
Grade 3 learners' perceptions and understandings of social justice in a democracy

by

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October 2014



Faculty of Education
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Grade 3 learners' perceptions and understandings of social justice in a democracy

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DEDICATION

To the children of South Africa

Tableau

*Locked arm in arm they cross the way
The black boy and the white,
The golden splendour of the day
The sable pride of night.*

*From lowered blinds the dark folk stare
And here the fair folk talk,
Indignant that these two should dare
In unison to walk.*

*Oblivious to look and word
they pass, and see no wonder
that lightning brilliant as a sword
should blaze the path of thunder.*

Countee Cullen (1925)

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To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that I, Alexa Kirsten Barnby, ID No. 5106090097080, a fulltime language practitioner with the University of South Africa and member of the South African Translators Institute, have edited Hilda Middeljans's master's dissertation, "Grade 3 learners' perceptions and understandings of social justice in a democracy". The onus is, however, on the student to bring about the changes suggested and address the comments made.



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ABSTRACT

Since 1994 South Africa has been known as a free and democratic country. This inquiry explores the perceptions and understandings of Grade 3 learners of social justice and the way in which social justice could be implemented in a democratic South Africa. The way in which the learners expressed themselves informed me about how they understand the political situation in South Africa and how they would change the situation to make South Africa a better place. The 1996 South African Constitution encourages equality and social justice through upholding the rights of the citizens. The interpretations of the learners informed me as to how equality may be achieved and also on ways in which to implement social justice in the curriculum. This study was informed by an interpretivist paradigm and guided by a conceptual and theoretical framework.

The existing literature on social justice and the implementation of social justice in a democratic South Africa has been guided by relevant concepts and theories. I used certain theories of Dewey to bring theory and practice together. Dewey proposed several theories to be implemented in society. His theories were based on democracy in education and he worked with teachers to encourage learners to think for themselves and, in this way, to create their own identities. I identified certain principles in the literature review that young learners would need to adhere to in order to evolve into active young citizens in a democracy. These principles include knowledge, skills and values. Social justice is one of the core principles of the National Curriculum Statement. The Department of Basic Education aims to merge principles of teaching and practice through the curriculum in order to help young learners to accept each other as citizens of South Africa while remaining sensitive to issues of diversity among the learners. The data collection methods and data collection instruments used in the study were designed to ascertain the opinions of the learners. In other words, the collection of the data was child-centred to enable the learners to express their own opinions. The paradigmatic considerations of the study is also explained by introducing them within the interpretive paradigm and confirming that this study was a case study.

The Grade 3 learners who participated in the study expressed their knowledge about social justice in terms of the fairness and unfairness which they perceive in South Africa. They also indicated how they would create an ideal strategy for nation-building and social cohesion. The learners expressed little about the current political activities in the country but, instead, concentrated on the concerns about human safety, care for the environment and fairness in the communities in which they live. The young learners clearly wanted change in South Africa in order to transform the country into a united nation in which everybody is treated equally.

The key findings of the study confirmed that young learners want to make a difference in any way they are able, they want to participate in political processes and they want their voices to be heard rather than be mere observers. Social justice is a phenomenon that is natural for young learners as they accept each other as they are. They expressed their desire for social cohesion in South Africa.

Key words: social justice, citizenship, equity, human rights, learners

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ADDENDA

- CD Appendix 1: Group 1 contributions
- CD Appendix 2: Group 2 contributions
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- CD Appendix 4: Field notes
- CD Appendix 5: Consent letter for schools
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- CD Appendix 7: Consent letter for learners
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CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THE INQUIRY:

Children, social justice and social justice in education in a democratic South African context

1.1 Introduction

Democratic South Africa is striving to achieve social justice in every level of the society. Vandeyar and Killen (2007:101) are of the opinion that the changes in post-apartheid South Africa have included remarkable changes in the education system in striving for social justice. Existing languages have been recognised as official languages and policies have been introduced to redress the injustices of the apartheid era. This has been a difficult task and the progress toward a new level of social justice has been erratic. According to Vandeyar and Killen (2007:101-102), one of the factors that have contributed to the continuing inequity is the reluctance on the part of many teachers to adapt their teaching practices to the new policies. However, through the medium of professional development, activities and the new policies have eventually been implemented in schools in order to promote social justice. The new policies which have been implemented in the educational system represented an attempt to correct the social injustices of the apartheid era.

According to a study conducted by Joubert (2007:150), children identify themselves at a young age as citizens in a democratic South Africa. Joubert further states that the children in the Foundation Phase understand the abstract concepts related to democracy and citizenship, including concepts such as their own rights, the responsibilities of active citizens and the

diversity of cultures that unite South Africa. Joubert's study also revealed that children were aware of the fact that they lived in unsafe neighbourhoods as well as the social injustice that prevailed and that they held political leaders responsible. The children expressed their participation in the country as active citizens in imaginative ways and looked forward to being part of a democratic South Africa (Joubert 2007:150). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of the Department of Basic Education encourages the application of social justice, stating that the educational imbalances of the past must be redressed and that equal educational opportunities must be provided for all. This teaching principles and practice must become a reality and teachers must actively teach the principles of social justice (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

Brodyk (2010:19-20) studied the reactions of young children to their environment which can shed light on their awareness of social justice. Brodyk (2010:19-20) found that young children observe the world around them, they interact with the people in their environment and they observe them. In this way they learn how to behave and express themselves. Children accept the things they learn as well as their ethnic backgrounds, religion and socioeconomic status. They grow up wanting to be like the people they admire the most – generally their parents, teachers, family and friends. They treat others through observing the way the world teaches them to treat others. People treat other people differently according to their social class, age and abilities which is in contrast to what social justice stands for. Social justice is based on the concepts of human rights, equality and a just and equitable society.

Learners (in South Africa learner refer to school-going children) are not always aware of social justice and how to make it part of their everyday lives. They may discriminate against someone because they do not know that the law stipulates they may not do this. For this reason, it is essential that adults and teachers understand fully the way in which young learners experience the differences between races and cultures. The perceptions of young learners may play a significant role in the way in which social justice is implemented among young learners in the classroom. If an atmosphere of social justice is created among young learners, this will be one step closer to an equal South Africa in which social justice prevails and the social injustice of the past may be corrected (Brodyk 2010:19-20).

1.2 Rationale

I have been working with young children since I graduated in 2006 from the University of Pretoria. I have experienced as a teacher in a South African school how children are able to accept each other without any discrimination based on their differences. My interest for social justice as subject has grown over the past years since I have had to implement social justice in my own classroom to the children, referred to as learners in the South African context. I taught and implemented social justice in order to teach equity and an awareness of the emotions and feelings of other learners in the classroom and school context. This, in turn, has inspired me to delve more deeply into the role that learners could play in building a democratic South Africa. The purpose of my study was to work collaboratively with young children in order to either explore or investigate and explore their perceptions and understandings of social justice. My intention was to work with learners in the Foundation Phase context in order to understand how they perceive and understand social justice. I believed that this would enable me to explore how teachers could educate children in order to enhance their understanding of social justice. In view of the fact that I would be working with children in the classroom context, I refer to them as learners.

CAPS contain specific statements about its purpose for learners (Department of Basic Education, 2011). As such, it states that all learners must be equipped with knowledge, skills and values, irrespective of their socioeconomic background, gender, race and physical or intellectual ability. In addition, they must also be active citizens of the society in a free country. This is the foundation on which social justice is built. These basic principles of social justice would teach learners to respect each other. CAPS also states that all learners must enjoy equal learning opportunities and that active and critical learning encourages an active approach to learning. It further states that young children must be informed about certain issues such as human rights, inclusivity and environmental and social justice, as contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Department of Basic Education 2011). Thus, social justice involves the implementation of fairness among learners where they accept each other despite their differences. This would reduce the social injustice that prevailed in the history of South Africa and help to build up a new democracy of young learners where everyone is equal.

According to Gillborn (2002:1), difficulties are often encountered when one tries to bring policy and practice together. He maintains that the ideals of the perfect world are depicted in the curriculum. However, in many cases, the majority of educators do not regard the teaching of social justice to learners as a priority and learners are, therefore, not made fully aware of their basic rights or how they should treat the people around them. In addition, even if the educators do teach the learners the basics of social justice, there will always be those learners who choose to act selfishly and disrespectfully towards members of a different race, religion and culture to their own and even towards disabled learners. However, this may be minimised through the teaching of social justice (Gillborn 2002:2).

1.3 Problem statement

Brodyk (2010:20) argues that most young learners possess a basic understanding of fairness and teachers can play a valuable role in developing this understanding. She further states that learners are open to new experiences and will accept the guidance of an adult in forming their own perceptions of different cultures. When they are exposed to new circumstances, learners have to make their own informed decisions regarding equity and social justice. It is, thus, clearly the role of the teacher to expand the learners' understandings and perceptions of social justice, equity and fairness and to encourage them to include learners from other cultures and to see them as their equals (Brodyk 2010:20).

The purpose of my study was to work collaboratively with young learners in order to either explore or investigate and understand their perceptions of social justice. Accordingly, I investigated the perceptions of social justice of young learners in order to identify the way in which young learners understand social justice. I anticipated that this would contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the way teachers can implement social justice effectively in the classroom. It is essential that educators understand the learners' life experiences in order to teach social justice, particularly in view of the fact that social justice has become one of the national policy requirements (Francis & Le Roux 2011:299). If learners learn what social justice is and also experience social justice in their everyday lives, they may be empowered to

contribute to social justice in society in their future lives. Francis and Le Roux (2011:299) also suggest that all educators adopt a primary role in conceptualising programmes in support of social justice education in order to bring change in the youth of South Africa.

1.4 Research questions

The main research question that guided this study was the following: What are Grade 3 learners' perceptions and understandings of social justice in a democracy?

In order to answer the main research question, the following secondary research questions were formulated:

- Do young learners' experiences in the social world influence their perceptions and understandings of social justice?
- Which factors influence young learners' perceptions of social justice?
- How do young learners respond to issues of equality?

1.5 Concept clarification

I believe that a multicultural society may create a balance between diversity issues. If we, as adults, teachers, parents and so forth want to create a just society, it is essential that we understand young learners' perceptions of social justice. Although there are many concepts related to social justice, this study will be based on three of the pillars that strengthen social justice, namely, human rights, citizenship and equity (Brodyk 2010:19). The following section provides a brief summary of these concepts as they are used in the study.

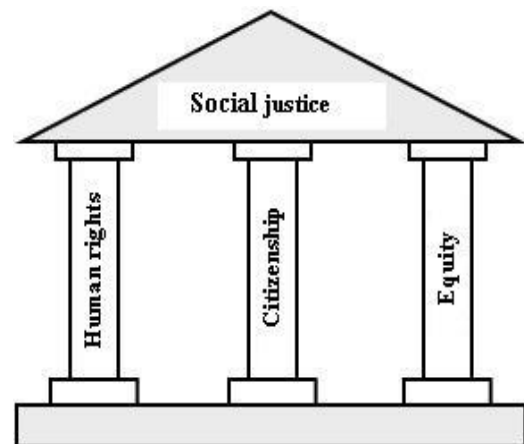


Figure 1.1: Three pillars

1.5.1 The learner and human rights

It was the opinion of the previous generation that children should be seen and not heard (Valley 2005:31-47). However, this mindset has been replaced with one in terms of which learners may not only express themselves but they may also reveal their feelings (Lansdown 2001:4). This change of attitude coincided with the emphasis on children's rights (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989). According to the Human Rights Commission (Abrahams & Matthews 2011:5), one of the principles behind the implementation of human rights is that learners must enjoy the right to equality of opportunity in life. This may be achieved through social justice. Therefore it is the opinion that greater attention should be given to ensure that learners participate in the decisions that are taken in their lives. Abrahams and Matthews (2011:5) provide an introduction to human rights and how to implement them, stating that, from the 1970s to the early 1990s, the non-governmental and community-based organisations attempted to uplift the socially vulnerable learners in South Africa. However, during the 1990s, the issue of human rights underwent a massive transformation with the implementation of major national programmes and also the establishment of a committee on women, children, youth and persons with disabilities and with a specific division for children's rights (Abrahams & Matthews 2011:5). After 1994, when apartheid was abolished, new laws were introduced and old laws replaced as specified in the Children's Act 38 of 2005 and the Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa 2006). However, despite significant progress, challenges still remain, including HIV/Aids, missing children and high levels of domestic violence and abuse that threaten the rights of children (Abrahams & Matthews 2011).

Every learner is entitled to know their rights. The Youth for Human Rights International Association (2003) advocates that learners must know their rights as an integral aspect of the universal human rights to which every person is entitled. In addition, it is very important that learners should know their rights from a young age as this will alert them to abuse and help them to form their own identity. It is also important that they are well-informed about the social systems or organisations that may assist them. In other words, learners must be aware of their human rights and how they can apply them in their daily lives, thus benefiting from equal treatment and social justice (Inter-Agency Working Group on Children's Participation 2008).

1.5.2 The learner as a citizen

According to the South African Citizenship Act 88 of 1995 (Republic of South Africa 1996), South African citizenship is conferred on every child born in South Africa. According to Van Bueren (2011:31), learners are regarded as passive citizens from a very young age but, as they grow older, society expects them to become active citizens. According to Van Bueren (2011:31), there are four different ways in which citizenship may be identified. Firstly, children have certain rights. Secondly, they are members of a social community. Thirdly, they are economic and political participators and, fourthly, they are part of a global world and may, therefore, be regarded as international citizens. These four aspects are equally important and imply that learners may be regarded as multigenerational citizens (Van Bueren 2011:31).

In the past learners were measured against adult models of citizenship (Van Bueren 2011:32). Van Bueren also claims that learners should be actively involved in certain decisions that involve political growth. However, according to Van Bueren (2011:32) voting regulations, children may not become formally active until they are 18 years old. Van Bueren (2011:32) argues against this situation, stating that learners should be actively involved in the democratic processes at a much earlier age than 18.

In a multicultural country learners are sometimes disenfranchised and separated from the law (Cohen 2005). However, Van Bueren maintains that the courts must ensure that children's rights, including their social justice rights, are protected and that special attention be given to learners from the lower socioeconomic classes. Social justice and multigenerational citizenship will reach their full potential only if the lives of all learners are enhanced by the democratic powers of the country. Children are born free and, as citizens of South Africa, they are entitled to basic human rights and social justice (Van Bueren 2011:38).

1.5.3 The learner and equity

In order to ensure that justice prevails for young learners, the critical domains of equity must be a priority (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2006:15). According to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2006:15), equity refers to the state where everyone is treated equally, where justice is served and where everyone is treated fairly. This concept is coupled

with the definition of equality according to which everyone should have equal opportunities and everyone is treated on the same level. The concept of social justice plays a role in both these definitions. According to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2006:16), to be treated equally means that all human rights must primarily be implemented in children's lives. In other words, every human being must be accorded an equal opportunity so that every individual is able to fulfil his or her full potential and there is no discrimination on the basis of any differences such as culture and race.

Riddell (2009:4) conducted a study on social justice and equality. In terms of social justice equality may be understood in various ways. Equal opportunities imply that the barriers between different groups are demolished and everyone has an equal chance. However, this is not easy to establish. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), who were social theorists in the 1970s, it is essential to make the playing field for studying desirable rather than to encourage learners to study in different educational fields that appear unattractive. In this way they will specialise in certain educational fields rather than to have a little knowledge of many subjects.

Every learner is well aware of the concept of equity. In the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democrac. The Department of Education (2001) states that without the implementation of social justice, it would not be able to correct the injustices of the past. Equality is one of the core concepts in ensuring that every citizen treats other citizens fairly. In addition, everyone should have equal access to the basic human rights so that equality may prevail in a multicultural country like South Africa (Department of Education 2001).

1.5.4 Social justice

Human rights and political and educational inclusion are central to the concept of social justice. Pendlebury and Enslin (2004:47) maintain that the implementation of social justice in a school environment constitutes a significant challenge as social justice is not a subject one may teach learners and is, rather, a perspective on life that changes their feelings towards different people and cultures. Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010:5–6) suggest different notions regarding the implementation of social justice in the classroom, stating that it is essential that the teacher work collaboratively and constantly with the learners. The teacher and the learners must, at all times, be aware of the environment which they create for themselves in the classroom and learners must

be attentive to the feelings of others. In addition, the teacher should model to them how to implement social justice by being an example at all times. Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010:5–6) further indicate that the teacher must also educate learners to accept diversity, especially should a learner come into an unknown or uncomfortable situation regarding their own culture.

1.6 Paradigmatic perspective

The study was done in the qualitative tradition and with an interpretative approach. It adopted a case study methodology, using focus group interviews, interpretivism and two particular theories for the purposes of validating both the study itself and its findings. The paradigmatic perspective is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The following subsections briefly describe the approaches that I used.

1.6.1 Interpretivist approach

As an interpretivist I deemed the interpretivist approach to be suitable for the purposes of the study, as I interpreted the participants' behaviour by observing them from the outside (Mack 2010:7-8). By using this approach I searched for understanding social justice related to young learners as the phenomena of my research project. Interpretivists interpret the world around them (Davison 1998:3) in order to understand certain phenomena in and perceptions of the world in which we live.

1.6.2 Theoretical framework

The study used the following two theories as each of them contributed in its own and unique way to the study. These two theories include:

- Dewey's (1903) theory on relating policy and practice – children must learn through experience.
 - Smith's (1998) theory that children should have their own voice.
-

Dewey (1903) believed that learners should learn through experience and that teachers should guide the learners to experience things for themselves and to make sense out of the world around them. On the other hand, Smith (1998) believed that each child must have their own voice in the family, as well as the world around them. Thus, young children must learn to think for themselves and contribute to society by stating their perceptions and understandings.

I used the theories of both Dewey and Smith to guide the study on the basis that it is important that learners think for themselves and construct their own understandings. It is also imperative that they express their own perceptions of the world around them orally and in writing. It is essential that teachers encourage critical thinking while learners must know that their voices are being heard.

1.7 Research methodology

The following sections discuss the research design, the selection of the participants, the data collection and the data analysis I used in the study.

1.7.1 Research design

The study used a case study as the research design. Baxter and Jack (2008:550) define a case study as an in-depth study that focuses intensively on a specific group or groups of participants. In a case study the researcher works on a personal level with the participants and explores the feelings and perceptions of the participants about a specific topic (Reason 2006:194–195). It is important that the researcher concentrates on the research questions when the research study is conducted.

1.7.2 Selection of participants

The participants selected for the purposes of the study were Grade 3 learners. According to the Washington State Department of Early Learning (2012:117–122), learners at the Grade 3 level have already developed grammatical knowledge and they have the ability to write meaningful

short stories. I chose this age group because learners in this age group are able to think for themselves and form their own ideas on topics (Washington State Department of Early Learning 2012:117–122).

The young participants were purposively selected from different schools and different quintiles in order to ensure a wide variety of participants who would be representative of the majority of the learners in South Africa. In the South African context a quintile refers to the poverty or wealth of a school (Hall and Giese (2008:27).

1.7.3 Data collection

The study used four data collection methods. Although these methods are described in detail in Chapter 3, the next sections contain a brief explanation of them. The four methods used included observation, focus group interviews, field notes and visual methodologies. Reisman, Gienapp and Stachowiak (2005:2) define data collection as the way in which the researcher collects the data by using the correct method for each unique research situation.

1.7.3.1 Observation

Observation is a formal data gathering technique in terms of which the researcher observes the expressions and behaviour of the participants (Polkinghorne 2005:143). In this study I observed the participants during contact sessions and made field notes describing their behaviour and verbal expressions. The observations took place in the participants' own schools and classrooms in order to ensure a venue in which the participants felt comfortable. The teachers of the learners were also present during the contact sessions.

1.7.3.2 Focus group interviews

I conducted focus group interviews in order to facilitate discussions with the three different groups of participants. Reisman *et al.* (2005:51) maintain that more detailed information can be gathered from focus groups interviews as compared to individual interviews because of the interaction between the participants. According to Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge

(2009:17), although the individuals in the group may be influenced by the group, the participants will, nevertheless, express their own ideas.

1.7.3.3 Field notes

Schwandt (2007) defines field notes as the raw data that the researcher collects during the fieldwork. Thus, field notes are short sentences that the researcher writes down while observing the participants during the data collection process (Hancock *et al.* 2009:17). I documented my observations in the field notes I recorded during the contact sessions with every group individually. I recorded the field notes in a book while I observed the learners. After each contact session, I transferred the field notes onto my computer using full sentences and logistical sort information such as school, class and date.

1.7.3.3 Visual methodologies

In the study the learners wrote sentences describing their feelings and perceptions as to how they would change the world if they were president. They also drew a picture of how they would change the world in order to make it a better place for everyone. Blackmore, Aranda, Beteman, Cloonan, Dixon, Loughlin, (2012:3) are of the opinion that young learners express their feelings through drawings and his opinions substantiated my reasoning for including these activities as data.

1.7.4 Data analysis and interpretation

The study used qualitative data analysis to seek to understand how the participants ascribed meaning to the concept of social justice by analysing their experiences, knowledge and perceptions of social justice as captured in the data. Maree (2007:6) maintains that, if inductive context analysis is used, then themes emerge from the data. I used thematic data analyses to analyse the data. The findings of the study based on the emerged themes are reported in Chapter 4.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Young learners as research participants are impressionable and vulnerable and it is thus important that the researchers do not bring their own bias into the research study (Abraham *et al.* 2011:1). I followed certain guidelines to ensure the voluntary participation and anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the data. These guidelines are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.9 Quality criteria

I made every effort to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. I addressed the issues of transferability, conformability, validity and reliability (Baxter & Jack 2008:550; Zucker 2009:11). The differences between the groups of participants were chosen in order to increase both the reliability and the transferability of the study. The quality of these criteria is discussed in Chapter 5.

1.10 Outline of the chapters

Chapter 1: An overview of the inquiry

This chapter provides a broad overview of the study. The chapter starts with an introduction to the study and the rationale behind the study. This is followed by a brief discussion of the literature relevant to the study. The chapter presents the research questions and explains some of the core concepts to emerge from the literature review. The chapter concludes by addressing the ethical considerations and the quality of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter discusses the global and local research that has been conducted on the research topic. The chapter outlines the theoretical framework that was used throughout the study while also taking an in-depth look at the various aspects that are related to social justice. Each concept of social justice is explained in detail. In addition, the chapter identifies the gaps in the existing

research literature, suggests potential areas for further investigation and highlights the strengths of the study.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

This chapter presents the research design and methodology used in the research process in detail. The chapter also discusses the participants, the data collection, methodology and process and data analysis. Throughout the chapter the strengths and limitations of the study as regarding the research process are highlighted.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and results

This chapter provides a detailed outline of the results of the study by presenting them in terms of the different themes and sub-themes that emerged from the raw data collected during the fieldwork. The themes are enhanced by various verbatim quotations and drawings of the participants. In addition, the inclusion and exclusion criteria in respect of each theme are presented.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter is the concluding chapter of the research study. The results of the study are linked to the research questions stated in Chapter 1 as well as the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2. The findings of the studies investigated in the literature review and the findings of this study are compared. The gaps in the existing research are identified. The limitations of the study are addressed and explanations of how I strengthened the study are given. The chapter concludes with recommendation for further studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Social justice across the globe

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 contained an overview of the phenomenon of social justice. Chapter 2 presents the literature review which provides an overview of social justice as it pertains to the study. The chapter discusses international and national research on social justice, highlighting the way in which social justice fits into the global world and focusing on the positive and negative aspects and weaknesses of social justice. The chapter also investigates the different ways in which potential tension that aroused from the study contributed to the discourse on social justice. The chapter examines the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy of the Department of Education (2001), as well as the national curriculum for South African schools as these documents relate to social justice. Finally, the literature review will discuss the existing theoretical frameworks related to social justice and also illuminate the gaps in the knowledge domain of social justice – gaps that has not yet been researched.

The next sections outline the core concepts of the research topic as well as how these core concepts relate to the young participants of the study. The literature I reviewed of the learners' life experiences and philosophies in respect of equity, fairness and social justice assisted me to create my own conceptions of social justice in education. The information that is presented in the conceptual framework guided the interpretation of the data and also assisted in the exploration and interpretation of the perceptions and understandings of Grade 3 learners about

social justice. The theories used in the study are described and I explain my understandings of these theories, indicating how I incorporated them into the research framework and transformed them into the conceptual framework.

The theoretical knowledge underlying this study is based on equity, equality, social justice and related issues such as human rights and the implementation of social cohesion in a democratic South Africa. All these concepts are related to democratic values which included in the content of democratic citizenship education (Joubert 2010). In my search for information which would enable me to answer the main research question, I discovered that the existing body of literature did not offer the answers that I was seeking. Despite the fact that existing research dealt with the issue of social justice there was nothing on the research topic chosen for this study. The more I understood and experienced the complexity of the implementation of social justice in a democratic country, the more I realised the immensity of my research topic.

2.2 Social justice and education

Social justice is the proper and fair application of laws that conform to the natural law of all nations (Francis & Le Roux 2011). These laws emphasise that all individuals should be treated equally and without prejudice, irrespective of their ethnic origin, possessions, gender, race and religion (Francis & Le Roux 2011). However, if this is to be realised it is essential that social justice is applied to the majority of the population through the medium of the government in a democratic society.

Francis and Le Roux (2011:301) state that social justice needs to be implemented in the education system that strives to ensure the equality of all groups in society. Teachers are in an ideal position to teach young learners about social justice. John Rawls (1999), an American philosopher, was one of the first to start developing programmes aimed at implementing social justice. In the late 1980s, Louise Derman-Sparks (2010), together with her colleagues, was one of the first people to advocate the anti-bias education in South Africa which was the precursor of social justice. According to Brodyk (2010:19), there are four aspects that contribute to the teaching of social justice. These include self-awareness, joy in human diversity, the recognition

of unfairness and the development of the skills required to act against those who are excluded from the society.

The following subsections contain a summary of some of the recent research projects that have been conducted both globally and locally and which relate to issues of social justice in education. I commence with a discussion of studies that have been conducted in a global context and indicate how each of these relate to this study.

2.2.1 Studies on social justices and education across the globe

South Africa is not the only country that has had to address the issue of social justice and, in particular, the integration of social justice into the educational curriculum. According to Guigni (2007:7–8), every country is characterised by its own unique multiculturalism which triggers various aspects of social injustices. Guigni (2007:8) defines multiculturalism as different groups of people living in a society with each group possessing its own unique ethnicity or culture. Each group benefits from the same government and has an equal right to funding and benefits. According to Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010:1), everybody deserves the right to access the same resources which are required to complete them as human beings and it is the role of the early childhood teacher to educate all learners in the principles of equality.

In order to assist multiculturalism to make a difference in a country it is important to teach social justice to the citizens. Multiculturalism is the foundation on which social justice is built. It is essential that this be recognised before social justice may be established in a society. Multicultural experiences and activities are a basic right of every person and include the right of every individual to represent their own culture. In addition, it is imperative that everybody accepts that every other citizen is unique (Guigni 2007:8). The following sections discuss social justice in various countries in order to discover how these countries apply social justice, what the outcomes were and the relevancy for my study.

2.2.1.1 Studies on social justice and education in Australia

In Australia, the indigenous people of the country lost their land and were discriminated against on a daily basis. Their struggle to survive remains unfinished business (Guigni 2007:8).

Australia acknowledged the existence of its multicultural situation in the late 1970s when an understanding of multiculturalism was developed in order to promote the rights of those migrants who could not speak English and also those who practised a different culture or religion (Giugni 2007:8). According to Giugni (2007:8) “multiculturalism can be defined as different cultures participating in a society unequally”. This implies that, although people may learn to live together, there will always be groups in a society that are treated different from others and which may even be discriminated against. After Australia’s acknowledgement of the existence of multiculturalism several other countries developed programmes aimed at implementing an anti-bias education system in order to build equity and equality.

According to Giugni (2007:15), anti-bias education first came to light in the 1960s in Australia when a group of educators became dissatisfied with the way in which the curriculum taught learners about diversity. At the same time other countries in the world were also experiencing the same types of issue as Australia that involved multiculturalism and antidiscrimination. Australia was one of the countries that were in a similar situation to South Africa. Like Australia, South Africa experienced an urgent need to implement social justice and the country may learn much from the Australians who were the first to develop programmes aimed at the implementation of social justice. This study also focuses on how social justice may be implemented in the curriculum and how teachers may teach social justice to young children.

2.2.1.2 Studies on social justice and education in Canada

Canada also experienced several problems with migrants in the 1960s and multiculturalism became a critical issue. People from a non-English background and migrants were classified as being multicultural (Giugni 2007:7). According to Giugni (2007:15), the anti-bias approach is based on a world that is created for children in order to bring childcare, discrimination and multiculturalism together so that everyone can be equal from a young age. This approach includes the process of finding out what young children think about what is fair and unfair and how they assume the relationships between people should be. However, if this is to be realised, the children must first feel confident about whom they are, they must be comfortable about interacting with a diversity of people, they must be critical thinkers, especially about the issue of injustice and they must have the ability to speak their minds (Giugni 2007:15).

South Africa is characterised by many different cultures as well as different languages. A few South Africans only speak English as a first language but many of them use English in business. The majority of the learners in South Africa receive their education in English although English is not their first language and thus they struggle to understand some of the concepts in English (Matthews 2012:10). It is important to be aware about the diversity of learners as well as their problems with language in order to be able to teach social justice. However, social justice also implies that all learners are educated in their home language to enable them to realise their potential academic ally.

2.2.1.3 Studies on social justice and education in the United States of America

Giugni (2007:15) maintains that the anti-bias approach was given fresh impetus when Australia collaborated with the United States of America in order to develop a product to enable people to work together and to fight social injustice in the lives of young children. Anti-bias education focuses on the optimal development of a learner to help the learners to develop to their full potential (Derman-Sparks & Edwards 2010:2). According to Giugni (2007:15), it is essential that anti-bias approaches are grounded in early childhood education and are implemented in the curriculum to enable learners to learn about social justice. The anti-bias approach focuses on the individual development of each learner, acceptance of and respect for different cultures and religions and the various perspectives of individual learners (Giugni 2007:15).

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the United Nations undertook a major research study known as the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2006). This study involved the launch of an international forum that comprised a three-year research project aimed at developing social justice on an international scale. The project was undertaken by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs with the programme running from November 2001 to November 2004. The purpose of the programme was to support developing countries that were not benefiting from globalisation. Major international meetings were held in New York and Geneva in order to promote social development and equality (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2006:2). The aspect of social justice and human rights was addressed at one of the four conferences which were held between 2002 and 2004. It was stated that, in order to create an equal society, there

must be an overall upliftment in human rights and social justice. After 2005 there was a significant improvement in the quality of human rights in the United States of America and internationally (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2006:2).

Results from this large scale research project arises awareness of social justice in the United States of America. The concept of social justice represents a relatively new perspective on the way of living. Even the great philosophers in history did not see the need to address the issue of social justice and it was only in the mid-twentieth century that the concept emerged (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2006:12). The concept of social justice emerged with the recognition of human rights as an important issue concept. Unfairness was recognised and people such as slaves, oppressed woman and exploited workers were seen as victims of their circumstances and a broken society. It was at this time that Rawls (1999:10–11) a researcher in the project, started to develop programmes to support the implementation of social justice in the United States of America. The principles of these programmes ensured that everyone from all facets of society would be equal and that everyone would be treated in the same way, regardless of their circumstances or their position in society. According to Rawls (1999:429), the success of social justice would depend on a new generation while the starting point for better conditions would be with the family and especially the children. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2006:13, 34) applied Rawls's concept of social justice by separating social justice from human rights and the freedom to operate within a society, by focusing on globalisation and by uniting people through media and the internet in order to enhance the possibility that everybody would acquire the same knowledge about the world. This implied improvements in schools and universities in order to create a global network of new technologies. However, regardless of these efforts, there are still schools in both developed and developing countries which offer poor quality education and which lack resources. The children from wealthy families continue to have a better chance of being connected to the global network than their counterparts from poorer families, while the inequalities in the education system remain a problem.

Research conducted by Goss (2009) in the United States of America revealed an interesting finding regarding social justice. Goss worked in a small school in the inner city of Chicago as a primary grade teacher with African-American learners. Goss regarded the establishment and implementation of social justice as very important and she conducted an action research study in

her primary grade classes. In her study, she asked her learners to express their own ideas of what would be involved in creating a better world for all. Inspired by John Dewey, Goss (2009:2–3) integrated some of his theories into her practice. Teachers are often imprisoned in their own classrooms by the curriculum and the amount of work they have to cover before the next examinations. The teaching of social justice may be implemented in different ways. Goss (2009:3) suggests that the teaching of social justice should

- be a fundamental cornerstone in children's lives
- make children aware of the world in which they live to enable them to answer questions about it
- ensure multiculturalism, anti-racism and a world that may claim to be just
- enable learners to explore the world around them and participate in activities
- create hope and joy for the children while giving them a broader vision of the world in which we live and teaching them to be kind towards everyone
- encourage children to act out their ideas proactively
- be thorough with regard to children's academic growth
- be sensitive towards different cultures.

Goss (2009:4) conducted her study over a period of five months. She showed the children the film *A Bug's Life*, and presented a short discussion about the history of the United States. She then discussed the roles of the president and asked each learner to create a page for a book with the title, "If I were President I would ...". The pages contained the drawings of the learners and their suggestions about what they would change about the country if they were the president of the United States. The results were simple and yet positive. Although in different ways each child wanted to show empathy towards poor people, suggesting giving them houses, cars and food, they also wanted to stop violence in any way possible. Some of the learners identified the oppressed and expressed sympathy with the sick or those whose freedom had been taken away. There were also learners who wanted to work together for a better future for the country, indicating that everyone should stand up for themselves and express their feelings. One group of learners wanted fairness to prevail above all else, indicating that if one learner could not enjoy fairness then nobody else was entitled to it (Goss 2009:6–7). Many of the suggestions that the

learners made were clearly the result of their own circumstances. Goss (2009) concluded that, regardless of the learners' circumstances, whether these circumstances involved homelessness, sickness, and violence or poverty, all the learners wanted a better world. They wished for meaningful social justice and all of them were willing to act to bring this about. In South Africa, many children suffer deprivation as a result of lack of food, lack of care and lack of other basic needs which relate to the circumstances of some of the children in Goss's classroom (Human Rights Commission 2011)

The best way in which to find out how children perceive social justice is to ask them for their own perceptions. A child may sometimes express himself in a way that an adult will not be able to interpret and thus it is essential that adults pursue options such as research-based activities in order to understand children's perspectives. As Goss (2009) did, I also explored the young learners' perceptions of social justice by asking them what they thought about fairness and equality as these concepts relate to social justice.

2.2.1.4 Studies on social justice and education in Scotland

Riddell (2009) conducted a study in Scotland about the construction of social justice. It is the prevailing belief in Scotland that a strong education will create a strong democracy and a sound social system. Many of Scotland's policy documents include a commitment to inclusion, equality and the implementation of social justice. Riddell (2009:6) maintains that social justice is an issue of immense concern in the Scottish school system because 80% of the schools were non-denominational while the other 20% were Roman Catholic, which make it difficult to implement social justice because every school system have their own believes and practices. Nevertheless, the same curriculum was taught throughout Scotland. However, some schools then adopted a different curriculum that allowed more flexibility in the learning programme, thus undermining some of the fundamental principles regarding access to the same education. Riddell (2009:6) also indicated that in Scotland they wanted to implement social justice from a young age and, thus, the Scottish Government highlighted the teaching of social justice in the Scottish educational policy. In order to compensate for the different viewpoints of the implementation of social justice in schools, this curriculum was applied in every school throughout Scotland.

Based on the implementation of social justice in the educational policy, the Equality and Human Rights Commission was created in 2007 and driven by the Scottish Commissioner (Riddell 2009:6). The changes to the new curriculum and its subsequent implementation use a complicated project as it was envisaged that all schools would be on the same level to ensure that every learner enjoyed an equal opportunity in respect of education. The focus was also on areas of equality such as gender, race and sexual orientation, although religion was one of the fields of own choice. Thus, the aim was to create individual citizens within a system that treated all as equals (Riddell 2009:6–7). South Africa has also implemented a new national curriculum with social justice as a cornerstone in order to redress the wrongs of the apartheid era.

2.2.1.5 Studies on social justice and education in neighbouring African countries

Bosu, Dare, Dachi and Fertig (2010:67) conducted studies in Ghana and Tanzania and published their findings of this research. From this research it was evident that African countries face tremendous challenges with regard to establishing social justice within the African educational systems. In addition to the normal daily activities in the classroom, most of the problems in implementing social justice start at home. However, Bosu *et al.* (2010:68) believe that learners learn social values in schools and that these values manifest in their behaviour. It is, thus, important for schools to implement fairness and equity within the schools to teach learners to demonstrate social justice to other human beings. Bosu *et al.* (2010:75) suggest that the school leaders adopt an action research approach to enable young learners to understand the concept of social justice and incorporate it into their own lives. However, it is not possible to do this in lessons only as it must be a lifestyle that the learners strive to live. Teaching social justice may have a significant impact not only on the learners and the teachers but also on the rest of the community.

Situated in Africa, South Africa also strived to become more social just after 1994. After the establishment of a democratic South Africa in 1994, the ideal of South Africa as a rainbow nation took shape (Joubert 2007:138). Joubert refers to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Republic of South Africa 1996), which states that it is incumbent on South Africans to build a united nation with values based on social justice, citizenship and equity if the country is to become a democratic nation-state. According to the Manifesto on Values, Education and

Democracy (Department of Education 2001), people from diverse origins, cultural practices and languages must adopt a democratic character that overlooks social injustice and, thus, merge into a unity.

2.2.2 Social justice and education in the local context

It would appear that the creation of equity and equality in a multicultural democracy is a difficult task. The beliefs and values of people from different cultures differ in many respects and, in many instances, these differences may result in conflict and intolerance. According to Pendlebury and Enslin (2004), there is considerable racism and hate towards people from different cultures in a Third World country such as South Africa. Matthews (2012) maintains that, in many multicultural and democratic societies such as South Africa, there is evidence of social injustice as a result of the country's history. She further mentions that independent social justice movements emerged after 1994 in South Africa but that the typical supporters of social justice are limited to relatively privileged academics. In view of the fact that people do not experience social justice, they may not regard their society as equal in terms of living conditions or job opportunities. However, there is a need for all citizens in such a country to work towards a sustainable peace in order to secure democracy and to feel that they belong in the country (Britt 2010).

According to Joubert (2007), the notion of belonging to a country is related to citizenship. Keet and Carolissen (2012) imply that social justice is intricately linked with citizenship, while Brodyk (2010:19) maintains that social justice is based on the concept of human rights. If a child's human rights are provided for, then social justice will also be in place. Human rights (Youth for Human Rights 2003) should be one of the first issues that a child is made aware of. The foundation of multiculturalism is human rights, entailing the right to practise one's own culture, speak one's own language and practise one's own religious beliefs in a country that is not one's homeland. In terms of the development programme of the Youth for Human Rights Commission, children's services to make children aware of human rights were created in order to meet the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds. This was not seen as a choice on the part of the government but as a human right. These three pillars of social justice, namely, citizenship, human rights, and equity (including equality), are the pillars on which to build social justice (Brodyk 2010:19)

During a study conducted in South Africa on learners as citizens, Joubert (2007:155) expanded the knowledge of the learners through learning experiences pertaining to their own identification as citizens. According to Joubert (2007:168), the nine-year-old learners were able to understand and express themselves as citizens of South Africa and they had an understanding of their responsibilities with regard to understanding the diversity in the country and living together in harmony. These skills to live together in harmony are required in order to secure a better future for themselves and others. The learners wanted to experience their citizenship and they wanted to change the world so as to create social justice and equality. In this context Joubert (2007) posited that learners need teachers to enable them to participate in bringing change.

Keet and Carolissen (2012:119–120) emphasise the fact that educators play a vital role in facilitating the teaching of social justice and citizenship to learners. This process may start by teaching the learners about the injustice in the world, the country, their immediate environment and the possible actions that they may take on order to investigate social just practices and to render the country more democratic and just as they grow up.

According to the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Department of Education 2001), all learners have the right to have their basic needs satisfied. The Children's Act 38 of 2005 and the South African Constitution, 1996, both hold that all South African learners must have equal access to schooling in their mother tongue if they so desire. The Manifesto also states that there must be no discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief culture, language and birth. In other words, everyone must be equal and treated in an equal way including the everyday practices of equality in everyday life.

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (2006:18) emphasises the fact that learners come from different socioeconomic groups. Accordingly, quality education is a critical foundation to ensure that everyone has the same chance of success. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs committed itself to creating an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment in which there is social development for everyone according to their

human rights. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs develops programmes and policies for social and economic implementation internationally in order to promote social justice throughout the world (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2006:93).

In South Africa several programmes were launched in the new democratic dispensation after 1994 to stress the importance of human rights and social justice in education in South Africa (Department of Basic Education 2011). However, despite the laudable intentions, a few of these programmes succeeded (Malcom 2007:66). According to Malcom (2007:80), before the greater issues such as creating welfare through jobs could be addressed, there were other embedded issues that required attention. These issues include the acknowledgement of the existence of a dominant social class and the differences between races.

2.3 The conceptual framework

The previous sections demonstrated my understanding of social justice through the study of the relevant literature with the emphasis on research studies. I gained insights into the way in which social justice may be implemented. It was explained how social justice has been applied on a global scale and the differences that may arise when implementing social justice. It is evident from the literature that social justice is a complex issue in countries such as Australia and United States of America and that these issues relate to the local context in South Africa. There is still a lack of research on social justice and the application of social justice on a wide scale throughout South Africa. There have only been a few studies on social justice conducted locally occurring in the big cities only. In order to ensure the implementation of social justice both globally and locally it is important to understand the concept in its entirety. I discussed social justice according to the three pillars. However, as there are many other related concepts to social justice and the following sections describe as concepts of *social justice* as well as other related concepts. Thereafter, section 2.4 of the chapter addresses the theories that are linked to social justice.

Gillborn (2002:8) agrees that social justice is a word that will first find its place in a small group before it will spread to the greater good of an equal society. I commence by describing the relevant concepts and show how social justice is related to the young learner.

2.3.1 Social justice and the young learner

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2006:13) defines social justice as distributive justice. This, in turn, implies that governments are obliged to act in the best interests of people in order to ensure equality. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2006:13-14) further states that people must have faith in human rights, they must see the worth of the human being as a person, they must see the equal rights of men and woman and they must demonstrate social progress so as to enable better standards as part of the social advancement of all the people in the country. Social justice has an underlying purpose to achieve a social, cultural and humanitarian character of acceptance where people live in peace with each other and accept differences in culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, language and race and any other differences that there may be between human beings (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2006:13). According to Keet and Carolissen (2012:119), a lack of social justice refers to the inequality in a society which brings about an unequal distribution of the responsibilities such as care for the community among all citizens (including children).

Brodyk (2010:20) maintains that young learners can be exposed to social justice. She states young learners explore the world around them in order to make sense of it. Accordingly, they observe and interact with the environment and with the people who are part of their lives. Children accept the culture in which they are born and raised. Children are confronted with issues such as family, ethnic background, religion and socioeconomic status and, although they may differ from other children, most children are proud of where they come from. However, not all children have the same opportunities in life. Their opportunities may depend on the quality of their school education while, at other times, family, race or gender may play a role in their equality of opportunity (Brodyk 2010:20). This implies that learners in a classroom forms a diverse broader bust small community within a diverse society. Within a diverse society social justice is a very relevant concept. However, social justice is an abstract concept which is based on other abstract concepts such as citizenship, human rights, equality and a just and equal society. Therefore, to Brodyk (2010:21), educators may argue that learners in the primary school are too young to be exposed to social justice in the classroom because it is an abstract concept. However, Brodyk (2010:21) argues that young learners know the difference between fair and unfair and right and wrong which can be seen as the building blocks of social justice. Brodryk

further states that, if the educator uses this knowledge of the learners, this will enable the educator to implement the principles of social justice in order to teach the learners the skills required to analyse events and circumstances and make their own decisions about equality and justice.

According to Langsted (1994), it is important to acknowledge the learners' perspectives as this may ensure better ecologically and socio-culturally valid research while also providing insights into a richer, better and more meaningful understanding of the expressed and communicated perspectives of learners. It is essential that children become primary participants in research so that they may form their own perceptions and understandings and, through this, enable adults to come to deeper understanding of the life-world of children.

2.3.2 Social cohesion and the young learner

Social cohesion may be interpreted in several ways as it relates directly to social justice. Social cohesion is not only a change in perspective but, according to Duncan (2007:2), it is the creation of social sustainability. Duncan goes on to say that social cohesion is a concept or a set of concepts to which citizens cohere. Thus, social cohesion is the national identity and the values of a community and relates directly to democratic values (Waghid 2010:449). A lack of social cohesion may occur when there is multiculturalism and diversity in a country that may result in conflict between the different cultures. It is difficult to establish social cohesion and, generally, this is possible only if the members of the society concerned accept the differences between the members of that society (Duncan 2007:2).

“The department defines social cohesion as the degree of social integration and inclusion in communities and society at large, and the extent to which mutual solidarity finds expression among individuals and communities” (Department of Arts and Culture 2013). This definition explains that a community will be socially cohesive when the inequalities such as ethnicity, nationality, disability, age, religion, class, gender or any other distinctions are eliminated or reduced (Department of Arts and Culture 2013:1). However, this is possible only when the citizens of a country work together as a group with the same goals in mind and when they strive to improve the conditions in which they are living. Young learners can participate in actions to understand different cultures through school projects or by participating in community projects.

2.3.3 Multicultural citizenship and the young learner

Multicultural citizenship is the starting point in the realisation of the dream of social justice. The South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa 2006) states clearly that no citizen may be deprived of citizenship. Children have the right to a name and nationality from the day they are born and they have the right to parental care or appropriate alternative care if they are removed from their original environment. Children of all ages are referred to as citizens. It is essential that children know that they have a rightful place in the world and in their own community. If children are loved by their parents or guardians and they feel wanted in their community, they will be able to share this feeling of belonging with others. In addition, they must then be able to treat every other citizen with the respect that they deserve and want for themselves.

South Africa is a multicultural country and, indeed, is often called the rainbow nation because of its diversity such as the number of different cultures to be found in the country. According to Giugni (2008:6), a culture is created when individuals live together in a group and their habits and traditions are passed down from generation to generation. Such groups are created to enable people to identify themselves with other people. According to Giugni (2008:6-7), culture differs from group to group with some groups being more closely related in their values and beliefs than others. The most common factors that differ from culture to culture include the following:

- language and the way in which people talk
- religion, beliefs and traditions
- customs, as well as the way in which people live and build their houses
- the type of art people create and their interest in certain artworks
- the sports in which people either compete or watch
- food
- geographical regions
- children's education and how children are expected to develop
- socioeconomic status
- the creation and promulgation of laws and the punishment for disobeying the law

Multiculturalism refers to the way in which we live and the options we have to live the way we choose to do. Thus, culture is a ‘natural’ product of the social world in which we grow up (Giugni 2008:7). People tend to believe in their own culture and are often passionate about their beliefs. The fact that they often believe that the way in which they do things is the only way in which things should happen is often the cause of conflict between different cultural groups (Giugni 2008:7) and this threaten social justice. Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010:8) maintain that it is often difficult to bring different cultures together and to establish an anti-bias system of education in which all cultures are equally important. The best way in which to implement multiculturalism is to create a new community of learners in the classroom with the learners building a cultural character that include every culture present in the classroom in order to consider and bring about social justice.

2.3.4 Human rights and the young learner

Human rights are one of the pillars on which social justice depends. It is essential that learners feel comfortable with themselves and with their own situations. They must also feel safe in their environment and loved by the people around them while their basic needs must be met. If the learners’ basic needs are met and their lives are stable, they will be able to reach out to other learners and even to the community. In addition, if learners are treated with respect they will also treat others with respect. An understanding of human rights will enable learners to form their own perceptions and understanding of social justice – the foundation on which a democracy is build. The foundation of equity lies in the principles of non-discrimination and is another pillar of social justice and thus related to human rights. It is stated by the Human Rights Commission (2011:12) that the people of different cultures must respect each other and not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status (Human Rights Commission 2011:12). The act of non-discrimination is associated with a long list of all the aspects in terms of which people can be discriminated against.

The following human rights are mentioned in the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa 2006). The Constitution states that everyone is free and equal. It also protects the child’s physical being so that nobody may treat the child as a slave and no one can hurt the child for any reason. The child is also protected by the law and may make use of the law to ensure their protection. In addition, the Constitution stipulates that there must be freedom of religion. The

basic needs of a child, including housing, medical care, food and basic education, must be met. Thus, the Constitution provides for all the basic needs of the child so that the child may have an equal chance in society.

Every child has the right to preserve his or her identity, including his or her nationality, name and family (Human Rights Commission 2011:50). In the past many South African citizens did not register their children at birth. However, there has been good progress in the realisation of the right of children to an identity with a 60% growth in child registrations at birth (Human Rights Commission 2010:7). According to Abrahams and Matthews (2011:100), it is also important for a child to establish a cultural identity so that he/she can relate to a group of people.

To live as a citizen each child has certain human rights to which he/she is entitled, with these rights protecting people throughout their lives so that they may live happy and peaceful lives, even as children (Youth for Human Rights 2003:2). In addition, the Human Rights Commission (2011:28) states that section 27(1) of the South African Constitution holds that everyone has the right to safe drinking water and sanitation. Environmental pollution is often a cause of the pollution in the rivers of the country with this pollution infecting the entire environment. According to Trumper (2010:218), children should be concerned about environmental issues as part of their attitude to their environment. Thus, if children want to address such issues in order to create a better future this would manifest in a real concern about the environment. The subject of litter came up in every focus group interview I conducted with the learners. The issue of littering is also included in the curriculum of the Foundation Phase where it states that children are to learn to keep their environment clean by using bins. It further states that learners should practise personal hygiene and take care of themselves by cleaning their rooms, making their beds and creating a clean and safe place in which to live (Department of Basic Education 2011). The importance of clean water is also one of the aspects that merit attention with the focus on how to save water and when water is either safe or unsafe to drink. It is important that children are aware of their human rights in order for the child to build up an own identity.

Every child has the right to medicine and medical help (Youth for Human Rights 2003:16). This right involves the right to basic health care in order to ensure that a child receives medical

attention when it is necessary (Human Rights Commission 2011:30). The right to health is included in section 28 of the South African Constitution, where it is stated that every child must be protected from exploitative labour or any services that are inappropriate to a child's age and that would place the child's wellbeing at risk. This includes the child's physical, mental or spiritual health (Human Rights Commission 2010:58). According to both the Human Rights Commission (2011:20) and section 26(1) of the South Africa Constitution, all children have the right to nutrition, clothing and housing. However, despite these basic human rights, the statistics reveal that there is a significant number of children in South Africa who live in informal settlements or traditional housing with parents who either earn little or no income and, thus, are not able to provide for their children (Human Rights Commission 2011:26).

Sorin (2005:13) maintains that it is important that children "see" what happens in the world around them. Thus, adults must not metaphorically "cover their eyes" in order to protect them from the images of violence, death or crimes in the media. Parents may even prevent their children from being exposed to fairy tales featuring monsters and witches. These things will not cause fear or anxiety but may prepare them for the real world of good and bad. Sorin (2005:13–14) further states that children should participate in the world by watching from a safe distance while they make sense of the world around them. Here it would be the adult's responsibility to guide them in opening the door to the real world.

The Human Rights Commission (2010:54) emphasises that, according to section 28(1) of the South African Constitution, every child has the right to be protected against maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. It is further the right of all children to be protected from any kind of violence or injury while they are in the care of their legal guardian(s), parent(s) or the person(s) taking care of them (Human Rights Commission 2011:54). Approximately 7 million children under the age of 18 live in the poorest 20% of households in South Africa (Human Rights Commission 2010:3).

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, everybody wants to feel safe. Once all the physiological needs have been satisfied the next level of needs involves feeling safe. Although, in the main, adults have little awareness of their security needs except in times of emergency, children often shows signs of insecurity and the need to be safe (Jerome 2013:42). The

Children's Act, 2005, as amended by the Children's Amendment Act No. 41 of 2007, provides for the basic needs of children without parents, stating also that all children are entitled to foster care and secure care facilities as well as adoption programmes (Abrahams & Matthews 2011:35).

Children are often the victims of domestic violence in South Africa. According to Lansdown (2001:4), parents often hit their children in order to impose effective discipline. However, instead of this being a good lesson, such physical punishment often constitutes child abuse. It is also the right of the child to be protected from all forms of violence. It is important to note that a large proportion of crime is committed against children younger than the age of fifteen years old (Abrahams & Matthews 2011:43). Child abuse is not the only concern regarding children in South Africa, as South African children are also often neglected or psychologically abused. Children are vulnerable and easy targets and are often the victims of sexual exploitation, drug abuse or unstable family issues which render them even more vulnerable and neglected than would otherwise have been the case. If children are neglected and allowed to do as they please, they may easily become the victims of accidents such as accidental poisoning or drowning (Abrahams & Matthews 2011:48).

Every child has the right to education (Human Rights Commission 2011). According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, education belongs to the highest level of needs at which a person wishes to build him/herself up in order to attain a certain level of expertise (Jerome 2013:42). The right to basic education starts with the development of a child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities. Thus, education starts at home at the birth of the child and continues throughout the child's life (Human Rights Commission 2010:40). After preschool development the young child has the right to formal education in order to acquire equal opportunities. The South African Constitution Section 29(1) states that everyone has the right to basic education, including adult education. It is the duty of the state to make such education both available and accessible (Human Rights Commission 2011:42)

2.3.5 Equity and the young learner

The South Africa Constitution (Republic of South Africa 2006) states that everyone is equal before the law and everyone has an equal right to be protected by the law. The Constitution

further states that equality means that every citizen is entitled to enjoy the full and equal rights of freedom. No one may unfairly discriminate either directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds. The Constitution cites the following grounds: race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, region, conscience, belief, culture, language or birth. Therefore, equity equality and human rights are directly related.

With regard to the concepts of children's rights, equity and discrimination as set out in the Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa 2006), I therefore decided to investigate social justice according to the provisions of the Constitution. Equality includes the right of freedom and involves promoting equality and implementing measures that protect or advance the learner to become a good adult. Discrimination is a feature of our daily lives with people discriminating unfairly against other citizens on one or more grounds and therefore hinders social justice. Equal treatment is one of the pillars on which social justice is built. By understanding the concept of equal treatment it may enable learners to also learn to understand social justice.

2.4 Theoretical framework

The theories used in the study included Dewey's (1903) theory of democracy in education and Smith's (1998) theory of understanding children's development. Each of these theories contributed to the study in a unique way. Smith (1998) believed that every learner must have a voice in South Africa. I am of the opinion that it would be valuable for teachers, parents and the community to know how learners think and how they would do things differently.

I used two theories in the study as they are related to social justice and the young learner. This theories are:

- Dewey's (1903) theory which relates to policy and practice of educating children and states that children must learn through experience.
- Smith's (1998) theory states that children should have their own voice.

Thus, both Smith's and Dewey's theories guided the study. I agree that it is essential that learners think for themselves, make critical decisions about what would be the best for them and for the country. I also agree with Smith's (1998) theory that children's voices should be heard. I intended to encourage their thinking critically on social justice. In addition, they had to know that their voices would be heard and that they should not hold back if they had ideas that they wanted to share with others. The learners had to answer questions about social justice and it was, thus, vital that they realised that their voices counted and that they could make an important contribution to the country.

John Dewey was one of the most significant American philosophers of all time. He lived from 1819 to 1959. He is often called the reformer of education (Westbrook 1999:1). Dewey formulated a philosophy that aimed at the unity of theory and practice. His theories were based on the maxim that democracy is freedom and he devoted his life to constructing theories and integrating them with practice. While he was developing his theories there was a need for philosophy to be applied in basic educational problems. As Dewey (1896) watched his own children grow up, he realised that there were no differences in the dynamics of the experiences of children and adults. He realised that both adults and children were active beings who confront problematic situations that may arise and that both adults and children solve problems through thinking. Dewey (1903) devised a theory known as democracy in education and in terms of which he tried to work with teachers so that they would teach the learners to learn through experience. This way of learning helps learners to start to think for themselves and form their own identities.

The main principles of Dewey's theories involve an active learning process that includes the learners as well as the teacher (Westbrook 1999:3). According to Dewey, the classroom is only a place where teachers and learners come together and learning starts at home with the own interests and ideas of the learner. This theory was very unpopular in practice because the school environment was curriculum-centred and there was no space for explorative education (Westbrook 1999:3). The system in the schools was based on the principle that the teacher provides the information and the children merely receive and accept this information. For

centuries traditionalists had defended this teach and receive approach in teaching, maintaining that child-centred approaches would result in chaos (Westbrook 1999:3). Although only a few people supported his ideas, Dewey continued to conduct research and stated that effective education requires that a teacher guide the learner toward the learner's understandings of certain concepts such as social justice.

The core concept of Dewey's (1903) theory is that learners learn through experience in order to produce their own opinion. Although much has changed since Dewey and many learning institutions now promote critical thinking and hands-on activities, this hands-on activities are still a critical aspect that merits further attention. In the main, learners tend not to think for themselves and they still look to adults for answers. However, it is my understanding that adults should give only guidance instead of the answers and this would enable learners to start to think for themselves and make decisions about what is important to them. When they are able to think for themselves, learners construct their understandings and will eventually also be able to make decisions that will affect their lives and the country positively.

Smith (1998:68), another philosopher in education, believed that it is imperative that a child have their own voice in the family, especially if the child is separated from their parents. However, this may also apply to a school situation where the teacher takes the place of the parents. Smith's interest in children's own identities was originally inspired by children's perspectives of social justice, as children do not only make decisions for themselves but also in their own families. Children eventually become adult citizens and, thus, they must also consider what is best for their country and one day be the leaders of South Africa. They must therefore be capable of becoming involved in aspects such as social justice which relate to political matters. Smith (1998:68) further states that it is incumbent on researchers to attempt to understand the way in which children perceive the world by investigating the perceptions of learners by asking them political questions. Such studies would contribute to the establishment of a socio-cultural and ecological approach to the future of the country. Such an approach would be an inspiration for teachers, researchers, parents and other professionals who work with learners (Smith 1998:68).

The key principle of Smith's (1998:71) theory is that it is essential to listen to the voices of learners. Learners must be regarded as child citizens who are able to contribute to society and

not as incomplete human beings with little knowledge of the world around them. Smith (1998:74) furthermore argues that we must listen to young learners because what they say is important. Smith (1998:74) adds that learners are in danger of growing up without having had the opportunity to reflect in the choices they have to make in life because most of these choices would have been made for them. Thus, learners must be given the chance to prove themselves to the world by expressing their opinions.

It is important to explore and understand the learners' perspectives of learning and understanding, relationships and new experiences (James & Prout 1990; Jenks 1996; Mayall 1994). Moss and Petrie (1997) describe the theory of children's spaces to expand the focus on the development of societies in order to develop a better future. My understandings is that it is vital that we give the learners a fair chance to make their own decisions, independent of what the media, their parents and society think is best for them.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methods that other countries use in order to create a social and just society. The chapter also discussed perceptions of the way in which South Africa implements social justice. It is important to investigate how other countries develop programmes for social justice so that South Africa may benefit from their ideas and implementation programmes. Social justice is a concept that arises out of the desire to change the world in such a way so as to ensure equality for the diversity of people living together in the county.

Chapter 3 describes the methods the study used in order to examine the perceptions and understandings of social justice of young children in South Africa. The discussion focuses on the research design, research methods and data collection strategies.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

Participatory research for data gathering

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research design and the methods used in the research project. Hancock *et al.* (2009:4) describe research as an attempt to understand the world around us, with the researcher adopting a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge about various aspects in life. According to Hancock *et al.* (2009:4) and Davis, Gallardo and Lachlan (2010:2), the researcher aims to explain human behaviour by studying human beings and, thus, to broaden the understanding of human behaviour in the social world. With this research project I studied Grade 3 learners to understand their perceptions and understandings of social justice in a democratic South Africa.

The chapter starts by explaining the paradigmatic considerations of the study, introducing it within the interpretive paradigm and confirming that the research project was a case study. Relevant data was captured regarding the young learners' understandings and experiences of social justice in a democratic South Africa. The chapter then presents an overview of the research process, including the stages of the fieldwork that was conducted at the research sites during the data collection period.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section explains my paradigmatic perspective within the broader field of education while the next section describes the research

strategy adopted. The chapter concludes with a description of the strategies used to enhance the trustworthiness of the study.

3.2 Paradigmatic perspectives

3.2.1 Qualitative paradigm

Schurink (2009) maintains that the qualitative approach is used to unlock the empirical world for the researcher. This approach determines the strategies, methods and questions used. The qualitative approach relies on the views of the researcher and the participants and the questions which the researcher asks during the data collection process. These aspects imply that qualitative research is an appropriate design for research conducted the field of education. Schurink further states that it is important that the researcher apply certain strategies when conducting the fieldwork in order to discount personal feelings and bias. These strategies include asking appropriate questions, being a meticulous observer, and thinking inductively and critically. When conducting qualitative research, Maree (2007) is of the opinion that that there are certain technical aspects that must be borne in mind. Qualitative research takes place in the natural world and it is, thus, essential that the researcher spends time in the field in order to gain some understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The envisaged study was an in-depth investigation into the perceptions and understandings of Grade 3 learners of social justice. It was anticipated that certain situations would prove to be complex especially as the study was conducted with children (Maree 2007:79). It was possible that the participants may start to talk about various subjects that were not related to the specific study and this would then degenerate into an unimportant discussion about the everyday lives of the participants. The qualitative approach helped to overcome the complexity involved in conducting research with children. The use of focus group interviews enabled me to facilitate the group to ensure in-depth discussions on the learners' perceptions of social justice.

Maree (2007:79) maintains that the researcher plays an influential role in the collection of the data during qualitative research and that the researcher may be viewed as a "research instrument"

throughout the research process. I tried to remain neutral about the topic of social justice at all times and I was cautious not to express my own feelings and views on social justice. By using qualitative methodologies I investigated the learners' perceptions and gathered specific descriptive data which I used to describe the learners' own expressions about social justice.

3.2.2 Interpretative paradigm

The researcher's view of reality is referred as ontology (Mack 2010:7–8). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) admit that there may be many interpretations of reality but maintain that these interpretations are, in themselves, part of the scientific knowledge researchers are pursuing. According to Mack (2010:5–6), epistemology refers to the view of the researcher when applying methods in order to come to an understanding of the world around them. Being an interpretivist, I chose to use the epistemological perspective of the interpretivist paradigm in investigating the phenomenon of social justice. Mack (2010:7–8) maintains that the interpretivist paradigm can be called the 'anti-positivist' paradigm, because it developed in reaction to positivism. The main principle of interpretivism is that it is not possible for research phenomena to be objectively observed from the outside but that research is an internal process that takes place through the direct experiences of people. One of the ontological assumptions of the interpretivist approach is that the social reality may be seen differently by researchers who interpret the events in various ways. Thus, there are numerous interpretations of a single event and multiple perspectives may be formed. Davison (1998:3) maintains that the "interpretivists interpret the world around them" and adds that "interpretivists contend that only through the subjective interpretation of and intervention in reality can that reality be fully understood".

The study of phenomena in their natural environment is the key to interpretivism, together with the acknowledgement that it is not possible for scientists to avoid affecting the phenomena they study. I studied the learners in their natural environment (classrooms) to ensure that they felt as comfortable as possible.

The basis of this interpretive research study is social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Knorr-Cetina 1981; Gephart 1978). Social constructionism focuses on the features of society, including organisations, technology, social class and age groups. Lowenthal and Muth (2008) are of the opinion that they believe that knowledge is constructed by young children as they

make sense of the world around them through new experiences. Thus, the participants in this study were actively involved in new experiences as learning is a cognitive process that builds on prior experiences (Lowenthal & Muth 2008). In the study I asked the learners to imagine what it would feel like to be the president of South Africa. Thus, they were asked to imagine themselves to be in an unfamiliar new position so that they could experience placing themselves in someone else's shoes and trying to make sense of the world around them while building new experiences on the knowledge that they already had.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:20) summarise the key concepts of the interpretive approach as follows:

- The participants determine their own actions through artefacts such as their drawings.
- There are different components of self-interacting – it is how the participants see themselves, how they make meaning of the world around them, how they interpret the world around them and how they will make it part of their own lives. This is the world of subjective meanings and what these meanings represent.
- There are processes involved during which learners experiment with the world around them and where they construct their own meanings of the world around them. The social context or natural environment such as a classroom in which the research takes place.
- The interpretive approach may also include role playing during which the participants take up a role of another in a specific situation and then act out how they would align their actions to the actions of others. In my research study I asked the learners to role to pretend to be the president of South Africa and, thus, they expressed themselves through the activity “If I were president ...”.

3.3 Research design

According to Creswell (2007:42) and Maree (2007:70) the research design is the plan on which a research study is based. The research design includes the selection of the participants and the research site, the data gathering techniques and also the data analysis process. It also defines the type and number of participants in the study and how the researcher applies the study in the real

world. There are various types of research designs which a researcher may use for different types of studies as the choice of design depends on the type of study the researcher wishes to conduct. Maree (2007:75) describes different qualitative research approaches, including the case study. This study used a case study. The next section describes the case study methodology and includes the selection of the participants, the data collection strategies and the data analysis.

3.3.1 Case study methodology

Baxter and Jack (2008:550) define a case study as an in-depth study and analysis of a bounded system. This, in turn, implies that such a study will focus intensively on a specific group of participants with whom the researcher will work on a personal level and also that it is bounded because it reflects a specific method which is used to conduct a study at a specific time or place (Zucker 2009). Creswell (2007) states that the case study is a research process that happens at a specific time in a specific place and involving specific processes, activities and programmes. Individual groups of people are the participants in this type of research study. According to Reason (2006:194–195), the case study must include both careful exploration and an in-depth study, especially when the researcher is working with young children. Reason (2006:187-203) believes that a case study requires that active groups of participants take part in the study. Thus, the researcher must concentrate on a specific case and collect the required data using various data gathering techniques.

This study focused on a multiple case study. According to Baxter and Jack (2008:550) a multiple case study involves more than one single case. Creswell (2007) maintains that the multiple case study is an in-depth analysis of a system or a sequence. Creswell (2007) further implies that a sound knowledge of the research processes of a multiple case study is essential as the research processes are as important as the research results. From an interpretivist point of view the multiple case study involves conducting a study in which numerous sites and sources of data are used in order to construct a holistic understanding of the way in which the participants interact with and relate to a specific situation, and how they make meaning of the world around them (Maree 2007:75). Baxter and Jack (2008:550) also states that the main reason why the researcher examines several cases is in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the cases as well as of the differences and similarities between the cases. I used groups from different cultures and backgrounds in order to conduct this research study (see 3.3.1.1).

The multiple case study methodology provided me with the opportunity to investigate the Grade 3 learners' perceptions and understandings of social justice. The study focused on the perceptions and understandings of social justice as the learners perceived the phenomenon. The study was conducted in various schools. I used the same methodology in the different schools and compared the results from each school with those from the other schools. I used specific methods to collect and interpret the data. The data collection methods used were designed to encourage the participants to react to the prompt, namely, the uncompleted sentence "If I were president ...". This was in line with studies conducted by Joubert (2007) and Goss (2009). The prompt assisted the learners to describe or give their perspectives of their personal interpretations of social justice. However, I do acknowledge both the advantages and limitations of this methodology. Naele, Thapa and Boyce (2006:4) highlighted the advantages and limitations of a case study. The most important advantage of the case study is that it provides a detailed description of the institution or phenomenon being studied whereas other types of study do not lend themselves to this kind of detail. Naele *et al.* (2004:4) further state that data in a multiple case study may be gathered through the use of multiple data collection methods to ensure a thick description of the case study. However, the multiple case study methodology also has its limitations. According to Naele *et al.* (2004:4) and Zucker (2009:10) the process may be somewhat drawn out because of the detailed information that is collected and discussed. This may result in the presentation of lengthy information and the reader may tend to lose interest in the research study. I attempted to present the rich information in an interesting way, ensuring that I had captured all the data and presented it in a reader friendly way without lengthy narrations.

A further concern about multiple case studies is that the data may be presented unsystematically. This is a result of the fact that qualitative research is sometimes considered unscientific and, if the researcher does not use a systematic approach to the data collection, the data will be both unreliable and invalid (Naele *et al.* 2006:4). When I conducted this study I made sure that I used a systematic approach. I planned every step of the research process and I collected the data systematically. I also collected ample data for the purposes of the study and presented it in a way that will, hopefully, keep the attention of the reader without being too lengthy or uninteresting.

3.3.1.1 Selection of research site

I chose the schools as research sites purposively. According to Dolores and Tongco (2007:147), this purposive sampling is also known as “judgement sampling” because the researcher chooses a specific group of participants to participate in the research study. Dolores and Tanco (2007:147) also maintain that this technique is non-random and that the selection of the participants is not based on either a set of numbers or an underlying theory. According to Davis *et al.* (2010:170–171), the main shortcoming of a case study is limited to the sites and the participants who are involved in the study. The behaviour of the participants may be completely different in another environment and this, in turn, may mean that different results would be collected from that environment. For the purposes of this study I collected data from three different schools and observed three different groups of learners in the schools. The participants in these schools could be seen to represent a certain area in the South African context, as well as the diversity of the South African population. Purposive sampling was deemed to be relevant to this research study as the cases were selected according to specific criteria:

- Each school was located in a different area and represented different quintiles.
- The learners came from different cultural backgrounds and, thus, they represented the diverse voices of the learners of South Africa.
- The fact that schools were from different quintiles could maybe provide the opportunity that the research results could represent the voices of children in the country.
- The schools were within my reach as I teach at a school in this area.

In South Africa schools are divided into five different quintiles. Hall and Giese (2008:37) describe the way in which schools are categorised into quintiles. The poorest schools are included in quintile one and the least poor are included in quintile five. Hall and Giese (2008:27) further indicate that the way in which the Department of Basic Education classifies these schools is through the poverty table compiled by the South African Treasury. Thus, the poverty level and the ranking of areas is based on the data collected from the national census that stipulates the income levels and dependency on the government of the citizens in the specific areas.

The following table depicts the schools that I selected as research sites.

Table 3.1: Summary of schools selected

Research group	School	Location	Quintile	Participants	Language of learning and teaching
Group 1	Private	Urban school	5	13 learners in Grade 3	Afrikaans
Group 2	Government	Suburban school, better known as an ex-model C school	3	24 learners in Grade 3	Afrikaans
Group 3	Government	Suburban school, better known as an ex-model C school	3	33 learners in Grade 3	English

The selection of the various and diverse schools provided rich data (Zucker 2009). I continued with the contact sessions until the data was saturated and no new views were emerging from the data (Hancock *et al.* 2009). I conducted three contact sessions per school. The participants were all in Grade 3 – the final grade in the Foundation Phase. This means that the learners are taught different subjects to prepare them for the next phase, the Intermediate Phase. They are, therefore, able to think for themselves and they are able to read and write. The majority of Grade 3 learners are nine years old. The participants consisted out of three Grade 3 classes. The learners who participated in the study were able to understand either Afrikaans or English.

Group 1: I selected this group from a private primary school in a closed community with white learners only. The language of teaching and learning is Afrikaans (one of the 11 official languages in South Africa). It was evident when I worked with them that these learners had not received much exposure to politics and their opinions were, in general, conservative. I use the word conservative in the sense that the learners based their answers on a Christian foundation.

There were only a few learners in the class, in the main, the learners received individual education. The financial status of the school may be described as very good.

Group 2: I selected this group from a public primary school. The group comprised mainly learners from the middle-class although there was a diversity of learners. This type of school is better known as an ex-model C school. The parents are from the middle-class with an income to match. The school had enough funds to supply the basic educational needs. It was evident when I worked with the learners from this group that most of them came from a middle class community although some of them were in foster care. There were learners from different cultures in the class as well as different races. The group included black, white and coloured learners and they all spoke Afrikaans.

Group 3: I selected this group from a public primary school. The learners in this group were either middle-class or poor. This type of school is better known as an ex-model C school. The majority of the parents were poor although the school had sufficient funds to meet the basic needs of the learners. It was evident when I work with them that most of the learners came from either the townships or rural areas in the province. The learners in this group were either black or Indian.

The population of South Africa is divided into four main race groups, namely, black, white, coloured and Indian (Seekings, 2007:4). There are also 11 official languages in South Africa. The participants I selected represented all the main race groups. However, I only used two of the languages spoken in South Africa only (English and Afrikaans) because of my own inability to speak any other language.

3.3.1.2 Selection of participants

According to the Washington State Department of Early Learning (2012:117–122), Grade 3 learners start to identify very closely with their culture and environment. They also use their listening skills to analyse the information that is given to them. According to the Department of Education (2001:28–29), the learners at Grade 3 level are starting to make meaning out of text and associate what they learn with previous knowledge. The learners apply their grammatical knowledge to understanding different texts and they start to write short stories that have a flow of

meaning (Department of Education 2001:28–29). The Washington State Department of Early Learning (2012:122–125) further indicates that such learners are able to compare different stories with the same topic, they are able to differentiate between a fact and an opinion and they also start to write longer stories than before and organise their writing on a specific topic. In other words, Grade 3 learners are able to think for themselves and form their own ideas on a topic. When I conducted the study it was important that the learners listened to everybody's opinions and formulated their own opinions and construct their understandings on social justice. Another reason for choosing Grade 3 learners was that they are able to think about an idea and express their own unique opinions on a topic. From my own experiences with Grade 3 learners I know that they do not generally do what the group does but express their own ideas. This is confirmed by the Department of Basic Education (2011).

According to the Government of Alberta (2012), Grade 3 learners start to work on a more independent level as compared to learners from the previous levels of the Foundation Phase. I will present a few aspects from this document that indicate what Grade 3 learners will do in order to express themselves. They are able to

- make their art look more realistic;
- use art to articulate their ideas or feelings;
- use language skills to describe the world around them in detail;
- make their stories more interesting; able to add excitement to their stories by pronouncing words in a different way or by uttering words in a different tone;
- are confident in expressing their feelings and make healthy and safe choices;
- solve problems and use their own strategies to find answers; and
- are curious to learn about different countries and obtain a broader view of the world around them.

3.3.1.3 Data collection methods

Reisman *et al.* (2005:2) describe data collection as the way in which the researcher collect information about what people think and feel about certain issues. There are different data collection methods and it is, thus, essential that the most appropriate method be chosen for a

specific situation. These data collection methods include surveys, focus groups, observations, interviews or questionnaires. The data may be collected from individuals to large groups of participants.

Durrance and Fisher (2005) describe some of the strengths and weaknesses of the various qualitative data collection methods. The researcher may conduct an in-depth data collection by observing the participants and/or by interviewing them with the participants expressing themselves and their feelings about various issues. The researcher may carry out oral or written communications and this personal involvement may elicit rich and detailed reactions. Although there is often a rich pool of data to be gathered, Durrance and Fisher (2005) and Polkinghorne (2005:137) also point out that qualitative research is time consuming and may require special equipment in order to record or transcribe the research. Other challenges in qualitative research are that it may be difficult to carry out follow up work, some of the questions may be misunderstood and/or the data may be inconclusive.

The main data collection technique used for the purposes of this research study was the contact sessions which were conducted with the learners from the various schools (each school within a different school environment). The study made use of both informal and formal data collection methods. The formal data collection methods included observations, focus groups interviews, field notes and visual methodologies.

As an informal data collection method I conducted a pilot study in the Grade 1 class which I taught. I asked the learners the same questions included in the list of questions that I would ask the grade three learners (see addendum 1). The reason for the pilot study was to ascertain how the learners responded to the questions and to obtain some idea of how learners of a younger age than the participants reasoned about the research topic. The results were fascinating. Many of the learners regarded people as equals and saw little difference between people.

Polkinghorne (2005) maintains that formal qualitative data collection uses spoken or written language, including interviews, observations, documents and artefacts. These methods are then converted into written text for analysis. As a qualitative researcher I used various formal data

collection methods including observations, focus group interviews, field notes and visual methodologies.

3.3.1.3.1 Observation

Polkinghorne (2005:143) defines observation as a formal data gathering technique in terms of which the researcher collects data through direct contact with the participants as human beings. The researcher observes the behaviour of the participants. Observation is, in the main, a primary and formal data collection method which is used in qualitative research (Polkinghorne 2005:143). Observation as a data collection strategy may be a delicate process as it involves data being gathered from watching events or the behaviour of people in their natural setting (Department of Health and Human Services 2008). The Department of Health and Human Services (2008) also indicates that observation may be either direct or indirect. When the observation is direct, the participants are able to physically see the researcher. However, when the observation is indirect the participants are watched without their being aware that they are being watched. In this study I made use of direct observation as the participants were able to see me recording their behaviour and verbal expressions.

According to Beukenhorst and Kerssemakers (2012:11), deficient observation may lead to bias and irrelevant conclusions. They further state that it is essential that measures are in place for observing the participants in order to acquire a comprehensive level of data. Observation was deemed to be an appropriate way of collecting the data for the purposes of this study because the learners were young and it was, therefore, important to look at their expressions in order to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings they ascribed to social justice than would otherwise have been the case. The Department of Health and Human Services (2008:1) published information on observation which proved helpful for the study. I studied a few core guidelines that helped me with the collection of the observation data. These guidelines included the following:

- I tried to understand the ongoing data collection situation. Thus, I monitored the learners' specific situations while I collected the data.

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- I observed the interaction between the participants and how they behaved after they had been introduced to the topic of social justice and prompted them with the activity “If I were president...”.
 - I observed the environment in which the study took place to enhance my understanding of how the learners thought.
 - Through the learners’ facial expressions and behaviour I learnt far more than would have been communicated by just words and I recorded the emotional behaviour and reactions of the participants in my field notes.

3.3.1.3.2 Field notes

Field notes are the evidence or raw data that is collected by the researcher as a tool of observation and as reflective notes (Schwandt 2007). Although field notes are a formal data collection instrument, the data is not presented in a standard layout or form. Field notes are the notes that the researcher makes while he/she is communicating with the participants, or while he/she is observing them. Hancock *et al.* (2009:17) suggests that the researcher enter the observations as soon as possible in a notebook so that the data is not lost. Mack *et al.* (2011:23) suggest that field notes may be handwritten and later entered into a computer. They insist that it is essential to record the date and time at which the notes are taken as well as the place where the notes are taken. The researcher should write down only what is necessary and fill in the details afterwards. It would be very time consuming if the researcher wrote down every sentence in full and valuable data may be lost if the participants continue to communicate while the researcher is busy with field notes instead of observing the participants.

Mack *et al.* (2011:24–25) suggest a few guidelines on how to expand field notes:

- Field notes must preferably be updated within the first 24 hours after the research has been conducted. If this is not possible on the same day on which the research was conducted then it must be done first the following day. The sooner the researcher reviews the notes the better as it may happen that the researcher is unable to remember valuable information that was shared and the field notes may trigger the researcher’s memory, but this opportunity will be lost over time.

- It is also important to review the field notes and expand them into full sentences as soon as possible after the research has been conducted. This may be done directly on computer file if the option is available.
- Field notes should be written in the form of a narrative to describe what happened during the research and there must be separate sections into which the data is divided, such as observations, interpretations and personal opinions.
- It is important to write down follow-up questions or issues that merit further attention. This is a basic step in qualitative research.
- The final guideline is to review the notes and make any additional comments that apply to the research.

In this study I used field notes for every focus group interview that I conducted. I used a notebook and recorded the core features of the actions and expressions of the participants during the focus group interviews. I wrote down short sentences or key notes in order to capture all the data possible. During the first two contact sessions with each group my main source of data was the observations and the information I had captured in the field notes. During the third contact session with each focus group I mainly made verbatim notes on the participants' prompts and a few field notes only while the participants were working on their sentences and drawings. After recording the field notes in my notebook I entered them into a computer using full sentences.

3.3.1.3.3 Focus group interviews

It is essential that the researcher ensure that relevant results are obtained from the actions of the participants. This, in turn, means that the researcher must ask relevant questions that are related to the research topic and guide the focus group to discuss the questions in a way which will produce relevant data that may be analysed (Beukenhorst & Kerssenmakers 2012:11).

Reisman *et al.* (2005:4) and Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2011:51) define a focus group as a facilitated discussion with a group of participants and that enables the researcher to collect in-depth data. This qualitative and formal data collection method may help the researcher to understand perspectives in a community (Mack *et al.* 2011:51). Reisman *et al.* (2005:4) further state that richer and more detailed information may be acquired from a focus

group as compared to the information from an interview with an individual person because a focus group creates interaction among the participants. On the other hand, Hancock *et al.* (2009:17) maintain that focus groups are, in a way, the same as interviews with individual participants as the participants in a focus group still express their own ideas. However the individuals in the group may be influenced by the opinion of the majority of the group. According to Reisman *et al.* (2005:4) and Hancock *et al.* (2009:17), there is always the danger that some of the members in the group may be influenced by other members in the group. It may also happen that a group member is not sufficiently confident to express an opinion because the opinion may be different than that of the rest of the group. Hancock *et al.* (2009:18) offer some suggestions on how to manage a focus group to ensure that the group functions as optimally as possible:

- Make use of an ‘ice-breaker’ to enable the group of participants to start to relax in the situation.
- There must be rules that the researcher stipulates to ensure a satisfactory flow of events. The researcher must lead the group in discussions and must be thoroughly prepared for appropriate topics of discussion.
- Participants in the focus group may not speak all at the same time or whenever they want to. In other words, there must be rules for the discussions, for example, raising your hand when you wish to speak and not interrupting another participant if he/she is talking.
- As the facilitator of the focus group, the researcher must allow all participants to express their opinions.
- It is also a good idea to have an extra person or co-researcher present as this person could also listen to the opinions of the participants and take notes of what they say.
- The researcher must also adhere to the appointed time that was stipulated for the focus group interview. This will prevent long and meaningless discussions between the participants.

In this study I acted as the researcher and facilitator of three different focus groups. Although each group had their own unique context I used the same systematic approach for each group. I used the guidelines that Hancock *et al.* (2009:18) suggest in order to obtain sufficient data from the participants. I describe below how I implemented this guidelines:

- I used the South African flag and a picture of the president as an ice-breaker. The learners were familiar with the president's image and were able to relate to it as they knew who the president was.
- The class teacher was present at all times when I conducted my research and I asked her for her personal reflections after each focus group. I recorded these reflections in my field notes.
- I led the focus group as I would have led an ordinary lesson and introduced the following rules: The participants were not to speak when they are not permitted to and they were not allowed to interrupt another participant.
- Each participant was given the opportunity to express their opinion.

I decided to use focus group interviews, thus ensuring that all the participants were actively involved in the research study for a short period of time. The reason for using the focus group interview was so that I could address the whole class at the same time while using my research instruments. In this way I was able to observe the reactions of the learners at the same time (Mack *et al.* 2011:52). I worked with participants from different cultures and different school quintiles. Each focus group lasted 40 minutes during which I focused on the discussions between the participants and myself as well as the questions and the responses. The group discussions and questions focused on the feelings of the participants about certain aspects of social justice; namely, fairness in South Africa and their feelings about different cultures and the fair treatment of everyone. I asked the participants questions in order to direct the discussions in the appropriate direction. I then used the participants' answers to guide the discussions.

I used the focus group interviews to confirm the data that I had collected from other sources such as the participant observations and my field notes. The depth of the focus group data depends on the dynamics within the group as well as the diversity of participants (Mack *et al.* 2011:52).

3.3.1.3.4 Visual methodologies

Blackmore *et al.* (2012:3) discussed of visual methodologies as a data collection method. Blackmore *et al.* (2012:3) note that the art of young children may offer unique insights into their

everyday lives. I used the visual content that the learners drew or painted during the research sessions to enhance my data. These visual methodologies contributed to my deepened understanding of the research topic. Roland (2006:2) maintains that children go through different stages in their artistic development while there are also internal and external factors that may play a role in artistic development. Blackmore *et al.* (2012:3) are of the opinion that young participants associate with visual data and that this visual data provides links to their experiences and, therefore, they are co-producers of knowledge. I employed a prompt and a user friendly worksheet of the prompt to enable the participants to complete the sentence and to write down their statements. They also drew a picture depicting how they would change South Africa on the worksheet. The open-ended questions which I asked in the focus group interviews become in-depth discussions about their feelings about fair and unfair. They then expressed these feelings in both writings and drawings as they completed the sentence “If I were president...”.

I made use of the drawings and photographs of the learners and their work. The photographs were used to depict the school and classroom environments of the participants without revealing their identity as I photographed only their hands, backs and their drawings. I also took digital photographs of the learners while they were working. The purpose of using visual images was to assist in describing my cases. The photographs enriched my data and created a visual perspective of each of the groups of participants (Wiles, Prosser, Bagnoli, Clark, Davies and Holland 2008:22).

The feelings of the participants were captured mainly in their drawings. According to Roland (2006:11), children use their visual images to create a greater awareness; by the age of nine or ten as they include more detail in their drawings than they would have done previously. This results in more realistic drawings. Nine-year-old children also draw metaphorically and use images to suggest an idea, emotion or expression. For example, they will draw a single tree on a landscape to illustrate loneliness or despair (Roland 2006:13). The fact that learners learn to express their emotions through their visual art contributed to my research as a result of the fact that they were able to draw more relevant and meaningful pictures. Those participants in the study who had difficulty in expressing themselves verbally enjoyed drawing in order to express their feelings while others preferred to write a lot more rather than to express themselves artistically. All of the participants were able to express their ideas and feelings about social

justice. In addition, they also enjoyed the activities of writing and drawing. The learners felt important as they clearly demonstrated that they perceived their participation in the study as something bigger than their daily routine.

3.3.2 The process of data capturing

The core of the research was based on research conducted by Goss (2009) and Joubert (2007), who explored and taught social justice. The research included a class activity which each learner completed individually. The process started with a discussion which build up to an activity. I gave the sentence as a prompt “If I were president ...”. Each learner was given a worksheet on which the incomplete sentence had been typed and a space for a drawing. They then had to write about and draw the things that they would change if they had the opportunity to be president of democratic South Africa. In order to gain insights into the learners' perceptions of social justice, I ensured that they were practically and emotionally involved. When I asked them about their drawings and how they interpret them, I then wrote verbatim their explanations and understandings of their writing and drawings on the worksheet. Throughout the entire process I observed the participants.

I visited each of the schools three times. I visited each of the schools for the first time to ensure that the participants felt comfortable with me and the way in which I communicated with them. I then conducted more than one session with each group. Each contact session started with an introduction to or discussion about the issue of social justice by using media such as the South African flag and a photo of the president. I then proceeded to the focus group interview during which I observed the learners by taking field notes of the responses and expressions of the learners. As recommended by Wiles *et al.* (2008:22), I gathered the requisite data by monitoring the actions of the learners in the learning environment and collecting data from their writings and drawings. The learners were old enough to have formulated their own theories about the world in which they lived. In addition, they were able to read, write and participate as individuals (see content of each contact session later in this section).

All the contact sessions were conducted in the same way. I conducted three contact sessions per group. The content of all these sessions was more or less the same. However, the results from

each contact session was different. The outcomes of the focus group interviews were also different. The next section briefly discusses the planning of the contact sessions.

Contact session 1

The first contact sessions were my first time at each school and, although I am a teacher myself and accustomed to standing in front of a classroom every day, I was, nevertheless, nervous and excited but also prepared. I took a poster of Mr Jacob Zuma and a South African flag to the classroom as an introduction to the focus group. At every session the teacher and participants were waiting for me. I also took with me to the classroom the consent forms that the participants had fill in. After the learners had settled down I briefly explained that I was conducting research for the University of Pretoria and that, if they so wished, they could be part of the research. All of the learners agreed to participate in the study. The teachers gave me the consent forms that the parents had had to fill in. Although all the learners were willing to participate in the study I did not include those learners whose parents had not given their consent to their children's' participation. There were between 13 and 36 learners in the contact sessions. When they had filled in their consent forms I collected the forms and started the focus group interviews.

I began by asking the learners where we lived. They all knew that we lived in South Africa. I then showed them the poster of Mr Zuma – all of the learners immediately recognised him as the President of South Africa. I asked them about the kind of work that a president does. Only a few of the learners knew what his work was although the majority of them called him the boss of the country. I then I showed them the South African flag and asked what they thought of it. Most of the learners liked the flag because it was colourful although a few mentioned that they would prefer to have another flag, When I asked them why they replied that the flag is associated with a government and said that they did not like the government. I saw this as a wonderful opportunity for a debate and, thus, I asked the other participants how they felt about the government and what they liked and disliked about South Africa.

After the discussion on the country and what they liked and disliked I asked them what the difference was between fair and unfair. They were familiar with these concepts and provided several examples of what it is like to be treated both fairly and unfairly. They also stated that it

is essential fairness overrule everything else and that everybody deserves to be treated fairly.

Contact session 2

The second time I visited the schools the learners was very eager to start immediately. We continued the session at the point at which where we had last stopped although this time I asked more difficult questions. These questions were about their feelings about what it would be like to be rich and also what it would be like to be poor. When I asked the participants to imagine themselves in each situation, they became quite upset, stating that the rich people should look after the poor people and that the rich people should give their money to the poor people. However, when the roles were reversed the learners all agreed that it was not a solution for rich people to give their money to poor people. The learners then talked about their own experiences and the discussion moved onto relevant news. We discussed how we should take care of our country. This, in turn, led automatically to the second topic.

The second topic was different at each contact session. Some of the classes were up to date with current news while others were not interested in the political situation in the country. The topics discussed were, in the main, related to the circumstances in which the learners was growing up.

Some of groups discussed criminal offences with the participants sharing their experiences with me. Almost all of them had been confronted with crime and, thus, we had an intense discussion about the police force and how to ensure that the criminals remained behind bars. One participant suggested that there should be a police officer on each corner of every street in the whole of South Africa and that this would, undoubtedly, put a stop to the crime.

One of the other topics was the elections that were being held in South Africa. The learners wanted to know how voting worked and what the responsibilities would be of the party that won. They were very upset about the fact that President Zuma had built himself a big house as he could have used the money to help the poor people.

The last topic that I introduced to them and that was the main topic of the research study was as follows: What would it be like to assume the leadership of the country and be the president? What should the leader of a country do to ensure sure that everything in the country is equal and that everybody is treated equally so that everything that happens in the country is fair. It was at this point that the learners started to say what a president should and should not do and discuss the terms on which they thought the country should be run to ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

Contact session 3

During the final contact session they were required to complete the worksheet. I introduced the session by explaining that they were to imagine that they had been elected as president and that it was, therefore, their responsibility to run the country. They would have to start somewhere to ensure that the country was better run and that everything in the country was fair. The participants were very excited about completing the worksheet and some of them started to write as others started to draw pictures. I walked among them and asked them personal questions on their work. They were very eager to answer the questions. Some of the participants finished quickly and asked if they could have an extra sheet of paper on which to write about and draw more of their ideas. I gave them permission to do so and some of them completed a second paper. If I was not able to understand their writing or way of expressing themselves, I interviewed them and recorded their explanations verbatim on their worksheets. At the end of the session I thanked them for their contribution to my study. They all indicated that they had been very happy that they could help me and that they would be willing to help me any time in the future.

After each session the learners asked me when I would come again.

The process of collecting the required data was difficult and the research that I had to conduct at the different schools was time-consuming. Every level of the school system who is involved in the learners' live had to give permission for the research to be conducted. I completed the research at each school research in a period of three weeks.

On reflection, I realised that the process of data collection is often a challenging, complex and a time-consuming process and requires constant management on the part of the researcher. I had to be prepared for each phase of the data collection process, I had to be on time for each focus group session and provide the correct information to encourage the participants to open up to me. In addition, I had to manage all the incoming data in a formal and organised way. The highlight of the study was, however, the rapport or connections I had established with the participants. I had enjoyed working with them and had appreciated their spontaneous reactions to the questions I asked them and the prompts I gave them. I liked the honesty with which they had expressed themselves and, in particular, when they had argued about the issues of fairness and unfairness in South Africa. The participants had looked forward to my visits and had been very interested in the topics we had discussed. I had always given the participants crayons if they had needed them and encouraged them when they worked.

Observing the participants enabled me to involve them in a participatory way in my research design. I had used different data collection instruments and this had, in turn, helped the participants to express their feelings about equality in South Africa and how it could be established.

Table 3.2 Summary of data collection and data capturing methods

Method of data collection	Type	Instruments assisting data collection	Prompt	Data capturing method
Observation	Observe participants	<i>Researcher observation</i>	Use natural environment (classroom)	Field notes
Focus group interviews	Group discussion	<i>What do you like or dislike about South Africa?</i>	Discussion about what it is like to live in South Africa	Field notes
	Group discussion and visual	<i>Who is the president of South Africa and what does he do?</i>	Picture of the president and discussion on the role	Field notes

	methodology		of a president.	
	Group discussion and visual methodology	<i>South African flag</i>	Show the South African to the learners in order to introduce them to the topic of discussion	Field notes
	Group discussion	<i>What is fair and unfair?</i>	Discussion on what it is like to be treated either fairly or unfairly	Field notes
	Group discussion	<i>“If I were president...”</i>	Discussion on role play as the president of South Africa	Field notes.
	Group discussion and visual methodology	<i>On worksheet</i>	A worksheet with an incomplete sentence “If I were president...” space for a drawing depicting what they would change if they were president	The completed sentences and drawings of what they would change if they had the chance to be president. Photographs of the prompts and of the participants

It was very challenging to use the data collection instruments I had selected when working with young children. I realised that I needed creative prompts to capture the attention of the learners (see Table 3.2). These prompts motivated the learners to participate in the study, ensuring that they were eager to participate and to express themselves visually in their drawings. I also used this prompts as my primary data collection instrument.

It is important that the researcher create a positive atmosphere for the participants to act comfortable in their “natural” environment in order to collect rich data. A positive atmosphere is

also ideal if the participants disagree on certain points or debate certain ideas rather than agreeing with everything (Mack *et al.* 2011:60). It was possible to compare the data from the focus group interviews while the rich data that I gathered revealed the in-depth insights of the participants' into the issue of social justice. The main disadvantage of the focus group interview was that some of the participants were too shy to express their feelings about the issues of social justice and preferred to listen to the other participants. For this reason it was important to create a relaxed atmosphere by being friendly and patient with the participants and making eye contact with each participant (Mack *et al.* 2011:60). This behaviour ensured that the participants felt sufficiently comfortable to express their views. I had also asked the participants to respect the opinions of the other participants.

3.3.3 Data analysis

The collection and analysis of data were integrated and refer to the process during which the raw data is processed in order for the researcher to come to a better understanding of it (Hancock *et al.* 2009:1–2). The data in this study included the drawings and writings of the participants and my observations of them. I also used photographs of each group which I had taken while they were busy reacting to the prompt. These photographs illustrated the difference between the groups.

The use of qualitative data analysis enabled me to seek to understand how the participants made meaning of social justice by analysing their experiences, knowledge and perceptions of the phenomenon as captured in their data. According to Maree (2007:6), inductive context analysis allows common themes to emerge from the data. Accordingly, I used content analysis to find emerging themes from the data. I analysed and compared the data I collected in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

The data analysis process started immediately after the first contact session as I had captured the raw data from this first contact session in a notebook as field notes. I then recorded my notes in full sentences. I also wrote down my observations of the actions and behaviour of the participants, thus ensuring that I captured all the data from the participants in my case study (Mack *et al.* 2011:43–44). After each contact session at the schools I interpreted the answers

given by the participants and compared them with my observations before I proceeded to the next school. This process enabled me to reflect on the different answers of the participants at each school.

Chapter 4 presents the data analysis which include the data analysis process in detail. Based on an interpretivist point of view I compared my findings in order to form a holistic image of the data I had captured from the different cultural perspectives of each research site and group. I compared the research findings of the participants with my field notes and then presented my findings from each visual methodology I had used the relation to the research questions (Baxter & Jack 2008:555). In the final interpretation of the results in Chapter 4, I present the case study in a thematic analysis. I used field notes to continuously attempt to eliminate my personal bias as I realised that, a teacher myself, I was subjectively and emotionally involved in the study. The remainder of the chapter discusses the trustworthiness of the study, my role as a researcher as well as the ethical implications of the study.

3.3.4 Trustworthiness

This section addresses the trustworthiness of this study. In view of the fact I worked with young learners, there are many aspects that I had to bear in mind to ensure that the study was trustworthy. Zucker (2009:11) maintains that it is difficult to observe a certain situation and remain neutral. According to Maree (2007:80–86), personal emotions and feelings may easily affect the researcher with this resulting in a study being both invalid and untrustworthy. He suggests that the researcher observe together with someone else in order to obtain a second opinion on the research results. This second observer can be anyone who is not actively involved in the study, for example, a class teacher. The researcher may then compare notes with the second observer as this would help to ensure that the researcher’s own biases do not render the study unreliable.

In this study I asked the class teachers to remain in the classroom while I conducted the study to ensure objectiveness. The learners felt more comfortable with their own teacher in the classroom. In addition, the learners had the opportunity to ask their own teacher questions or talk to her if they felt uncomfortable either with me as the researcher or the situation. The participants also felt safe in their “natural” setting of the classroom. I was the outsider who did

not know their names. However, despite the change in their daily routine with a “new teacher”, they were very excited to work with me and they contributed more than I had asked for, with all of the learners giving me their full support and interacting spontaneously with me. This, in turn, provided rich and in-depth data. After each session I asked each class teacher for her general opinion of the research study. This helped me to form an idea of what the results may be with the information adding more value to my study. This process also served as a form of member checking (Zucker 2009:11). To further ensure trustworthiness of my study, I conducted the research in an ethical way.

The participants and their parents gave their assent to participate. In addition, I explained to them that they did not have to participate in the study if they did not want to and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. If they did not participate they would not be discriminated against and their choices would be respected. I would also not ask why a participant had decided to withdraw from the study. In view of the fact that I wanted the participants to express their own life experiences, I gave them “child friendly” tasks to complete. I informed them that their contributions would be very valuable to me and I asked them to be honest in everything they contributed.

In order to enhance the trustworthiness of the research findings I used various procedures during the analysis and interpretation of the data which had been collected. I analysed the writings and drawings of each participant and tried to understand what each participant had wanted to tell me. In addition, I used different research works and articles in the interpretation of the visual methodologies to guide me in understanding the work of the learners.

3.3.5 Role of the researcher

Fink (2000:1) explains that the role of a qualitative researcher necessitates the researcher's involvement in every step of the research process. This involvement includes various aspects such as the stance of the researcher towards the participants. According to Dwyer (2009:55), the researcher will either act either as an insider or an outsider. The insider may study the participants via observation and they would not even notice that they were part of the study. On the other hand, an outsider approaches the participants before commencing the research. This

may, in turn, have a significant effect on the results of the study if the participants were not approached in the appropriate way. She further states that, if the researcher adopts an outsider approach to the study, the research must be approach in a delicate way to ensure that the researcher becomes familiar with the participants before commencing the study. It is essential that the participants feel comfortable with the researcher. This will, in turn, enhance both the reliability and the trustworthiness of the study. If the researcher overwhelms the participants they may feel uncomfortable and either withdraw from the study or not be honest. In this study I tried not to act as a teacher but as a researcher. Therefore, I had several contact sessions with the participants. The aim of the first session was to give the participants the opportunity to become familiar with me as a researcher. I then followed up with further sessions. The participants clearly felt more comfortable with the situation when I commenced my research during the second contact session than would otherwise have been the case. The participants felt familiar with me as a researcher and they knew what to expect from my visits.

Fink (2000:4) maintains that the qualitative researcher is personally and actively involved while conducting the research is done. This personal involvement usually means that the participants are more willing to participate and to tell their story than would have been the case without the personal involvement of the researcher. This, in turn, may result in a situation in which the researcher will forms close relationships with the participants, thus ensuring that the analysis and interpretation of the data is correct (Fink 2000:6). A researcher is also responsible for the correct research process and must strive to be as objective as possible.

As the researcher I was actively involved with the participants when collecting the data. My role was to guide them through the research process and to inspire them to express their interpretations, understandings and feelings with regard to social justice. These sessions became very personal for both me and the participants, thus resulting in rich data. I processed, analysed and interpreted the data and respected the contributions of each participant. In addition, as a researcher I wanted to contribute my findings to schools and other researchers.

3.3.6 Ethical considerations

Abrahams *et al.* (2012:1) state that children are both resilient and very impressionable in times of adversity. However, they are still vulnerable citizens in society. Young children look up to the

authority of adults and they may, therefore, be easily manipulated into giving certain answers to certain questions (Abraham *et al.* 2012:1). I conducted the research project in an ethical manner by ensuring the following:

- Asking the learners for their assent or permission before I started the research study. It was essential that they felt that they were in control and that they had the option to participate in the study (Abraham *et al.* 2012)
- Applying for permission from the governing bodies of the schools, principles and parents in order to obtain the informed consent of all the role players.
- Offering access to participants to all the data I collected.
- Confidentiality when I analysed and interpret the learners' contributions. The data was filed by research group and every participant receive his/her own number.
- According to Mack *et al.* (2011:53), the participants usually ask the researcher questions about the research topic. However, when this happens it is important that the researcher not answer the questions in order to avoid offering persuasive criticism and/or obtaining biased answers. If a participant asked me questions that related to the topic I asked them what they thought the answer was to the question. In addition, was is important to ensure the confidentiality of the information that was provided during the focus group discussions and the interviews in order to protect the identities of the participants.

Wiles *et al.* (2008:19) argue that it is important to ask learners if photographs of them may be used for the purposes of the research. It is an ethical issue to use photographs in a research study, especially photographs of underage participants (Wiles *et al.* 2008:21-22). In order to ensure that I could use the images I asked the permission from the parents, the principles and the school governing bodies and I assured them that the participants' identities would be protected. After obtaining permission from the parents, principles and governing bodies I asked the participants for their permission to use the photographs as well, which they all granted.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methods, instruments and texts used in the study, the research sites and the process used to conduct the focus group interviews with the participants. Chapter 4 presents the data which was collected as well as the data analysis and the results of the study. In addition, the chapter discusses the perceptions of the participants and how they felt about social justice. Chapter 4 include the contributions of the participants.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:

Understandings of the participating learners in a democratic South Africa

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 described the research design, data collection methods and the participants. Chapter 4 contains an interpretative explanation of the data collected. Thus, this chapter aims to make sense and meaning of the data. In this chapter I engage with the data that I collected using the various data collection instruments in order to present the results that will assist me in generating findings relevant to the research questions. Through the data analysis I offer my interpretation of the perceptions and understandings of the Grade 3 learners' experiences of social justice in a democratic South Africa.

By using qualitative data analysis, I sought to understand how the participants made meaning of social justice by analysing their attitudes, experiences and knowledge as regards the phenomenon. According to Maree (2007:6), inductive analysis enables common themes to emerge from the data. This study used content analysis to find the similarities and differences in the data or themes that emerged from the multiple case study that were conducted. The data that had been collected was analysed and the data from the participants from the various schools was then analysed (Groups 1–3). After each session at a school I interpreted the data and compared it to my observations before I proceeded to the next school. This process and the strategies I adopted enabled me to reflect on the different answers given by the participants from each

school. In the following section I address the data gathering process and the data analysis strategies.

4.2 Data analysis strategies

According to Anderson (2007:2) there are two different types of data analysis namely content and thematic analysis. Content analysis describes the essence of a study and provides an in-depth view of the various meanings arising each individual participant. I used this type of analysis to obtain both a holistic outlook of the entire research process and also an in-depth view of the different understandings of each participant. I also made use of thematic analysis where I discussed certain themes that emerged from the data and then identified sub-themes from each of them. This strategy helped me to interpret the data from an individual participant and the data set from each school. After the process had been conducted three times, I compared the data from the various schools to detect differences and similarities.

4.3 The data analysis process

As an interpretivist it was incumbent on me to summarise the mass of data that I had collected during the fieldwork and then communicate the results to a wider audience (Hancock *et al.* 2009:26). According to Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2012), all the parties involved in a research study contribute their own unique interpretations of the world around them in the focus group interviews. It was essential that I be open to all the different opinions and statements of the young participants. The observations and field notes assisted me in analysing both the life experiences of the participants and also the way in which they would like to apply social justice in a democratic country. The important principle in analysing the data was to use the data that the participants had presented and make a systematic and constant comparison between the different groups in order to gain an in-depth insight into the learners' own experiences (Zucker 2009:11).

Yet another step in the data analysis process involved recording my reflections (as part of my field notes) on each of the groups. After each session I wrote down a short phrase recording how I had experienced the group and what I had observed about their opinions of social justice in a

democracy. This process assisted me to link my own interpretations of the opinions of the participants to both the prompts and field notes that I had taken during the fieldwork. This constant comparison approach was based on grounded theory and enabled me to identify the important themes which emerged from each of the groups and then I concluded it in one group as a whole (Hancock *et al.* 2009:26). The themes offered me the opportunity to categorise the participants' answers in a systematic way in order to answer the main and the sub-research questions. I transcribed the data from the participants verbatim so that none of the original data was lost.

As a following step in the data analysis process, Zucker (2009:8) suggests that the researcher make sense of the life events of the participants' lives. When I analysed the learners' life experiences I not only used the field notes and prompts (activities) they had completed, but I also tried to make meaning of both their expressions and the significance of how they had tried to convince me of their opinions. The meaning of the participants' expressions was an important aspect in the analysis of the data as a whole as the learners had also featured as individuals who were part of a group of participants. The results were classified into themes and sub-themes where the voices as an individuals were heard as well as the opinions of the participants as a group.

Summary of activities during the data gathering process:

1. When I started the data gathering process, I visited a school and conducted a focus group interview with the learners as well as observing them
2. During the third focus group session each learner who had participated in the study completed the prompt that I used as my primary data collection method. I also used the field notes that I had taken during the sessions.
3. I processed the data that I had gathered and wrote out my field notes in complete sentences.
4. I wrote down a short reflection (as part of the field notes) on each contact session and described the "vibe" that there had been in the classroom in order to obtain an overall sense of the session as well as the overall expressions of the learners.

5. I filed the data that I had collected in an organised way. After all the data had been collected from each school I embarked on the data analysis.
6. I compared the data form each group with each other and form a conclusion on an overview of the groups.

It was important for me as the researcher to make meaning of the data which had been gathered throughout the data collection process. Zucker (2009:6) suggests that it is essential that the researcher follows the stages of the data analysis process. The first stage involved describing my experience as a researcher, the second stage involved describing the analysis process while the third stage focused on the meaning of the data and the themes I selected. I used this method to illustrate the process of data collection.

Figure 4.1 I briefly summarises the data collection process.

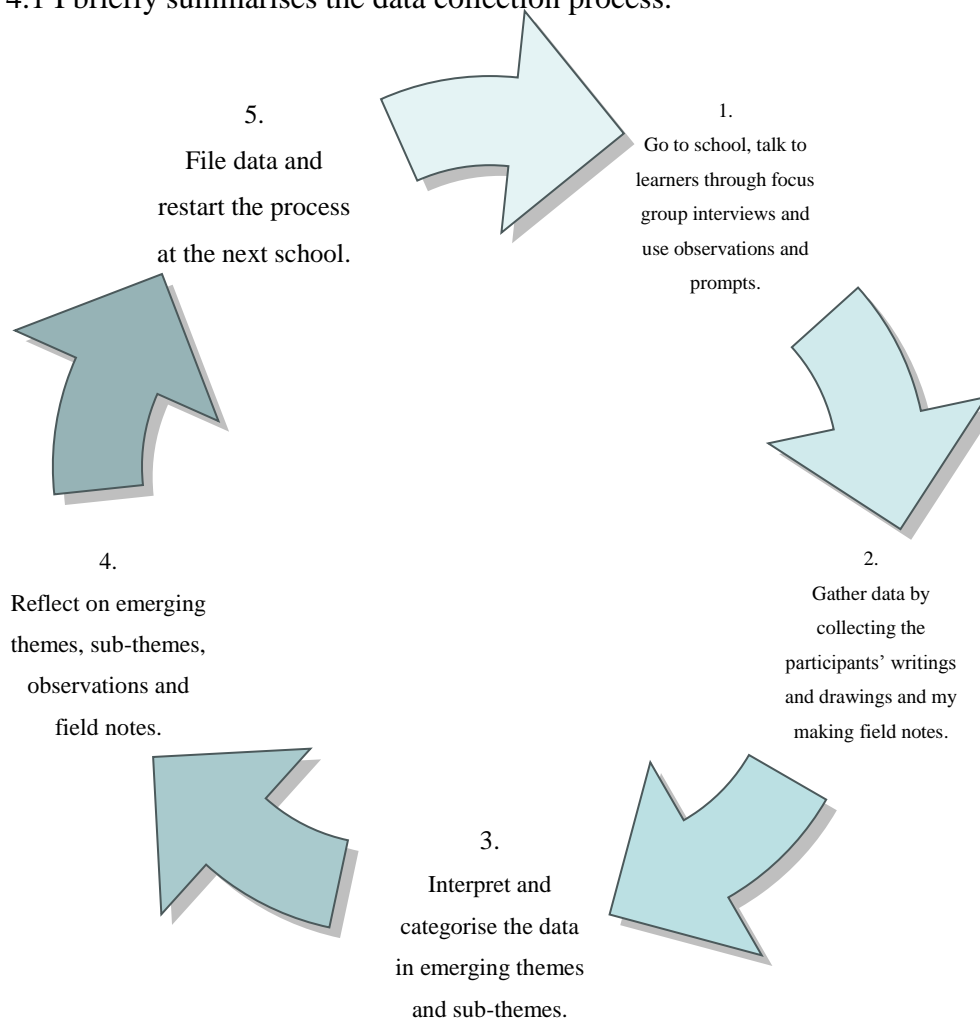


Figure 4.1: Data gathering and analysis process

4.4 Results of the content and thematic analyses

Thematic content analysis refers to the process in which the researcher prepares the content for thematic analysing by identifying themes. Anderson (2007:2–3) describes the process as follows:

- The researcher makes multiple copies of the data that was collected.
- Using the same colour the researcher then highlights words, expressions that are repeatedly emerging and that relate to each other.
- On the basis of the highlighted areas the researcher makes meaning of the data by writing down the meaning of the content of the highlighted areas.
- The different colours are grouped together and the themes emerge from these groups.
- Each colour group is given a label according to the content of the created theme.

Content analysis enables themes to emerge, highlighting the relationships between the data that was collected. The information so obtained is then linked to a cultural context (Onwuegbuzi *et al.* 2012:14). Once all the data had been collected I categorised the information and organised it according to the different colour groups or themes. This information enabled me to support existing theories – see Chapter 2 (Onwuegbuzi 2012:15). I then gave an integrated account of the life experiences of Grade 3 learners on social justice in a democratic South Africa based on my engagement with the data and emerging themes.

The following section presents the data from the prompts (activities) that the participants completed. In relevant cases I also made use of the observations presented as field notes. I selected exceptional contributions made by the participating learners with each theme that demonstrated extraordinary insights into the research topic and which could also represent the responses of the majority of learners in the group. This enabled me to create a holistic image of each group of learners.

I described the Grade 3 participants' life experiences and understandings of social justice in South Africa in terms of the five different themes and their sub-themes as presented in table 4.1. In section 4.7 I present the comparison between the different groups.

Table 4.1 An overview of the themes and sub-themes



4.5 Themes which emerged from the data, inclusion and exclusion criteria

Theme one pertains to the learners who cared about the environment and included two sub-themes. The sub-themes as illustrated below describe what the learners had indicated that they would do to make South Africa a better place in order to care for the country. The sub-themes support the main theme of the learners' understandings and perceptions of social justice in a democratic South Africa. The colour green represents the green of nature and expresses how the learners wished to protect nature. Table 4.2 presents the theme and sub-themes as well as the inclusion and exclusion criteria which I used when identifying the themes and sub-themes.

Table 4.2 Theme 1 and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion

Theme 1		
Care for the environment		
Sub-themes:	Inclusion criteria:	Exclusion criteria:
Protect nature	Learners' attitudes and alertness as regards protecting nature against those who do not care about it	Solutions to problems involved in caring for the country, i.e. for personal reasons
Prevent pollution	Learners' attitudes and motivation relating to preventing pollution in the country	It is only ideas on how to prevent pollution and is not a logical, feasible plan

This table depicts the attitudes of the learners towards conserving nature as well as their desire to prevent pollution in South Africa. The ideas of some of the learners on how to prevent pollution had been illogical and were excluded from the data that was used for the purposes of the study.

Theme two pertains to the learners' attitudes towards the values and good manners that we should practise in our everyday lives. This includes the fact that we should care for each other.

Peoples' bad habits are also included in this theme as well as the learners' attitudes toward these bad habits. The participants also mentioned practising religion in our everyday lives. This theme is represented by the colour blue as I associate religion with the blue air.

Table 4.3 Theme 2 and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion

Theme 2		
Pursue positive behaviour		
Sub-themes:	Inclusion criteria:	Exclusion criteria:
Practise good manners and caring for others	The way in which people should look after each other and how to behave in order to demonstrate good manners and respect towards others	The ways in which good manners must be practised. The ways in which people should not look after each other. Being disrespectful
Discourage bad habits such as fighting, smoking and drinking	Learners' attitudes towards people those habits are bad for their own health and the health of everybody else	Learners' attitudes that display motivation to develop bad habits that will affect their own health and that of others
Being religious or practising religion	Practising religion in your own life as well as reaching out to others in order to motivate them to become religious	Forceful acts to coerce people to practise a specific religion

This table depicts the desire for good behaviour on the part of the people in the community and in the learner' own households. The learners expressed the desire for a peaceful environment with religion as a basic aspect in their lives. Selfish reasons to implement specific religions and advocating bad habits were excluded from the data as well as the opinions of learners who want to force people to believe in a specific religion.

The third theme is represented by the colour purple. This theme relates to the issue of social justice which emerged from the focus groups I conducted with the learners. The learners were of the opinion that there are certain ways in which the world may be changed in order to create a just world. This theme focuses on how learners would change the world and how they ensure that the world was fair.

Table 4.4 Theme 3 and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion

Theme 3		
Making the world fair		
Sub-themes:	Inclusion criteria:	Exclusion criteria:
Make everyone equal	The way in which people would all be on the same level of equality	Equality must not prevail in the country
Change the world to create social justice	How the world must be changed in order to ensure that everyone is equal and that everybody is given the same chances as everyone else	The way in which the world must be changed to allow one or more person to benefit while the rest are left behind and are not given the same chances as everybody else to better themselves

Theme three is about the changes that would have to take place in the world in order to make the world fair and ensure that everybody enjoyed the same benefits. The inclusion criteria include that all people must be given the same chances and some not benefit ahead of others. This also relates to the greater good of the country and not to selfish reasons. I used the colour purple that represent royalty. This reminded me of the implementation of social justice in schools where everyone can be equal.

Theme four is represented by the colour yellow as this bright colour represent danger if the laws is not obeyed. This yellow theme includes political actions that are unlawful and suggestions on how to solve the problems in the country caused by criminal offences.

Table 4.5 Theme 4 and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion

Theme 4		
Uphold laws of the country		
Sub-themes:	Inclusion criteria:	Exclusion criteria:
Disapproval of murder, stealing or any criminal acts	Actions that end lives or damage people's property	Actions that include physical harm that does not end a person's live or cause damage to property
Punishment for crime	The criminal actions that anyone may commit and be sent to jail for	All the criminal actions that may cause harm but which do not involve a jail sentence All suggestions that criminals should not go to prison
Disapproval of physical harm to anyone	Actions that cause physical harm or abuse when there is conflict	Actions that do not cause physical harm when there is conflict

Theme four relates to what the learners saw on the television news or what they had experienced in their own lives. This involves people committing crimes that are against the law and, thus, the type of crimes that are punishable by law. The inclusion criteria include physical harm that is inflicted on a person and the punishment that is meted out for the crime. The learners used the word crime to denote any unlawful action that may be taken.

Theme five relates to the public services and the way that the participants would like to change the public services it in order to create a better word with more opportunities. The colour orange

was used to represent this theme because that is the colour of the overalls the people sometimes wear when working with public renovations.

Table 4.6 Theme 5 and the criteria for inclusion and exclusion

Theme 5		
Strengthening public services		
Sub-themes:	Inclusion criteria:	Exclusion criteria:
Upgrade the public services	The desire to change the public services and improve them	The unwillingness to upgrade the public services
Create new public services	Actions to institute new public services in order to create job opportunities or to find a new solution for current problems	Actions to upgrade services for personal reasons and not to benefit the community

Theme five refers to the desire to change the public services in the country in order to improve them and/or to create public services that do not exist at present. However, this is to foster the development of the whole country and not for selfish reasons.

4.6 Themes and sub-themes which emerged

Certain sub-themes emerged from the main themes. These sub-themes describe the meaning of the main themes in greater detail. Every main theme included two or three sub-themes that supported the main themes. All the data from the participants is saved on the CD that is included at the back of the dissertation. Please see Addenda 1 to 3.

4.6.1 Theme 1: Care for the environment

I will begin by discussing the sub-themes under the main theme. This theme refers to the way in which the learners wanted to care for the environment.

Sub-theme 1: Protect nature

The protection of nature is one of the main concerns in South Africa, I asked the groups what they disliked about our country and the first issue that they mentioned was taking care of nature. Rhino poaching was featuring prominently in the news when I conducted my study and all of the groups seemed to be aware of this as they mentioned protecting nature. Some of the participants were very anxious to express their feelings and they were clearly very upset about the rhino poaching situation. I observed that one of the participants almost became furious with me as she tried to convince me of her opinion that the poachers should be thrown into prison and left to die there. When presenting the data from Afrikaans-speaking learners I translated it in English. I refer to participants as P.

‘Dan moet mense hulle gemors optel, vir die padtekens moet luister en nie gemors in die riviere en in die see gooi nie’ (Then they have to pick up their litter, they must obey the road signs and not dump their litter in the rivers or sea) (Group 1 – P1)

‘Ek sou ‘n wet skryf dat hulle moet ophou om renosters dood te maak vir hulle horings. En ophou om water te mos. En olie in die see gooi, dit moet ook op hou, want die diere gaan dood in die see’ (I will make a law to tell people to stop killing rhinos for their horns, they must stop wasting water. They mustn’t dump oil in the sea because the animals in the sea will die) (Group 1 – P3)

‘Sou ek sê dat hulle op moet hou om diere te skiet en daar meer natierwagters moet wees om vir jagters te vang’ (I would say that they must stop shooting animals and that there must be more conservationists to catch the hunters) (Group 1 – P4)

‘Hulle mag nie bome afkap nie’ (They may not chop down trees) (Group 1 – P6)

‘Die ronosters se hoorings moet nie weg wees nie! Ons olifante moenie gejag word nie! Zulus moenie jag nie’ (The rhino’s horns mustn’t be gone. The elephants mustn’t be hunted. Zulus mustn’t hunt) (Group 2 – P16)

‘Ons moet nie die bome af saag nie’ (We must not cut down the trees) (Group 2 – P4)

The learners was very motivated to discuss this topic and were very informed on the subject of conservation. They mentioned four different areas of conservation:

- To obey the traffic rules that are intended to protect people and animals.
- To protect the trees which provide oxygen.
- To conserve the animals for the next generation.
- To look after our marine world and protect the life in the sea.

During this session I observed that the learners were strongly motivated to protect our country and to ensure that our natural heritage is protected and kept alive.

It emerged from the field notes (Group 1 – P 1) that the participants had much that was good to say about the beauty of the country. They mentioned the greenness, the flowers and trees and they were clearly proud of the flag and of the president.

Unfortunately the beauty of the country is destroyed by people who make no effort to protect it and do not care about destroying it. . Animal poaching, including rhino and elephant poaching, was one of the first topics that the learners attend to. The participant also mentioned that Zulus should not hunt. When I asked the participant what he meant by this he said that the Zulus in the old days had hunted lots of the animals and that a few wild animals only were left in the country. Participant 4 also indicated that “We must not cut down the trees”, thus expressing the urgent need to protect trees. There are many uses for trees, including using the wood to make paper products and wooden furniture, while tress also provide the oxygen that is essential for human life. I observed that the participants wanted to provide a clean and healthy environment for people to live in.

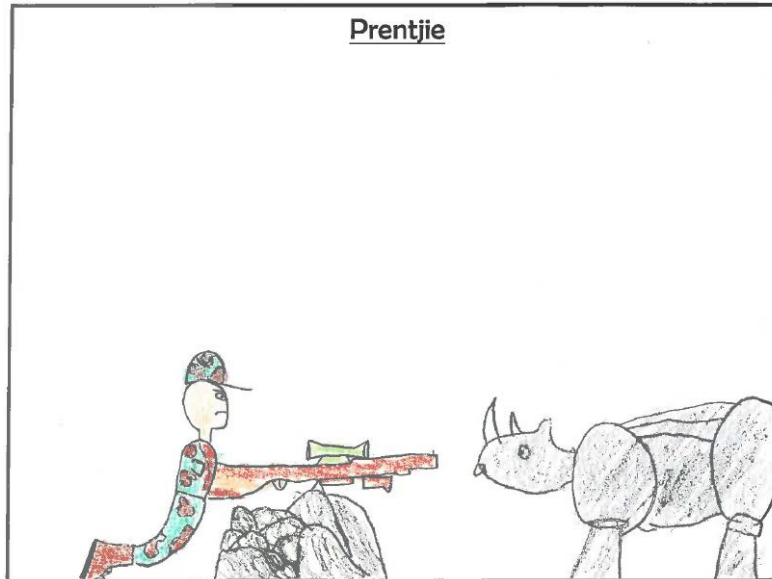


Figure 4.2: Group 1 Participant 4 - Rhinos are being poached

Sub-theme 2: Prevent Pollution

The improvement of our country's nature was of ongoing concern to the learners. The learners had a very clear understanding of the different types of pollution and the damage pollution causes to the earth. The learners also expressed grave concern about the causes of pollution, especially with regard to situations in which people are doing nothing about the pollution.

One of the subjects that was highlighted in every group was the issue of littering and keeping our country clean. The learners were very aware of this issue and also of the image that we present to the rest of the world (Group 2 - Participant 12). The learners were very proud of their country and they were thrilled to be citizens of South Africa. The participants also had much to say about the beauty of our country. All the groups demonstrated a remarkable Christian perspective on how the world had been created and how we must take care of it.

'Ek sal besoedeling minder maak' (*I wil ensure less pollution*) (Group 1 – P2)

'Ek sou maak dat die bote op die see eksta sterk is en seker maak dat daar nie olie in is nie, en ook nie petrol nie maar dat dit op lug loop. Die karre gaan nie meer rook uitlaat

nie, maar lug en hulle gaan nie petrol gebruik nie maar lug' (*I would make the boats on the sea stronger and ensure that there is no oil in them and that they work on air. The cars will not produce smoke but air and will not use petrol but will use air*) (Group 1 – P6)

'Meer asblike en meer veers' (*More dustbins and more people to sweep the streets*) (Group 1 – P10)

'Ek sal as ek die president is sal ek lat die land skoon bly en die skoole moet papiere op tel. (*I will, if I were president, ensure that the country is clean and that schools must pick up paper.*) (Group 2 – P4)

'Die reël is die eerste reël wat ek skryf hulle papiere op die grond gooi nie' (*The first rule I will make is that they may not throw their papers on the ground*) (Group 2 – P9)

'Hule moet die wereld skoon hou, en papiere optel' (*They must keep the world clean and pick up their litter*) (Group 2 – P10, 17, 18, 19, 21 and 24)

'Wil ek die wêreld skoon hê. Want as die mense van ander lande kom dan sê hulle hierdie land is so vuil. Ek wil hê die mense moet sê ons land is die skoonste. Ek wil die gras en die bome moet groen wees' (*I want the world to be clean because, if people from other countries come to visit us, then they say our land is dirty. I want our country to be the cleanest. I want the grass and the trees to be green*) (Group 2 – P12)

'I want every one to stop leatering' (Group 3 – P3, P6, P7, P10, P13, P22, P23 and P31)

'Do not lettey, please people' (Group 3 – P5)

'I will tell they not to cleatring' (Group 3 – P9 and P16)

The learners came up with some creative solutions to the problem of pollution in the country. Participant 6 of group 1 suggested that all boats and cars must use air. This would produce fresh air instead of air pollution or oil that leaks out into the sea. Participant 6 of group 1 suggested that, instead of all the fumes that pollute our air when we use cars or boats, all the cars and boats should use clean air as this would keep the air clean. The participants indicated that they wanted to improve the undesirable state in which we live, not only for themselves but also for the greater good of the country and the safety of all people (Field notes Group 1 p. 1–2).

Participant 4 of group 2 suggested that, as a solution to the problem of litter, the children in schools should pick up the paper that is lying around in the streets. This participant also suggested that people must also care for the trees. Participant 5 from group 3 almost cried out for help, pleading the people not to litter. I observed that the participants were very concerned about bigger issues that affected them personally instead of the care and protection of nature. Participant 9 from group 2 stated that he would banish littering rule but maintained that this was the first rule that he would implement if he were the president. Participant 12 wanted to be proud of the country and want to create a good image of the country for the tourists. The participants were aware of neatness and beauty and, thus, that no one should litter and that everybody should strive to keep the world clean. The other solution to the littering problem that was suggested involved creating more job opportunities and employing more public workers to clean up the streets as well as putting out more dustbins.

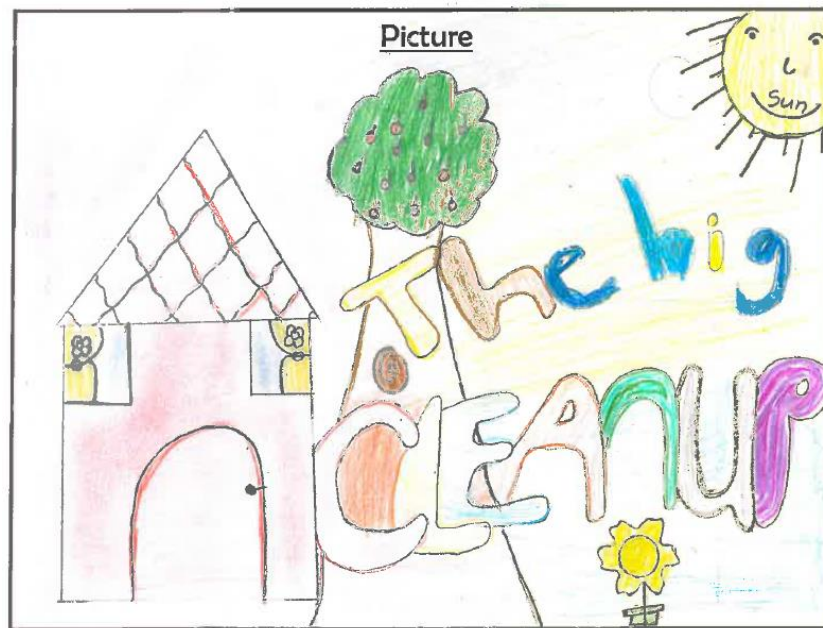


Figure 4.3: Group 3 Participant 9 – The big clean up

4.6.2 Theme 2: Pursue positive behaviour

Sub –theme 1: Practise good manners and caring for others

The groups was all well-mannered and demonstrated good behaviour and caring for each other in a unique way by giving each other a turn to state their own opinion. They maintained that people should live in peace together, stating that people should be fair and be happy with what they have. Many of the learners in all of the groups stressed the importance of giving poor people houses, not only for the security that would provide but also wanted to create a family atmosphere. The groups were diverse and although some of the learners were from good, healthy homes, others were from broken families or even orphanages. All the learners expressed the same desire that everybody should belong to a happy family.

‘Dat hulle lief met mekaar moet wees, eerlik in die hof en bevooreg wees wat jy het’

(They must love each other, be honest in court and feel privileged for what you have)

(Group 1 – P1)

‘Ek sou ‘n regverdige president wees. Ek sou die bedelaars hul eie eiendom gee, ek sou vir die bedelaars klere gee’

(I would be a fair president. I would give the beggars their own property and I would give them clothes)

‘Mens mag nie lelike goed oor swart mense sê nie’

(You may not say bad things about black people)

‘Ek sou gesê het hulle [ryk mense] moet vir die mense huise gee’

(I would say that they [rich people] must give houses to the poor people)

‘Ek sou ‘n groot huis bou met 20 kamers en ek sal vir die arem mense kos en water gee’

(I would build a big house with 20 rooms and give the poor people food and water)

(Group 2 – P5)

‘Ek sal vir die arem mense bly plek gee’

(I will give the poor people a place to live)

‘Ek sou die arme mense wat op die strad was sal ek vir hulle ammal baie geld gee en vir

hulle kos gekoop het en ‘n huis gebou het met baie kamers en klere met ‘n swembad in’

would give money to all the poor people who live on the street, and I will buy them food and I will build them a house with lots of rooms and I will give them clothes and a swimming pool (Group 2 – P8 and P23)

‘My vrou sou die [arm] mense op pas en ek sou huise bou. Ek sou vinnig gesê julle moet gou bou’ (*My wife will look after the [poor] people and I would build houses. I would tell them to build fast*) (Group 2 – P9)

‘Ons president is ook ‘n goeie prisedent en dis ykop Zuma’ (*Our president is also a good president and he is Jacob Zuma*) (Group 2 – P17)

‘Ek sal vir die mense se om nie lui te wees nie’ (*I will tell the people not to be lazy*) (Group 2 – P18)

‘I don’t want to be fat. I would look at a distance. I would be thin. I love my town’ (Group 3 – P1)

‘I was going to learn to buid houses. And make people houses that they cannot be poor. I wood give poor people blanketets. Residents must try to help all the poor people’ (Group 3 – P2 and P17)

‘I want every one to gev pore people some money’ (Group 3 – P3, P10, P11 and P19)

‘No more bad manners’ (Group 3 – P6)

‘Also lisen to your mothers and father. You must lisen to your teacher. Or an adlit’ (Group 3 – P18)

‘I would love the pepole’ (Group 3 – P19)

‘No thisresecting [disrespecting] pepole’ (Group 3 – P24)

‘I would buy people houses’ (Group 3 – P26 and P30)

‘I would change the world by helping my parents and people in South Africa. I will help people cross the street that who are blind. I could feed people who are blind. I love my beautiful South Africa country. I love help people’ (Group 3 – P31)

Most of the learners wanted to care for the whole country, to make it a good place in which to live and to put everyone on the same level. However, participant 1 in group 3 stated that he

would first look after himself before he would care for the rest of the country. Participant 1 in group 3 stated that he would look at the country from a distance, he did not want to get involved in politics and he wanted to enjoy his position with his house and car. In contrast, participant 15 from group 3 expressed the desire to make the whole world a safe place – a place where everybody could be happy.

One of the other issues that the participants discussed was the issue of rich and poor. They felt that it was obviously unfair if some people were rich and some people poor but did not know how to solve this problem. Participant 7 in group 1 could not find a solution to the problem so he suggested that the rich people should not make fun of the poor people because they are poor. Most of the participants suggested that rich people should give their money to the poor people so that the poor people could be rich as well. Group 2 suggested creating a place where they would either erect buildings for the poor or one building with lots of rooms so that everyone could live together while others wanted to give the poor people food or money. I observed that the learners in this group demonstrated a remarkable sense of caring for the weaker people in the country and believed that these weaker people should be helped first.

In a discussion with group 1 the issue of racism was raised. The learners were intensely aware of the fact that all people are the same and that you may not be haughty with people from another culture. The children believed that all cultures should respect each other and that people must accept every person for the way that person is. The learners were also aware that it was not acceptable to make jokes about other cultures or say anything negative about people who are different in any way.

Participant 17 stated that he liked the president and that he was a good president. I asked the learner why he had said this and he answered that Zuma was like Mandela and Mandela had been a good president because he had cared for everybody. Participants 6, 18 and 24 from group 3 emphasised the importance of respecting people who appointed over you, such as teachers. I noticed that the learners respect the people whom they could trust and that they relied on the people who made a difference in their lives.



Figure 4.4: Group 2 Participant 8 – Caring for others

Sub-theme 2: Discourage bad habits such as fighting, smoking and drinking

The bad habits that the participants mentioned included bad manners and causing harm to others intentionally. With regard to this sub-theme, the diversity of the groups clearly had an effect on the discussions. The participants in group 1 express little concern about fighting, smoking or drinking because such activities were not part of their everyday lives whereas the participants in group 2 did express some concern about these bad habits. However, the participants in group 3 were very concerned about such bad habits because they were confronted with them on a regular basis.

Discouraging bad habits was one of the main points of discussion in group 3 as the learners in this group were able to relate to the subject of domestic violence. They described in detail how people within or outside of their households fought and how they often could not sleep because of people fighting (Participant 11 – group 3). The learners explained that most of the fights started when people swore and that, after a while, they would start to hit one other and then throw stones.

'Ek sou sê dat die rykes nie moet spog nie, want hulle maak die armes hartseer' (*I would say that the rich people must not brag because they make the poor people sad*) (Group 1 – P7)

'Ek wens ek kon die mense stop lat beklei en te stop te vloek' (*I wish that I could stop the people fighting and stop them swearing*) (Group 2 – P2, P10, P11, P14, P15, P19, P22 and P24)

'Sal ek vir die mense sê dat hulle nie mag vloek, steel en doot maak nie. Ek sal vir hulle sê dat hulle lief vir mekaar moet wees' (*I would tell people not to curse, steal or kill other people. I would say that they must love each other*) (Group 2 – P6)

'En ek sal sê die mense moet nie klippe gooi nie' (*I will tell the people not to throw stones*) (Group 2 – P12)

'Yo must not smokk at home are (or) any wear. No drinkkin at home are (or) any wear' (Group 3 – P4)

'No smoking. Don't be drinking beer people. Respect your perant. Don't keep staff that is not yours' (Group 3 – P5 and P10)

'Don't drink and drive you may be killed' (Group 3 – P9, P16 and P23)

'No smoking or drinking' (Group 3 – P10, P11, P13, P16, P17, P22 P23 and P24)

'No fitting [fighting]' (Group 3 – P4, P12, P16, P20, P26, P27 and P30)

'No swering to peopels' (Group 3 – P12, P16 and P23)

'No booling [bullying]. (Group 3 – P12, P13 and P18)

'No lieing' (Group 3 – P13)

'No playing with knife' (Group 3 – P32)

It learners clearly felt that making fun of people was a bad habit and that people should not be unkind to others who were less fortunate than they were. I observed that participant 7 from group 1 had realised that you cannot give money to poor people in order to give them a chance to prosper, and, so, he recommended that, whenever person is blessed with prosperity, the person

should be humble about their good fortune and not brag about it to enable the poor people to feel better about themselves. One participant described to me how her mother swore but said that she would stand up to her mother and tell her that swearing was wrong. Her mother would then apologise. The participant stated that it was wrong to swear, especially in front of children (Field notes Group 2 p. 2).

Smoking, drinking and fighting were the main topics we discussed under this sub-theme. The participants stressed the dangers of smoking and drinking. The field notes (Group 3 p. 1–2) recorded how the learners had described in detail how fighting and drinking would often result in people committing horrible acts such as burning down houses or subjecting children to domestic violence. Although smoking and drinking are not crimes per se, they were often the cause of behaviour that could result in imprisonment.



Figure 4.5: Group 3 Participant 10 – We must not drink

Sub-theme 3: Being religious or practising religion

The participants in group 1 were from a Christian school where Christianity was taught as a school subject. The school encouraged the Christianity and taught the learners about Christianity on a daily basis. The other two groups were from public schools where Christianity was not taught as a school subject. Some of the participants were religious where others did not care about religion.

When I observed the groups I observed that Group 2 was well informed about Christianity. Every morning while I waited to start the session, the teacher would first pray with the learners and give them a message out of the Bible for the day. The learners were aware of the belief that God had created the earth and that it is incumbent on the people to take care of it. They believed that, if Jesus were in your life, things would change for the good.

'Ek sal die kerke meer maak' (I will make more churches) (Group 1 – P2)

'Ek sal vir 'n mens sê dat jy sê die mense die 10 geboeie by kom. Hulle moet vir Jesus gloo en elke aand bebel lees en bit voor hulle gaan slaap' (I will say that the people must comply with the 10 commandments. They must believe in Jesus and they must read the Bible and pray every night before they go to bed) (Group 2 – P10)

'Ek wil die gras en bome moet groen wees. Want dit is hoe god dit wil hê dit moet wees' (I want the grass and trees to be green. Because that is how God would want it to be) (Group 2 – P12)

'All ways go to church' (Group 3 – P23)

'Pray evrey day' (Group3 – P12)

Attending church meant that people learnt how to behave and they learnt about good and evil. The participant from group 1 wanted to build more churches in the hope that people would then go to church more often and make religion a part of their everyday lives. If people accepted religion into their lives they would live good lives and make an effort not to sin. This, in turn, would make the world a better place. The solution of building more churches would not necessarily solve the problem that people will go more often to church, although the idea was that the people should live better lives.

Participant 10 from group 2 mentioned that one should obey keep the 10 commandments as the 10 commandments are a set of rules that ensure a good lifestyle in terms of which one attends church, respects one's parents, does not kill, does not get divorced, does not steal, does not lie and does not desire things that are not yours. In addition, one must be faithful to the Lord and not misuse His name. The participant further stated that everybody should believe in Jesus, pray

and read the Bible before going to bed. I noticed that the learners advocated implementing a system of religious in the country as this would ensure that people would be good and obey the basic laws of Christianity. This, in turn, would result in a world in which people did not sin and they behaved in a good way.

4.6.3 Theme 3: Making the world fair

Sub-theme 1: Make everyone equal

Nobody wants to be poor, everybody wants their basic needs to be satisfied and most people would like some extra money to spend on the things that they want. Unfortunately, however, this is not the situation anywhere in the world. Although justice involves striving to ensure that everyone is equal it is not possible to give everybody exactly the same opportunities. I observed the desire to make everyone happy so that everybody may live in peace in the various groups. The learners had a simple perspective on how happiness and love should prevail in the country.

‘Ek sal die armes en die rykes ewe ryk maak’ (*I will make the poor and the rich both equally rich*) (Group 1 – P2)

‘Almal moet ewe veel geld hê’ (*Everybody must have the same amount of money*) (Group 1 - P9)

‘Ek sou ammal gehelp het as ek president ge was het’ (*I would help everybody if I were president*) (Group 2 – P8)

‘Ek sou dat die hele wereld bly wees’ (*I would make everybody happy*) (Group 2 – P11)

‘Mandela was ons president hy tot freedom to geloop. Dat ons almal freedom in ons country kan hê’ (*Mandela was our president – he walked to freedom so that everybody in the country could have freedom*) (Group 2 – P22)

‘I was going to bliud hoses and give poor people money and buy for them food, and they can live with me and my kids and all the poor kids and buy food and they will sleep on the bed with my kids. I like liveing with poor people and my famile and live as famile and care about each other and love each other’ (Group 3 – P14)

‘I would change the ruls for everyone. The rules was going to be. Everyone must get food

everyone must get moeny and house. I was going to be nice to everybody that is poor. If some pepol don't have some money I will give them money' (Group 3 – P19)

Participants 2 and 9 from group 1 wanted to establish social justice by suggesting equal amounts of money for everybody. Participant 2 focused on the fact that everybody should be rich so that everybody would have the same opportunities with the money they had while participant 9 merely expressed the view that everybody should have the same amount of money. In other words, this learner was suggesting the communist approach in terms of which the rich give their money to poor people so that everybody may have the same amount of money.

One of the learners stated that it was unfair when some children were able to sleep on beds while others were forced to sleep on the ground (Field notes Group 3 p. 3). I noted that some of the learners from different groups came from poor households and that sometimes their basic human rights were not being fulfilled. This was, thus, the reason why they wanted everything to be equal.

Participant 8 from group 2 stated that he would help everybody in the country without regard for either colour or race, maintaining that everybody is entitled to the same treatment in order to be happy. Participant 22 from group 2 displayed a deeper political insight into the history of South Africa as compared to the other participants. He mentioned the fact that there had been apartheid in the country and that Mandela had been the first president of the democracy that had changed our country, bringing freedom to all the people.

Participant 14 from group 3 suggested that he would take all the poor people into his own house so that they could sleep on beds with his children. Many of the learners in this group addressed the issue of sleeping on a bed and having their own bed which they would not need to share. According to Participant 19 from group 3, the rules of the country must be changed so that everyone receives food, money and a house – basic needs.



Figure 4.6: Group 2 Participant 22 – Mandela, the first step to equality

Sub-theme 2: Change the world to create social justice

Under this sub-theme the learners discussed the differences in colour for the first time. The participants were all of the opinion that skin colour should not make a difference in the way in which you behave towards people. Establishing social justice in a country involves integrating policy and practice. Although there are many ways in which to establish equity and equality not all of them are practically feasible.

The moment that someone expressing wanting to change the course of the country in order to create social justice means that this person is thinking one step ahead of the majority of the people. It is also an honourable deed as it means that the person is thinking of the greater good of the country instead of thinking of him/herself.

‘Swart mense en wit mense moet nie lelik met mekaar wees nie’ (*Black people and white people must not be nasty to each other*) (Field notes Group 1 p. 2)

‘Ek sal omgee vir my land en vir die mense. Ek sal vir my land werk gee om te doen. Almal wat nie werk het nie, sodat almal kan geld verdien. Die land moet nie arm wees nie want dit gaan nie lekker wees nie’ (*I will care for my country and for the people. I will*

give work to the people so that everybody can earn money. The country must not be poor because that is not nice (Group 2 – P13)

'As ek president was sou ek skool ver ander het want ek dink dis goed. Almal moet dieselfde klas kry met skryfgoed' (*If I were president I would change schools because I think that would be good. Everybody must get the same type of classroom with stationary*) (Group 2 – P17)

'Ons moet saam werk elkeer. Die kinders moet skool toe gaan in die week. Die groot mens moet werk' (*We must work together. The children must go to school in the week and the adults must work*) (Group 2 – P24)

'Teach children how to read books. All the children must learn to read because there are some children who cannot read and then they cannot be smart' (Group 3 – P2)

'I want everyone to go to school. I want everyone to be the best' (Group 3 – P3)

'Children always go to school' (Group 3 – P23)

'I would change person that burns peoples houses. I want to be a cop too' (Group 3 – P26)

Black and white people should not discriminate against each other with all the learners expressing the view that everyone must receive the same treatment no matter their skin colour. They also stated that white people should be kind towards black people because it is bad to brag about the privileges that you have and which others do not have.

There were three participants in group 2 who expressed the desire for change in the country. Participant 13 did want to give money to the poor people but, instead, she felt everybody should be given work opportunities as this would mean that everybody would be capable of looking after themselves. It is not acceptable if there are people who are poor. Participants 17 and 24 of group 2 both wanted changes in the school system, stating that everybody should go to school and have the same opportunities in the classroom. All schools should function on the same level and everybody must receive the same educational opportunities.

Participants 3, 23 and 26 from group 3 wanted everybody to go to school so that they could learn how to read and write because, if you are able to read and write, this means you are clever smart and will find a job. It is important that everybody have the opportunity to receive a basic education. Participants 2 and 3 from group 3 were of the opinion that everybody should have the opportunity to build themselves up to the highest level at which all the physical needs, safety needs, needs for love and belonging and needs for self-esteem are met and the need for self-actualisation realised. It is important to be able to read, write and do basic mathematics in order to understand the world in which we are living. Participant 26 from group 3 told me how he had seen people burning down houses. This must have been a traumatic experience for this young participant. This participant wanted to change the people who burn houses to make them better human beings.



Figure 4.7: Group 2 Participant 13 – Create job opportunities

4.6.4 Theme 4: Uphold laws of the country

Sub theme 1: Disapproval of murder, stealing or any other criminal activities

We held a short discussion on the violence in the country. It was clear that the participants were aware of the violence that is rife in our country. Most of them were able to relate to incidences with muggers or burglars who break into people's houses. A few of the learners mention people who are murdered. Some of the participants had been exposed to crime whereas others only know about the criminal offences in the country.

'Hulle moet ophou om bomme in die lande laat otplof. Hulle moet ophou om mense te vermoor' (*They must stop bombing the country and they must stop murdering people*)
(Class 1 – P3)

'Het ek gesê dat daar geen geweer mag gebruik word nie. Mense mag nie mekaar jaag met gewere nie' (*Then I would say that you may not use a gun and people may not chase each other with guns*) (Class 1 – P12)

'Ek wil graag hê dat hulle nie moet steel nie. Hulle moet nie kinders doodmaak nie. Hulle moenie mekaar slaai nie' (*I don't want them to rob. They must not kill children. They must not hit each other*) (Group 2 – P2 and P12)

'Ek sal ook kyk lat die mense op ho mense roof. Ek sal ook ge lat die mense op ho giweeri sket' (*I would stop people robbing each other. I will also ensure that people don't fire guns*) (Group 2 – P15)

'No stealing money from childin and adults' (Group 3 – P4)

'No killining peppol' (Group 3 – P4, P5, P6, P11, P12, P13, P15, P17, P18, P24 and P32)

'No takking stuff that is not yours' (Group 3 – P4, P5, P6, P9, P11, P13, P16, P18, P20, P23 and P32)

'No braking in ather peppols houses' (Group 3 – P4, P6)

'No stealing from the shops' (Group 3 – P4, P6)

'No stealing money from banks' (Group 3 – P6, P13, P24)

‘I will lach [catch] all the dugadiks [drugadicts]’ (Group 3 – P7, P13, P15)

‘You must not talk to someone you don’t know’ (Group 3 – P9)

‘No string [striking]’ (Group 3 – P11 and 21)

‘No browning [burning] peopels house’ (Group 3 – P12)

‘No shoot’ (Group 3 – P13)

‘You must not kill children’ (Group 3 – P17)

‘I will say no criminals allowed in country’ (Group 3 – P25)

‘I will change the straking rules. You may not strike, people get hurt’ (Group 3 – P26)

‘No killing police’ (Group 3 – P32)

One of the participants mentioned the bombing that happens in the country and in the world. The participants were upset about the innocent people who die and could not understand why people would commit such horrific crimes as murder. Participant 12 from group 1 wanted to get rid of all the guns in the country as that would mean that no one could shoot anybody/thing and, thus, everybody would be safe. I observed that some of the participants were isolated from the vicious murders and violence in the country. The participants wanted to create peace in the country in order to prevent crime.

Shoplifting was one of the other aspects that we discussed. Some of the learners were able to describe in detail how to take something from a shop but stated that you should not do this because, if you were caught, you could go to prison. Participant 6 from group 3 elaborated further, stating that you may not steal money from the bank. This would include armed robbery. It was also interesting that the learners used the word “stealing” for more serious crimes such as shoplifting or breaking into houses but would rather use the word “take” when it came to lesser crimes such as taking someone’s pencil or money from your mother’s purse. It was clear that taking something did not constitute a serious crime but that stealing something was a crime.



Figure 4.8: Group 3 Participant 18 – Disapproval of murder

Sub-theme 2: Punishment for crime

The discussion on punishment for crime and criminals had political overtones. The learners expressed the view that the criminals must be punished for their crimes and that different methods of punishment should apply to different crimes. There was a fine line between the crimes for which you may be sentenced to go to prison and crimes you commit without going to prison. The learners were very aware of the different types of crimes that warranted a jail sentence.

‘Ek sou Malema afdank, want hy maak slegte besluite’ (I would fire Malema because he makes bad decisions) (Group 1 – P5)

‘En ek sou die diewens swaar straf’ (And I would punish the thieves) (Group 1 – P6)

‘Die poeliesie moet die skelms vang en in die tronk laat sit’ (The police must catch the criminals and put them in prison) (Group 2 – P4, P7, P9, P11, P21)

‘I want creanimels to go to prisin’ (Group 3 – P3, P4, P16, P26)

‘No one going to prison because everybody will listen to me and they won’t do bad things’ (Group 3 – P25)

Participant 5 from group 1 revealed a deeper insight into the political happenings in the country as compared to the other participants, revealing a good understanding of the current political situation. The other participants in the group were not able to participate in this discussion.

Five of the participants from group 2 stated that the police should catch the criminals and put them in prison. People who do not want to obey the law should be punished for their crimes. The field notes also highlighted the fact that the participants were against crime and that criminals should go to prison.

Participant 25 from group 3 demonstrated a sound belief in himself as president, stating that he would be such a good president that everybody would listen to him and that there would be no need for anyone to go to prison because everybody would be listening to him. I noticed that the world of the learners was limited and that they did not always realise the magnitude of what being a president entailed.

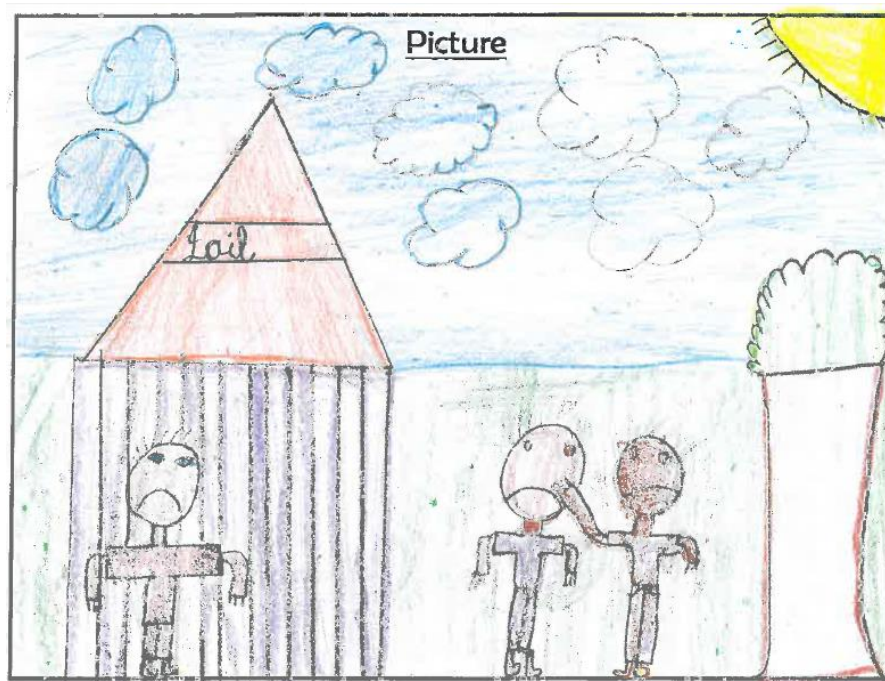


Figure 4.9: Group 3 Participant – Going to jail for crime

Sub-theme 3: Disapproval of physical harm to anyone

Some of the participants in this group had experienced physical harm either to themselves or to someone they knew. The participants were very aware of the fact that children must be kept safe from physical harm especially because they are innocent.

'Ons kinders word dood gemaak. Ons word geroof en ons kinders is geryp' (Our children are killed. We are robbed and our children are raped) (Group 2 – P22)

'No cidnappingin childrin' (Group 3 – P4, P6, P9, P13)

'You must not go with someone you don't know them. Childrens must not go alone because they will kill your childrens. And I will tell you girls you must not go at night' (Group 3 – P8)

'I would say no child abusing' (Group 3 – P16, P18)

'No rabing [raping]' (Group 3 – P24)

Participant 22 from group 2 made a statement in order to protect the children of the country. "Our children are killed" Many children suffer the consequences of crime in the country – in some cases the children were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time and, in other cases, they are the victims of domestic violence. This participant also mentioned that the issue of rape. The rape statistics in South Africa are very high although many incidences of rape are not even reported. The participants were particularly sensitive about the issue of violence against children because children are vulnerable and, in many cases, are not able to protect themselves against the crimes.

Participant 8 from group 3 stated specifically that girls should not go out at night. Many children in South Africa are the victims of kidnapping which then leads to either physical or sexual abuse or both. The learners from group 3 could not say enough about how to be safe and take care of yourself.

4.6.5 Theme 5: Strengthening public services

Sub-theme 1: Upgrading public services

The participants held intense discussions about the state of the roads in South Africa and were clearly very concerned about the number of accidents that happen on a daily basis, the number of potholes in the roads as well as the air pollution that is so harmful to the environment. The participants had an issue with innocent people who died because of the lack of public services as these deaths could be prevented and it is not necessary for people to die.

‘Sou ek die paaie beter maak en die hospitale beter maak’ (I would make better roads and better hospitals) (Group 1 – P2)

‘Protect the people’ (Group 3 – P17)

‘I will change all schools. I will change all hospitals to make it better’ (Group 3 – P25)

Participant 2 from group 1 was very concerned about the state of the public hospitals in the country. The participants had heard stories about the lack of doctors on duty and also about the low level of medical care. Many of the participants in the study had had personal experience of this issue and wanted everybody to have access to good medical care.

The participants expressed the need to protect people and to create better services for the protection of citizens. Participant 25 from group 3 want to improve both schools and hospitals. The poor conditions in some government services must change and participants wanted to make the services better.

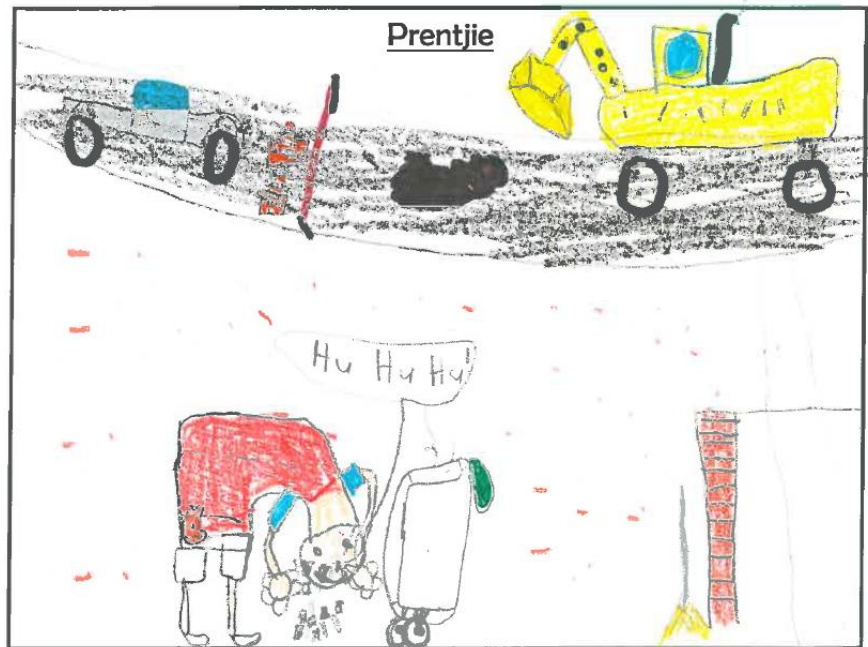


Figure 4.10: Group 1 Participant 10 – Fixing the potholes in the road

Sub-theme 2: Create new public services

It is one thing to demand better public services but the participants went to the next level, expressing own their ideas on how to improve the public services. For example, they suggested creating new public services. They did not discuss this matter in any depth but they did want to make some changes.

‘Ek sou al die fabriek laat afbreek en plekke maak waar hulle die goed self kan maak’ (I would break down all the factories and build make places where people can make the stuff themselves) (Class 1 – P6)

‘Dit is baie sleg as olie in die see in loop. Dit gaan in ‘n lee dam loop en daar gaan ‘n net oor wes’ (It is very bad for oil to spill into the sea. It’s going to flow into an empty dam and there will be a net over) (Class 1 – P8)

‘Ek sou polisie op elke straathoek sit sodat hulle al die dieve kan vang’ (I would put police services on every street corner so that they can catch the thieves) (field notes Group 1 p. 1)

‘ek sou vir hulle [arm mense] ook ‘n werk gegee het as hulle vir werk soek’ (I would give them [poor people] work if they want work) (Group 2 – P8)

‘Ek wil ‘n poeliesie wees en ek kan vir die dief van. Dan sit ek die dief in die tork in. Dan gee die gld trig’ (I want to be a police officer so that I can catch the thieves. I will put the thief in prison and give the money back) (Group 2 – P3)

‘I want people to have jobs. I want people to have money at work’ (Group 3 – P3)

‘If I were president I was going maic [make] new school. I will make new cars. I will make new shops’ (Group 3 – P21)

‘make a soccer city and make a park, for people to have fun together’ (Group 3 – P30)

With regard to making the country a better place, participant 6 from group 1 suggested demolishing all the existing factories in order to prevent pollution. Instead of factories people would make handmade items, thus ensuring both job opportunities as well as the active involvement of the people in building up the country. Another issue mentioned was the pollution with oil leaking into the sea. Participant 8 from group 1 wanted to build a separate place in to which the dirty, oily water could flow. He would ensure that people would not get hurt by placing a net over this place into which the oily was flowing.

Another issue was that of a safer environment with police officers on every street corner. This participant not only wanted to create job opportunities but also ensure a safe and crime free environment (Field notes Group 1 p. 1). Participant 3 from group 2 wanted to administer the law himself by becoming a police officer so that he could catch the criminals himself and ensure that they were sent to prison. He would also be fair and give the stolen goods back to their rightful owners.

Participant 8 from group 2 would find work for the poor people, thus ensuring that they would be able to provide for themselves and for their families. Participant 3 from group 3 explained that, although his mother had a job, she was not paid on a regular basis and she sometimes had to work long hours. It is a privilege to have a job in South Africa and there are a millions of people in South Africa who are unemployed. This participant did not want to give money to the poor

people but, instead, she wanted to give people the opportunity to build themselves up, have a job and earn money. This, in turn, would result in a stable economy. This type of action would solve many problems in South Africa. This participant was thinking past the obvious and, instead of giving away money, she wanted to create an environment in which every citizen could benefit. Participant 30 want to create a place of fun for people – a place could everybody can go to enjoy themselves.

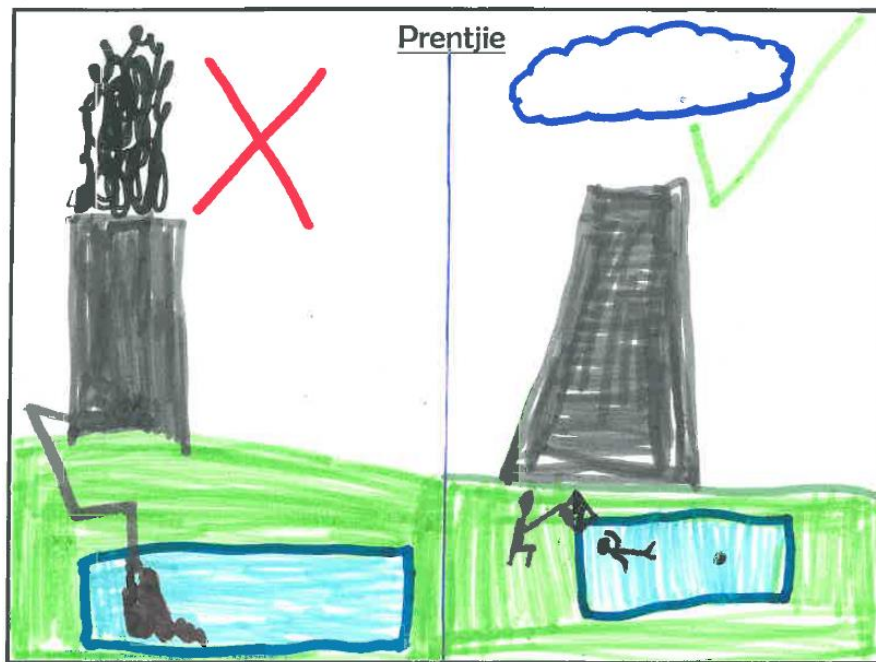


Figure 4.11: Group 1 Participant 9 – Stop pollution and create a public service

4.7 Comparison between the different groups

There was immense diversity between the groups and every group focused on different aspects during the focus group interviews. I will briefly discuss each group in order to describe the main focus of each group. Thereafter I highlighted the similarities and differences between the groups.

4.7.1 Group 1

This first group was from a private Christian school. This group focused in general on issues that involved the conservation of nature and the upgrading of the public services. The

participants were clearly isolated from vicious crimes and violence. The participants came from good, stable homes and they had not been exposed to all the negative aspects of the world.

4.7.2 Group 2

The second group I visited was a very diverse group. While I was conducting the study I realised that the learners in this group did not have much in common in terms of their backgrounds. Some of the learners came from good, stable homes, some came from single-parent homes and some were from an orphanage, while still others lived with family members. The answers of some of the learners in this group demonstrated their relatively protected existence, while the answers given by others clearly demonstrated that the children had been exposed to violence and/or abuse. The discussions with this group were amazing. Although I constantly tried to lead this group into a serious discussion it was as if they were still innocent in a sense and they wanted to see only the good things in life.

4.7.3 Group 3

When I conducted the focus group interviews with this group I was able to instantly recognise which of the learners came from the townships and which lived in the urban areas. This class comprised black learners only. They all had their own opinions and were prepared to speak their minds rather than follow the group. Some of the learners come from very poor households and, when I asked them informally what they would do if they were president, they all started off with material items such as a car, a house, a swimming pool and a wife.

The first or home language of these learners was not English and they struggled to write without spelling mistakes.

4.7.4 The similarities between the groups

The groups had each their own unique focus. The first group focused mainly on nature conservation while the second group focused mainly on the issue of good and bad manners. It was evident from their contributions that many of the members of this group had been exposed to domestic violence or lesser types of crimes. The third group held discussions on the serious

crimes such as murder, rape and kidnapping with many of the learners talking from their own experiences with such crimes.

All of the groups discussed the problem of littering and how they would solve this problem. The subject of the rich and poor was also mentioned by each group with all the participants wanting to create equality between the rich and the poor so that everyone would be on the same level. Each group also expressed the view that criminals must go to prison for their crimes.

4.8 Concluding remarks on the main findings

The data from the Grade 3 classes (Groups 1, 2 and 3) who participated in this case study revealed their life experiences on social justice and their understanding of how to make the world an equal place. Exploring the topic of social justice enlightened me as to how the learners wanted to change the world. They suggested the following changes in order to make South Africa a better place:

- Take care of the world, do not chop down trees if it is not necessary and take care of the animals that live in our country. Overall make sure that South Africa is a pleasant and beautiful country in which to live.
- Do not litter and be alert to the things may can make our country an unhealthy or unpleasant place in which to live.
- Ensure that the public services in the country work as they should, including the infrastructure and the public facilities such as the hospitals.
- Everybody should have the opportunity to have a job in order to be able to provide for themselves and their families.
- It is important to look after the poor people in the country. However, merely giving them money is not the only solution.
- It is essential to live in peace together as, when people fight with each other, this may cause harm to others.

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- Criminals should be behind bars and no harm should come to anybody, especially the children.
 - Do not take something that is not yours.
 - Children should be protected and they should also protect themselves against kidnappers.
 - Smoking and drinking are bad habits that may also harm others. It is important to stay healthy.
 - Everybody should have the opportunity of basic education in order to learn how to read and write.
 - It is important not to discriminate against anybody on the grounds of their beliefs or differences.

The Grade 3 learners of the multiple case study were excited to act to as a president. They stated that they would be willing to take responsibility for the country in order to make it a better place in which to live, expressing, in an imaginative way, their feelings and understandings as regards how they would change South Africa. Irrespective of the commitment of these learners to changing the democracy their desire to ensure a sustainable future for South Africa was clearly noticeable. They were excited to participate as they felt that their voices may be heard, thus enabling them to make a difference.

I presented the empirical data in this chapter in terms of the three different groups. Data from the groups contained ideas that represented the changes that should be made in order to create an equal and just world in which social justice would prevail. The groups all expressed the same desire to change the current situation in South Africa in order to secure a better future for themselves. I investigated the groups closely in order to come to a profound understanding of how the learners in different schools experienced social justice. Chapter 5 presents an account on the learners' understandings of social justice and extend to link between social justice and the curriculum. In Chapter 5 I offer interpretative comments throughout the discussion, using the theoretical framework and relevant literature as a background.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Enhanced understandings of the perceptions and understandings of social justice of the participating learners

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 discussed the findings of the study. This chapter starts with literature control in order to assist me to answer the research questions (Anderson 2007:2). This is followed by a discussion on the limitations of the study as well as the contributions of the study to the existing body of knowledge on social justice as it relates to young children. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research and possibilities for the application of social justice in education in South Africa.

5.2 Literature control applied to the results

The literature control involves the researcher finding a connection between the results of a research project and the relevant literature. Regarding this study, there were both agreements or support as well as disagreements or contradictions between my research results and the existing relevant literature. In Table 5.1 I present the agreements between the results of the study and the existing literature. Agreements imply that the literature correlates with the results of the study. Table 5.2 represent the contradictions between the existing literature and the results of the study.

In addition I present the gaps in the literature that I was able to identify as well as my new insights gained from the results of the study. In section 5.2.4 I explained my support to existing knowledge from my results.

5.2.1 Similarities between the literature and the results from the study

In table 5.1 I present the themes and sub-themes and indicate the similarities between literature and the themes (including sub-themes).

Table 5.1 Themes and the literature similarities

Theme 1		
Caring for the environment		
Sub-themes 1 and 2:		
1. Protect nature. 2. Prevent pollution.		
Author and source	Existing knowledge	Interpretative discussion
Department of Basic Education (2011)	The curriculum states that children should learn to keep their environment clean as well as practise personal hygiene.	The curriculum is implemented in the classrooms and it was clear that the learners knew how to practise personal hygiene.
Department of Basic Education (2011)	Children must learn to keep their environment clean by using bins. They must also practise personal hygiene and take care of themselves and the close environment.	Keeping the country clean was a major concern among the learners and they suggested different techniques for keeping the environment clean.
Human Rights Commission (2011)	Everyone has the right to safe drinking water and sanitation.	The learners reflected on the fact that there is not running

	Environmental pollution may harm the environment.	water in every household in South Africa and, thus, many citizens are forced to draw water from the rivers. Many of the rivers are polluted and the water may cause deadly diseases.
Human Rights Commission (2011)	Children have the right to clothing, nutrition and housing.	The learners reflected on the fact that there are many homeless people in South Africa although the majority of the people do have some kind of house or structure in which they live. Many of the people in South Africa are not able to afford nutritious food.
Youth for Human Rights (2003)	Every child has the right to medicine and medical help in order to ensure basic health.	The participants were aware that the public hospitals provide medical help and many people make use of this services. However, the standard of medical care in these hospitals is not always satisfactory and the hospitals need to be upgraded.
Trumper (2010)	If children wish to address environmental issues in order to create a better future this their real concern about the country.	The participants in the study clearly dreamt of a better life and a better future for themselves and others in their community.

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<p>Theme 2</p> <p>Pursue positive behaviour</p>

Sub themes 1 to 3:

1. Practise good manners and caring for each other.
2. Discourage bad habits such as fighting, smoking and drinking.
3. Being religious or practise religion.

Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretative discussion
Moss & Petrie (1997)	Learners must be free to make their own decisions, independently of outside influences.	The learners were aware of the importance of independent thinking and the right to make their own decisions without outside influence. The participants wanted to be independent of the decisions that adults make.
Giugni (2007)	Anti-bias education includes the process of finding out what young children think about what is fair and unfair and how they assume that relationships between people should be.	The learners were aware of what is fair and unfair. They differentiated between cultures and they realised there are different skin colours.
Brodyk (2010)	Learners explore the world around them in order to make	The learners were interested in the world around them and

	sense of it. They observe and interact with the environment and with the people who are in their lives.	they were curious to find out why things are the way they are. It is the responsibility of the adults in the lives of the learners to instil a positive attitude in them towards different people in their environment as well as towards different cultures.
Giugni (2007)	Culture is formed when individuals live together in a group and their habits and traditions are passed from one generation to the next. These groups are created to enable people to identify with other people.	There are many different cultures in South Africa and also 11 official languages, representing most of the cultures. In the main, the participants were able to speak 2 to 3 different languages and this, in turn, enabled to identify with different cultures.

Theme 3		
Making the world fair		
Sub-themes 1 and 2:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make everyone equal. 2. Change the world in order to create social justice. 		
Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretative discussion
Francis & Le Roux (2011)	Social justice emphasises that	The participants in the study

	all individuals should be treated equally, irrespective of personal differences	all expressed the wish that every person in the country could the same rights and opportunities to enable them to make a success of their own lives.
Francis & Le Roux (2011) Keet & Carolissen (2012)	Teachers are in the position to teach young learners about social justice.	Teachers are among the adults who may make a difference in the lives of young learners by teaching them about social justice and how to implement it in their lives. The learners in the study were eager to learn from their teachers.
Human Rights Commission (2011:50)	Every child has the right to preserve his or her own identity, including his or her nationality, name and family.	The learners in this study wanted to feel that they belonged. Although it is the duty of the parents to ensure that their children are registered as citizens and they create their identity, the learners also expressed the wish to feel they were wanted in the community.
Guigni (2007)	Multiculturalism involves the various identities of all citizens. Individuals have the right to be part of their own cultures.	The learners were all part of their own cultures and they also respected other cultures. However, they did not want to belong to any culture other than their own.

<p>Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2006)</p>	<p>In order to create an equal society there must be an overall upliftment in human rights and social justice</p>	<p>It emerged from the discussions that the learners believed that it is possible to teach social justice to young learners and that they wanted to practise social justice in their lives.</p>
<p>Rawls (1999)</p>	<p>Development of programmes to support the implementation of social justice. The principles underlying these programmes should ensure that everyone should be equal in all facets of society and that everyone is treated in the same way, regardless of their circumstances or position in the society.</p>	<p>My understanding from the data is that it is possible to teach social justice only when there are programmes supporting the implementation of social justice in schools. It is not a concept that will teach itself automatically. The learners were open to new ideas for making everyone equal and giving everyone the same opportunities.</p>
<p>Riddell (2009)</p>	<p>Social justice must be taught from a young age.</p>	<p>I observed that children of a young age are still vulnerable and impressionable and it is, thus, important to teach them social justice from a young age while they are still open to change and before their perceptions have been influenced by the negativity in the world around them.</p>
<p>Goss (2009)</p>	<p>Regardless of the learners'</p>	<p>There was an innate desire in</p>

	<p>circumstances – homelessness, sickness, violence or poverty – all the learners wanted a better world and meaningful social justice and all of them are willing to work for this.</p>	<p>all the participants to strive for a better future for themselves, their families and the country.</p>
<p>Joubert (2007)</p>	<p>The notion of belonging to a country is related to citizenship. Nine-year-old learners are able to understand this and to express themselves as citizens of South Africa. They accept their responsibility in understanding the diversity in the country and living together in harmony.</p>	<p>The participants expressed a sense of belonging to the country. This sense of belonging is linked to their identification of themselves as citizens of the country. The participants were opposed to violence or actions that may harm others. They wanted to live in peace and care for others.</p>
<p>Keet & Carolissen (2012)</p>	<p>Social justice refers to the level of inequality in a society. Inequality in society means that privileges and burdens are unequally distributed among the citizens of the country and either inclusion or exclusion become part of the everyday lives of people.</p>	<p>The study showed that, as citizens, young people want to be actively involved in politics and they are prepared to strive for a better country.</p>

Theme 4

Uphold laws of the country

Sub themes 1 to 3:

1. Disapproval of murder, stealing or any other criminal acts.
2. Punishment for crime.
3. Disapproval of physical harm to anyone.

Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretative discussion
Giugni (2007)	People are able to learn to live together but there will always be groups in society that are treated differently from others and these groups may even be discriminated against.	It was clear from the experiences of the participants that some people are not able to overlook differences in cultures or traditions that conflict with their own culture or traditions.
Department of Arts and Culture (2013)	The implementation of social justice is possible only when citizens work together as a group with the same goals in mind and when they strive to improve the conditions in which they live.	The participants maintained that it is unfair that everybody does not have the same amount of money and that the adverse conditions in which some people live may engender feelings of hatred towards people that have the things that they want. This, in turn, may result in some people committing crimes in order to obtain what they want.

Lansdown (2001)	Parents often hit their children in an effort to impose effective discipline. However, instead of this being a good lesson, the child who is subjected to physical punishment may, in fact, be abused. It is also the right of the child to be protected against all forms of violence.	The participants were concerned about the violence in the country, especially towards children. They wanted children to be safe from physical violence.
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Theme 5		
Strengthening public services		
Sub-themes 1 and 2:		
1. Upgrade public services. 2. Create new public services.		
Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretative discussion
Derman-Sparks & Edwards (2010).	Everybody deserves access to the same resources in order to realise themselves as human beings.	The participants expressed the view that there are still many inequalities in the country where people do not have the same opportunities or access resources to enable them to reach their full potential.
Derman-Sparks & Edwards (2010)	Anti-bias education focuses on the optimum development of learners to help the learners to develop to their full potential	It is clear from the participants that it is not always merely opportunities that are needed to make the country equal; it is

	and to learn to think critically about issues in the country.	also important to <i>create</i> new opportunities.
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5.2.2 Contradictions between the literature and the results from the study

Some of the literature findings did not correlate with the evidence from the study. In Table 5.2 I presents contradictions between relevant existing knowledge and the results from the study which include interpretations of the young participants.

Table 5.2 Themes and literature: Contradictions

Theme 1: Care for the land		
Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretative discussion
Republic of South Africa (2006)	The constitution provides for all the basic needs of a child so that the child may have an equal opportunity in society.	Not all the basic needs of the learners were being met because some of the parents were not able to provide for their children because of an unstable financial income.

Theme 2: Pursue positive behaviour		
Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretative discussion
Giugni (2007)	Learners must be comfortable interacting with a diversity of people, they must become critical thinkers, especially about injustice, and they be able to speak their minds.	The learners in this study were multicultural and they interacted with learners from different cultures. In some cases the learners found it difficult to understand other cultures and they preferred

		their own cultures.
Sorin (2005)	Children may participate in the world by watching it from a safe distance while they make sense of the world around them. In this case it is also the responsibility of the adults to guide them to entering the real world.	The learners wanted to be active citizens in order to feel part of the world in which they lived. By watching from a safe distance they would not be able to explore the world around them.

Theme 3: Making the world fair		
Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretative discussion
Bosu <i>et al.</i> (2010)	African countries face remarkable challenges relating to establishing social justice in the African educational systems.	It emerged from the data that many of the learners were open to change and that the implementation of social justice may start at a young age.
Bosu <i>et al.</i> (2010)	The majority of the problems encountered in the implementation of social justice start at home.	Social justice may be taught at any phase of a child's life. The participants also expressed the view that it is possible to learn equality and fairness from anybody.
Pendlebury & Enslin (2004)	Racism and hate towards people from different cultures are rife in a Third World country such as South Africa.	Racism and hate are still evident in South Africa although the participants, who were not born during the apartheid era, demonstrated

		considerable understanding of different cultures.
Gillborn (2002)	Social justice is a profound concept that will first find its place in a small group before it will spread out to the greater good of an equal society.	The participants believed that social justice should be implemented on a global scale and that the entire country should strive to redress the injustices of the past.

Theme 4: Uphold laws of the country

Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretative discussion
Jerome (2013)	It would appear that adults have little awareness of the security needs of children, except in times of emergency. Nevertheless, children often show signs of insecurity as well as the need to be safe.	The participants expressed that they were vulnerable and they needed to be protected against the violence of the world in which we live. However, the participants not only needed protection in their everyday lives but they also wanted to know that the country is in peace.

Theme 5: Strengthening public services

Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretative discussion
Giugni (2007)	Anti-bias approaches in education must be grounded in early childhood education and	The young learners expressed the need for anti-bias education as a service that is

	implemented in the curriculum.	implemented in the curriculum to enable the children of South Africa to implement social justice from a young age. It is essential that anti-bias approaches be taught at every phase in the schooling.
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5.2.3 Literature and results not stated in literature and new insights

When I conducted the study I found that there were certain gaps in the existing literature in relation to my results on social justice. These results are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Results not stated in the literature

Research gap identified	Findings from this study
There is little evidence in the literature about the feelings of children towards social justice in South Africa.	Adults often want to solve problems their own way but it is sometimes important to listen to the voices of children. Children have simple, yet understandable and logical, ways in terms of what they would do to make the world a better place.
Personal perceptions and feelings of the learners are not always presented in a way how they would make the world a better place.	Children want to be part of the world in which we live. They want for a happy and peaceful country in which everybody is able to enjoy social justice.

Table 5.4 Literature and new insights from the results

I noticed in the study that young learners are eager to learn about the country and to contribute, albeit it in a small way.
The young children suggested some very creative solutions to the problems that we are

experiencing in our country. Children's voices must not be ignored and they must be given the opportunity to express themselves.

Some of the participants had been exposed to violence or had been bystanders when criminal acts had been committed. Nevertheless, none of them wanted bad things to happen in the country.

5.2.4 Supporting existing knowledge regarding social justice from results

Multiculturalism is a worldwide reality that cannot be ignored. In the schools there are children from different races and from various cultures but not all of them have the same opportunities in life. There is, thus, a need for teachers to teach multicultural perspectives in schools (Moule 2005:24).

“The purpose of education is to promote a democratic society based on principles of social justice and economic equity. Schools and education should be laboratories for democracy, where adults and children learn together, raise questions about issues and problems, both of a cognitive and social-critical nature, and they work together to find the answer to those problems... A basic task of education is to support students' ability and disposition to analyse experience, as it relates to justice and equity issues, and then to take action to address injustices or problems in that experience.”

– Jean Moule 2005 –

There is much literature available on social justice. It is important that educators have a cultural framework in terms of which to make sense of the different perspectives of their learners on social justice. In some cases people attempt to focus on building bridges and developing programmes in order to make social justice more accessible. However, such programmes will become more efficient when teaching acknowledge the perceptions and understandings of young learners on social justice. This will allow them to implement programmes that will cross the boundaries and create space for interventions (Hyttén & Bettez 2011:21).

5.3 Addressing the research questions

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the perceptions and understandings of young learners of social justice. The specific research objective was to explore the learners' perceptions and understandings of social justice in order to give guidelines for the implementation of social justice in the school curriculum. With the help of the participants I developed a better understanding of what the young learners' perceptions of social justice were than had previously been the case.

This section revisits the secondary research questions before addressing the main research question, namely: What are Grade 3 learners' perceptions and understandings of social justice?

5.3.1 Secondary research question 1: Do young learners' experiences in the social world influence their perceptions and understandings of social justice?

It is not possible to protect children protected from what is happening in the world in which we live as the media reports fully on the injustice and inequality that happen on a daily basis. In addition, children are often the victims of crimes or are involved in bad experiences and that may change their perceptions of people who are different than themselves – See evidence in respect of theme 4. The learners in Group 3 had had experiences of violence that they had not been able to process and they did not know how to handle certain situations in which they had been put. Children are often involved in shootings, riots or domestic violence where they witness the racism and hate between cultures (Department of Safety and Security 2007:129-130). These experiences may form their perceptions of the way in which the world operates and cause them to believe that violence is the only way in which to solve problems.

On the other hand, learners may have positive experiences in the social world with people influencing them in a positive way about the differences in the country. It is important that children are given the opportunity to express their ideas on how to stop the violence to help the schools and communities to initiate special projects aimed at protecting children (Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities 2012:11). Smith (1998) is also of the belief that the young learners should raise their voices and speak out about what is on their minds.

Children's experiences play a pivotal role in the kind of adults children will become and it is, thus, important that children form as many positive perceptions of social justice as possible when they are young.

5.3.2 Secondary research question 2: Which factors influence young learners' perceptions of social justice?

Children are vulnerable human beings. They are also very impressionable and may be open to being manipulated into doing things that they really should not. The young learners in the different groups came from various cultures as well as different quintiles representing different groups in South Africa. Each of these groups had had different experiences of social justice and would implement it in the country in different ways because they all came from different backgrounds and had grown up in different cultures (Derman-Sparks and Edwards 2010:1).

There are several factors that influence young learners when they form their perceptions of social justice. According to Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010:1), the main factors that influence learners was their perceptions of how their parents and other adults whom they admire regarded other cultures and also the way in which they are taught about their own culture. In addition, the learners' peers and/or learners from the same culture also influence the way in which learners react to each other with learners from the same culture sometimes ganging up against learners from a different culture (Derman-Sparks & Edwards 2010:2). Gillborn (2002:2) maintains that the teacher may also influence the learners. Teachers spend considerable time with the learners and may have a significant impact by inculcating a positive attitude in the learners towards different cultures and social justice and even correcting the inequalities between races. The media may play also a role in the perceptions of learners as to how they either wish to or do not wish to implement social justice. The media may change the minds of learners about different cultures if it shows cultural violence or discrimination against cultures (Giugni 2007:11).

Although there are many factors that may influence learners from a young age it was clear from theme 3 of this study that the learners all had in common the desire to change the country in order to make it a better place for everyone to live in.

5.3.3 Secondary research question 3: How do young learners respond to issues of equality?

When the learners were asked about what is fair and unfair they immediately responded to the question with examples of how and when they had been treated unfairly and how and when they had been treated fairly. This aspect of fairness emerged in theme 3 and was clearly a very familiar concept to the children. With regard to making the world a better place and creating equality among all the citizens the learners offered several suggestions on how to change the country. Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010:2) linked equity and equality with social justice where equity is the upliftment of the less fortunate so that everyone has the same chances, equality provides everyone with the same tools and resources in order to establish equality.

It is clearly important for learners that everything should be fair and that everybody have the same opportunities as others. Nobody should be left behind and nobody should be discriminated against on the basis of differences (Giugni 2007:9). In addition, everyone must learn to be proud of their own origins and their own cultures. This would, in turn, ensure that, even you do not have to be like someone else, you must respect their way of living (Derman-Sparks & Edwards 2010:1). Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010:1) further state that everybody should be equipped with the same tools in order to make a success in life and that everybody should have the same opportunities, regardless of differences.

Westbrook (1999:1) describes John Dewey's theory as a theory which advocates that children should be able to find answers for themselves and explore the world around them. Thus, it is essential that young children experience equality in the world and how to implement it if they are ever to understand it. They must think of their own solutions to the problem of inequality and also how they would implement these solutions.

5.3.4 Primary research question: What are Grade 3 learners' perceptions and understandings of social justice?

It is apparent in figure 5.1 that is illustrated at the end of the research questions that there are several factors that may influence the perceptions of social justice and that these perceptions may be formed by the various people who are involved in a child's life. Parents and teachers are the

main persons who are involved in the child's life and they have the most significant influence in the child's life. Young children are more impressionable than older children because the older they become the greater the likelihood that their perceptions will be formed and, thus, older children are more unlikely to change their perceptions as compared to younger children (Derman-Sparks & Edwards 2010:8). The sub-research questions assisted me in answering the main research question.

Social justice is a concept that is interwoven with the three aspects illustrated in figure 1.1, namely, citizenship, human rights and equity (including equality). However, these aspects are all important for learners if they to form a perceptions and understandings of social justice in South Africa. I therefore deal with each of the concepts in an attempt to answer the main research question.

Citizenship

According to Pike (2008:113), a learner must first form their own identity in a country as well as a feeling of belonging. This first aspect is important because a child must feel safe, secure and wanted in their immediate surroundings before he/she may start to think about the greater good of the country. A child who is neglected will first try to find their own place in the world and establish their own identity before he/she will be prepared to care for others (Department of Woman, Children and People with Disabilities 2012:12). The learners identified themselves as citizens of the country and they wanted to participate as active members of the society.

Human rights

After a learner realises their place in the world it is important that the learner's basic needs are met if the learner is to make progress in life. Meeting the child's basic needs will ensure that the child has food, water, safety, health and education and this should, in turn, enable the child to realise their full potential in life (Abrahams & Matthews 2011). In the study it came forth that the learners was aware of some of their human rights and that they are willing to help in any possible way to make their environment a better place to live in.

Equity (including equality)

When the identity has been formed and the basic needs of the child have been met the learner will then be prepared to make changes in the adolescent phase in his/her life to ensure that everybody is treated in the same way and that everybody is given the same tools to enable them to make a success of their lives. This aspect came strongly to the fore in theme 3 with the learners expressing a strong desire for the happiness and equality of all.

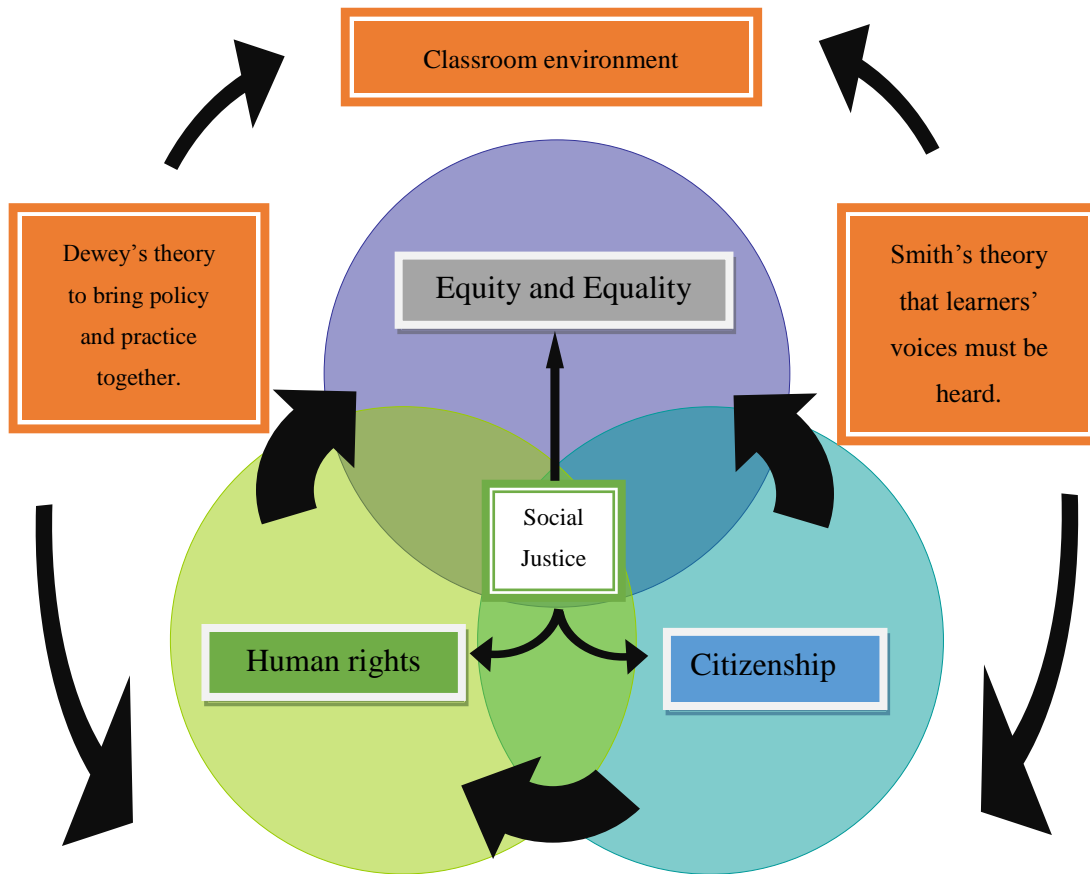


Figure 5.1: The interweaving of results and concepts of social justice

As illustrated in figure 5.1, social justice is situated at the centre of the three pillars. Thus, all three of these aspects must be present in a child's life if the child is to apply social justice in their life. A happy child will look further than their own needs, they will start to think about others and they will aspire to change the world in order to make the world a better place – See theme 3 in the study. Figure 5.1 also contain the two theories that I used for my study, these theories were two of the principles on which I build my study. I listen to the voices of learners (Smith

1998) and through that I bring policy and practice together (Dewey 1903). Both of these theories is possible to apply in the classroom in order to create social justice among children.

In conclusion, it became apparent from the study that young learners, whose identity has been formed and whose basic needs are fulfilled, will aspire to implementing social justice in their environment and their country. The learners may be influenced from a young age, namely, approximately six to ten years old (Foundation Phase). It is important that they are taught the correct ideas, values and attitudes by direct teaching and through their lived experiences to enable them to accept the differences between people. The young learners were still naïve in a certain sense and they offered certain suggestions that would not be possible to implement. Nevertheless, they wanted to change South Africa into a happy place in which everybody may live in peace together. As an interpretivist I had the opportunity to study the learners from an outsider position and interpret the ways in which they wanted to change the country.

5.4 Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of the study relates to the methodology of case study research and the number of groups that I visited. The groups that I used to represent all facets of the country did not include all the cultures that are found in South Africa. However, my aim was to gain an insight into young learners' thinking about social justice from as many groups as possible in the society. It is, nevertheless, possible that learners in other groups may have different perspectives on social justice.

The next limitation of the study was the issue of language. I used Afrikaans and English in the study but, in most cases, English and Afrikaans were not the learners' home or first languages and they did not have the ability to express themselves as they would have done in their own languages. To address the limitations of the study I refer to my actions in the following sections.

5.4.1 Transferability

Zucker (2009:11) maintains that the trustworthiness of a study is dependent on the transferability of the study. According to Baxter and Jack (2008:550), the transferability of a study is limited when a case study is selected as the research methodology. The participants of the study were selected by purposive sampling and this, in turn, indicates that there may be some areas that were not included in the study and that learners from different areas may have had different perceptions. Therefore, I cannot generalise my results to all Grade 3 learners in South Africa. However, I attempt to select schools or groups that would represent the majority of children in South Africa. I only used schools in Tshwane which is the greater metropolis. As I describe each case or group in detail it might be possible to transfer the results from my study to other similar cases.

5.4.2 Conformability

There is always the risk of researcher bias in a qualitative study (Dwyer 2009:55). In view of the fact that I had my personal perceptions of the research topic it was essential that I eliminate these personal interpretations and focus only on the data. However, I did rely on my personal interpretations of the data and, thus, there was the possibility of subjectivity and biased interpretations rooted in my personal beliefs and ideas. Despite the fact that it is not possible for a researcher to be totally free from the influence of bias, I endeavoured to counter this through reflexivity (Mack *et al.* 2011:15). Mack *et al.* (2011:23) further maintain that researchers either confirm the data that they already know or they discover new truths. I made use of field notes in which I recorded my thoughts, feelings, actions and beliefs and on which I then reflected. The data I collected confirm the data that already exist. I also discover new data that emerged from the study.

While I acknowledge the limitations of my research project I also attempted to strengthen the findings of the study by documenting each process in order for my results to make sense (Zucker 2009:11). In addition, I acknowledge that there is not one truth only but that there may always be different opinions and feelings on a specific issue (Denzin & Lincoln 2003).

Throughout the study I was consistent, approached every group in the same way and led the groups in discussions that would be trustworthy. In addition, I coincided the research questions throughout the study in order to be able to focus on the phenomenon and to answer the questions at the end of the study.

5.5 Recommendations

The study revealed the perceptions and understandings of young learners relating to how they would change the world in order to create social justice. During the study the learners voiced certain ideas that captured my attention. Thus, after analysing the data I am able to recommend possible areas for further research, training and practice.

5.5.1 Recommendations for further studies

In view of the results discussed in Chapter 4, I recommend the following topics for future studies:

- A follow-up study with the teachers who were present in the classrooms while I was conducting the study in order to ascertain their perceptions of how to teach social justice to young learners.
- Further research into the perspectives of learners from every culture in South Africa on social justice and their ideas on how they would implement it in the country.
- An in-depth study into the manner in which social justice may be included in the curriculum and the best ways in which to teach young children social justice.
- Action research in terms of which the children would practise implementing social justice in their own lives and classrooms and ascertaining how they could learn about the various cultures.
- A study to explore the perceptions of learners from different races – How they see themselves, others and diversity?

5.5.2 Recommendations for training and practice

The findings of this study have implications for the implementation of social justice in schools. This implementation should be rooted in the Foundation Phase with Foundation Phase educators teaching social justice in the classroom. Social justice will not become a reality without proper implementation programmes. In addition, it is important to teach social justice from a young age and to work with children in order to transform negative perceptions into positive perceptions.

It was evident that the majority of learners wanted to implement social justice in their everyday lives and that they believed that everybody should be treated in the same way. It is vital that these perceptions be impressed upon the learners so that they are not be influenced by other people who may have a negative view of social justice. If learners are trained from a young age to accept the different cultures and beliefs of other people they will be empowered to teach other people to behave in the same way. This, in turn, will ensure that the social injustice in South Africa is set right by a new generation of learners who believe that social justice should be implemented in South Africa.

5.6 Concluding remarks

The implementation of social justice remains a problem not only in South Africa, but also in other international countries. It emerged from this study that young learners want equity and equality to prevail. In the main, young learners are open-minded about other cultures and they want fairness and justice for everybody. There was a common desire in the three groups that I used in the study that everybody should do the right thing and those who commit crimes must be punished for their actions.

The first group, which had been more protected from the violence in the world than the other groups, had a different notion of social justice as compared to the group that had been confronted with violence. All of the groups reflected on their own immediate circumstances and this was reflected in their desire to change the world and to make it a better place. Perceptions of social justice might change as learners grow older and reach a more constant and established outlook on life. This outlook may be either positive or negative towards social justice. It is, thus,



important that the perceptions of young learners are acknowledged in such a way that educators will be equipped to deal with social justice in their classrooms.

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ADDENDA