially low marks, and other learners in the class, as well as the teacher in some cases, would laugh at and make fun of them. This was done, according to learners, despite their protests against teachers reading out their marks.

These learners reported that they perceived teachers' pedagogical ways as being biased towards certain groups of learners. Teachers were seen to side with girls and academically strong learners. The high achieving learners felt that teachers accused academically weak learners of starting arguments. These learners mentioned that teachers were seen to blame learners who were

repeating the grade, for negatively influencing other learners. It was also reported that learners who passed were treated differently from those who failed. Learners indicated that all classes were not given the same types of tasks for example, the teachers would make one class write a summary of a chapter that the learners have read, whereas the other class will be given the completed summary.

Low achieving learners

The low achieving learners referred to their views on humiliation and how they experience it in their learning environment in similar ways. These learners found it embarrassing when teachers made them kneel in front of the class as a form of punishment. They also felt that teachers were biased towards certain groups of learners. The learners in this group indicated that teachers had favourites especially amongst the girls. The teacher would, according to these learners, praise their favourites and often accuse the weak learners of disruptive behaviour. It is evident that the low achieving learners had more experience of humiliation than the high achieving learners.

Teachers, according to these learners were also seen to take out their frustrations on learners. Learners reported that teachers were angry and would shout at learners unnecessarily, and often confuse them (learners). These learners also indicated that teachers would punish the whole class for one person's wrong-doing.

5.4.1 Teachers' pedagogical ways and attitudes common to both groups of learners ("humiliation").

The data shows that both groups of learners felt humiliated when teachers made them kneel in front of the class. Learners however indicated that they preferred this type of punishment rather than the teacher sending them to the office.

Learners reported that teachers treated them differently, especially the low achieving learners. They indicated that teachers would accuse the low achieving learners of being disruptive and would embarrass these learners. In addition, according to both categories of learners, teachers were also seen to side with the girls in the class, as well as the academically strong learners.

5.5 Differences in learner perceptions of teachers' pedagogical ways

The emphasis in the above discussion was on the similarities between the two groups of learners with regard to their perceptions and experiences of pedagogical ways that encourage their engagement with learning. The data also shows that there are differences in learners' perceptions of pedagogical ways, particularly with regard to low achieving learners in relation to "busyness". In relation to the other three categories (value, opportunity and humiliation), the data shows that the low achieving perception is similar, but that their experiences are not the same. They report on experiences that the high achieving learners do not report. At the level of experience, that difference is seen, except for busyness. In relation to "busyness", the low achieving learners point to different ways of participation and involvement in lessons. They referred to doing worksheets together with the teacher, as opposed to teachers handing out worksheets and learners being expected to complete them without teachers explaining what needs to be done. The low achieving learners also referred to other modes of learner participation like reading aloud and doing dictionary work.

These learners indicated that they enjoyed and found lessons exciting when teachers related subject content to their real life experiences. According to these learners, they also enjoyed it when teachers made fun of things instead of being serious all the time. The high achieving learners mentioned that their teachers encouraged them to stay focused throughout lessons and according to these learners, their teachers promoted discussions about social issues. It is thus evident, from the data that there are some pedagogical ways perceived specifically by the low achieving learners regarding the category, "busyness".

Still in relation to "busyness", the low achieving learners held different perceptions of the lack of learner and teacher involvement in the classroom context. Lack of learner involvement referred to, firstly, learners not responding to teachers' questions and merely waiting for the answer, and secondly, learners who do not pay attention during lessons. Lack of teacher involvement, according to this group of learners, referred to the following factors: teachers not explaining work and assuming that learners understood; teachers not responding to learners' questions; and teachers would not check learners' books. With regard to feedback, these learners indicated that teachers were not providing, what they felt constituted constructive feedback, instead learners

would be labelled “lazy” or teachers would refer to past marks. It is important to emphasize that these pedagogical ways were not mentioned by the high achieving learners.

Learners’ views of teachers’ pedagogical ways with regard to “value” demonstrated that differences existed in the experiences of the high and low achieving learners. Although both groups of learners understood and perceived value in similar ways; although they mention similar pedagogical ways of transmitting value, they referred to different ways in which they experienced disrespect. The high achieving learners felt that teachers did not show much care or warmth towards the low achieving group, the “slow learners”, especially during lessons, when, according to these learners, teachers did not waste their time on “slow learners”. Learners in the low achieving group mentioned – and these comments were not made by the high achieving group – that the teachers often criticized them in front of the entire class, would insult and call them embarrassing names like “pinky in the brain” or “you useless boy”. Other learners in this group indicated that the teachers would scream at them and then “give you names”. These learners reported that teachers would show much disregard toward them. Teacher would also make fun of learners after they have confided in them. Learners also indicated that teachers would come to class unprepared.

There were differences in the way high and low achieving learners experienced “opportunities”. Like value, their perceptions of the pedagogical ways in which teachers provide opportunities to learn are largely similar and their experience of these, at least by some low achieving learners, was different. Low achieving learners reported that teachers did not shout when learners gave incorrect answers. Learners, however, indicated that they did not always have the courage to answer, especially when they knew that their answer was wrong. This group of learners also felt that teachers did not want to waste their time on slow learners. Learners also indicated that teachers were not available for consultations. According to these learners, they did not trust their teachers sufficiently to discuss their problems with them. The high achieving learners emphasized the importance of trusting their teachers.

The difference in learners’ experience of teachers’ pedagogical ways of transmitting opportunity was seen when they were reporting on negative experiences. The low achieving learners felt that their teachers seated them according to their ability. They also indicated that their teachers would compare them to other learners. The low achieving group of learners felt that teachers would just

go ahead with work even though these learners would indicate that they did not understand the work. According to these learners teachers would not respond to their questions. It is important to emphasize that these negative experiences were not mentioned by high achieving learners.

These learners also perceived teachers as being relatively inconsiderate. According to the learners, teachers "take out their frustrations on learners". Learners felt that their teachers were always angry and would shout at them unnecessarily. The learners in this group also reported that when teachers shouted at them, they would become confused, especially during lessons. The teacher would also, according to these learners, punish the whole class for one person's wrong-doing.

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate ways in which teachers' attitudes, as perceived by learners, affect learners' engagement in their learning. The main research question was: *In what pedagogical ways, as perceived by high and low achieving learners, do teachers transmit attitudes of care, trust and expectations to learners?*

The literature review highlighted three key constructs of attitudinal qualities that may enhance learners' engagement in their learning. These were "warmth, care and empathy", "trust and respect" and "teachers' high expectations". The literature showed that an active and interactive approach to learning and teaching is required that may contribute to both the intellectual and spiritual growth of learners. Engaged pedagogy, which consists of a balance between leadership and warmth, has been shown to enhance learning and teaching. The collection of studies reviewed, underlined the importance of firstly, an active participation in learning, and secondly, the importance of rich communication in a learning environment. The studies also demonstrated that the creation of secure, trusting relationships and learning environments in which mutual respect exist between teachers and learners, are factors that may enhance learning. In addition, research suggests that when teachers set high expectations for all learners from the start, students gain independence and confidence with each goal they meet. It is argued that setting high expectations raises students' motivation, self-perception, confidence and achievement (Anderson, 2005). Underlying these three constructs, is a dialogic approach to teaching and learning – pedagogic dialogue – a mode of instruction that will enable the three constructs pedagogically.

A qualitative study was designed with focus group interviews as the instrument of data collection. The data were transcribed, coded and analyzed. The aim was to find, through the analysis of the learners' perceptions, the differences and similarities, in their perceptions, of teachers' attitudes, specifically how teachers' attitudes affect learners' engagement in their own learning. This was followed by an unpacking of the pedagogical ways that, according to learners,

teachers use to transmit attitudes of care, trust and expectations, in the three schools that comprised the sample.

Learners' responses during the focus group interviews were naturally varied and often quite enlightening. At some schools the responses of the high achieving and those of the low achieving groups of learners, about certain issues, were relatively similar. In other instances the differences in perceptions of these two groups of learners about the various issues discussed, were more apparent. There were also differences in responses within each group of high and low achievers.

What became evident from the learner responses during the focus group interviews was that learners wanted to be taken seriously by their teachers. According to the learners, one way of teachers showing this, was by coming to class well-prepared and presenting lessons that learners felt were worth their while. Learners seemed to thrive in an environment in which they felt that the teacher had their best interests at heart. They wanted to hear from the teacher that they were doing well. In the absence of this type of affirmation, they often felt that teachers did not care about them or were detached from learners and this de-motivated them.

The data showed that although there were considerable similarities between the perceptions of high achieving and low achieving learners with regard to their teachers' pedagogical ways, significant differences were apparent. The low achieving learners pointed out different ways of participation and involvement in lessons. They perceived "busyness" as reading aloud, doing dictionary work and completing worksheets, whereas the high achieving learners were engaged in more conceptually challenging activities, for example they held discussions about social issues. With regard to the rest of the categories ("value", "opportunity" and "humiliation") differences were found about the experiences of low achieving learners, not their perceptions. The low achieving learners felt that their teachers criticized them more often and that they were subjected to humiliation and insults. In addition, the low achieving learners felt that their teachers did not want to waste their time on "slow learners" and hence they did not have the courage to participate in lessons, especially in terms of calling out answers or presenting their work to the rest of the class. According to these learners, teachers often ignored them during lessons by either not responding to their questions or simply not giving them opportunities to ask or respond to questions. Learners in the low achieving group also held the view that their teachers were not available for consultations.

The literature shows that one of the principles of good learning is that it takes place within the context nurturing relationships and rich communication. Moreover, it was shown that the three constructs of attitudinal qualities, namely: "warmth, care and empathy", "trust and respect" and "teachers' high expectations", identified in the literature, may facilitate learning within the context of nurturing relationships in a classroom setting. This study shows that for learning to take place, certain pedagogical ways are required: "busyness", "value", "opportunity" and "avoidance of humiliation".

6.2 Limitations of the Study

This research project has the following limitations: Firstly, the study focused on how teachers' attitudes affect learners' engagement in learning and their motivation to learn and not what effect teacher attitude will have on learner achievement. Samples of learners' assessment tasks or test scores did not form part of the data collected for analysis, although these could have been used to show a far more clear relationship between teachers' attitude and learners' learning and access to school knowledge. Secondly, I did not look at ways in which teachers mark learners' books, as an indicator of the differential treatment a teacher might give learners of either high or low achievement levels. Rather emphasis would be on teacher-learner interactions as reported by learners during the focus group interviews. Thirdly, data on teachers' perceptions could have been used with the aim of comparing learners' and teachers' perceptions of the three main themes. Notwithstanding these limitations, a focus on learners' perceptions is justified as a lens into the experiences reported by learners about the relationship between teachers' attitude and learners' confidence and motivation to learn.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research in relation to this study could take the following factors into account:

- the school circumstances
- teachers' responses.

Reflections

This topic has always been close to my heart. I have always believed and know now more than ever that teachers play an important role in the lives of all our learners, more especially learners who come from a disadvantaged background, who often are the majority of the low achieving learners. Many learners come from broken homes and broken communities and seek some sort of affirmation and acknowledgement in their lives. We, as teachers, are in a position to provide our learners with so much more than just the content of a book.

Learners often find themselves in a vicious circle. As a result of their situation at home where there is a lack of almost everything, learners build up resentment against the world and that is often enacted in the classroom. We as teachers in turn interpret it as ill discipline and learners are "punished" for misbehaving. I have so often come across many angry learners who have almost a total disregard for any form of "authority" and show an almost total lack of respect for their teachers and most of their peers. But when you speak to them in a civil, respectful manner, which often shock them, and look into their eyes, you often see the sadness and fragile soul that is so carefully concealed beneath the hardened outside.

It really pains me when I hear teachers being so absolutely dismissive of learners. Yes, we are challenged by learners' behaviour, their attitudes and their apparent and often very real disinterest in their school work. I do however maintain that if we continue to treat our learners with kindness, care, warmth, respect and show them that we truly believe that they can achieve, we will make a difference. I have had experience of that, and it is challenging and can be draining, but it is achievable.

This study has again shown me that learners, especially low achieving learners, do take notice of what teachers do and say, and that they are affected by the manner in which they are treated. I do believe that if we work on our relationships with our learners and create as the literature says, a safe and secure learning environment, if we are able to achieve a balance between leadership and warmth in our classroom environment, I truly believe that we will make a difference in the lives of our learners. Learners need to know that they can trust their teachers in their learning experience. They need to know that teachers expect only the best from them and that their teachers believe that they are capable of achieving their best, not just in the classroom, but in other spheres of their lives as well.

This study has also highlighted the important role of dialogue, especially also pedagogic dialogue. I feel that learners need to be given a platform to voice their opinions and views and be encouraged to do that and should not feel restricted or less than the next person or "shy." At the same time, though they need to know the "rules of engagement." There is just so much we, as teachers, can do. As bell hooks says, "the classroom, with all its limitations, remain a location of possibility."

REFERENCES

Anderson, G. (2005). *Fundamentals in Educational Research.* London: RoutledgeFalmer

Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (1998).*The Practice of Social Research.* South Africa: Oxford University Press.

Bassey, M. (1999).*Case Study Research In Educational Settings.* England: Open University Press.

Burbules, N. (1993). *Dialogue In Teaching: Theory and Practice.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Burbules, N.C. (2000). The Limits of Dialogue as a Critical Pedagogy.*Dept of Educational Policy Studies.* University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign

Cicognani, L. (2004). To punish or Discipline? Teachers' attitudes towards the abolition of corporal punishment. http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za

Cohen, L. Lawrence, M. Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*.London: RoutledgeFarmer

Collins, J. Harkin, J. &Nind, M. (2002).*Manifesto for Learning.*London Continuum.

Cornelius-White, J. (2007). Learner-Centered Teacher-Student Relationship are Effective: A Meta-Analysis. *Review of Education Research,* 77 1, 113-143.

Cotton, K. (1989). Expectations and Student Outcomes.*Student Improvement Research Series,* Vol.7.

Davenport, P. & Anderson, G. (2002).*Closing the Achievement Gap: No Excuses.* USA: APQC Publications.

Freebody, P. (2003). *Qualitatvie Research in Education: Interaction and Practice.* London: Sage Publications.

Goleman, D. (1996) *Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ.* London: Bloomsbury.

Good, T. L. & Brophy, J. E. (1973). *Looking in Classrooms.* New York: Harper & Row.

Good, T. L. & Brophy, J. E. (1991). 5th ed. *Looking in Classrooms.* New York: HarperCollins Publications Inc.

Hargreaves, A & Fullan, M. (1998).*What's Worth Fighting For Out There.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Henning, E. (2004). Finding your way in qualitative research. Pretoria: Van Skaik.

Hooks, B (1994). Teaching to Trangress: Education as the Practice of Freedom. New York: Routledge.

Hoy, W., Tater, C., and Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2006). Academic Optimism of Schools: A Force for the Student Achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 43 (3), 425-446.*

McMillan, J. H. & Schumacher, S (2006). *Research in Education: Evidence- Based Inquiry.* USA: Pearson Education Inc.

Meier, D. (2002). *In Schools We Trust: Creating Communication of Learning in an Era of Testing and Standardization.* Boston : Beacon Press.

Moloi, K.C. Dzvimbo, K.P. Potgieter, F.J. Wolhuter, C.C & Van der Walt, J. L (2010). Learners' perception as to what contributes to their school success: a case study. *South African Journal of Educatio,* 30: 475 - 490

Morrow, W. (2007). *Learning to teach in South Africa.* Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Nell, N. Müller, H. Hugo, A. Helldin, R. Bάckmann, Ő. Dwyer, H & Skarlind, A. (2011). A comparative perspective on teacher attitude – constructs that impact on inclusive education in South Africa and Sweden. *South African Journal of Education*, 31: 74 - 90

Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: an alternative approach to education.* New York: Teachers College Press

Noddings, N. (2006). *Critical lessons: What our schools should teach.* New York: Cambridge University Press

Pedder, D. and McIntyre, D. (2006). Pupil consultation: the importance of social capital. *Educational Review,* 58 (2), 145-157.

Rogers, C. (2006). Attending to student Voice: The Impact of Descriptive Feedback on Learning and Teaching.*Curriculum Inquiry, 36(2), 209-233.*

Smith, M.K. (2004) Nel Noddings, The ethics of care and education, *The encyclopaedia of informal education,* www.infed.org/thinkers/noddings.htm.

Soudien, C. S. (2007). The "A" factor: Coming to terms with the question of legacy in South African Education. *International Journal of Educational Development,* 27.182-193.

Taylor, N. & Prinsloo, C. (2005). The Quality Learning Project: Lessons for High School Improvement in South Africa .Jet Education Services.

Van Der Berg, S. (2006). How effective are poor schools? Poverty and educational outcomes in South Africa.*BureauFor Research,* 06. 2-40.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule for Focus Group

Learners will be interviewed in a focus group prior to the observation of lessons. They will be questioned about their perceptions and experience of teacher and interaction and what impact it has on their motivation to and engagement with, their own learning.

1. When and how does your teacher praise/criticize you? Give specific examples.

2. When you are unsure of what to do or do not know an answer to a question, how does your teacher normally react?

3. Does your teacher make her/himself available for consultation?

4. When you give an incorrect answer, what is your teacher's response?

5. Do you think that your teacher treats you the same as s/he treats other learners in the class? If yes, how do you see it and if not, how do you see this?

6. How often does your teacher call on you to provide an answer pr demonstrate your work to other learners in the classroom?

7. Do you risk yourself and present your answers out loud even if you are not sure that you are correct?

8. What do you like most about how your teacher presents her/his lessons?

9. Does your teacher vary her pace, style and activities to suit the different needs of the diverse groups of learners in the classroom? (I will clarify concepts used in the question if learners

do not understand them).

10. How does your teacher respond when you approach her/him with a personal/academic problem?

11. Will you have the courage to speak to your teacher about a problem outside of school? If not why?

12. When you have not done well in a test, what response do you get from your teacher?

13. When there is a conflict between a strong learner and a weak learner in the class, what does your teacher normally

Appendix 2: Parental consent for learner participation in research project

Dear Parent/Guardian

I will be conducting a Research Project at the school your child attends. The aim of the study is to investigate different forms of learner participation and how teachers structure/mediate these forms of learner participation, as required by the Outcomes-Based approach to Education.

My target group is the Grade 10 Home and Additional Language learners and hence the participation of your child. I would like to assure you that confidentiality and anonymity with regard to your child's participation in the project as a whole will remain a priority in this research project.

Please complete, sign and return the form below, indicating whether you agree or do not agree to your child's participation in the above-mentioned project.

Parental Consent form

Please tick the appropriate box below, then sign and return the form to your school at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your co-operation

Participation in study:

☐ I **give** permission for my child to participate in the study

☐ I **do not give** permission for my child to participate in the study

Appendix 3

20 Johnson Street
Eldorado Park
Ext. 9
1812

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to conduct research at your school

I hereby request permission to use your school as a site for conducting a research project. The study forms part of the requirements needed by me to be awarded a Masters in Education (Med) degree at the University Of The Witwatersrand.

The aim of the research is to investigate forms of learner participation and how teachers structure/mediate these forms of participation, as required by Outcomes Based Education. For the purposes of the study, I would like to use two Grade 10 English Home and/or Additional Language educators, preferably educators who are known to be academically strong, and their learners.

The research will be carried out over a period of two weeks and will commence towards the end of September 2007. The data collected will be used for research and teacher-education purposes only for period of five years after which it will be destroyed. The name of your school will be kept completely confidential, including in all academic writing about the study.

There are no foreseeable risks in participants will not receive any remuneration for their participation. Please also be aware that participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without any penalty. However, the benefit of participating in a project of this nature is that you will be making a meaningful contribution to the production of quality education to all learners, and this is the ultimate goal of the project.

If you have any concerns about participation, or any questions that you would like to ask, you may contact me at the following numbers: 011 945 2288 or 083 523 8841.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

……

Estelle Buys (Ms)

(Researcher)