

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:

#### *Voices of the participating children as citizens in democratic South Africa*

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##### 4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3 I described the research design and justified the choices made concerning sampling, methods selected for data collection and analytic decisions about data collection. In Chapter 4 I offer an interpretative account of the data. In this chapter I aim for ‘making sense’ (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:145) of the empirical evidence and to ‘focus on meaning’ (Charmaz, 2000:510). In my report I engage with the data provided by the various data collection 'instruments' in order to present results that will assist me in generating findings relevant to my research questions. I account for results concerning the nine-year-old learners' life experiences and understandings as citizens of the democratic dispensation in South Africa.


As an interpretivist, I used inductive and deductive approaches and applied the systematic guidelines of grounded theory analysis methods as described by Charmaz (2000:509-535) to investigate my data in constructing meaning. The development of analytical interpretations of the data directed me in focusing on further data collection (Merriam, 1998:161). Constructivist grounded theory analysis assisted me in assuming the relativism of multiple social realities concerning the learners of my case study and recognising the mutual creation of knowledge by me as the viewer, and by the learners as the viewed. In addition, constructivist grounded theory analysis strategies assisted me in sensitising concepts from different perspectives (Charmaz, 2000:513), specifically from the perspective of citizenship. Concepts emerged in themes and relevant categories, which I have chosen for their applicability and usefulness in an attempt to answer my research questions. Consequently I used thematic analysis within the analytic tradition of grounded theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006:78). In Table 4.1 I propose a summary of the themes and related

categories that emerged.

**Table 4.1: Summary of themes and related categories**

Theme	1. Learners' identification of themselves as child citizens	2. Learners living as child citizens in the local community	3. Learners living as child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa	4. Learners' desire for change in securing their future
Category	1.1 'I am proudly South African'	2.1 'Children should play [in the local community] without being afraid of being hurt or killed'	3.1 'South Africa is my best world'	4.1 'If I were Mr. Mbeki, I would make a better nation'
	1.2 'Children have the right to be heard'	2.2 'I don't want people to cry in our country'	3.2 'We [South Africa] are a free democracy'	4.2 'We [children] are the future'
	1.3 'Children have the responsibility to do what is right'	2.3 'We [children] need services to build the country'	3.3 'We [South Africans] are called the rainbow nation'	
		2.4 'Education and learning will bring more people together'		

When I analysed the learners' life experiences, I referred to the meaning as well as the quantity of their expressions, which emerged from instruments in an attempt to indicate the significance of their expressions related to a particular theme. For example, Theme 4: Learners' desire for change in securing their future, emerged from the following instruments: 'If I were Mr. Mbeki...', 'Letters to Madiba' and the Focus group interviews; and particularly from the instrument 'If I were Mr. Mbeki...' (see examples in **Addendum 8**).

The following table, Table 4.2, illustrates the relationship between the data derived from each research 'instrument' and the four themes. I did the weighting of the data from each 'instrument', leading to the emerging of each theme according to the quantity of the data contributed by the learners. Cohen *et al.* (2000) referred to this process of educational research as correlational research. I indicated the weighting on a scale of 1-3 and visualized this by the icon of the South African flag . One flag presents a small number of relevant data (two or three participants), two flags an average amount of representative data (three or more participants) and three flags a significant amount of recurring data (ten and more participants).

**Table 4.2: The relationship between data from each data collection instrument and the themes**

Themes	Data collection methods and instruments									
	Focused interviews: *Group interviews									*Focus group interviews
	1. What I like and don't like about SA	2. The SA Flag	3. If I were Mr. Mbeki ...	4. If I were the president ...	5. Hot chair drama technique	6. Slogans for posters meant for peers	7. Letters to Madiba	8. Children's rights and responsibilities	9. Class discussions	Instruments used with group interviews 1-9 and Book on SA
1. Learners' identification of themselves as child citizens										
2. Learners living as child citizens in the local community										
3. Learners living as child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa										
4. Learners' desire for change in securing their future										

In the following section I first explain the process I used for data analysis and then report the results. I offer an interpretative commentary on the results from the data. I present the data in this chapter as a distinct set of data with supporting quotes from the learners' expressions, including spelling mistakes, in an attempt to provide their authentic views and responses.

#### 4.2 Explanation of data analysis process

Constructivist grounded theory analysis offered me strategies to reconstruct the life experiences of the learners (Charmaz, 2000:514-521). One such strategy was to code the multiple data sources. I used initial or open coding for my emerging analysis while interacting with and interpreting the data. The line-by-line coding assisted me in sensitizing concepts as a starting point in organizing and understanding the learners' life-experiences as citizens (see Phases of Data Analysis in

**Addendum 10).** What became important to analyse emerged from the data presented by the learners themselves (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:126-128). I kept the codes active to enable me to make systematic and constant comparisons of concepts in gaining insight into the learners' experiences.

As part of the coding strategy I then applied selective or focused coding by colour coding the identified and emerged concepts. Through this process I started to define and categorize the data in a matrix called a 'conditional matrix' by Strauss and Corbin (in Charmaz, 2000:516). The matrix, also referred to as an analytical diagram by Charmaz (2000:516), charts the range of conditions and consequences related to the focus of study. I constructed the Citizenship Context Diagram as a series of circles in which the outer rings represent those conditions most distant from actions and interactions of the learners and the inner rings presented those closest to actions and interactions concerning the learners. The Citizenship Context Diagram is given in **Addendum 11**, Figure 1 as a visual representation of the emerged themes and categories of the data analysis (see Summary of themes and categories in Table 4.1). I describe the construction and employment of the diagram as a technique, which assisted me in the process of 'making meaning' of the life experiences and understandings of the learners as citizens. I shall refer to the diagram in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

Another analysis strategy I followed was to write memos (as part of field notes) aimed at the construction of conceptual analyses (see the summary of the construction of the Citizenship Context Diagram in **Addendum 11**). This strategy assisted me in linking analytical interpretation with empirical reality as described by Charmaz (2000:517-519). I used the raw data constructed by the learners and collected via multiple instruments to assist me in comparing concepts, analyzing properties of categories and identifying patterns. In an attempt to refine my emerging theoretical ideas I also wrote about the learners' unstated assumptions and implicit meanings and how these assumptions and meanings related to conditions in which themes emerged.

A further strategy I applied was theoretical sampling to refine ideas (Charmaz, 2000:519-520). Theoretical sampling facilitated the identification of conceptual boundaries and the relevance of my categories in developing them as theoretical constructs. In applying this strategy of theoretical sampling I found conceptual gaps in my data and I therefore went back to sample data on specific issues. For example, during the integrated data collection and analysis process I realized I needed

more data about certain categories that emerged, like the category on leadership. In order to assist me in constructing the characteristics of the president of South Africa from the learners' point of view, as expressed in their data, I noticed that I needed more direct expressions from the learners about this topic. I therefore went back to the learners to collect data with the instrument 'If I were the president, I would be...'. I compared this data with the data of the learners' expressions about the character of the president already obtained from other instruments like 'If I were Mr. Mbeki...' and 'Letters to Madiba'. This interactive, cyclical process occurred several times so that I could refine ideas and concepts, which would present the voices of the children as learners and as citizens. With theoretical sampling I also compared the conditions under which the categories were linked to other categories; I discovered relationships between categories, relationships, which emerged between and across themes and categories for example the learners' social awareness, their feelings of patriotism and their desire for change.

### 4.3 Results of the theme analysis

I propose an integrated account of the life experiences and understandings of the nine-year-old learners as citizens of the democratic dispensation of South Africa based on my engagement with the data. The data provided by the various instruments presented results in terms of the themes and categories pertinent to my research questions. I reflected mostly on what was present in the learners' expressions of their life experiences as citizens in democratic South Africa and illuminated the significance thereof. In the following section, I provide evidence for the emergence of each of the four themes and relevant categories as visually depicted by the Citizenship Context Diagram (see Figure 1 in **Addendum 11**).

In the following sections, I provide inclusion criteria for presenting evidence, which emerged from the data and indicate, where relevant, exclusion criteria. In this study I focused on the experiences of the nine-year-old learners as participants of my case study against the background of the national curriculum and not on the experiences of the other important cornerstones of citizenship, namely teachers, parents, society and policy makers. I analyzed what emerged from the data and in a few instances I elicited exceptional contributions made by participating learners, which indicated extraordinary insight from learners or responses opposite to those of the majority of the learners. In addition, other exclusion criteria I applied were experiences of immigrant children and the differentiation of experiences by the different genders.

I described the nine-year-old learners' expressions about their life experiences and understandings as citizens in a democratic South Africa through the following themes:

- Learners' identification of themselves as child citizens
- Learners living as child citizens in the local community
- Learners living as child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa and
- Learners' desire for change in securing their future.

I commence with Theme 1 and provide evidence for the emergence of the learners' identification of themselves as child citizens and the related categories that illuminate this identification in the context of citizenship.

### 4.3.1 Theme 1: Learners' identification of themselves as child citizens<sup>2</sup>

The nine-year-old participating learners of my case study identified themselves as **child citizens**, a distinctive group of citizens with distinctive qualities, living as citizens in democratic South Africa. As child citizens they required that they be respected, listened to and regarded as active role players in the democratic dispensation. As citizens they claimed their rights and acknowledged their responsibilities. Many learners saw themselves as morally and socially responsible citizens. Learners' expressions of their identities emerged throughout the following categories, constructed as: 'I am proudly South African', 'Children have the right to be heard' and 'Children have the responsibility to do what is right'. In the following section I discuss each of the categories relevant to Theme 1.

#### 4.3.1.1 'I am proudly South African'

In the context of my study the identity of the citizen refers to a sense of **individual** as well as **national identity**. The identity of the individual can be described as 'the conscious of the acting self' and is constructed in a social context (Ross, Papoulia-Tzelepi & Hegstrup, 2005). As component of the social context, identity is part of the process of cultural change. A culture is a system of human values, which change over time and from group to group. Put another way: People understand themselves in relation to others and develop their identity, among others, through the

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<sup>2</sup> Theme 1, visually depicted by the inner and red circle of the Citizenship Context Diagram (see Figure 1 in **Addendum 11**).

national traditions and values to which they are exposed (Kymlicka in Ortloff, 2005).

Each nation has its own culture of values, norms and habits and through a culturally determined curriculum aspires to influence the development of a child's individual and national identity, including behaviour, participation in the specific culture and citizenship. National identity refers to citizens who are required to construct a shared sense of nationhood as a prerequisite democratic and successful functioning of the state (Eaton, 2002:45-46). The state will not be able to exercise peaceful authority and legitimacy over its citizens unless they perceive themselves to be members of a national collectivity, and are willing to act for the good of the 'nation'. For a democracy to function, its citizens must accept the appropriateness of the demarcated territory, which bears that country's name. They must see themselves as members of that 'imagined community' and they must be proud of that membership and willing to support it (Mattes & Anderson in Eaton, 2002:46).

The concept of identity can be analysed through different perspectives, such as philosophy, the social sciences or neurology and educational science. For the purpose of this study I explore the developmental and educational aspects of the construction of the identity of the young child in terms of citizenship (Korhonen & Helenius, 2005:45), although I acknowledge the influence of politicians and political philosophers on the formation of both individual and national identities. In the category 'I am proudly South African' I have excluded the articulation of the teachers and the parents on the construction of the identity of the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study.

Kuščer and Prosen (2005) refer to a 'collective identity', a statement about the membership of a certain group of citizens who has (or is believed to have) some mutual characteristics. A person may belong to many groups simultaneously, thus having many collective identities. These identities can complement each other, be independent, or oppose each other. However, a diverse society poses challenges to the establishment of democracy and civil society (Kuščer & Prosen, 2005). Ortloff (2005:35) argues that citizens need to be able to internalize multiple levels of identity and embrace diversity. In the context of South Africa, understanding identity is complex as it is underpinned by national, sub-national, political, ethnic, economic and social diversity. Eaton (2002:47) refers to a hypothesis stated by Mattes, that the more strongly people identify with a sub-national identity group, the less likely they are to tolerate members of other groups, to participate in democratic politics, or to comply with rules made by the government. Therefore, for a newly democratised,

multicultural state such as South Africa 'national legitimacy' and a sense of national identity among citizens is crucial for the establishment of effective democratic governance and civil stability. The value of 'social honour' was proposed as a key element of citizenship-in-the-making to instil a 'sense of honour and identity as South Africans where individuals are comfortable with both a cultural identity and a national South African one' (Ministry of Education, 2001:3).

The child's developing identity, individually as well as nationally, is a long-term outcome of citizenship education. In addition to children's identities, their relationships to others and their participation in a group are at stake (Fumat, 2005:77). Fumat (2005:77) refers to the concept of 'democratic personalities' and asks the question: 'Do young children at an early stage of citizenship education have experiences which will prepare them for future citizenship in a democratic society?' In a democratic society, children's socialization involves supporting their individualization, their autonomy and their social participation. Democratic societies aim to develop individual creativity and critical thinking and the socialization process is aimed for instilling a sense of belonging (living together in a democracy) as well as contributing to a democratic society (civic behaviour) (Fumat, 2005:77).

The nine-year-old learners expressed understandings of their identity in terms of citizenship in different ways. In the Focus group interview on compiling a book on South Africa, a learner said: 'I am a South African' (P2 – Class 3) and in *Letters to Madiba* (Madiba – a nickname for former president Nelson Mandela) learners wrote:

'I am proudly South African' (P11 – Class 3)

'I am a South African' (P45 – Class 3)

'I was born South African' (P19 – Class 3)

The participating learners of my case study seemed to **understand who they were** in terms of citizenship and their relationship to South Africa. They expressed their individual and national identity in an integrated way, which made it difficult to distinguish between the two identities. The nine-year-old learners seemingly identified themselves as **child citizens** as well as **South African citizens**. In terms of individual and national identity, I regard the first anecdote as exceptional evidence since Participant 11 identified herself in terms of her feelings for South Africa (pride). She



portrayed herself as a 'product' of South Africa. 'Proudly South African' is used as a South African brand name for marketing the country's own products. It is evident that the learners stated their identities as facts and not in an imaginative way as described by Korhonen and Helenius (2005:46). This may indicate a maturity of the learners' construction of their identities in terms of citizenship, maturity beyond the general perception I had as researcher about the nine-year-old learners' construction of their identities.

A further clarification of the learners' identification of themselves as child citizens was their **differentiation** between themselves as **child citizens** and **other citizens**. Participating learners of my case study referred to:

'other people' (P27 – Class 2 – 'If I were Mr. Mbeki...')

'other people out there' (P22 – Class 3 – 'Slogans for posters meant for peers')

The preceding anecdotes may indicate that participating learners have a collective identity as a **unique group of citizens** in the South African population. It seems as if the learners acknowledged other citizens but distinguished between them and child citizens.

In addition to their expressions about their identity, the participating learners of my case study regarded themselves as **significant citizens**. Many learners were central to most of their drawings as revealed in data from all the instruments (see examples of drawings in **Addendum 8**). Data from the instrument 'What I like and don't like about South Africa' revealed many drawings of learners in Class 1 that were titled 'Me' (P22) and 'Myself' (P29). In six instances learners stated directly how they perceived themselves when participating in the instrument 'What I like and don't like about South Africa'.

'I like myself' (P21, P29 - Class 1)

'I like me' (P22, P37, P38, P42 – Class 1)

These expressions seem to verify previous indications that the learners identified themselves as important citizens. The anecdotes may also indicate that the learners possessed **high self-respect**

and **self-worth**, which can be related to the learners' consideration of themselves as important child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa.

Adding to the learners' identification of themselves as child citizens, are their views on their participative role in democratic South Africa. **Participation** includes the skills of collaboration and negotiation, which are components of the **democratic processes** and essential to **citizenship** (Wood in Holden & Clough, 2000). During the Focus group interview on a letter to Madiba, two learners of Class 3 expressed this belief by stating what they would like to do to improve the democratic dispensation of South Africa.

‘I believe that we as the youth can make a difference ...by asking for no adult TV, by stopping poverty, by creating better and more jobs for all South Africans’ (P1)

‘Children [can] make South Africa a better place by stopping robbers, stop to killing animals and plants, love each other and love our country’ (P5)

My intention is not to elaborate on the different actions the learners indicated but on their expressions about **participation**. These expressions may be indicative that participating learners of my case study believed in themselves as **active citizens and role players, contributing to positive change in making a difference** to the democratic dispensation of South Africa through **responsible action**. At this stage their actions seemed to be more of an 'imaginary' participative role, which may indicate that they **did not experience meaningful roles in participation**. According to Hart's model (in Holden & Clough, 2000:19-20), children can be involved by people like teachers at various levels of participation. Hart's model starts with manipulation on level one, decoration on level two, tokenism on level 3; all non-participation levels. Active or real participation only starts at level four where children have meaningful and informed roles, rather than a decorative one. Hart describes level eight as the most participative level where children share their child-initiated decisions with adults. I argue that according to the levels of participation as described by Hart (in Holden & Clough, 2000:19-20) the level of participation of the participating learners of my case study seemed to be on the **non-participating levels**, thus indicating no participation in democratic processes. The question thus arises: Were the participating learners of my case study only being educated in theory to participate for 'one day' or were they involved in deliberative participation in

matters concerning their political life or civil society? Through further analysis of all the themes and categories, I attempted to answer this question.

In the next section I expand on Theme 1: Learners identified themselves as child citizens through reporting on the other two recognized categories: ‘Children have the right to be heard’ and ‘Children have the responsibility to do what is right’. I provide the following evidence to support these categories.

#### 4.3.1.2 ‘Children have the right to be heard’

**Rights** are 'things' you are entitled to: what 'we' can do, say or believe or what 'we' can have (Hine, 2004:5). Children have inalienable rights as members of the human family (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 12 and 13 of 1989) and both components related to rights, namely having rights and exercising these rights, are essential to citizenship (Green, 2005:viii). In the South African context, the Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) proclaims the rights of children in Article 28. On a poster published by the Department of Welfare (1997), the topic states *Children's Rights are Human Rights* and the following rights are given: Listen to me, Educate me, Respect me, Protect me and Care for me. During a class discussion learners of Class 4 expressed their appreciation of their rights (see transcription of discussion in **Addendum 8**). When participating in writing slogans for posters meant for peers, one learner wrote: ‘I have rights’ (P35 – Class 3) and in *Letters to Madiba* learners wrote:

‘we [children] have rights’ (P25, P54 – Class 4)

‘children have rights’ (P32, P67, P70 – Class 4)

These participating learners seemed to be knowledgeable of the fact that children have **individual rights** as child citizens as well as **collective rights** as a distinctive group of citizens.

John (in Holden & Clough, 2000:9) states that minority groups (like children) in democracies not only **exercise** their rights, but also **claim** their rights. Claiming rights, however, is a difficult task for it involves recognition, partners, partnerships, advocacy and full participation. When participating in the activity on ‘Children's rights and responsibilities’, one learner articulated the following:

‘We [the children] have a right to be heard’ (P47 – Class 4)

This statement may imply a **desire or need** for children's **voices to be acknowledged as child citizens**. However, from my point of view as the researcher who worked with the learners and who was sensitive to all their expressions, I interpret this anecdote as a **claim for rights**. Claiming their rights may also indicate a claim for being **respected** as important citizens, **equal to adult citizens; recognised** thus to the same extend as other citizens. Being **listened to** is the **right of a citizen; and public institutions having a responsibility to ensure that this happens**.

Inalienable rights guaranteed by the Constitution, Article 28 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) are to **be loved and cared for in a safe home with food, water and warm clothes**. In *Letters to Madiba* twenty-four participants commented on their needs. A learner in Class 4 wrote:

‘We [children] need homes that is safe to live in ... some flats have no doors. We need love, food, clothes, water, blankets to sleep at night’ (P47, P67)  
‘We [children] need a nice home ...’ (P28)  
‘Please help [my] auntie. She is not working and she needs food for the baby and a home and clothes for the baby’ (P30)

The participating learners of my case study seemingly expressed their **inalienable rights** in the form of a **need or plea**, which may be indicative of themselves or other people living in undesirable circumstances.

Learners expressed the right not only to be **loved** and **acknowledged** by immediate family but also by political leaders, especially former president Mr. Nelson Mandela, espoused for his love for children. In *Letters to Madiba* learners of Class 4 wrote:

‘Please love your children’ [reference to all children of South Africa] (P55)

‘Thank you for what you have done for us, love us also too. Bless you’ (P23)

The acclaimed right to be loved may indicate a **trust** from learners in the **leadership** of Mr. Nelson Mandela, indicating possibly that children as child citizens needed the political leaders to **acknowledge** them as child citizens and to **take care of them**, as stated in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The right to ‘security of the person’ is written in the Constitution, Article 27 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and also declared by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). It is a right in jeopardy according to the statistics on crime in general and on crimes against children in South Africa. Raubenheimer (2006) reported that over four million children between the ages of twelve and twenty-two have been targets of crime in South Africa. Against this background it is understandable that many learners of Class 4 hold various opinions on their right for protection from harm.

In *Letters to Madiba* learners wrote:

‘Make bad things go away like crime and killers’ (P69)

‘Stop abuse and do not kill children at night’ (P33)

Participating in the activity on *Children's rights and responsibilities* learners said:

‘We have the right to say no to child abuse’ (P2, P35, P32, P38, P46, P67, P70)

‘We have the right to say no to sex’ (P29, P35)

‘We have the right to say no to strangers’ (P8, P35, P62)

‘We have the right to say no to bad people’ (P31)

These expressions may be indicative that the learners understood their **right to be protected by the state, especially against child abuse**. However, living in an unsafe environment as already described in Chapter 1 of this study, the participating learners seemed to be exposed to unsafe circumstances, which in some instances seem to be life-threatening. The participating learners of my case study appeared to experience a **contradiction between their rights such as to be**

**protected** and **the reality of an unsafe inner city environment**. This could promote **disbelief** amongst children in the principles, processes and values of the democratic dispensation.

The participating learners not only knew and claimed their rights but also expressed their responsibilities as child citizens. In the subsequent section I report on the learners' expressions about their responsibilities.

#### 4.3.1.3 'Children have the responsibility to do what is right'

**Responsibilities** are actions and decisions for which 'we' are accountable: things 'we' feel 'we' ought to do (Hine, 2004:5). Crick (in Department for Education and Employment, 1998) defines the concept of responsibility as 'care for others, premeditation and calculation about the effect actions are likely to have on others; and understanding and care for the consequences. **Citizenship and responsibility** are interrelated concepts since Holden and Clough (2000) describe a citizen as a person who can make informed and responsible decisions according to a values-based framework. This framework is based on **morality** and the principles underpinning the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Holden & Clough, 2000) and involves **values** such as: social justice, political equity, respect for differences, human rights, co-operation, civility, respect for the rule of law, and a commitment to negotiation and debate as the proper way to resolve disagreements over public policy (The Citizenship Foundation in Hine, 2004:4). In addition, Crick (in Hine, 2004:4) identifies **moral and social responsibilities as core components of citizenship**.

In the South African context, the national curriculum, based on the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), and aligned with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Department of Education, 2002c), foresees the responsible citizen as one who would be able to 'participate as responsible citizen in the life of local, national and global communities'. Most learners made statements about their responsibilities, which emerged generally as **moral and social responsibilities**. When participating in the activity *Children's' rights and responsibilities*, many learners expressed their conceptualization of their moral responsibilities. I shall report on the learners' expressions concerning their social responsibilities later on in this category. The participating learners of my case study expressed various moral responsibilities.

‘I am responsible to protect myself’ (P28 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘I am responsible to take care of myself’ (P29, P38, P48, P69 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘Do not lie and cheat – be honest’ (P33, P37 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

‘Stop hitting each other’ (P21 - Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

‘Please – stop fighting at school’ (P20 - Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

As child citizens the participating learners seemed to acknowledge the **moral value** of being **responsible for their personal development**, an **essential precondition of citizenship**. Therefore, once children are responsible for themselves, they may be more inclined to be **responsible for others, the school, community, society and the state including those in authority**.

Learners' expressions about **moral responsibility** indicated that they distinguished between concepts and actions related to **good and bad** and **right and wrong**. One learner encapsulated this awareness with the expression ‘do what is right’ (P17 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*). When participating in the instrument *What I like and don't like about South Africa* learners of Class 4 identified **positive actions**, thus **doing what is right**.

‘I like children playing together’ (P7, P12)

‘I like people loving each other’ (P4, P5, P13)

‘I like children listening to their parents and teachers’ (P15, P17, P22, P36)

‘I like children loving South Africa’ (P7, P18)

In confirming their judgment between **right and wrong** many participating learners of Class 3 indicated their opinions of 'what is wrong' by describing **negative actions** when writing *Letters to Madiba* such as:

‘bad people raping, killing, fighting, breaking in other people's houses and shooting each other’ (P65, P59, P61)

‘stop fighting, stop killing, stop abuse’(P47)

‘stop the thieves stealing and if they don't want to listen you [Madiba] must take them to jail’ (P57)

The participating learners of my case study indicated that they have already, at the age of nine years, developed a **sense of right and wrong**, an **intrinsic characteristic of moral development**.

Concerning the moral development of the participating learners it seemed that they were beyond the second stage of moral development as described by Kohlberg (Morrison, 2006:277-278). In addition to their sense of 'right' and 'wrong' learners demonstrated a strong awareness for the purpose of **rules in society**.

‘we [all South African citizens] must get more rules ... people [who] don't obey rules, go to jail and get death penalty’ (P2, P3 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

‘I don't like people who disobey rules and I don't know why [they don't obey rules]’ (P10 – Class1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

The expressions by the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study about rules may further indicate their conceptualization of their **moral responsibility**. Learners not only expressed the **need for rules** but also a strong awareness for the **consequences of disobeying rules**. In the first anecdote the learners' expression about ‘more rules’ may indicate their opinion that rules may be necessary for preventing the negative behaviour of other citizens. In the second anecdote the primary message of this learner was a plea for government to make laws and to impose them in order to protect law-abiding citizens from harm. This anecdote indicates disbelief that people do disobey rules. These expressions may also specify the learners' need for the enforcement of the rule of law by which the South African democracy is being governed (the Constitution, 1966).

Nolan (in Department of Education, 2001:9-10) drew on Kohlberg's definition of the levels and stages of moral development in the typical person, already explored in Chapter 2 of this study.



Kohlberg (in Hine, 2004:19; Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998) suggests that children of different ages will have different levels of understandings of right and wrong and present stages of moral development in a linear and progressive way. Stages 4 and 5 represent adolescents' and adults' acceptance of rules for the welfare of society. The ultimate aim (stage 6) of Kohlberg's levels of morality would then indicate that learners have internalized values and that a sense of duty has been replaced by a sense of personal responsibility. Nolan argues that people (including children) have to be educated in the spontaneous adoption of moral values. Education has to see to it that learners have a conscious choice of values based upon one's consciousness of 'who one is and what life is about'. Nolan suggested what education has to do is to take learners forward to these higher levels of moral judgment that will enrich the learner as well as the society. The results of this study suggested that participating nine-year-old learners could have some of these moral understandings on the highest level of moral development according to Kohlberg's model.

In addition, to further describe the moral and social responsibilities in terms of citizenship as expressed by the participating learners of my case study, I present the learners' report on the value of **respect** that emerged as eminent in all data. Paying respect to somebody or something or claiming respect is a value related to both moral and social responsibility. On the one hand respect is regarded as a democratic value (Ministry of Education, 2001) to be instilled in young learners as a responsibility. On the other hand nation-states have to respect the rights of a child as a precondition for the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989:3). When participating in the instrument *Children's rights and responsibilities* the learners of Class 4 referred 23 times to the word respect as a responsibility in different contexts. The following anecdotes provide the evidence.

‘Have respect for children’ (P33 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

‘Respect children’ (P30 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

‘Respect teachers’ (P26 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

‘Respect people’ (P17, P19, P23, P27 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

‘Have respect for older people’ (P28, P34 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

‘Respect others so that we can be respected’ (P5 – Focus group interview on compiling a

book on South Africa)

The first five quotations are slogans, which I interpret more as requests, because considering that they are slogans written for peers and people in the environment, it seems that the learners were asking for all people, including children, to be treated as citizens in a valuable, thus in a respectful way. This request also included that children had to respect other citizens. The sixth anecdote may indicate the learner's understanding of the mutual characteristics of respect. This anecdote seems to indicate reasoning on an advanced cognitive level as well as the relationship between cognitive and moral development (Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998:380-381). From this evidence I conclude that learners seemingly acknowledged the value of respect in terms of citizenship in democratic South Africa.

It is evident from the data that learners' moral awareness informed their social responsibilities and that it was in most instances impossible to distinguish decisively between moral and social responsibilities as expressed by the participating learners of my case study. According to Gordon and Brown (2000:527) social responsibility culminates in social action, which children can learn and apply to make unfair things fair. The participating learners of my case study not only showed social responsibility and a desire for social action towards the sick, the elderly and the poor in their local community, but also expressed the notion of compassion to vulnerable people in their local community. I elaborate on their feelings of compassion in Theme 2, Category 2 (4.3.2.2).

The citizen's rights and responsibilities are inextricably linked in a reciprocal relationship (Hine, 2004:5), a relationship on which the participating learners of my case study particularly remarked. Thirty-five participating learners of my case study made contributions to the instrument on *Children's rights and responsibilities* during a lively class discussion in Class 4. During this session many learners indicated that they knew certain rights together with the corresponding responsibilities, for example:

‘We have the right to live in a home’ (P30, P39, P49)

‘We have the responsibility to clean our rooms’ (P34, P43, P46)

‘We have the right to go to school’ (P1, P3, P4)

We have the responsibility to go to school’ (P28, P29, P36)

‘We have the right to a clean country’ (P23, P50)

‘We have the responsibility to keep the country clean’ (P50, P58)

The participating learners of my case study seem to be informed on their rights as well as their corresponding responsibilities, which may indicate an internalisation of the concept of consequence related to rights and responsibilities.

In Theme 1, the learners identified themselves as important child citizens living in South Africa in various ways. In Theme 2, I provide evidence of the learners' expressions as child citizens living in the local community.

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Learners living as child citizens in the local community<sup>3</sup>**

Citizenship is about being a member of the state and a member of the local community; about belonging and feeling secure in the community (Green, 2005:viii). Citizenship is about the relationship between an individual as a member of the community and other members or groups in the community. In the local community, citizens experience first-hand the 'mechanisms' of democracy. Local democracy means people can make choices about representatives to see to the specific needs of the local community and its people. On the other hand, local people who know about their area are more inclined to get involved and participate in the democratic processes, which include holding the local government accountable for decisions made (Rushforth, 2004:30-31).

As child citizens the participating learners of my case study expressed an awareness of democratic principles and processes. They expressed their democratic right to be critical, to hold the government accountable for their seeming lack of 'social security' and to participate in the

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<sup>3</sup> The yellow circle represents this theme and the related categories (see Figure 1: Citizenship Context Diagram in **Addendum 11**).

democratic dispensation on local level. The learners expressed feelings of concern and fear about living in their local community. Furthermore, they expressed pertinent feelings of compassion for all the vulnerable people they encountered in their local community. As child citizens they were aware that certain services were pertinent to enable them as child citizens to contribute to the democratic dispensation of South Africa. Against this background, I offer the nine-year-old learners' expressions of themselves as child citizens living in the local community, which emerged as the following categories: 'Children should play [in the local community] without being afraid of being hurt or killed'; 'I don't want people to cry in our country'; and 'We [children] need services to build the country'. I commence with the first category.

#### **4.3.2.1 'Children should play in [the local community] without being afraid of being hurt or killed'**

Citizens of a democracy are entitled to have freedom and security of person, where they live, work, and where their children go to school. To secure personal freedom is the responsibility of the national government of a nation-state. The national government has to serve the people by protecting these rights on all levels such as on the local community level (Rushforth, 2004:42). In the South African context, the Bill of Rights (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996) ensures these rights, for citizens should lead productive and self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice. The learners of my case study clearly expressed their experiences about living in their local community or neighbourhood. Learners of Class 4 talked about the unsafe conditions in their neighbourhood like theft, the killing of people and the abuse of children (see transcriptions of class discussions in **Addendum 8**). Although a few learners mentioned domestic violence I only included learners' concerns about violence in the context of the democratic dispensation of South Africa. During a Focus group interview, learners of Class 3 commented on living in the inner-city neighbourhood and their concerns.

Interviewer: 'What would you tell the leaders of South Africa about living here?'

Participant 1: 'Children should play without being afraid of being hurt or killed'.

Participant 6: 'Stop crime because we will all die'.

Interviewer: 'What message do you have for other children in your neighbourhood?'

Participant 1: ‘Don't waste food – out there are street kids’.

Interviewer: ‘How would you help the street kids?’

Participant 5: ‘Give them job and places to stay, to build their lives up again to be something in life’.

Interviewer to Participant 5: ‘You live in a house in ... [another neighbourhood of the City of Pretoria]? What can you tell us about your neighbourhood?’

Participant 5: ‘We are not allowed to walk in the streets on Fridays and during the weekend. We are not allowed to walk in the streets at night. People drink and fight in the streets’.

The comments made by the participating learners of this focus group interview give the impression that it is unsafe to live in this specific inner-city neighbourhood and according to Participant 6, crime seemed to be the cause of it with seemingly devastating consequences. The participating learners were critical about living in their local community and expressed negative instances about living there. They expressed their informed apprehension about crime occurring in their community. The nine-year-old learners of my case study seemingly exercised their democratic right to hold government accountable for the circumstances of their neighbourhood. The use of the plural **we** by Participant 6 may indicate a feeling of commonality which in terms of citizenship, confirms the learners' feelings of a collective identity. Further evidence about unsafe living conditions from data revealed by one of the learners (P5 – Class 3) in the focus group interview, who lived in a house in a suburb of the city and not in the inner-city area as most of the participating learners of my case study, also confirmed the general concern about crime in South Africa, irrespective of a specific geographical location. The expressions of fear made by the participants of this interview could be interpreted against the high rate of crime reported in South Africa (Keppler, 2006).

The reply of Participant 1 to the second question of the interviewer during the preceding interview, also exhibits the critical stance of participating learners about the homeless children living in the streets of their local community, whom they labelled *street kids*. The learners referred to homeless children when participating in seven of the nine instruments (see Table 4.2), which revealed their comprehension of this issue. Many learners felt empathy for these children and a compassionate desire to help them in a practical and positive way (see Participant 5 of the above interview transcription). I report on the expressions of the participating learners of my case study related to

the homeless children again in the second category of Theme 2 (4.3.2.2).

A further exposition of the participating learners' critical concerns about their local community is encapsulated in some of their drawings. Many drawings done by learners about their neighbourhood were about people shooting each other or people engaged in criminal acts. Most of these drawings were done in black and white, in contrast with other colourful drawings about their experiences of the democratic dispensation of South Africa, which I interpret as a reflection of the grim picture learners portrayed of their local community (see examples of drawings in **Addendum 8**). The expressions of the learners through these drawings seem to visually confirm learners' negative verbal messages about their neighbourhood.

Despite the negative expressions about their local community, most of the learners referred to their relationships with other members of their local community in a positive way. In the next category I report on the learner's expressions about these social relationships as an important aspect of citizenship.

#### **4.3.2.2 'I don't want people to cry in our country'**

Compassion is the personal identification with people's feelings, thoughts and experiences and a desire to help people in distress. Schiller and Bryant (1998:10) state, 'through compassion we recognise our own humanity in others'. 'Compassion and active imagination' are notions explored by Nussbaum (2001:426) and extended by Waghid (2005) in the context of South Africa. Waghid (2005) argues that the notion of compassion and 'active imagination' could have the potential to extend the dimensions of democratic citizenship, for compassion encompasses values of commitment and public participation and 'imaginative action'. Both Nussbaum (2001) and Waghid (2005) emphasise that compassion and 'imaginative action' are to be instilled in citizens through democratic citizenship education on all levels. Osler (2005:12-13) agrees that feeling and practice related to the well-being of other citizens, are components of citizenship and citizenship education.

Participating learners of my case study expressed their feelings about children and people in their local community and in this context, also indicated their attitude about their roles when partaking in different instruments such as *Letters written to Madiba, If I were Mr. Mbeki...*, Focus group interviews and slogans for posters meant for peers (see Table 4.2).

‘I don't want people to cry in our country’ (P60 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)  
‘Madiba, tell people to stop raping small children like us’ (P35 – Class 4 - *Letters to Madiba*)

‘Help my mother to have a job’ (P40 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)  
‘Help my cousin to find a job’ (P41 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

‘Madiba, please help poor children to get free education’ (P64 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)  
‘Give money to the poor, open a children's home, help a poor school, help the deaf and the blind children’ (P7 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*)

‘I would help the poor people who stay by the street and affected by HIV/AIDS. Don't want to see them dying. Give them homes and food and money and work. I would like to see all pensioners in this world to be taken care of and be given the right place to stay’ (P35 – Class 2 – *If I were Mr. Mbeki...*)

‘Help the people from the street and let them build their lives over again. Give them jobs in the residential offices’ (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

‘We [children] want to help’ (P8 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

‘When I have money I give to the street kids who don't have and who is eating from the dustbin’ (P25 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

These expressions may indicate the mind-set of the participating learners as child citizens about thoughts and practices related to compassion. Participating learners expressed wide-reaching social awareness through feelings of compassion for immediate family and other vulnerable people in the local community like deaf people, people with HIV/AIDS, the homeless children and poor people. As child citizens the learners not only shared compassion for people in need, but they also constructed advice for active participation in social affairs. They offered help, although in an imaginative way. It may seem that the participating learners have internalized the democratic value of *ubuntu* or human dignity; a value core to the South African democracy. *Ubuntu* has a particularly important place in our value system for it derives from African civilisation: ‘I am human because you are human’ (Ministry of Education, 2001:16).

Learners’ expressions about living in the local community not only dealt with their relationship(s) with members of the local community but also included experiences about the services offered in the local community. I report on this issue, as the provision and access of services to citizens are

aspects of citizenship.

#### 4.3.2.3 ‘We [children] need services to build the country’

In a democracy, government provides services to citizens on all levels (national as well as district level), such as police, libraries and schools. The provision of services on local level has to be based on democratic values and principles adapted for the particular local circumstances. Democratic values refer to values such as equity, social justice, an open society and respect. Democratic principles include citizens making choices through participation, debate and discussion on the one hand and local government acting accountable to their citizens about their governing decisions (Ministry of Education, 2001:5; Rushforth, 2004:30-31). Therefore, the concepts of communication and participation are related to local government and citizenship. Expressions of the nine-year-old learners about the services offered to them in their communities emerged from the data. Data from the instrument *What I like and don't like about South Africa*, completed by participants of Class 1, revealed their positive attitudes about different services in their immediate life world:

‘I like the hospital’ (P4, P39)  
‘I like the tap in our flat’ (P13),  
‘I like to drink water from the tap’ (P16)  
‘I like going to the park’ (P26).

The expressions made by the participating learners of my case study revealed their gratitude for services, which may indicate an understanding of the various systems of government and an awareness of the citizens' role of appreciation towards government; not only to be critical. They seem to be committed to communication and participation as child citizens in their local community. However, many learners expressed critique for the services offered to them in their local community such as services offered by police and traffic officers. As a result of the high crime rate I previously documented, learners articulated advice to the police about strategies to combat crime. This in itself is further evidence of the learners' expressed commitment to participate in the well being (specifically safety and protection) of the local community. In *Letters to Madiba* learners wrote:



‘Madiba, employ more traffic cops at night and in the morning’ (P29 – Class 4)

‘Please make the cops work harder in the night’ (P33 – Class 4)

‘Put lots of traffic cops on the streets’ (P45 – Class 4)

‘We [children] need more police to help us build the country’ (P7 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

The learners explicitly expressed ideas and feelings about education and going to school as a service provided to them in their local community as a means to ‘build South Africa’ (P7 – Class 3 – *Slogans for posters meant for peers*). I have analysed this aspect as a distinct category since citizenship education is a means to facilitate the notion of citizenship to young children (Holden & Clough, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2001). I elaborate on education as a local service provided to the participating learners of my case study in the next category:

#### **4.3.2.4 ‘Education and learning will bring more people together’**

Citizenship education, also referred to as ‘education for participation’ (Holden & Clough, 2000:14) or ‘education for democracy’ (Steyn, De Klerk & Du Plessis, 2006), involves reflecting on democratic values, assisting the learners to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for taking action and ultimately provide opportunities for them to become involved as active citizens. In addition, citizenship education aims to educate learners for meaningful participation in society indicating education for ‘good citizenship’ as well as education for ‘the market place’ (Ministry of Education, 2001:10). According to Holden and Clough (2000:14), such education is endorsed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 12 and 13 (1989) where children are given the right to seek and impart information, to express their thoughts and feelings, to have them listened to, and to participate in making choices and decisions affecting them. Democratic values form a base from which children can acquire the skill of decision-making, which includes considering the influence of their decisions on others and the execution of their decisions. In the context of South Africa the participating learners of my case study have been facilitated the framework of democratic values underpinning the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), already dealt with in Chapter 2 of this study. Education in South Africa is seen as the means to assist citizens to adopt moral values spontaneously, which will bring a change of consciousness and take learners to a higher level of

moral judgement (Ministry of Education, 2001:10).

Although the literature on citizenship education emphasises the crucial role of the teacher in children's construction of citizenship (Harwood, 2000; Voiels, 2000; Ross, 2005), I have excluded expressions made by the participating learners of my case study on the actions teachers should take in assisting them in this matter for my study did not focus on the teachers' role or on their perspectives on citizenship education. The majority of participating learners articulated an abundance of expressions about education and attending school when responding to the instrument *What I like and don't like about South Africa*.

'I like education' (P4, P5, P27)

'I like school' (P23, P48)

'I like my school' (P47, P49)

Participating learners of my case study seemed to feel positive about going to school and therefore they seemed to appreciate being educated. In many of the drawings made by the learners, learners focused on the teacher writing on the chalkboard (see examples of drawings in **Addendum 8**). In addition to the messages of these drawings, participating learners expressed their attitudes about their teachers in *Letters to Madiba* and in *Slogans for posters meant for peers*.

'Thank you for giving us a wonderful teacher' (P66 – Class 4 – *Letters*)

'Children respect teachers' (P26, P35 – Class 3 – *Slogans*)

'Children love your teachers' (P36, P37 – Class 3 – *Slogans*)

These expressions may indicate the significance of the role of the teacher in their lives and maybe implicitly the role teachers play in citizenship education. As already mentioned I did not pursue the role of the teacher as an aspect of citizenship education further in my study.

However, a few learners held negative views about attending school.

‘Other children are bully children for their money’ (P12 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

‘Madiba, tell them to stop hitting the small ones’ (P4 – Class 3 – Small focus group interview with Mandela's mask)

‘I don't like another child say you smell bad and teasing you because of your own language’ (P7 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

‘Stop bullying because of your language’ (P6 – Class 3 - Focus group interview on *Slogans for posters meant for peers*)

‘Stop bullying when you talk in your own language’ (P46 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

Participating learners of my case study seemed to be subjected to the practice of bullying and intolerance at school, which they experienced in a negative way. Although I acknowledge these negative expressions to substantiate the following interpretation, it is not my intention to further elaborate on bullying. In the light of the preceding evidence, I interpret that nine-year-old learners are exposed to negative actions, which may influence their view of citizenship.

An added view of the participating learners about education was related to the right of a child to be educated and their responsibility to participate in the education process. Education is a right confirmed by the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Article 29 (1) of the Constitution states: ‘Everyone has the right – to basic education... .’ The learners had much to say about education in terms of their rights as child citizens:

‘We have the right to be educated’ (P32, P35 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘We have the right to go to school’ (P1, P3, P4 - Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘We have the right to a good education’ (P3 – Class 3 – Small focus group interview)

‘We have the right to free education’ (P1 – Class 3 – *If I were the president...*)

‘Help the street kids with education, they have the right to go to school because when they

are big they must work ‘ (P56 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘We [children] have the responsibility to go to school’ (P28, P29, P36 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘My responsibility is to go to school and do my work hard’ (P30 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘It is my responsibility to listen to my teachers and principal’ (P47 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

These expressions may indicate that the participating learners not only regarded education as their right but also as important, especially when relating education with the world of work. In the context of citizenship education it is significant that nine-year-old learners already have the vision of meaningful participation in society and the insight into the interdependence of productivity and responsibility. Supplementary to the learners' rights to education, learners seem to be opinionated about ‘good’ education as their right, indicating possibly the best tuition. The expression about ‘free’ education may indicate the learners' insight that the economic position of children may influence their right to basic education. The learner's request for free education is relevant since Mrs. Naledi Pandor, the Minister of Education, announced a system for ‘no-fee education’ in all nine provinces in South Africa (Pandor, DoE Media Statement: No-Fee Schools 2007/22/11). The participating learners seem to express their desire for participation in the making of choices and decisions regarding the education offered to them on the local level of government. The expressions about learners' responsibilities may indicate the participating learners' commitment to participate in a positive way in the democratic processes, not only for themselves but also for other children, for instance the street kids.

In addition to learners' expressions about education, many learners formulated the relationship between education, children's learning experiences and the role of television (TV) as mass media. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) encourages the mass media to disseminate information and material of ‘social and cultural benefit’ to the child (Article 17) and for the preparation of the child for ‘responsible life in a free society’ (Article 29). Rushforth (2004) regards knowledge about mass media and its influence on citizens, especially the power of television, as part of ‘Citizenship Studies’. During the Focus group interview, participating learners expressed concerns about the influence of television on their learning.

‘on TV please no adult viewing during day time and weekends. I believe we are learning what we see. Children must have more learning things on TV and not naked people and rude things. TV has a big influence on us, there is too many violence and adult viewing’  
(P1 – Class 3)  
‘No adult TV’ (P2 – Class 3)

Participating learners revealed their insight on the influence television may have on their education. According to them certain programmes had a negative influence on children, especially ‘adult viewing’. The learners seem to prefer programmes with educational content. According to their framework of values such as Respect, they were indicating their desire to be treated as a special group of citizens, namely as child citizens with a preference for ‘child-centred’ television programmes. In the context of citizenship the learners revealed evidence of being democrats in an open society. The learners’ expressions are indicative that they were able to process information critically and intelligently; these are criteria for being a responsible citizen. The learners’ responses emphasize their acceptance of a culture of dialogue and participation concerning their own education.

Regarding television and its influence on children, participating learners referred to the role of Government, who should care ‘what children watch on TV’ (P1, P3 – Class 3 – Focus group interviews). Accountability in the education system means all stakeholders involved in education, including school governing bodies, the mass media like television and the educational authorities are accountable to the broader community and to the citizens of democratic society (Ministry of Education, 2001:18). During a Focus group interview each of the learners had to put on a mask of former President Nelson Mandela and then had to act in his role. The interviewer and the other members of the small focus group then asked ‘Mandela’ questions, which he had to answer. In the next transcription of this interview session, Participant 3 acted as Mr. Nelson Mandela and the research assistant as interviewer.

Interviewer	‘Mr. Mandela, what kind of person do you want the children to be?’
‘Mr. Mandela’	‘...not play the stuff on TV; children follow it because they play the bad things in the morning ... they do not play education stuff no more.’
Learner from group	‘Mr. Mandela, can you change the TV; make learning shows?’
‘Mr. Mandela’	‘Yes, more educational stuff, learning more people – <b>learning will bring more people together.</b> ’
Interviewer	‘Mr. Mandela, what programmes would you like children to watch?’
‘Mr. Mandela’	‘Put more education not violence. Help the <b>governing body</b> to put more education on TV especially on Saturdays.’

The nine-year-old learners of my case study seemingly revealed understandings that Government and local authority are both responsible and accountable for educating child citizens, especially through the medium of television. The nine-year-old learner (Participant 3), acting as Mr. Mandela, displayed mature cognitive thinking when expressing that education and learning would bring unity in the diverse South African society. This expression may indicate an insight into the value of accountability. Accountability entails that all citizens are responsible for the advancement or to ‘build up’ our nation through education and that we are all responsible too, to others in our society, for our individual behaviour, whether as administrators, political leaders, learners or the TV as mass media.

Learners expressed their feelings of being part of the local community, which revealed their relationship with the democratic dispensation of South Africa as child citizens. In the next theme, Theme 3, I report on the learners of my case study and their experiences of the democratic dispensation of South Africa.

#### 4.3.3 Theme 3: Learners living as child citizens in the democratic dispensation of South Africa<sup>4</sup>

The ‘new’ democratic dispensation of South Africa was formed in 1994 with the first general and democratic elections. The participating learners of my case study were born in the year of the

<sup>4</sup> Theme 3 and related categories, are visually depicted as the green circle in the Citizenship Context Diagram (see Figure 1 in **Addendum 11**).

establishment of the new democracy. Together with other citizens, it was foreseen that they ‘must share a common recognition of the fact that all of us stands to gain from the transformation of South Africa into a non-racial... and prosperous country...’ (Mr. Thabo Mbeki in Ministry of Education, 2001:76). One of the aims of the national curriculum is to prepare the youth for ‘participation as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities’. The basic premise of the national curriculum is the Constitution (1996) and it promotes a vision of: ‘A prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice (Department of Education, 2002c:1). It is against this background that I interpreted the participating learners' experiences about living in the democratic dispensation of South Africa. Categories of this theme crystallized as feelings of patriotism for South Africa (‘South Africa is my best world’), experiences and understandings about the South African democracy (‘We [South Africa] are a free democracy’) and comprehension of diversity and unity (‘We [South Africa] are called the rainbow nation’).

The participating learners of my case study expressed feelings of patriotism for South Africa, which culminated in feelings of a common citizenship and a sense of a national identity. As child citizens living in democratic South Africa, they expressed accountability for the advancement of South Africa by participating in the democratic processes. They regarded South Africa as a free democracy, thus seemingly reflecting insight of the democratic values of equality and an open society where the diverse populace of South Africa is unified in the South African democracy. The learners articulated definite opinions about their experiences of living in the democratic dispensation of South Africa as child citizens on which I elaborate in the next sections.

#### **4.3.3.1 ‘South Africa is my best world’**

Citizenship is about patriotism and about feelings of belonging and loyalty. These feelings culminate in an expression of national identity depending on the degree to which the citizen identifies with the nation-state (Osler, 2005:12-13). In the context of South Africa, a democracy where ‘a people pitted against each other brought into the unifying streams of democracy and nation building’ (Ministry of Education, 2001), was envisaged at the Saamtrek (Afrikaans for pulling together in one direction) conference in 2001. During this conference President Thabo Mbeki called for ‘The New Patriotism’, a sense of unity in the quest for a common South African destiny, a new

identity where individuals are comfortable with both a local or cultural identity as well as a national identity (Ministry of Education, 2001). This ‘new’ patriotism stems from pride and the values of people who call themselves a nation. From these values stem tolerance and acceptance, equality and democracy, dialogue, negotiation and conflict resolution that make South Africans a unique people. Pride is an ingredient of a healthy society and the consequences of all the values contained in the Constitution (1996) (Asmal in Ministry of Education, 2001:76). One of the sixteen educational strategies envisaged to instil the ‘new’ patriotism is: ‘Nurturing the new patriotism, or affirming our common citizenship’ (Ministry of Education, 2001:76).

Accordingly, I present expressions of the participating learners of my case on the new patriotism by reporting on their feelings for South Africa, which emerged in different contexts through different instruments, for example *Children's rights and responsibilities*, *What I like and don't like about South Africa* and *If I were Mr. Mbeki...* and the Focus group interviews (see Table 4.2).

‘South Africa is my best world’ (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

‘I like my country South Africa’ (P50 – Class 4 – *Children's rights and responsibilities*)

‘I love South Africa’ (P7, P13, P46 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

‘I love our country South Africa’ (P8, P16 and P5 – Class 3 – Focus group interview on slogans for posters meant for peers)

‘Our country is a beautiful place’ (P8 - Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*)

‘South Africa, our country is a very, very, very, very [4 times] beautiful place’ (P21 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*)

‘I am proud of this country’ (P28 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

‘I love my flag’ (P8, P10 - Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)

‘I feel proud of South Africa and the flag because I am part of it’ (P14, P28 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)

‘Everybody loves the flag because it belongs to South Africa’ (P3, P4, P5, P16, P21, P24 – Class 2 - *The South African Flag*)

‘I love the flag. It is important and pretty, the colours mean something to us, so that's why



we call the flag, the flag of the rainbow nation’ (P12 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)

‘I love the flag, it shows people coming together and because South Africa is a free democracy’ (P15 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)

As child citizens, participating learners expressed feelings of patriotism in abundance through expressions of pride, love, loyalty and appreciation for South Africa. It appears that learners felt that they belonged to South Africa as affirmed by Participant 1 of Class 3 when she said: ‘South Africa is my best world’ during a small focus group interview and discussion about South Africa. Through the symbolism of the new and colourful national flag learners indicated a sense of nationhood and a national identity. It appears that the ‘new patriotism’ has been nurtured, for the nine-year-old learners showed evidence of accepting a common citizenship. The last anecdote of the preceding evidence shows Participant 15 thinking in a mature way by relating feelings of patriotism with what South Africa stands for: a democratic dispensation for all its citizens.

In addition to their expressions of patriotism, participating learners of my case study expressed their accountability or responsibility to South Africa in a wide-ranging sense as one learner said: ‘The flag is dutyfull’ [sic] (P35 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*). In a broader context, accountability can be interpreted as the responsibility (duty) of each citizen for the advancement of the South African democracy. Accountability is a democratic value identified by the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy and acknowledged as the core of patriotism (Ministry of Education, 2001:17-18, 77). In *Slogans for posters meant for peers* various learners of Class 3 expressed their accountability for South Africa and requested their peers to adhere to this accountability as well.

‘Children look after our country because our children would like to see [it] too’ (P6)

‘Children keep country beautiful place’ (P5, P6, P7, P11, P18, P27, P34)

In the context of citizenship, the learners gave the impression that they felt accountable for South Africa in a participative way with both a vision of the future and of sustainability. This may indicate that the nine-year-old learners felt prepared for this extensive responsibility.

I relate learners' expressions about patriotism to their views about democracy. Although the

concepts of democracy and patriotism are interrelated in many ways such as democratic values, learners' expressions about democracy clearly emerged as a distinctive category on which I report subsequently.

#### 4.3.3.2 'We [South Africa] are a free democracy'

At this stage I want to recall my working definition of democracy as described in Chapter 1 of this study. The two 'kinds of democracy' that are deeply rooted in the South African tradition, are the **liberal** and the **social** democracy. Liberal democracy is rooted in liberalism and social democracy in socialism. Historically speaking, liberal democracy evolved from individualism with its distinctive feature of freedom (specifically personal freedom), while social democracy, on the other hand, developed from socialism with its distinctive feature of equality (Steyn, De Klerk & Du Plessis, 2006:5). According to Steyn *et al.* (2006:5), freedom and equality ought to be indisputably balanced in what they call a 'true democracy'.

Despite the dawn of democracy in 1994, one has to note that South Africa only has a limited democratic tradition and culture. The high level of violence, the lack of tolerance, the limited mutual respect and understanding of different groups for each other are still part of our daily life. A democratic culture can only be successfully established on the precondition that the hearts and minds of South Africans are won over to the case for a true democracy (Steyn *et al.*, 2006:2) where the rights of the individual as well as the well-being of the group counts. A sovereign, democratic state was foreseen at the Saamtrek conference in 2001, with the vision of democratic values binding the people of South Africa to 'compel transformation' (Ministry of Education, 2001:12). These values were foreseen as the discipline and the basis of government and all national institutions; the basic premises for the national ethos, the moral and the ethical direction which the nation has identified for its future (Mahomed in Ministry of Education, 2001:11). The Constitution entrenches these values and is therefore a 'call to action' to all South Africans to build a just and free democratic society in which the potential of each person is freed (Ministry of Education, 2001:11).

Against this background I analyzed the learners' expressions about their experiences of the South African democracy and related concepts in diverse contexts. Their expressions emerged in two focus areas, namely their conception about the values related to democracy and their knowledge about democratic processes. Many learners knew that former president Nelson Mandela (Madiba)

‘fought for democracy’ (P20 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*) and that they were free to speak their rights (see transcriptions of class discussions in **Addendum 8**). Participating learners also expressed their understandings of democratic values, mostly through *Letters to Madiba* and the discussions in the Small focus group interviews.

‘He [Mandela] made this country a democratic South Africa’. The verbatim interpretation of this statement by the learner was that ‘we [children] can go to any school we want and live in any area’ (P1 – Class 3 – Focus group interview)

‘We [South Africa] are a free democracy’ (P15 – Class 2 – *The South African Flag*)

‘Thank you for children's the freedom’ (P40 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

‘Thank you for making us [children] free and for making rights for children and that the country could have rights’ (P43 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

‘We are glad that you made 10 years of freedom’ (P61, P70 – Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba*)

The relationship between freedom and democracy is notably expressed by Participant 15 of Class 2 as ‘We [South Africa] are a **free democracy**’, seemingly emphasizing a liberal kind of democracy. In the light of this expression as well as the other preceding expressions, I propose that the participating nine-year-old learners appears have internalised the implication of abstract concepts related to democracy such as freedom, freedom of choice, freedom and rights. Reference to rights may include the learners' understanding of the democratic value of equality and an open society. In the context of citizenship, equality may refer to the participating learners' wish to be equal to other groups in society and therefore to be listened to. Concerning the value of an open society the learners may indicate awareness that they have the freedom and the constitutional right to play a part (and not only to observe) in the South African democracy as free citizens, free to talk, free to express themselves and free to have their own opinion.

Learners' expressions about democracy not only revealed their capacity to describe defining characteristics of democracy but also revealed their accountability to adhere to these values. I conclude this section by stating that the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study seemed to recognize the balance between freedom and equality, according to Steyn *et al.* (2006:5) a characteristic of ‘true democracy’. The learners also related the concepts of freedom, democracy and rights to former President Nelson Mandela, giving him the icon status as representation of

peace – a status he already held on national and international level (Ministry of Education, 2001:8; Rushforth, 2004:88).

Two learners (P38 of Class 4 – *Letters to Madiba* and P17 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*) indicated that they were immigrants and expressed negative feelings towards the South African democracy. I therefore excluded their contributions and only used data from the other learners as child citizens of the South African democracy and their contributions about the democracy.

In relation to the participating learners' knowledge about democracy, I refer to Mayesky (2006:479-483) who states that 9-12-year-old children can learn about complicated concepts and processes of democracy like peace and disagreement. Martin (2003:3) depicts knowledge about democratic processes as a feature of citizenship. Rushforth (2004) describes the working mechanisms of local and national government within a democracy as part of citizenship studies. Crick (in Hine, 2004) refers to the knowledge and skills related to citizenship education as political literacy and Mellor *et al.* (2002:11) as civic knowledge. I report on the learners' contribution to the instrument *The South African Flag* where learners of Class 3 were asked to interpret the colours of the flag by writing sentences about it. From the learners' contributions it was evident that the red colour in the flag symbolised specific meanings.

‘Red means blood and freedom’ (P49, P50, P53, P70)

‘Red means past and all the people that died’ (P31, P41, P46)

‘I like the flag, the red means people fought for freedom, so now we got freedom for this day, today, our tomorrow, us together as one nation no more war’ (P43)

Expressions by the participating learners of my case study seem to confirm my understanding that learners related the concepts of democracy and freedom with the symbolism of the new South African flag and vice versa. They seem to understand the historical background of the negotiated settlement that led to the peaceful establishment of the South African democracy where people from different pasts and positions in the society negotiated this settlement. The learners in addition seemed to have developed a historical consciousness through an informed awareness of our past.

Further ideas about democratic processes emerged from the data where learners completed the instruments *If I were the president I would be...*, the Focus group interview on a letter to Madiba and *Letters to Madiba*.

- ‘I want to be a president who is a good one. May all the people support me’ (P1 – Class 3 – *If I were the president I would be...*)
- ‘Thabo Mbeki is a good president of this country ... he takes responsibility for everybody and may all support him’ (P21 – Class 2 – *If I were the president I would be ...*)
- ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I would do everything that everyone can vote for me’ (P4 – Class2 - *If I were the president I would be...*)
- ‘Dear Madiba, thank you for teaching me about democracy and hiding your [my] vote’ (P3 – Class 3 – Focus group interview on a letter to Madiba)
- ‘When I grow up I will always vote for ANC [African National Congress]’ (P25 – Class3 – *Letters to Madiba*)

Participating learners knew that in a democracy people’s support is important and that your vote is secret as expressed as ‘hiding your [my] vote’ by Participant 3 of Class 3. However, from the excerpts it was also clear that learners simplified the complicated process of political parties promoting their ideals in order to gain the support of the voting public. This may be an indication of the learners' lack of knowledge about democratic processes.

However, participating learners knew about democratic processes like negotiation (talking together) as well as the responsibility of citizens for paying for services delivered, an aspect Osler (2005) associated with the legal status of a citizen. During a Focus group interview my field-worker acted as interviewer and facilitator when asking the participants to contribute to a letter, which she was writing on their behalf to former President Nelson Mandela (Madiba). Learners requested Madiba to act as follows:

- ‘Madiba, let all the people come together and talk’ (P1 – Class 3)
- ‘Madiba, tell people to have a meeting and tell them [the people] to pay bills for lights’ (P2 – Class 3).

From the contributions of the participating learners it was evident that the learners expressed a

sense of the democratic culture, which emphasised communication and participation as promoted by the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001) and the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c). It is evident from the above two sets of evidence that the learners related the political leaders in the persons of the former president, Mr. Nelson Mandela and the current president, Mr. Thabo Mbeki to the democratic processes, indicating their understanding of the role of the political leader in the South African democracy. The learners voiced strong ideas about leadership in the South African context as well as opinions about the characteristics of a leader and the associated accountability. To my mind, the participating learners were seemingly holding the two leaders as symbols of power, accountable for the advancement of the nation.

Against this background, I employed a drama technique to verify the learners' interests, their knowledge and skills about matters of a more political nature. The learners acted as citizens asking former President Nelson Mandela questions, which revealed some understandings of the learners' political literacy (see video of drama technique in **Addendum 8**). I used the hot chair drama technique to involve learners interactively and in direct dialogue with the former president. Although I expected this technique to disclose more knowledge and insight of the learners about politics, it only revealed some degree of learners' understandings about voting, the abolishment of apartheid, unity and their sense of belonging to South Africa. Learners revealed very little factual knowledge about politics and the structure and functions of local government, how democracy works, elections and canvassing for support as described by Martin (2003:2) and Rushforth (2004). What was evident from the drama technique was the learners' high social awareness. The fact that learners thought 'Robert Mugabe, President Botha or George Bush' had put Mr. Nelson Mandela in jail (see the following transcription of the drama technique) indicated on the one hand their lack of factual knowledge but on the other hand could be interpreted as modest interest in 'historical interpretation' (Department of Education – Learning Area: Social Sciences, 2002c:131).

**Mr. Nelson Mandela (Madiba) in the hot chair**

**Aim:**

Two students, Retha and Jaco, assisted with this drama technique. Jaco, with a mask of Mr. Nelson Mandela's face, role-played Mr. Mandela and Retha acted as the mediator/negotiator between Mr. Mandela and the learners. The intention was to create the atmosphere for the learners to act as citizens.

The idea was that the learners could question Mr. Mandela on the current political situation in South Africa with the aim that, through this process, learners would reveal their experiences as citizens.

**Scenario:**

Learners of Class 3 were sitting in the hall of the school, waiting quietly and in anticipation for what was about to happen. The video camera was in position, ready for action.

**Action:**

Retha: *Good afternoon, children. I have brought you a surprise!*

She walked out of the hall and came back with Jaco, wearing the mask of Mr. Mandela and dressed in black. He walked slowly up to a chair where he sat down, facing the learners.

**A few learners:** *It's fake! Fake Mandela!*

**Retha:** *Welcome Mr. Mandela!*

**Learner:** *How did you become a president?*

**Madiba:** *Democracy.*

**Learner:** *Apartheid ...* Another learner: *Celebrating 10 years...*

**Retha:** *What happened?*

**Learner 1:** *Voting for South Africa.*

**Learner 2:** *They voted for him.*

**Learner 3:** *...class vote... Your vote is a secret.*

**Madiba:** *Yes. Why must it be a secret?*

**Learner:** *I say I vote for the president and there is a person next to me and he wants to vote for the same person.*

**Learner 2:** *...because he want to copy your vote.*

**Madiba:** *Do you vote for class leaders? Why is a vote a secret?*

**Learners from the group:** *Why do..., You can vote for someone..., When... the president is the real person who must be the president? Thabo Mbeki...*

**Retha:** *Why is a vote a secret?*

**Learners from the group:** *Intimidation, force, threaten, freedom.*

**Learner 1 to Madiba:** *Why were you in jail?*

**Learner 2:** *Because he wants the whites and blacks to come together.*

**Learner 3:** *Who put him in jail?*

**Learners from the group:** *Robert Mugabe, President Botha, George Bush.*

**Madiba:** *Do you like SA?*

(Silence from the group)

**Retha:** *Why do you like SA?*

**Learners from the group:** *It's a nice country, not one colour of people, different colour people, I like South Africa because I was born here, because it is our country, I was born in SA, it's a beautiful country, nature, rainbow nation.*

*But we don't like bad things like smoking, lying, stealing, raping, killing.*

**Madiba:** *How will you change these bad things?*

**Learners from the group:** *Don't sell drugs, crime, stop cutting trees. I know why they make Thabo Mbeki the president because Mandela was too old.*

**Learner to Madiba:** *How many years were you President?*

**Madiba:** *Only two years.*

**Madiba:** *Can the children make this country a better place?*

**Learners from the group:** (Learners all replied and individual voices could not be distinguished)

**Madiba:** *You must make the small changes.*

**Learners from the group:** *Pollution stop, pick up paper, look after the country, people who hate should love each other ... respect each other.*

Learners, participating in the drama technique, indicated limited political knowledge, although they acknowledged the value of respect as already explored as a democratic value in Theme 1 (4.3.1.3). Respect seemed not only to govern the relationship of the learners as citizens with each other and with other citizens, but also directed the learners' views on equality and diversity. In the following section I elaborate on the aspect of equality and diversity as core concepts of citizenship.



#### 4.3.3.3 ‘We [South Africans] are called the rainbow nation’

This category is about equality and diversity with the main issue at hand: How do people live together in a multicultural society or nation state? Davies and Rey (2000:183-184) refer to this issue as a question of different identities and that the concepts of ‘intercultural and intercultural education’ could affirm understanding between individuals with different identities related, for example, to race and culture. The concept ‘intercultural’ affirms the reality of interactions and interdependence as well as ensuring that these interactions contribute to mutual respect and the formation of cohesive communities rather than accentuating relations of domination and attitudes of exclusion and rejection. Intercultural education relates closely to certain models of education for citizenship where the importance of different identities is seen against the embracing practices of human rights, participatory democracy and equality. According to Davies and Rey (2000:184) this approach is vital for citizenship. While there is evidence of apathy amongst young people concerning politics, there is at the same time a climate of intolerance, aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism which expresses itself through violence against people of immigrant origin and minority groups (Council of Europe in Davies & Rey, 2000:184).

The ideal of a South African rainbow nation was publicised since 1994 with the establishment of democratic South Africa. It was propagated that for the diverse South Africa to establish the ideal of the rainbow nation, South Africans needed to build a united nation-state and democratic dispensation based on the democratic values such as social justice and equity as well as equality as entrenched in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The vision of the democratic South Africa, as described by the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001), is as follows: ‘moulding a people from diverse origins, cultural practices, languages into one within a framework, democratic of character ...that can mediate conflicts without oppression and injustices’. These ideals were protected in laws related to education such as the National Education Policy Act (1996) that aims to protect and advance South Africa's cultures and languages (Ministry of Education, 2001).

The Constitution, Article 9 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) states: ‘everyone is equal before the law’ and may not be discriminated against on the basis of ‘race, gender, sex ...ethnic or social origin, colour, ...age, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth’. The concepts of

diversity, inclusivity and age which are related to the ‘Equality Clause’ (Ministry of Education, 2001) of the Constitution, is significant to my study, because the ‘Equality Clause’ substantiates my argument that child citizens are to be treated as equal citizens in the South African society. The values of tolerance and respect for others stem from the ‘Equality Clause’, and are not only a South African concern but also an international one. On international level the Human Rights Act (1998) banned all unfair discrimination and stereotyping related to gender, religion and disability. In this context Martin Luther King (in Rushforth, 2004:14-16) said: ‘I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged according to the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.’ In the context of Australia, Mellor *et al.* (2002:7, 12) refers to equality as social cohesion since the overcoming of individual and institutionalized racism is one of the biggest challenges of the reconciliation process in the Australian society (Woods in Mellor *et al.*, 2002:7). Participating learners of my case study expressed opinions on various aspects related to equality and diversity in the democratic dispensation of South Africa.

‘We [South Africa] have a lot of different people’ (P18, P25 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

‘I like different languages’ (P10 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*)

‘I like the flag, blacks and whites and more cultures’ (P43 – Class 3 – *The South African Flag*)

‘I like the flag because it has different colours and different colours of cultures’ (P52 – Class 3 – *The South African Flag*)

‘I like the flag because it has many cultures and a rainbow nation’ (P61 – Class 3 – *The South African Flag*)

The participating learners seem to have an understanding of the concepts of different identities uniting as a nation. The learners mentioned the fact that they lived in a country with people, different in various ways. They indicated insight into the linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity of the South African population. The learners' understanding of diversity and unity is confirmed by their knowledge and understanding of the symbolism of the South African flag. Learners seemingly understood the symbolism of the flag: the unique central design of the ‘V’ at the flag post comes together in the centre of the flag, extending further, as a single horizontal band to the outer edge of the fly. This symbol can be seen as representing the interlinking or convergence of diverse elements in South African society, which take the road ahead in unison (Department of Education, 2001c).

A learner (P25 – Class 1 – *What I like and don't like about South Africa*) made a drawing with different faces, each face a different colour, similar to the colours of the South African flag, which symbolises the different cultures in South Africa forming a unity. Another drawing showed people (presented in different colours) holding hands together and smiling (see examples of drawings in **Addendum 8**). Apart from the above evidence of learners' conception of a South African unity, is the evidence gained from the learners in Class 4 when they sang the national anthem. The learners requested to sing the national anthem of South Africa. I observed the joy on their faces while singing all the verses of the national anthem and when I asked them at the end of the song for the reason why they stood on attention a learner responded 'for the love and togetherness (P16 – Class 4 – Transcriptions of class discussion). It was evident in the sentences about *The South African Flag* that learners not only related the concepts of equality and diversity to unity but also the concepts of diversity and unity to democracy.

'I love the flag, it shows people come together' (P21 – Class 2)

'Black and White together and more cultures. Us together as one nation, no more war.  
Thank you for this **special unity**' (P43 – Class 3)

'I love the flag, it shows people coming together and because it is a democracy' (P15 – Class 2)

'I love my flag because it has many cultures and a rainbow nation' (P61 – Class 3)

Not only did participating learners indicate their acknowledgement of diversity and an understanding of the interrelatedness of diversity and the 'special unity' in the democratic dispensation of South Africa, but it appears that they were committed on a personal level to the democratic value of equality and the practice of non-discrimination. Learners expressed an attitude of acceptance and tolerance towards people with different identities when participating in the Focus group interviews.

'I promise to not fight or judge someone of their culture and not to hate people but to love them' (P2 – Class 3 – Focus group interview on a letter to Madiba)

'Accept foreign people but South Africans must be given first privilege for work' (P1 – Class

3 – Focus group interview on a book about South Africa)

‘Racism should come to an end from white people as well as black people. Everyone should be given a chance in life no matter what your skin colour ... your pink or blue, poor or rich’  
(P1 – Focus group interview on a book about South Africa)

During the Focus group interview on how to write a book about South Africa Participant one of Class 3, revealed conditional acceptance towards people from another country: that they don't overpower the job market, a sensitive issue in the South African society (Moodley & Adam, 2004). The last of the preceding anecdotes contributed by Participant 1, may indicate that learners experienced racism, although they have been facilitated the democratic value of equality, which they indicated as an accepted value. It seems that Participant 1 understood that racism is a threat to unity in South Africa. The rationale for giving the preceding expressions of learners was to illustrate that the nine-year-old learners gave the impression that they had accepted the abstract democratic value of equality, which encompasses tolerance and respect for other with diverse identities, viz. core components of citizenship.

#### 4.3.4 Theme 4: Learners' desire for change in securing their future<sup>5</sup>

Citizenship entails educating children as future citizens. The basic precept of citizenship education is seen as one way to prepare young learners to enhance their own personal growth and to contribute to the society in which they live, especially in societies where transformations are taking place (Mellor *et al.*, 2002:8; Wilde, 2005). Citizenship education should involve assisting children to participate in school and community at a variety of levels. In preparation for participation, children need particular skills and a values-based framework. This may require those concerned with citizenship and citizenship education to rethink their conceptualisation of childhood, so that children are acknowledged as citizens and trust is placed in their evolving competence (Holden & Clough, 2000). Such education would facilitate the active citizens to keep themselves informed about civic issues like problems and conflicts facing all citizens and to form their own opinions. The future citizens will understand their own rights and take their responsibilities seriously. Their decisions and actions will be tempered by a moral concern for social justice and the dignity of

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<sup>5</sup> This theme is visually depicted as the blue circle in the Citizen Context Diagram (see Figure 1 in **Addendum 11**), which I linked to the pink blocks to visualize learners' expressions about the future related to change. From a two-dimensional view (see Figure 1) the blue circle can be seen as a thin outer ring for the few direct expressions made by the learners on the future. From a three-dimensional view the blue circle (see Figure 2 in **Addendum 11**) can be regarded as a large circle, foundational to all other circles of the Citizen Context Diagram (see Figure 1), signifying the immensity of the future stretching ahead of the nine-year old learners as citizens.

human kind. They will keep asking critical questions of those in power and persist that their views are listened to. They will demand that those in power are accountable to those that put them there. As Rushforth (2004:113) states: ‘it is up to the active citizens to create the future all of us want to see.’

The learners' expressions about their desire for change in securing their futures crystallised in two related categories: ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki, I would make a better nation’, which entails child citizens being active in working for change and ‘We [children] are the future’, which deals with child citizens being active in working for the future.

The learners who shared their experiences recognised the notion of change in their lives as well as in the context of South Africa. They were critical as to the change they promoted in their local community, which was mostly related to social change. To enhance the desired change they were committed to participate themselves and held the leaders accountable for implementing change. The learners also showed mature thinking in relating change to their futures and their own accountability for sustaining South Africa as their country. However, I recognised a feeling of powerlessness in the learners' expressions for their aspirations to participate was only expressed in an imaginative way. Although the concepts of change and future are integrated, I attempt to present each category as an entity by submitting relevant evidence in the following sections.

#### **4.3.4.1 ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki, I would make a better nation’<sup>6</sup>**

Civics and citizenship are related to change. According to Mellor *et al.* (2002:8) and De Villiers (2005), the life of the future citizen would be characterized by profound changes, changes at the core of peoples' existence. Mellor *et al.* (2002:8) refers to the social and economic transformation citizens of the future will be faced with. This would seem to call for citizens who are active and committed in participating in all of society's processes and for citizenship education that can play a role in preparing young citizens for this future and its challenges. This category is about the participating learners' expressions on the desire for change in relation to their future.

In data from all instruments the notion of **change** emerged, related to diverse contexts. The expressions by the participating learners of my case study about change have to be seen against the

background of the learners' discontent with conditions within the 'new' democratic dispensation of South Africa. As already reported in this chapter, learners disliked the violence and crime they seemed to have experienced and the neglect of vulnerable people in their local community. Learners related change to different aspects and levels of their lives. According to Zuern (2001:5), a formal national transition, for example South Africa's transition from an oppressive government to a non-racial democracy, does not simply lead to local level change, a situation the learners had been reporting.

Expressions about change seem to be integrated with the learners' expressions about their need to participate in bringing about change. John (2000:9) describes this desire of young children as 'being active in working for change'. For individuals to bring about change in a democracy, they have to participate in democratic processes like voting or becoming an elected representative (Rushforth, 2004:34). Price quotes Beyer (2001:49), who asserted that criticism of current realities and participation in the recreation of our worlds are a central part of citizenship and democratic life. Although the nine-year-old learners are too young to participate in political processes like voting or being elected as a representative, they needed to understand the knowledge of these processes as part of their empowerment as citizens. In the context of South Africa, a developmental outcome envisaged by the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c:6) is a learner who will be able to participate as a responsible citizen in the democracy.

In seeking to understand the significance of the learners' accounts on change and their participative role, I report on their expressions related to these aspects of citizenship. The frequent use of the word 'change' by the learners was revealed mostly by the data from the instruments concerning the two leaders: the completion of the sentence *If I were Mr. Mbeki...* and *Letters to Madiba* (see Table 4.2). However, learners used the word change in an imaginative way and through the persons of Mr. Mbeki and Mr. Mandela. When completing the instrument *If I were Mr. Mbeki...* learners of Class 2 acted in role play and wrote the following:

'If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the community' (P9)

'If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the country' (P34)

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<sup>6</sup>The concept change is presented as pink blocks, framed blue to visually depict the relationship between future and change - see the Citizenship Context Diagram - Figure 1 in **Addendum 11**.

‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I would make a better nation’ (P7 – Class 3)

‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I would, will change the world’ (P30)

‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the world into a better place’ (P17)

In *Letters to Madiba* learners of Class 3 and 4 expressed their requirements for change in the subsequent anecdotes:

‘Madiba, can you make some changes around South Africa, stop people fighting, killing, stop abuse, help people who live in the streets looking for jobs, with no money to buy food for their children’ (P47, P37, P34 – Class 3)

‘Madiba, change people that are stealing, raping children, abusing children, killing people’ (P34 – Class 4)

‘Madiba, I want you to change our country’ (P64 – Class 3)

‘Madiba, I wish everything could change’ (P67 – Class 4)

‘Madiba, I want you to change the world’ (P52 – Class 3)

It appears that the participating learners of my case study hoped for change not only on a local but also on a national and global level. Wanting to ‘change the world’ may indicate the learners’ perception of themselves as global citizens. Global citizenship is a concept related to citizenship and has recently been discussed by many writers in the field of citizenship (Ackers & Stalford, 2004; Ortloff, 2005). Osler (2005:3) proposed the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship, especially in societies with a multicultural and multi-ethnic character. Goodman (2007) refers to international citizenship. Smith and Armstrong (2003) see the world as a global village with different nationalities and ages of which one-fifth of the villagers are nine years of age. Although global citizenship is an important component of citizenship the learners only expressed ideas on global citizenship in relation to the concept of change.

In addition, from the expressions learners gave in the preceding anecdotes, it appears that the participating learners held the two leaders, Mr. Mbeki and Mr. Mandela, as symbols of power, responsible and accountable for change, especially for undesirable circumstances to which the learners referred repeatedly. The leaders were seemingly held accountable to the electorate that put them in those positions. This may indicate the learners’ knowledge and understanding of the

relationship between leaders, as symbols of power and their responsibility to the ordinary citizenry in a democracy.

The learners' conceptualisation of change related mostly to social change as supposed to personal change or 'progress'; or any other type of change they could have focused on. Social change is seen as the transformation of social relations and dynamics in a given community (Collins & O'Brien, 2003:327). John (2000:9) stated that young children have a strong sense of social justice. The nine-year-old learners' expressions about social change were evident when they asked Mr. Mbeki and Mr. Mandela to assist in bringing about change. Learners not only commented on the different changes they wanted Mr. Mbeki to perform, but also indicated how they would implement these changes if they were in his shoes. When doing the instrument *If I were Mr. Mbeki...* learners of Class 2 suggested the following:

- 'If I were Mr. Mbeki I will change, give people money' (P23, P2, P4, P9, P10, P13, P41)
- 'If I were Mr. Mbeki I will change the country, help the people that live in the street that don't have money and food' (P34)
- 'If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the world and give food and money' (P38)
- 'If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the streets and the crime...' (P39)
- 'If I were Mr. Mbeki I will take care of South Africa, I will change the rules and give people money and will make sure our country is safe' (P36)

Most of the changes these learners suggested and the rectification of the social problems (as given in all the preceding anecdotes) may be related to social change concerning vulnerable people and people threatening the security of the local community. Concerning the last scenario, Participant 36 saw the democratic value of the rule of law as the solution for securing a safe community. In most of the learners' recommendations for implementing change, the word 'money' was used, accentuating learners' insight into the relationship between social and economic transformation.

Although learners expressed a need to participate in the desired changes, their expressions demonstrated a sense of powerlessness in relation to their ability to initiate and achieve change. I relate this assumption to the absence in their expressions of themselves as citizens participating in the construction of change in the civic domain. Learners did not report on direct involvement in



decision-making processes at school and in the community. Learners only reported on their urge for changing negative circumstances and experiences influencing their lives. This may indicate that although the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c:6) prescribes participation of responsible citizens, it is still only an idea and not a practical application in the life-experiences of these learners.

With the expression ‘If I were Mr. Mbeki I would change the future’ (P6 – Class 2), this participant related the concepts ‘change’ and ‘future’, signifying the learners’ perception of the importance of a changing future for the nine-year-old learners as citizens. In the subsequent section I report on the learners’ perceptions and statements about the future.

#### **4.3.4.2 ‘We [children] are the future’**

Children are concerned about the future (Holden & Clough, 2000:21). Learners expressed a desire for a better future secured by a changed society. They articulated a future vision of a happy and peaceful life, a vision where they would participate actively in making the world a better place. De Villiers (2005:11) refers to ‘the future as a point in time to be reached, a forthcoming reality that is changing’ and that there are ‘one day’ perceptions of the future: tomorrow, next week, next year or the next generation OR a perception of the future as an imminent ‘now’ reality.

The participating learners of my case study did not share many explicit expressions about the future and the few expressions about the future emerged in the instruments: *Letters to Madiba*, *If I were Mr. Mbeki* and the Focus group interviews (see Table 4.2). The analysis of the data may signify the learners' awareness of the future related to many spheres of their lives and their perceptions of the role former President Nelson Mandela and President Thabo Mbeki should have in their futures. Learners saw a future where the leaders would ‘take care of all the people’ (P17 – Class 2 – *If I were Mr. Mbeki...*) and where ‘all the children will be loved’ (P55 – *Letters to Madiba*). In this category I deal with the learners' expressions of being active in working for their futures, futures where children are important citizens.

According to the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001:1), young South Africans are being educated as the citizenship of tomorrow in classrooms throughout the country. They are being prepared for the common destiny of the South Africa to be, a future

South Africa based on the Constitution (Act No 108 of 1996) (Ministry of Education, 2001:1). The Constitution expresses the nation's social values and its expectations of the roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic South Africa. The Bill of Rights (Republic of South Africa, 1996) places paramount value on equal opportunity, human dignity, life, freedom and security of persons. The National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002c:4-6) builds on the vision and values of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and envisages 'the kind of learner' that will not only develop his or her full potential as a citizen of democratic South Africa but who will also participate in society as a critical and active citizen. Against this background, a participating learner articulated the following:

'We [children] must look after our country because our children [meaning their own children] would like to see [it] too' (P6 – Class 3 - *Slogan for a poster meant for peers*)

This participating learner seems to be aware of his future role and responsibility as citizen of South Africa. He expressed an acknowledgement of the importance of the sustainability of South Africa for future generations and his accountability toward it.

As future citizens, the learners were future-orientated and expressed a desire to participate in securing their futures, futures in which they wished to experience a content life, shared with other citizens. In relation to the learners' awareness of their potential as role players in their own futures, a learner (P1) of Class 3 said in the Focus group interviews, during two different sessions:

'We [children] are the future and I believe that we as the youth can make a difference in the future'

The participating learner expressed a belief in themselves as child citizens, a minority but important group of the South Africa populace, with a desire for change in securing their future. They are aware of the power of their voices, voices claiming participation, a decisive aspect of citizenship. Learners associated their future visions with their feelings of patriotism for South Africa. Many learners expressed their willingness to contribute to ensure South Africa's future.

‘I will love this country. Promise to never throw paper and pollution ... and I will be faithful for the rest of my life’ (P22 – Class 3 – *Letters to Madiba*)

The impression I gained from the participating learners' preceding expressions is that they were willing to be active citizens, committed to participate in their futures and with an overwhelming patriotism towards South Africa. The learners' expressions about the future seemed to indicate that they perceived the future as both ‘one day’ and ‘now’ reality (De Villiers, 2005:11), which indicates evaluation, thus mature thinking for nine-year-old learners (Morrison, 2006:284). It seemed that the participating learners shared the vision of the national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c) and were willing to become the ‘envisaged learner’ as already described in this study.

#### 4.4 Concluding remarks on main findings

Data from the nine-year-old learners who participated in my case study, revealed an abundance of life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation of South Africa. Exploring these experiences and understandings enlightened me on the learners' understandings of citizenship and their democratic identities. They presented themselves as citizens who:

- were intensely patriotic and identified passionately with the South African democracy, the flag and its symbolism; thus expressing a national and South African identification
- demonstrated fairly high social awareness
- understood abstract concepts related to democracy and citizenship such as: the rights and responsibilities of a citizen, diversity of cultures within which the unity of South Africa is manifested, and democratic processes like voting to some extent
- internalised the democratic values such as democracy, social justice, equality, *ubuntu* (human dignity), accountability, the rule of Law and respect
- were critical in terms of the lack of social security. They declared dissatisfaction with their unsafe neighbourhood, including what they perceived as social injustices
- held the political leaders liable for enforcing the law and rectifying social injustices
- perceived the future as both ‘one day’ and ‘now’
- advocated for change, especially social change in securing their futures

The voices of the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study revealed themselves as committed to be the active and responsible citizen. However, the learners expressed their participation in the democratic dispensation of South Africa only in an imaginative way and as a future vision. Irrespective of the learners' dedication to democracy and their desire to participate in ensuring a sustainable future life in the South African democracy, they were seemingly excluded from the current democratic processes.

I presented the empirical data grouped around four themes in this chapter. The four themes and relevant categories represented the major life-experiences of the learners as: nine-year-old citizens, citizens of the local community, citizens of democratic South Africa and citizens in need for a changed society which will secure their futures. I closely explored and examined the four themes in order to come to a profound understanding on how the learners' experiences and understandings of democratic practices shaped their understandings of citizenship and their democratic identities, on which I elaborate in depth in Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, I present an account on how the learners' acquired understandings of citizenship and democratic identities could extend generally held current conceptions of citizenship education. I offer interpretative commentary by exploring the findings against the background of the selected theoretical framework and related literature.