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THE ACCOMMODATION OF THE BLACK GRADE NINE LEARNER IN A TRADITIONALLY WHITE SCHOOL

by

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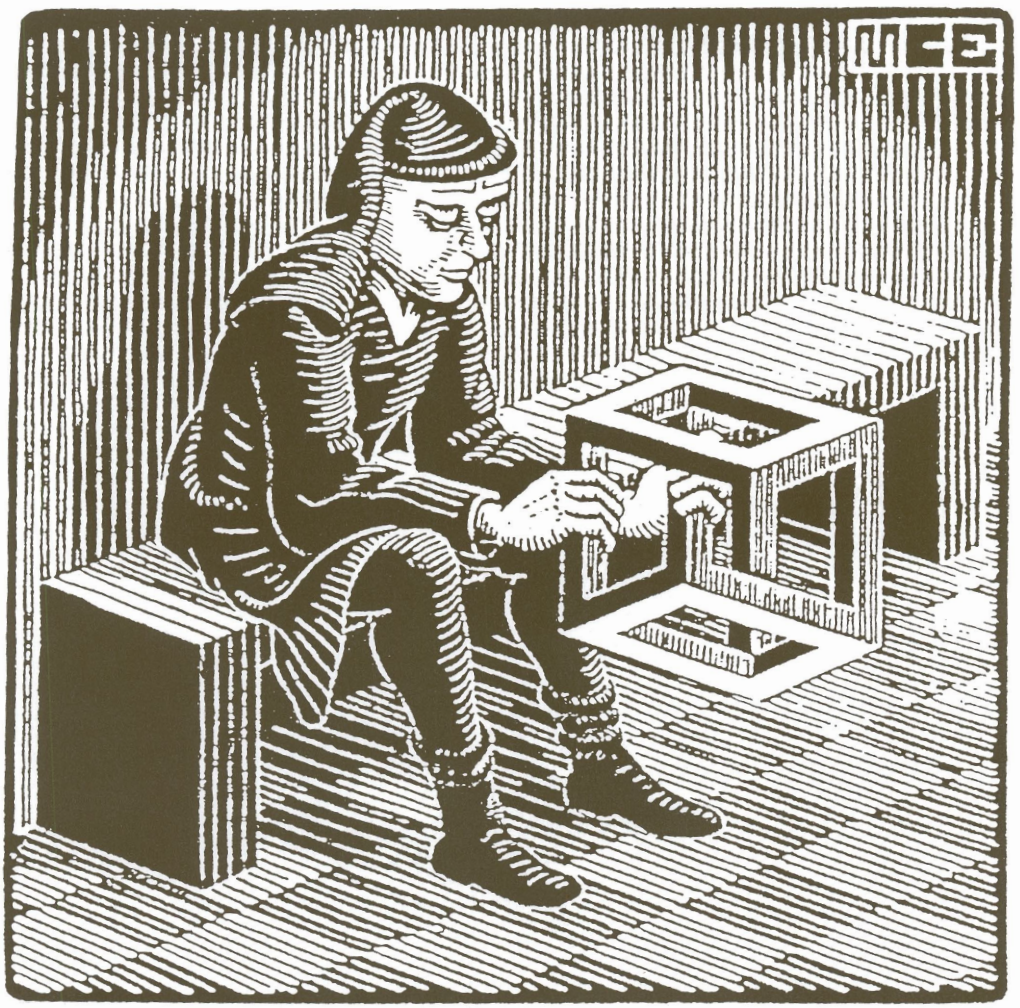

The highest wisdom has but one science, the science of the whole. (*Leo Tolstoy,* War and Peace)

To my parents

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SUMMARY

THE ACCOMMODATION OF THE BLACK GRADE NINE LEARNER IN A TRADITIONALLY WHITE SCHOOL

by

Petro Erasmus

SUPERVISOR : Prof. Dr G.V. Ferreira

DEPARTMENT : Orthopedagogics

DEGREE : Philosophiae Doctor

In South Africa, First World and Third World elements exist side by side, representing different social, economic and political realities. The current educational dispensation advocates the exposure of members of various cultures to one another at school.

This study focuses on the quality of accommodation and possible accompanying problems and the degree of belonging experienced by black learners attending traditionally white schools. Differences between the cultural orientation, socio-economic situation and historico-political background of black learners, as opposed to the orientation of the schools they attend, could hinder their adjustment to these schools. Additional influencing factors could be these learners' expectations of the self, school and society, as well as a possible educational backlog.

This study endeavoured to research and describe black learners' life-worlds, especially their experience of the multicultural school environment in traditionally white schools. The aim of the empirical research was to identify any specific educational and underlying emotional needs that could arise from hailing from a different cultural background. This aim was realised firstly by undertaking a theoretical investigation focusing on the literature on the subject, and secondly by an empirical investigation in two phases into various aspects of black Grade Nine learners' life-worlds.

In the theoretical investigation, which served as a basis for the empirical study, an attempt was made to research the cultural and home situation of Grade Nine black learners. The discussion of problems that these learners could encounter within traditionally white schools was based on an eighteen-theme "culture-general framework" applied to the South African school situation.

The empirical research involved visits to a sample of eight traditionally white schools in Gauteng. Qualitative and quantitative methods were combined in a two-phase research design. In the quantitative phase, a questionnaire directed at the learners was applied to a sample of 332 learners. The questionnaire gathered biographical information, and data on the family, individual and school/cultural dimensions to identify stumbling blocks to and facilitating elements in the process of accommodation in these schools. The qualitative phase consisted of participating data collection techniques, namely sixteen semi-structured focus interviews with eight selected learners and eight teachers, one learner and one teacher from each of the eight participating schools. The interviews concentrated on the learners' and teachers' feelings regarding the same dimensions addressed by the questionnaire. The combination of these two procedures allowed a holistic and more in-depth picture of the nature of the learners' experiences and needs at school to emerge. The validity of the eventual conclusions was heightened by the process of triangulation between the theoretical, qualitative and quantitative findings.

Racism was identified as a prominent stumbling block, and effective accommodation strategies were lacking at schools. Learners displayed definite emotional and social needs within the school situation. On the other hand, several facilitating elements are already present in these schools and could be developed further. This challenging situation is addressed by means of various guidelines aiming to improve the quality of accommodation within schools. Suggestions for future research are also made.

Key words:

- black Grade Nine learner
- traditionally white school
- school accommodation

- educational/emotional needs
- culture-general framework
- stumbling blocks
- facilitating elements
- two-phase research design
- quantitative/qualitative research
- racism
- multiculturalism and anti-racism
- intercultural interaction
- double-bind situation
- holistic approach
- whole-school approach

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SAMEVATTING

DIE AKKOMMODASIE VAN DIE SWART GRAAD NEGE LEERDER IN 'N TRADISIONEEL-BLANKE SKOOL

deur

Petro Erasmus

PROMOTOR : **Prof. Dr. G V Ferreira**

DEPARTEMENT : **Ortopedagogiek**

GRAAD : **Philosophiae Doctor**

In Suid-Afrika bestaan Eerste en Derde wêrelde sy aan sy en is verteenwoordigend van verskillende sosiale, ekonomiese en politieke realiteite. Die huidige onderwysbedeling bepleit die blootstelling van verskeie kulture aan mekaar op skoolvlak.

Hierdie studie fokus op die kwaliteit van die akkommodasie en moontlike meegaande probleme en die graad van samehorigheid wat swart leerders in tradisioneel-blanke skole ervaar. Swart leerders se kulturele oriëntasie, sosio-ekonomiese situasie en histories-politiese agtergrond, in teenstelling met dié van hulle skool, kan hulle aanpassing by hierdie skole bemoeilik. Dit wil voorkom of hulle verwagtinge van hulself, skool en samelewing, sowel as 'n moontlike opvoedkundige agterstand ook hul ervaring van akkommodasie kan beïnvloed.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om swart leerders se leefwêrelde, veral hulle ervaring van die multikulturele skoolomgewing in 'n voorheen tradisioneel-blanke skool, na te vors. Die spesifieke doelstellings van die empiriese navorsing was om die opvoedkundige en onderliggende emosionele, sowel as enige ander behoeftes wat kan voortspruit uit verskillende kulturele agtergronde, te identifiseer. Hierdie doelstellings is gerealiseer deur eerstens 'n teoretiese ondersoek en tweedens deur 'n empiriese ondersoek na verskeie aspekte van die leefwêrelde van swart Graad Nege leerlinge te loods.

In die teoretiese ondersoek, wat dien as basis vir die empiriese studie, is 'n poging aangewend om die kulturele en huislike gesitueerdheid van Graad Nege swart leerlinge na te vors. Probleme wat hierdie leerlinge binne die tradisioneel-blanke skool kon teekom, was gebaseer op 'n agttien-tema "kultuur-algemene raamwerk" wat toegepas is op die Suid-Afrikaanse situasie.

Die empiriese ondersoek het bestaan uit besoeke aan agt tradisioneel-blanke skole in Gauteng. Kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe metodes is gekombineer gedurende die empiriese studie. Gedurende die kwantitatiewe ondersoek is 'n vraelys gemik op 'n steekproef van 332 leerders gebruik. Die vraelys het biografiese inligting, data oor die gesins-, indiwiduele en skool-/kulturele dimensies ingewin om struikelblokke en fasiliterende elemente in hierdie skole te identifiseer. Die kwalitatiewe ondersoek het bestaan uit deelnemende data-insamelingstegnieke, naamlik sestien semi-gestruktureerde fokusonderhoude met agt leerders en agt onderwysers, een leerder en een onderwyser van elk van die agt deelnemende skole. Die kombinasie van hierdie twee prosedures verteenwoordig 'n holistiese en meer in-diepte prentjie van die aard van leerders se ervaringe en behoeftes op skool. Die geldigheid van die uiteindelike gevolgtrekkinge is aangehelp deur die proses van triangulasie tussen die teoretiese, kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe bevindings.

Rassisme is duidelik 'n prominente struikelblok, en doeltreffende akkommodasiestrategieë was nie in plek by die skole nie. Leerders het spesifieke emosionele en sosiale behoeftes getoon binne die skoolsituasie. Aan die ander kant was daar ook verskeie fasiliterende elemente teenwoordig in die skole, wat dan ook verder uitgebou kan word. Hierdie uitdagende situasie word aangespreek deur verskeie riglyne wat poog om die kwaliteit van akkommodasie in skole te verhoog. Voorstelle vir verdere navorsing word ook gemaak.

Sleutelwoorde:

- swart Graad Nege leerling
- tradisioneel-blanke skool
- skoolakkommodasie
- opvoedkundige/emosionele behoeftes

- kultuur-algemene raamwerk
- struikelblokke
- fasiliterende elemente
- twee-fase navorsingsontwerp
- kwantitatiewe/kwalitatiewe navorsing
- rassisme
- multikulturalisme en anti-rassisme
- interkulturele interaksie
- "double-bind" situasie
- holistiese benadering
- hele-skool benadering

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