

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: INTERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS AND TEACHING STAFF

“Ask.

Listen and record.

Ask.

Listen and record.

It is a grave responsibility to ask.

It is a privilege to listen.”

Halcolm, quoted in Patton (1990:358-359)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Individual focus interviews consisting of semi-structured questions were conducted with sixteen respondents until the data was saturated, as demonstrated by a repetition of themes. Each of the eight participating schools was represented by one black Grade Nine learner (four boys and four girls) as well as one member of the teaching staff. The aim of the interviews was to gain a better understanding of the experiences, the perceptions and the life-worlds of these learners in a multicultural, traditionally white school. The sanctioning of the free expression of thoughts, feelings and criticism gave these learners “voices” – a form of expression that was actively discouraged in the past.

The data were then analysed by means of the eight steps described in Tesch's (1990) method of data analysis (discussed in Creswell, 1994:154-155) – see Section 4.5.2.4 for a more detailed account. Thereafter, the identified categories and sub-categories were placed in a theoretical framework (see also Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5) which provided a structure for the identification and discussion of dimensions relevant to this study. In accordance with this framework, the life-worlds of the black learners in this study were divided into the family, the individual and the school/cultural dimensions. Interaction between these dimensions largely determines the quality of the learners' life-worlds.

The family dimension refers to factors related to learners' home and family circumstances (see also Table 4.3).

The individual dimension (see Table 4.4) focuses on aspects related to the learners themselves.

The school/cultural dimension refers to a number of aspects regarding the school (see Table 4.5).

The findings are discussed in two phases. First, the findings of the interviews with learners are explored. Then the findings of interviews with the teachers are examined.

6.2 INTERVIEWS: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS OF LEARNER INTERVIEWS

The learners' experiences of the identified dimensions are discussed in the order set out in Table 6.1. The discussion focuses on a collection of learners' experiences. It features excerpts from the most data-rich interviews. The stumbling blocks that inhibit meaningful and adequate accommodation in a traditionally white multicultural school are dealt with first. Then facilitating elements that encourage multicultural school accommodation are discussed.

In discussing all the themes in the various dimensions, a literature control was added, comparing the results with the findings set out in other literature on the subject. This control contributed to the richness of the study. Also, whenever relevant, the discussion of the findings refers to the findings of the questionnaire in order to triangulate results or to demonstrate convergence in the findings. Moreover, the mixing of methods is in line with Creswell's (1994:189) suggestion and served "to find contradictions and new perspectives, and to add scope and breadth" to the study. New perspectives resulting from the research are mentioned. Aspects found in the literature but which do not appear in the research findings of this study are noted. Field notes taken to validate the results were incorporated where relevant.

Although the rhetoric or language of research for qualitative texts may adopt a personal and informal style (Creswell, 1994:6-7;159-160), this chapter is written in a predominantly

impersonal and formal style. However, grammatical and idiomatic errors in the interviews have not been corrected in the excerpts. Any names that appeared in the transcriptions have been changed to ensure the anonymity of both the respondents and anyone they referred to.

In the discussion of the experiences of learners who enter a traditionally white school, both elements that provide stumbling blocks (in the form of hindrances that prevent an experience of accommodation), and facilitating elements (that promote a sense of accommodation) are presented. The order in which the findings of the learner interviews are presented is summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Stumbling blocks and facilitating elements that contribute to the accommodation of black Grade Nine learners, from the learners' point of view

STUMBLING BLOCKS (inhibit multicultural school accommodation):
<p>THE FAMILY DIMENSION</p> <p>Expectations and pressure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles within the family • Choice of schools <p>The parent-child relationship</p> <p>THE INDIVIDUAL DIMENSION</p> <p>Individual aspirations</p> <p>Freedom of choice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical appearance/hairstyles • Music <p>Self-esteem</p> <p>Sense of belonging</p> <p>THE SCHOOL/CULTURAL DIMENSION</p> <p>Language</p> <p>Racism</p> <p>Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intercultural issues • Intracultural issues

Table 6.1 is continued overleaf

Table 6.1 (continued)

FACILITATING ELEMENTS (promote multicultural school accommodation):
The ability to perform in the scholastic sphere
Discipline and rules
Uniforms
Shared/collective activities (culture, sport)
Teachers perceived as supportive
Mutual acceptance

The main hindrances to learners' experience(s) of an accommodating school atmosphere, as well as the facilitating elements, as set out in Table 6.1, are discussed below.

6.3 STUMBLING BLOCKS: THE LEARNERS' POINT OF VIEW

6.3.1 The family dimension

This dimension refers to learners' home life. The home plays a very important role in creating a secure and nurturing base which frees learners to explore and handle life in general, including school-related matters. If this dimension is lacking in any way, it will most probably have a negative influence on the way learners behave and perform at and deal with school.

6.3.1.1 Expectations emanating from the family

It is important to know what the expectations and aspirations of learners' families are for the learners. These hopes and dreams are usually related to the family's reputation in the community. If the family fears losing face, learners could feel extremely pressurised to perform against all odds. Two facets of the aspect of family expectations, namely roles within the family and choice of schools emerged as factors which affect learners' happiness at school. These two facets are considered below.

- Roles within the family

It appears that girls are expected to do household chores (see Section 3.5.2.4 for more details). In some instances, girls must cope with running the household and must answer personally for the safety and care of siblings. Two of the four girls interviewed said the following:

“We, I mean every black girl got chores. You gotto learn how to clean, you gotto learn how to cook, you gotto learn how to wash your little sister. It's part of being responsible – that's the black culture ... You gotta learn how to cook for your husband when you're grown up, you gotto learn how to wash your little sister, so you can wash your child when she grows up. You gotto learn to clean the house, to clean your house when you're married ... It's part of being responsible when you're grown up ... it does, it does interfere, 'cause sometimes, like me, I've got many chores to do at home. I gotto watch my little sister, I mean my sister and my little brother ... I gotto clean, I gotto wash the kitchen, I gotto wash the washing and that sometimes interferes with my study. It does interfere with the study, 'cause sometime my parents come home late, and I have to cook, I have to make sure they, they bath after they eat, I have to make sure they brush their teeth ... that does interfere.”

“For a moment you forgot all the troubles that you had at home – washing up the dishes and all that, and you just enjoy yourself for the moment and you know, just become a child actually, because your parents aren't there.”

Literature on the subject confirms that there is a tendency to rely heavily on children for help in running the house. Research by Liddell *et al.* (1994:62) has shown that urban children were involved in more chores than their rural counterparts – a phenomenon they could not explain. Dawes and Donald (1994b:4) refer to Reynolds' (1989) observation that teenage girls may be withdrawn from school in order to care for their younger siblings while their parents work. Swart-Kruger (1994:223) refers to circumstances that oblige parents to make arrangements that burden their children with heavy responsibilities.

The research findings indicate that an inordinate amount of responsibility regarding child-care and housework could frustrate learners' efforts to comply with the demands of school. This is particularly relevant where the standard of schooling demands dedicated study hours. Also, it catapults these learners prematurely into an adult role with adult responsibilities.

- **Choice of schools**

Three respondents said that they had been placed in schools chosen by their parents. They indicated that, although they generally struggled scholastically, they specifically battled to cope with the medium of Afrikaans.

“I expect a good education, and I know I'm going to get a good education in here, but the difficultest thing is about the language in Afrikaans ... It was difficult ... for me to learn the language ... It was a big problem for me ... in our place there in [name of township] the education is not higher than here ... So my father and my mother ... they told me there's a school somewhere in [name of suburb], but it's in Afrikaans. They ask me that can I go there and then maybe ... I will get a good education there ... So ... I told my mother, my parents, that I want to go out because I cannot take geographies and histories ... So I decided to go out, but my father told me maybe I can stay here ... I wanted to go out, because of all the subjects.”

“When I came to this school, my general expension [impression mispronounced] except I can learn very hard, and I can pass, get some points, like last year, when I was in Standard Six, ... and I told the school was going to be in English, so when I come it was Afrikaans. So I accept it in Afrikaans, with my mother asking me to do and he told me that he'd help me. I must learn Afrikaans”

It appears that black parents place an extremely high premium on providing the very best education they can obtain for their children. Bot (1990:79,91,93) states that even in very low income families, parents are willing to pay substantial contributions, especially towards their children's secondary education, in order to offer their children a better education (see also Section 6.7.3.3).

It appears that the two learners above were given little say in the choice of school. Cleaver (1994:10) explains that if children do not follow the path chosen by the parents or are not successful at school, the parents could experience themselves as inadequate and unsuccessful providers. In this respect, the child is an extension of the parent, which implies that if the extended self carries out the parent's wishes, the parent experiences pride. Should this not happen, the parent experiences a sense of failure.

It follows then that the learners feel pressurised to perform well in an educational situation that is not necessarily to their advantage, and have to cope with an unfamiliar medium of instruction. Frustration resulting from an inability to cope with the demands of schoolwork

in such a situation could pose a stumbling block to learners' adjustment and happiness within a multicultural school.

6.3.1.2 *The parent-child relationship*

According to four of the respondents interviewed, the parent-child relationship lacks the elements of trust and/or understanding. This leads to a breakdown in communication, resulting in a dysfunctional family system which could severely impede the development of the child and consequently prevent the achievement of optimal self-actualisation.

"No! ... I can't do that, no!"

"Who would you trust to talk to then?"

"My mate ... Not my parents ... I can't open up to my parents ... Ja, I do trust them, but ... not my personal life."

"Most of my friends do have problems with their parents ... "

One learner felt especially misunderstood regarding the issues of interest in the opposite sex and dating:

"Uhh, it's very difficult for black parents to talk to their children, like sit down with them – OK – talk about ... having a boyfriend, uhhh ... doing whatever. It, it's actually in our culture, the only time you must have a boyfriend is when you're twenty one ... Then you start dating ... And when you have to talk to your parents, and then they get angry, and ... it starts being an argument, now. It's not a talk anymore. So it's very difficult to cope with that situation ... they were taught differently than us ... We were taught OK if you ... becoming a teenager, then your hormones start acting ... you know, they don't see it that way. The only time you should have a boyfriend, is when you're twenty one, and that's final ... But it's difficult to talk to your parents, especially for our black kids. It's difficult to talk to your parents about boyfriends and girlfriends and stuff like that. They think now you're young, I mean, you're seventeen, you're young, you're not suppose to have a boyfriend! And it works the other way round. We, we think OK, now fifteen, now I can start dating, you know!"

Van Niekerk (1982:153) maintains that the educational relationship between parent and child should be characterised by mutual trust, understanding and sympathetic, authoritative guidance. The educational climate that the adult has the responsibility to create should provide stimulating opportunities such as a stable home and proper physical care, but above all adequate affective, social and religious guidance. For this to materialise, the presence of a caring, competent adult is a prerequisite. Often black families are unable to provide

adequate support structures for the nurturance and development of children (Dawes & Donald, 1994b:5). To cope with the prolonged absences or general unavailability of black parents or caregivers, children have developed alternative coping mechanisms. Liddell *et al.* (1994:60) point out that, in the absence of available adults in the larger households, children rely more on other children for interaction and information (see also Section 2.3.2).

Cleaver (1994:10-11) explains the above research findings as follows: the peer group can encourage learners to become involved in behaviour that may be deemed undesirable by parents. It appears that parents are not aware and show little understanding of the changing norms that constitute their children's life-world. She also mentions that communication about childbirth and sexuality is still extremely difficult and embarrassing for many black parents, while children today demand to be informed on these matters. Aggleton, Homans and Warwick (1989:34) refer to a British survey according to which parents do not see themselves as good sex educators. As a result, parents are ignorant about how to adapt to and handle present day changes. Consequently, there could be a tendency for communication between parents and children to deteriorate rather than improve.

6.3.2 The individual dimension

This dimension focuses on learners' individual feelings, experiences and hopes. The following aspects (see also Table 6.1) are discussed: individual aspirations, freedom of choice with regard to physical appearance (hairstyles) and music, self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

6.3.2.1 *Individual aspirations*

It appeared that most of the learners had high individual aspirations, both academically and socially. They seemed to view the school as an institution that will ensure upward mobility in their futures, as is suggested by the following three excerpts:

"I expect to get the highest education qualifications so that, I ... achieve what I always wanted to achieve ... I actually want to be a Doctor ... I do not want to die as a Mr or Mrs, but as a Doctor."

" ... I expected uhh expected high school to be uhh great and have all the friends, both black and white – yes – and I really thought I would enjoy with the teachers ... and friends yeah."

“ ... I want to get somewhere in life, and make friends with people in the schools and get along with the teachers.”

6.3.2.2 Freedom of choice

The following excerpt from one of the interviews reflects the feelings of most of the respondents that they generally feel controlled at school and that they require more freedom of choice regarding a code of conduct concerning matters that are important to them:

“No, it's not really our school. And sometimes you know we don't get the freedom, the freedom uhhh, what we, what we would usually do here, if you do it that mean trouble.”

Weis (1989:133) points out that white American students also resent the control that institutional authorities have over their lives, regarding the use of time, space and dress.

According to the interviews, two of the areas in which learners would like more freedom of choice are their hairstyles and music. Both these issues are considered below.

- Physical appearance/hairstyles

It appears that learners seek more freedom regarding the choice of hairstyles:

“ ... some of them want Afros and we are not allowed to have them ... and dreadlocks ... ”

“Ja, but they told this other girl to take out her braids” ... “The other teacher told this other girl to take them out, and they were very neat. She had to take them out.”

“Yes, in a way I would also like dreadlocks, but we are not allowed to have them, so I've got to stick to the rules.”

Bowing to group pressure concerning certain fashionable hairstyles is penalised at school (see also Section 6.7.2.2):

“ ... well mostly our black kids like dying their hair ... that's not allowed. And the boys, they like making dreads - if you like twist your hair, and that's not allowed. So we've got problems with that, yes ... mostly. We've got problems with that, 'cause boys like doing that, I mean it's in fashion now. If you don't do it then it's like you're not in the group, and when you dye your hair, then you, you, you get uhhh, you get penalised in the school.”

Some problems concern hairstructure and individualised hairstyles:

“ ... 'cause they don't allow gels in hair for us blacks ... they don't like them talking about gels ... They don't like gel ... I mean they don't want us to pour gel in our hair. Then if the teachers told them they mustn't pour gel in their hair they don't allow, they don't agree with the teachers.”

“Ja, so they, they want gel?”

“Yes.”

“To be put in their hair?”

“Yes.”

“Why do you think that is?”

[The respondent cracks his knuckles] *“Because our blacks' hair, when you don't put gel, you get dried up and then sometimes it breaks.”*

“The hairstyles that we make are different, blacks hair and white hair. So our styles, maybe sometimes we look very funny, see some of them just cut here through and make a way through, things like that.”

The literature emphasises the importance of physical appearance to adolescents. Monyemorathwe (1992:29) cites Couvaras (1972) as saying that for adolescents, the body becomes a symbol of self. How adolescents view their physical self may determine the kind of self-esteem they feel.

Gillborn (1995:157-8) argues that adhering to certain elements of a specific dress code, though it appears overtly non-racial, has the potential to disadvantage people of specific backgrounds. Regarding hairstyles, he says that it might be important for certain blacks in the community to shave patterns in their hair, since that is the only way they can really change their hair. Consequently, when permission to exhibit these hairstyles is refused, it could be likened to discrimination.

For learners who already feel marginalised and discriminated against, this might add to the feeling of not being part of the school.

- **Music**

The learners were generally very positive towards social events at school – in fact, they sometimes ask for more. However, five of the eight respondents have very definite feelings regarding the music played at these functions. Music forms an integral part of such social functions, which normally involve dancing, and are therefore regarded as extremely important by the learners.

“No it is not my kind of music, ... no I, I don't like their [whites'] music, but I came to enjoy myself ... But I don't like the music.”

“... there are some people who do attend them [socials] ... Most of the time there are more black people there, because we use to have funk ... If you don't like the music you just stand aside until your kind of music comes up and then you dance.”

“First white people's music, and then it was ours, and then it was white people's and then it was ours.”

“ ... they tell us that we must come with our cassettes, 'cause we [they] don't have the cassette for us blacks.”

“And then the other thing is we should host more functions, 'cause like now there was a show that was supposed to come on and hardly anybody got their tickets ... So now I think they should actually ask the pupils what they would like to hear, not what the school is organising for us ... We've got different tastes of things, so I mean ... I know a lot of us, especially the black pupils would have liked something else, because we knew we could have brought our friends from somewhere else, and we know what kind of music they like.”

A local study showed that there is a difference between the dance music preferred by black and that preferred by white learners (Van der Merwe, 1997:192). Learners do, however, display a willingness to accommodate one another across cultures in this realm.

From the above excerpts, it appears that respondents have very definite, culturally linked, music preferences. They appear to be fully aware that this difference exists, and experience themselves as “different” regarding this matter. They would also like to be granted more autonomy regarding the choice of music at future socials. Correct handling of this stumbling block can influence the degree of accommodation these learners experience at school.

6.3.2.3 *Self-esteem*

The findings indicated that the self-esteem of **all** the respondents was intermittently under attack, which could leave them feeling devalued and as if they are not respected. Attacks on learners' self-esteem can take many guises and appear to have a racist undertone, as the following excerpts indicate.

“Stop this racism ... Calling names ... on the school grounds ... I think talking to them is good ... because they must feel how we feel when they do that to you.”

“ ... when we're in toesig, I mean they think we can't understand Afrikaans ... they say: 'Ah Meneer, sien jy die kaffer is hier?' and [the teacher] say: 'Ja ek sien' and they start talking to them and it's like they are on their side ... ”

“Uhh, we only mix sometimes when we go to the pavilion, when we sit there. But we don't mix like we mix! No, we sit that way [the respondent demonstrates that backs are turned to one another] and they sit there. And you find that enormous space there! Once you go and you sit there, then they all start moving. Yes then the 'skuif, skuif' and they start 'skuifing' to the other side! ... sometimes they stand and they go ... Sometimes, you know ... the prefects, they force them to sit and then they sit and then they look the other way ... yes, and they look the other way ... So it's like classes, classes.”

“I must say, we ... black students, I don't think they listen to the teachers. They take it as if the white teachers don't see us as nothing ... So we blacks ... think that the teachers don't like us, but I don't know if it is true, it is true or what.”

Some would like the freedom to just be themselves:

“No we want to ... talk as we usually talk ... Laugh as we usually laugh, 'cause sometimes ... this girl made a joke and we started laughing and then we got in trouble for that. Mr. X, he personally came to us and told us: 'You girls are laughing so loud, we can hear you by the office. Please keep it down.' So it's situations like that, that you know, we don't feel OK talking when we have to talk, like 'Oh they're going to start telling us we're making a noise', ja, and stuff like that.”

Some experience devaluation and disrespect when they are falsely accused without being able to defend themselves:

“... when we fight with the white kids ... Then it's like you're the one who hit him, or you're the one who gets ... in the problem. Then you're the one who's guilty, even if it's the other way around ... ”

“Positive self feelings are the basis of all good feeling” and signal that a separate self or identity has been forged, which will in addition “function as an indicator of the adequacy and integrity of the self” (Markus & Kitayama, 1994a:109). The latter also quote Epstein (1973) as well as Harter and Marold (1991) as saying that self-esteem is “typically operationalized as the total amount of good feelings directed toward the self”.

As the above excerpts all refer to racist undertones, it is imperative to note that racism often has indirect and subtle consequences, such as an impaired self-concept, a distorted identity and reduced self-esteem (Foster, 1994:221).

Positive “mirroring” or feedback about the general self is important to the formation of a good self-concept during the adolescent phase. However, in the life-worlds of black adolescents there are bound to be occurrences at school, as is demonstrated by the above excerpts, that can steadily erode any positive feelings of self-worth (see also Section 1.2.4).

6.3.2.4 *A sense of belonging*

Belonging can be defined as the need people have to be affiliated to or accepted by a group, thereby sharing in the similarities of and the benefits the particular group provides (Cushner *et al.*, 1992:58). Markus and Kitayama (1994a:121) point out that to perceive others as part of a group and to share the same qualities could be experienced as very positive and could create positive emotions (see also Sections 3.5.1.3 and 6.7.2.2).

When specifically questioned on the issue of whether they felt that they belonged to their schools, six learners answered in the affirmative. However, when the criterion of group acceptance across cultural groups was applied, a feeling of marginalisation was evident amongst seven of the respondents. They expressed it as follows:

“Because ... the whites, they have their own friends. Maybe I think, maybe I can go to them and stay with them. Maybe they will say ... why she came here? Why or what does she want or what? Something like that, so I just stay with my friends.”

“ ... the white kids, no we've got a problem with the white kids. Yes, ... they're not friendly ... they mostly start all the fights. They ... don't socialise, they're always in their group, and we're always in our group, so it's like that.”

“ ... I've got white friends especially in my class ... And even other blacks, they have friends ... but mostly the blacks won't be about like as best friend. They'll just be friends ... Yes, mostly the blacks are there alone, mostly the whites are playing alone.”

“I must say, they're not my friends. I just know them ... but mostly I sit with my friends ... My black friends.”

“No. No I don't, I don't ... [belong]. The school where I use to go to ... we use to play soccer together, with the whites and the blacks ... we didn't have racial issues and things like that, but we get here and it's all different ... ”.

It appears that the respondents experienced problems typically experienced by newcomers to areas where “unfamiliar” or hosting groups reign – namely to establish new in-groups. This could lead to feelings of marginalisation which could counteract the experience of the

school as accommodating. Markus and Kitayama (1994a:112) say that "... for those with interdependent selves, feeling good requires a connection to others, and a connection to others produces good feelings". They explain that for those with interdependent selves "... good feelings may be a function of good social relationships (i.e., fitting-in, belonging, maintaining harmony in one's relations, occupying one's proper place, engaging in appropriate action)" (Markus & Kitayama, 1994a:106).

In order then to fulfil this need for feeling good and belonging, learners could develop their own in-groups with "exclusive" membership (see also Section 3.5.2.5). Markus and Kitayama (1994a:120) refer to Jarymolovich (1987) and Reykowski's (1991) opinions that when "the group is the primary basis of self-definition, in-group membership takes on particular importance, the interdependent members of the group will evoke positive evaluations and the out-group members, negative evaluations". Consequently, should group membership be decided along racial lines, it could promote racism. This in turn could destroy any sense learners might have had of belonging to and being accommodated at school. A vicious cycle starts, threatening peaceful co-existence within multicultural schools. In such a cycle lies the danger.

6.3.3 The school/cultural dimension

This dimension refers to a number of aspects regarding the school, namely language, racism, culture (intercultural issues and intracultural issues).

6.3.3.1 Language

All the respondents (either they or their peers) had a problem with Afrikaans at school (see also Section 6.7.3). Even everyday occurrences – like sharing a joke – become a considerable obstacle without the necessary linguistic competence and could cause those who cannot follow the language to feel left out:

"We don't sometimes get what they say, you know, it's very bad, 'cause sometimes they go out there, they make a joke in Afrikaans and the other kids are laughing and we're just staring like ... what was the joke?"

Some regard English as the most important language, especially for those who desire upward mobility (see also Section 3.5.2.3). Afrikaans is viewed as limited in its usage, both locally and internationally.

"I think we should have ... more opportunities to learn the other language that we want to learn. Not to be forced to learn only English and Afrikaans, because all of us are unhappy about the situation at the moment, but still we are coping with it ... we are making the best out of it ..."

"Some African language and some international language like French or Portuguese or something like that ... at the moment wherever you go you speak English. It's not quite often that you get people communicating in Afrikaans. You go everywhere and they all know English. Quite rare to find them knowing Afrikaans. I'll say you must keep them English medium and keep on being taught that must be our first language, 'cause then we'll be able to cope other places."

"... I mean like now, I'm used to thinking English, because I use to play with all the white kids and stuff, and if I speak English now with my black friends, then they start saying: 'Ah wena you think you're white', you know, and stuff like that ..."

Some were quite outspoken about Afrikaans being undesirable:

"Some of them say they don't want it and they want the black languages in this school."

"They don't like Afrikaans. They want to speak Sotho. They don't like Afrikaans."

In some cases, the respondents appear to have a genuine problem with coping in Afrikaans. They were really trying to be accommodating towards the language and its users, although understanding and communicating in Afrikaans still presents a scholastic problem:

"We're taught in English, so there is no problem with our language at the moment, but sometimes you get teachers that talk to us in Afrikaans, and it is very difficult for us to cope. Sometimes they don't know the words in English, and they speak it in Afrikaans and we don't quite get the word ... the teachers really try. They want to, it's just that they're not use to the English. We don't blame them, because they've been teaching Afrikaans ... 'cause sometimes they don't know the words, then they have to look it up, but sometimes we help them ... We ... know they've been teaching Afrikaans all along, so."

"As long as we blacks don't understand Afrikaans, so as long as they make it easy to speak English, it's fine for me."

"I would prefer school to be in English. I like it to learn in English 'cause I was from English school, then I came to Afrikaans school, so now I can't catch up quickly. But I can talk Afrikaans, but I can't catch up quickly ... The things how

they done in English and how they done it in Afrikaans, I find it a little bit difficult for me ... ”

The above responses echo the literature on feelings about the position of the Afrikaans language in KwaZulu-Natal, as documented in a study by Finchilescu and Nyawose (1998:57). Their study reported that Afrikaans was seen as undesirable and unimportant, with limited local and global usage and that the general feeling was one of negativism towards the usage of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Afrikaans was also associated with discrimination and stigmatised as the language of the oppressor in the minds of many black people in South Africa, while English has, to a large extent, escaped the antagonism usually directed towards ex-colonial languages elsewhere in Africa (Chick, 1992:275-276). These respondents' responses could also partly be ascribed to this stigmatisation of Afrikaans.

6.3.3.2 *Racism*

With regard to the issue of racism, from this research, it appears that the respondents generally experienced marginalisation through some form of racial discrimination or victimisation at school (see also Section 6.7.1.5). Only one respondent did not feel that there was some example worth mentioning.

One respondent, who said that there was a lot of racial tension at school, mentioned that outside intervention might remedy the unhappy situation:

“Sometimes ... they [the teaching staff] call us to the hall. They talk to us there. Then they divide the ... kids ... but I don't think that's helping. I think the more they do that, it's the more the problem become, 'cause some of the white kids, they just listen to them. We try and we change. We try, but they just start all the problems ... we would like that [outside intervention], 'cause that will make this school a better place, 'cause now we're in a situation where we don't understand it ourselves.”

A double standard regarding the application of discipline and general rules is pointed out as unacceptable. It appears to cause internal conflict, since the learners cannot see why the various cultures should be treated differently. The respondents ascribe these unfair occurrences to racism:

“We should get the same punishment. If we were fighting ... if the other one is hurt more ... We should get the same punishment like being expelled ... Finished. They shouldn't say: 'Oh he's hurt more, so you're expelled' ... No, no, I don't think that'll

be good, because now we'll start saying: 'Oh, they're on the white people's side', 'cause mostly you get that situation."

"... yesterday I was going to give somebody, a girl in my class ... her pens ... So I stood up, I walked to her desk and then, when I were there, the teacher said no I mustn't stand up without her permission. And then like two minutes later I see somebody else, a white girl, X, she was walking around. And the teacher did not say anything about it ... that does bug me. Why let somebody else walk around and then tell the other one to sit down?"

"And we get a situation ... where the white girls ... they start smoking ... so they don't get that punishment that will suit them, you know. They get like -50 in possession of drugs, alcohol and stuff. But I mean if ... if it was more on our side, we will get expulsion, and no doubts about it."

"... on the school grounds ... it's a rule – don't combine with white. At the tuckshop ... there is no black that works in the tuckshop, so ... mostly they start serving all the white kids first ... we always come at the back. When everything is finished, then we come and buy. So when we get there most of the stuff are finished, and on the playgrounds we're always like that."

In some cases it appears that political beliefs inhibit intercultural harmony and social integration. There appears to be a general need for equality and respect:

"Socially I do mix with some of them [white learners]. Not all of them ... there are some of them who are still caught up with the apartheid thing. They still think they should be top priority and we should take the back seat, which is quite unfair ... I just think they should realise ... that everybody's equal ... they must not expect things to be done for them and to be done by us for them. They should actually do the things themselves, because we all need each other eventually at the end."

"Most of the teachers I like a lot, but there are some other teachers ... Every now and then they put something racially towards you, you know or they call you some ... they have some racial thing, just like they still have this apartheid thing going on – they have a thing against black people. Which I think is very unfair. You should leave it at home. If you've got a racial thing, you should leave it at home, because it's your place to teach us, not to tell us about what you feel."

In one instance, there was also evidence of capitulation in the form of accepting the racial divide as inevitable:

"You ask me about if they are saying something, because I'm black? ... Ja, some of the kids, they are saying that, but I don't have a problem with that, because uhm, we are not the same, and we can't be the same. Your ... , my mind and their mind are not the same, because they ... maybe they are making jokes ... but, ... I won't be angry with them. I just leave them alone."

In some instances, there appears to be a greater incidence of racism in the ugly form of belittlement and devaluation, either through physical or verbal abuse.

“In the first year here, there were some boys ... they use to ... say something that is not right and things ... to take the stone and ... throw to us.”

“Actually, to tell you the truth, there some students who don't like blacks ... And there's some blacks who don't like whites ... Sometimes they hurt each other. Maybe there's a boy coming through the ... big door ... And I'm coming through ... the first. Then he push you. Then the time you say: 'Excuse me, why did you push me?' then he tell you: 'Why you asking me that?' Then he hit you.”

“Maybe sometimes when we pass, they playing hand tennis. Then they just throw you with the ball.”

“It was nice when I came to school last year, but this year the guys [white] started to pull me ... I don't know [why] ... they just hate us ...”

“This is the problem, 'cause sometimes ... when they see a black boy with a white girl then they go: 'Hey wat doen jy met 'n wit meisie uuh?' and stuff like that and they start being aggressive ... ”

The practice of racism creates a vicious cycle and stereotyping is perpetuated by the various generations (parents and learners) – both black and white. One respondent explained the origin and application of a “rule” at school that discourages intercultural socialisation as follows:

“It's, it's the kids, 'cause one time there was this, this boy, he was in our class – he was white. He use to hang around with the black boys in our class – so they used to call him a name. They call him a 'wit kaffer’.”

Another respondent felt that the fact that the school was an Afrikaans-medium school could have contributed to the perpetuation of the learners' intolerance to other cultures and race groups:

“ ... ehh I think it's five or six years now that the blacks have been here, and I don't think it's really ... I mean I know it doesn't take overnight to uhh get associated with both cultures, but it's long, I mean six years ... I mean that's long and they still don't adjust to the fact that OK we're here. 'Cause the new ... the standard sixes – the white kids – they come here – and the big ones teach them, this is how it goes in the school – you don't mix with the blacks, the blacks don't mix with the whites. So then ... it's starting again, so I don't think it will ever change.”

One respondent described hatred for blacks amongst white Afrikaans learners as stemming from an effort by these white learners to fit in with their group and suggested a solution to the problem:

"It's like they're trying to fit in with the rest. They're not all like that. They're not. They're just trying to because: 'Oh now my friend hates blacks. Now I'm also going to hate blacks.' It's ... like that. They try to fit in ... I think it's from our history. The background of the parents. Ja, I think it's 'cause the parents grew up like that so they teach their children to ... become like that. So if the parents stop telling the kids the negative things, then it will be OK"

Another respondent said racist remarks will only occur if one treats others horribly first:

"No, I don't get that [racist remarks]. Only my friends [do]. Depends – if you're horrible to them then they're also horrible to you."

When asked whether she has good friends amongst the white learners, one respondent's reaction indicated that white girls display a more relaxed attitude towards interracial mixing than is the case with white boys:

"Ja I do, I do. They're nice. But they're girls, but they sometimes tell me: 'Oh, but my boyfriend doesn't want to see me with you and stuff like that'."

"... we like socialise sometimes to the girls, but the boys - no - no."

There was one incident of identity confusion, where the respondent appeared unsure about which group she belonged to:

"I don't fit in better with the, with the blacks, 'cause they, they call me a coconut, see ... It means like uhm, I act white inside and black outside, I'm black outside ... Ja, I don't really like it" [sounds and looks sad].

Some respondents favoured socialising with the out-group (white learners) rather than the own-group (black learners):

"I prefer sitting with the white kids then, because they're not that aggressive and they're nice ..."

This study confirms a consistent pattern mentioned by Foster (1994:226) that emerged over about sixty years of South African research on racial attitudes. According to that research, whites show strong own-group preference, and negative attitudes towards black people, and this is more pronounced amongst Afrikaans-speakers. While blacks generally show

own-group preference, there is also evidence of positive attitudes towards white English-speakers. Afrikaans-speakers are regarded with a more negative attitude.

Foster (1994:228-229) also discusses South African research by Aarons (1991), who found that white children displayed a stronger degree of own-group preference and out-group rejection than did black children. This difference decreased with age and differences by the age of 11 to 12 years were minimal. Afrikaans-speaking children, however, remained more prejudiced and ethnocentric than English-speaking children of all ages.

This study confirms Aaron's findings in that it does appear that black learners in Afrikaans-medium schools were confronted by racist attitudes more often. However, there are indications of an awareness among the respondents that a considerable number of Afrikaans learners do not subscribe to racism. It appears that some of the respondents in Afrikaans-medium schools distance themselves from racism and ascribe the origins of racism to the politics of the apartheid era, rather than ethnic or physical differences.

A summary of three South African doll preference studies shows that in two samples of black children and one sample of coloured children in the Western Cape, preference for the white doll was more prominent than identification with the white doll (Foster, 1994:227-228). This agrees with the findings in the current study. Black learners do not necessarily want to be white, but, should the opportunity arise, a large number would prefer to associate with white learners rather than with black learners.

Anderson and Herr (1994:65) relate an incident where racial harassment at an American school compelled a learner to react violently. Only after much discussion did it come to light that the learner was routinely racially harassed, which created a very frustrating situation for him over a long period. This finally led to unacceptable acting-out behaviour. There is little doubt then that racism indeed "prevents the full flowering of human potentiality, is a form of structural violence and certainly inflicts damage on those at the receiving end" (Foster, 1994:236). Some of the indirect consequences are impaired self-concept, reduced self-esteem, distorted identity and possibly viewing own-group (in-group) members as inferior and lacking in some way, while members of other groups (out-group members) are considered superior (Foster, 1994:221.)

6.3.3.3 Culture

The findings on this aspect are discussed under the headings inter- and intracultural issues. Intercultural findings deal with issues **between** cultures, while intracultural findings concentrate on conflicts **within** cultures. The nature of the conflicts mostly involves learners versus learners, while conflict between learners and teachers appears less frequently.

The following excerpt from one of the interviews states clearly that, regarding certain aspects, there are considerable differences between African and Western traditions. At the same time, the respondent highlights the need for more understanding and empathy within the cultural context:

“So I'm quite happy with the disciplinary procedures at the moment ... Most of the time yes ... but in the other times when they [teachers] should actually consider the child's story ... they should try being in the shoes of the pupil ... because you know the African traditions and the Western ones, they're quite different. So when you usually tell a teacher this – in Africa it's quite OK to say that, but then they know that it's quite OK for you, and they say that you be rude or something like that, which is quite unfair.”

Walter Goodenough, a well-known anthropologist, defined the culture of a society as consisting of the specific knowledge and beliefs that community members have which will also enable them to operate in a manner acceptable to the group, and also in any role that the group finds acceptable (Wardaugh, 1986, cited in Kaschula & Anthonissen, 1995:15). The above respondent understands the demands of culture. This learner speaks for many when she airs the frustration of having to “learn the kind of constant translating of cultural rules that means survival for them” (Anderson & Herr, 1994:66).

- Intercultural issues

The key issues identified are noisiness, latecoming, conflict resolution and substance abuse.

(a) Noisiness

Two respondents felt very strongly about being stereotyped when their culturally-correct communicative behaviour was misinterpreted, and indicated a need for more cultural awareness and sensitivity:

“ ... we actually have a problem with that ... us black people, if you speak softly, then we think you're gossiping about someone. We actually have to speak loud, so everyone can hear what you're saying, so that there'll be no corruption. That's what we're scared of. If you gossip about someone, they'll come and get you ... So ... in the classes we can't speak, because that same rule applies – you have to speak so everyone can hear you ... So ... in the classes we keep quiet. In the corridors when we start speaking ... it's problems, because we're making a noise, and it's affecting all the school things and ... we get problems with that ... it's very difficult to cope with the situation ... they should just let us talk as we talk on the outside. I mean in the classes we don't talk. We understand in the classes we have to keep quiet ... That's why we have a lot to say at break ... No, we want to talk at break. Talk as we usually talk ... Laugh as we usually laugh.”

“I won't say that it's a must to, you know, as black people to always scream out ... but then there are times, ... you're just used to it so much not that you do it at home ... but you're just used to it. So the teachers don't seem to understand that, you know, we're just used to expressing ourselves in a clear manner. So I think that's one of the problems now.”

The literature refers to cultural differences in communication (see also Section 3.5.3.5). Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995:88) quote Carbaugh (1990): “There are many sources of cultural differences in communication. These become especially important in intercultural contacts for they can lead to misinterpretation of intent, misunderstandings generally ... negative stereotyping and so on.” The audible levels of language use differ between cultures. A Xhosa speaker may be regarded as gossiping when he/she speaks softly, whereas an English speaker could be more concerned with matters of privacy or not wanting to disturb others (Kaschula & Anthonissen, 1995:20). Such cultural misunderstandings can counteract a sense of belonging to the school because learners may experience themselves as being out of place.

(b) Latecoming

The townships are geographically isolated from the suburban schools. This leads to many problems with regard to being late for school. Four respondents felt that special

arrangements could be made to accommodate latecomers and that they should not be punished.

“ ... a lot of black children are late, they're very late, 'cause some of them live in B [township]. And they've only got one bus ... Yes, but if you miss that bus, then it's over. It's either you don't come to school or you try other means of transport, 'cause in [name of township] mostly the taxis that come by [name of particular area] are very few. Yes so you sometimes they take the train, but the train is late. They come, OK they stand here, they're ohh, there's big problems ... But I'm, I'm like OK, if they miss the bus, I mean they are here, it's not like they were absent, for like no reason. At least they try some means of transport and they did come, but we got many complaints from the principal about that [gestures, rolls eyes]. ”

Van Heerden (1992:242-243,216) found that the attitude toward latecomers amongst black learners is that one should be grateful that an individual has turned up at all, since that shows the person tried his/her best. It appears that there is some realisation that it is important to be on time for an appointment, since coming late can disrupt the other person's activities. However, it appears that is of greater importance not to hurt someone's feelings, since when a promise is made, it must be kept. Therefore, the main concern is the person that could be harmed rather than the time issue as such. Those who uphold such opinions cannot make any sense of punishment for coming late (see also Sections 3.5.2.2(a) and 6.7.3.2).

When asked about the discipline at school, the following respondent used the victim image and verbal manoeuvres to absolve herself for being late:

“No, it's OK [discipline], but I don't like the part when you, when you're late ... it's not my fault if I'm late. Could be my sister's or something ... Ja, so I don't like the part where you come late to school and you have to stay after school ...”

Ramphela (1992:22) argues that to plead victimisation and to demand special treatment is counterproductive in that it reinforces a culture of entitlement. Such individuals expect society to be the agent of change, rather than to look at their own share in effecting change. Within schools this can negatively influence learners' orientation towards their own scholastic input.

It seems that there could be a growing acceptance of the rules controlling latecoming – the next two respondents do not regard themselves as latecomers, and they criticise their peers for coming late:

"Maybe the school come at 7.30. If you come after 25 to 8 you are late and they take your diary and they're going to give you inscriptions ... They tell you, if you stay far away, get a bus early, wake up early and get a bus. Ja, I think also they are right ... 'cause others, they come in their own time ... They take their time on the ... they won't even like, like to come to school. When they come to school, they just walk slowly, they just go somewhere ..."

"I don't think maybe they will agree with me, but the way I feel, I think if you come late, it's your own problem"

Two respondents revealed a future-oriented time perspective:

"Yes, 'cause I mean life is all about time. You can't just sit around for an hour doing nothing. In that hour you could actually have been doing something else."

"Latecoming? ... I think that's not good, because if you are late now, you'll be late in future for your job."

A future-oriented time perspective is indicative of a gradual shift toward the acceptance and implementation of an industrialised time perspective (Van Heerden, 1992:244), and should contribute positively to these learners' scholastic achievement.

(c) Conflict resolution

One respondent was particularly outspoken about the tendency amongst black adolescents to resolve conflict through physical force:

" ... Blacks tend to become more aggressive ... You just have to sort it out the rough way ... they mostly use physical, physical. You have to be man enough to handle the situation, so the only way you can find out whether you're man or you're really strong, and what, it's the only way by fighting it through ... you know, they tell you: 'Ah, wena, you can't do that!' because they think now you're scared of that person if you like resolve it like: 'OK ja, I forgive you'. No that doesn't work in our community. They're gonna say: 'Oh, you're scared of each other now!' ... And you have to really, even if you don't want to do it, but you just have to do it, because then they gonna start thinking negative things and saying negative things about you. So it's really like that ... Even the girls! ... OK then you get all these support groups ... You know, like: 'Yeah girl, you go and show her!'"

It also appears that the media, along with group pressure, could promote anti-social behaviour (also see Sections 2.2.2, 2.3.1.1 and 6.7.4.3). One respondent pointed out the negative influence of television and said that, because learners are expected to prove their point, they could engage in unacceptable physical behaviour just for the fun of it.

“No, these days, ... they're getting influenced from TV, from States, from overseas. OK, the States handles the situation like this, so now we want to handle it like this. Now they take it from there, and then they bring it here and it becomes wider and wider until it becomes out of control.”

(d) Substance abuse

Two learners commented on substance abuse in the form of drinking and smoking tobacco and dagga.

“Drugs and smoking is uncool, but drinking, yes, drinking is in. 'If you don't drink, then you don't live', ... that's the slogan they put together ... I mean they don't find any harm in drinking. They don't know about the harm you can find in drinking, so they drink.”

“They drink a lot. When they go to parties, they drink ... I wouldn't know about drugs ... But I know about dagga ... They always smoke dagga.”

Weis (1989:133) commented that, with regard to the aspect of substance abuse, white American students' also resent the control institutional authorities have over their lives, and that this resentment is expressed most forcefully with regard to smoking. Stevens and Lockhat (1997:253) refer to the shift among black South African adolescents from political activism to the “Coca-Cola” culture, which means that they embrace American individualism, individualist aspirations, competition and the general American world view. These authors refer to Ntabazalila (1997) as well as Thiel (1997), who maintain that black adolescents' attempts to redefine themselves collectively or to deal with the double-bind of the “new” South Africa, may result in a proliferation of gangsterism, substance abuse and anti-social behaviour, and the emergence of ethnic separatism (see also Section 2.3.1.1). In this regard, an accommodating school environment can play a very definite supportive and instructive role to help learners to negotiate their identity-formation successfully.

- Intracultural issues

Intracultural conflict consists largely of own culture groups putting pressure on learners to behave in certain ways, allowing little freedom to individuals to do as they like.

“I don't fit in better with the, with the blacks, 'cause they, they call me a coconut, see ... It means like uhhm, I act white inside and black outside, I'm black outside ... Ja, I don't really like it [sounds and looks sad] ... It's not, it's not saying white and

then I'm black ... We're just the same ... Ja, it's not the colour. It's just what's inside.

*“ ... 'cause blacks tend to become more aggressive, 'cause like you said something wrong, there is no forgiveness. You just have to sort it out the rough way ... you really have to watch what you're saying. Don't say this when this person is here, and say that when this person is here, and stuff like that. But with white kids ... you say sorry and it's over. But in the black community, you say something and it's gonna stay there, or when you do something embarrassing they're always gonna remind you for the rest of your life what you did ... But ... in the white kids ... it's just for that day and it's over ... But ... the blacks - it's never over, you know. You did **this**, it was **wrong** and they're gonna keep reminding you what you did and that's not nice ... I prefer sitting with the white kids then, because they're not that aggressive and they're nice ... ”*

The above excerpts confirm that, in post-apartheid South Africa, black adolescents are faced, on the one hand, with Western ideologies, new role models and economic structures – accompanied by a shift from collectivism to individualism. On the other hand, they are confronted by the extreme power of the group within the black community, with its very specific role and behaviour prescriptions (see also Section 1.2.4). Adolescents have to develop an identity which will allow them to cope with existing social realities. Unfortunately, many of them are caught in a double-bind situation of confusing and contradictory role prescriptions (Stevens & Lockhat, 1997:253).

It appears that white learners also experience intracultural pressure concerning their intercultural relationships. The empathy shown by a black respondent for white fellow learners who are exposed to similar group pressures appears to be unique to this research. When asked if she had good friends amongst the white learners, one respondent said:

“Ja, I do, I do. They're nice. But they're girls, but they sometimes tell me: 'Oh, but my boyfriend doesn't want to see me with you' and stuff like that.”

According to Weis (1989:162), racism is affirmed more by males but is less central to females. The implications for this study could be that female learners (both black and white) are attempting to break the bonds of group dictates regarding social interaction whenever a chance arises (see also Section 6.7.1.6). Also, it could indicate that black girls, in particular, are trying to construct an alternative identity, as opposed to a collective identity. Female learners could thus show the greatest promise in challenging racism at school level, possibly

due to the fact that, as Weis (1989:162) suggests, female culture is “less fractured along a variety of dimensions”.

Another problem regarding group pressure is the issue of excellence and wealth. One learner mentioned that scholastic excellence and wealth are frowned upon by the group.

*“... they're jealous. I mean, they're very jealous. They'll start gossiping about you, ... If you get high marks, and the teacher comments on you, they like look at you. OK, she got high marks, we'll see what she does next time! And next time if you get low marks, they say: 'Ha, she thought she was clever!' ... so if you get high marks, you gotta make sure you **stay** there! ... So you gotta study hard and make sure you stay on top, because once you go down [bitter laugh], that's when they gonna step on you ... They're gonna say: 'Ah, she thought she was clever. Did you see what she got for maths?' and stuff like that, yeah, it's like that ... If you do well, you keep quiet [bitter laugh]. It's just you and the teacher that knows. If you do well, you just say, if they ask you: 'How did you write?' You say: 'Oh it was good!' ... That's all you have to say ... You don't go say: 'I did the best, you know I got this and this!' ... You just nod your head and carry on with life ... and when you are commented by the teacher – oh, that's hard! We don't want teachers commenting, because once she makes this comment about you, then you've gotto make sure that comment sticks to you, yes. If she says: 'Oh, she's well behaved in her class', then you gotta make sure you behave every **day**, ' cause ... if you, then if you do something wrong, they'll say ... 'Oh I thought ... she was the most behaving girl in the class!' ... Yes, you have to do what **they** do, what **they** like ... And like **they** do ... if they say, OK tomorrow we're not coming to school, tomorrow you **don't** come to school! ... If you come to school then that means OK you don't agree with them, so you're not in the group any more.”*

“... if someone is wealthy, then you don't ... talk about your wealthiness. You don't ... So when you're wealthy, you just have to keep it quiet and just, you know, bond with them and say whatever they say ... 'Oh, you know ... at home we haven't got money.' So, if you're wealthy, you just have to go: 'Oh, I know that situation!'”

In the literature, there are indications that the concept of excellence is in disrepute and that pressure is applied to those who excel, since they seem “out of line” (Ramphele, 1992:24-25), (see also Section 6.7.2.1). This prompts some students to conceal their (good) test results in order to avoid censure.

Van Niekerk (1992:46) refers to a discussion with a black friend who informed him that showing signs of wealth in the form of nice gardens and homes is unacceptable to the group. This attitude could result in the destruction of possessions that are regarded as a sign of wealth.

The negative repercussions of such beliefs and pressure on learners' ambitions and subsequent scholastic performance are self-evident (see also Section 3.5.2.5).

6.4 FACILITATING ELEMENTS: THE LEARNERS' POINT OF VIEW

The general feeling amongst all the respondents can be summed up in the words of one respondent:

"I feel proud of my school. Actually I enjoy being here."

This implies that despite many stumbling blocks hindering the accommodation of black Grade Nine learners in a multicultural school environment, facilitating elements are obviously also present. Some of these have been identified and are discussed below.

6.4.1 The ability to perform in the scholastic sphere

Most of the learners have high individual aspirations and expectations, both scholastically and socially. The following excerpt indicates that the respondent, despite initially low expectations, was motivated by the external factor of good scholastic performance. The respondent was then selected to the Students' Representative Council. In this way the respondent "developed a voice", which in turn could promote educational reform movements by advocating a better understanding of the needs of black learners. The following respondent put it this way:

"Well, I never expected much really until ... as time went by and then I got ... I expected a lot of things like being in the SRC which I am on at the moment and those kind of things ... My academic achievement I would say that also made me happy."

"I expect to get the highest education qualifications so that, I don't know ... be a much better person, you know, achieve what I always wanted to achieve ... I actually want to be a Doctor. I want to die as Doctor X or something like that ... I do not want to die as a Mr or Mrs, but as a Doctor."

The value of experiencing a considerable amount of control over one's life is particularly important as a facilitating element, given De Charms's (1968, discussed in Biggs & Telfer, 1987:121) emphasis on the connection between intrinsic motivation and the self-concept. He came to the conclusion that if learners believe that they are controlled by others, this

would lessen their motivation to achieve. If, however, they realise that they are in control, they will be more intrinsically motivated. Anderson and Herr (1994:67) point out that student empowerment through the sanctioning of minority student “voices” and criticism may reduce the alienation of minorities from other cultures within the school situation.

The following respondent mentioned no other aspirations apart from obtaining a good education.

“I expect a good education, and I know I'm going to get a good education in here.”

Others mentioned sport along with scholastic, social and future expectations:

“I expected it to be a very nice school, 'cause I'm used to going to school with my fellow white kids and I uhh expected high school to be uhh great and have all the friends, both black and white – yes – and I really thought I would enjoy with the teachers ... and friends, yeah.”

“ ... to do well in my sports, academic-wise, I want to get somewhere in life, and make friends with people in the schools and get along with the teachers.”

The general feeling amongst respondents was one of goodwill towards other learners and staff. They generally wanted upward social mobility, and hoped to attain this by securing a good education at a good school. It appears that achievement in any aspect within the scholastic sphere empowers and inspires the learners and encourages a positive feeling towards the school.

6.4.2 Discipline

Except for one respondent who felt indifferent with regard to this issue, it appeared that all the learners experienced a need for externally imposed order and discipline. (Externally imposed discipline refers here to the disciplinary measures as prescribed to by the school's disciplinary system.) The locus of control is therefore situated outside the learner. Discipline was generally viewed as providing structure and a context for learning. The only prerequisite was that the discipline had to be consistent and fair. It appeared that the need for discipline was not only quite well understood, but was also fairly successfully applied in the various schools. Therefore, although there was occasional resentment of institutional authority concerning dress code and detention, discipline was mentioned as an important factor in maintaining order in the school.

"I think it's quite good you know. Everybody should be disciplined ... so I'm quite happy with the disciplinary procedures at the moment."

"I've got no problem with discipline ... They treat us well."

"The one who come late to school, you must send the letters to the parent, but why your children came to school so late?"

"It's OK. They're taking the right procedures."

While one respondent's friends did not favour discipline, he alleged that the school's discipline had brought about changes in some of them:

"I like the uniform, the way they teach, the way they strict ... Most of my friends ... they are bad né? But the rules of the school, they are very good for them, and so they can't be bad just like that only. It's changing some of others like, some of my friends you can talk to them, talk to them or things ... And some of them, they listen to me, and some of them they say this school is not nice, because of the rules. Then I say to them, you don't want the rules. That means you like, you want to do what you want to do. So that's not the right thing, just follow the rules and you will learn properly. Then they say the teachers, they don't like them, things like that. The teachers, they talk to us nicely, they've been nice to us, I think they didn't treat like black or white, they just carry on like they [all learners] are the same. But if you don't work, she will be nasty, because she's giving you work, and you don't do that [the work, it] means [that] you think she is stupid."

Another respondent implied that, although discipline is not liked, it is a "necessary evil".

"No, it's OK if it's there. But it's just that I don't like it. Like everybody doesn't like discipline."

For disciplinary measures to be successful, certain conditions should be adhered to. It was generally felt, for instance, that the application of discipline should be devoid of racial bias, and that there should be feedback or some form of reward for good behaviour.

Oh, OK, I think they're fine [disciplinary measures] to suit the school, but we've got a problem with it ... we've got a system where we get debit forms and credit forms – if you do badly you get a debit, if you do good you get a credit. But we feel that ... we've been like cheated, 'cause you do something a little bit bad and you get a minus ten ... It doesn't actually balance ... That's very unfair, 'cause in one class the teacher there ... I mean she would look for the rule in her diary, just to connect you to the situation that you had to get minus."

"... some of the teachers ... they start talking to them and it's like they are on their side [white pupils] ... so actually try to change the teachers ... to start helping –"

dealing with the situation. Not being against, but start helping ... we must get the same punishment."

"OK, civvies, ja, I would say maybe they should let us wear civvies every last Friday of the month ... depending on your behaviour. And then if you don't behave well, well then you don't get to wear civvies. Then that will improve the behaviour of the children definitely."

The success of the educational relationship depends on the elements of mutual trust, understanding and obedience to authority (Van Niekerk, 1982:8). Discipline is therefore essential for the realisation of education. From the literature study, it appears that, in South Africa, there is a very wide range of approaches on discipline. Approaches vary from the severely authoritarian, to the *laissez-faire* to the completely lax. Often the latter approach is favoured by learners, resulting in a decline of behavioural standards and academic achievement (Coutts, 1992:63).

With regard to discipline in multicultural schools, Coutts (1992:61,62) discusses the need for simple, clear and easily understood disciplinary measures based on consistency and fairness. A study by Van der Merwe (1997:175-176,181) mentions that the teachers were of the opinion that most of the learners regarded discipline positively. His study also indicated that it was important for respondents that the school rules should be acceptable to all the culture groups in the school. Pacheco (1996:237) showed that, although learners voiced a need for discipline and order, in practice, there was a total lack of discipline in some of the black schools included in her study.

6.4.3 Uniforms

Uniforms create a sense of pride, belonging and connectedness. Changes that were suggested by the learners interviewed were minor and were mostly aimed at greater comfort.

"The uniform is OK. We look very nice and neat ... Yes even when you wear this uniform, you can even see, when I'm in the street you can see there is a school child ... Not like there in the location ... 'cause when you walking around ... maybe the principal of other school, she see the child of [name] school ... And even other parents if she want to put her child in [name] school, then she will firstly look at the children, how they look and how they respect it. If they ... not respect it, also that parent she wouldn't like his children to learn very wrong things. She want them to go in a straight way, because that's why they normally bring their children here."

“Uniform, no, it's nice. We think our uniform is the best!”

“Ja, I love this uniform.”

6.4.4 Shared/collective activities (social gatherings)

Most learners appeared to enjoy the social activities that the school has to offer, to the point of asking for more social functions (see also Section 6.8.2.3).

“We like that a lot, so we're still deciding ... [about asking for] more socials.”

Although the actual participation in sport is fairly poor, sporting activities show great promise for effecting good intercultural relations:

“We use to play soccer together ... the whites and the blacks. I mean, it was combined ... we didn't have racial issues and things like that.”

6.4.5 Teachers perceived as supportive

Generally the teachers were perceived as approachable and supportive.

“Most of the teachers I like a lot ... ”

“It's OK. The teacher helps me a lot [with Afrikaans].”

“When you come out of school ... other teachers, they just teach extra classes. Most of us blacks we tell the teachers, can I please come before after half past one, before I go home, I just want to come here and learn what, what we were doing early in the class. Then the teacher come here. The teachers doesn't mind, you just have to come.”

“They're also good, they're also good, because they ask you if I do not understand, and they explain everything, until I understand that's what you mean.”

“They are nice and polite.”

“ ... I think the teachers stopped them, because the class was so racist. Then the teachers called them together and spoke to them.”

“Firstly I never got along with my Afrikaans teacher, but now we're getting along. We respect each other and everything ... Actually, I don't have a problem with the teachers.”

“ ... we get along well with the teachers ... the teachers really try ... They want to [speak English]. It's just that they're not use to English.”

"I find them very, very nice. When they teach, they make sure that you understand, and they almost asking us black children: 'Do you really understand?'"

"You should always be at school. It is a good place to be ... I love my teachers ... I understand my teachers, they also understand me."

6.4.6 Mutual acceptance

It appears that mutual acceptance can be regarded as a powerful facilitating element. Respondents said the following about feeling at home with fellow white learners:

"Ja sure ... Depending. It depends who your friends are ... What is important is the person that you are ... It is about who you are. Not about what colour you are or that ..."

"It's not saying white and then I'm black. It's just like that. We're just the same ... Ja, it's not the colour. It's just what's inside."

Foster (1994:232) says: "A uni-dimensional and bipolar conception of identity ignores the well-grounded distinctions between personal and social identity as well as the notion that we possess multiple identifications such as gender, class, nation and so forth." Also, such a bipolar view of identity can obscure the possibility of other identity dimensions such as ambivalence, contradiction or the sensitive balance between positive and negative identifications. Consequently, the concept of identity cannot be simplistic – either positive or negative.

In the striving towards genuine non-racialism one scenario proposes a desire to fuse identities in a way that would move both black and white toward each other and help them to forge new identities. Another scenario suggests different identities as a moral good, provided that there would be a high degree of **mutual acceptance** between the races. Accordingly both scenarios accept "outgroup favourability as morally and psychologically sound in contrast to the present equation that [only] ingroup identification is psychologically healthy and morally desirable". From the interviews it appears that learners do not want to be typecast. They only want to be accepted at school for the individuals they are.

6.5 SYNTHESIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE LEARNER INTERVIEWS

The following are the findings of the learner interviews:

6.5.1 The family dimension

- Black families generally rely too heavily on their children, especially the girls, to do housework tasks and care for siblings. This frustrates learners' efforts to comply with the demands of schoolwork.
- Learners were given little say in the choice of their schools. They feel pressurised by parents to perform well in an educational situation that is not necessarily to their advantage, mainly due to having to cope with an unfamiliar language as the medium of instruction.
- Learners cannot talk to parents about personal matters. They feel particularly misunderstood regarding matters that concern dating and relations with the opposite sex.

6.5.2 The individual dimension

- Learners have very high expectations regarding upward social mobility and academic qualifications.
- Learners resent institutional control over their lives and require more freedom of choice in matters such as hairstyles and music.
- The self-esteem of learners are under intermittent attack. These attacks take many guises and appear to have racist undertones. Such attacks frustrate the learners' demand for the freedom just to be themselves.
- Learners responded in the affirmative to the question as to whether or not they belonged to their school. However, when the criterion of group acceptance across cultural groups was applied, it was clear that they felt marginalised.

6.5.3 The school/cultural dimension

- Learners experienced particular problems with Afrikaans, in the sense that the language is seen as being of limited use and undesirable. Some learners had a genuine problem coping with the language.
- Regarding racism, learners felt marginalised.
- Double standards regarding the application of discipline and general rules were pointed out as unacceptable and as the cause of internal conflict.
- There is a need for racial equality and respect for every individual.
- Political beliefs could inhibit intercultural harmony and social interaction.
- There was some evidence that the racial divide could be accepted as inevitable. A few learners capitulate in the sense that they remain quiet about disturbing matters.
- There are signs of racism in the form of belittlement and devaluation, either through verbal or physical abuse.
- The practice of racism creates a vicious cycle and stereotyping is perpetuated by the various generations.
- It appeared that racism could be more pronounced at Afrikaans-medium schools, although there is a growing awareness that not all Afrikaans-speaking learners subscribe to racism. Some learners ascribe racism to the politics of the apartheid era, rather than to physical characteristics.
- Racist remarks occur more often if one provokes others by treating them horribly first.
- White girls display a more relaxed attitude to interracial interaction than do white boys.
- There was some incidence of identity confusion.

- Some respondents favoured socialising with the out-group (white learners) instead of with their own group (black learners).

(a) *Intercultural issues*

- More understanding and empathy, as well as cultural awareness and sensitivity, is required within the intercultural context.
- There is some realisation that there are considerable differences between African and Western traditions.
- Learners felt stereotyped when their culturally-correct communicative behaviour (in an African context) concerning loud talk and laughter, was misinterpreted (in the Western-oriented school context).
- Latecoming was perceived as a definite problem, and responses varied from a demand for special treatment by using the victim image, to a feeling that schools must be grateful learners turn up at all, to a growing acceptance of the rules controlling latecoming. Criticism was also levelled at peers who came late. Some respondents revealed a future-oriented time perspective.
- Black adolescents tend to resolve conflict through physical force. The media, along with group pressure, appear to promote anti-social behaviour amongst learners.
- Alcohol, tobacco and dagga appear to be the most frequently abused substances amongst learners.

(b) *Intracultural issues*

- Intracultural issues centre around intracultural group pressure which allows little freedom to individuals to do as they like.
- Some white learners (especially the girls) are also exposed to intracultural pressure concerning their intercultural relationships. Their situation elicits an empathetic response from some black learners.

- Wealth and scholastic excellence are frowned upon by the group.

6.5.4 Facilitating elements

- There is a general feeling of goodwill towards other learners and staff.
- Learners generally feel proud of their school.
- The ability to perform in any aspect within the scholastic sphere appears to be an important incentive to achieve at school and it inspires a positive feeling towards the school.
- To establish good intercultural social relationships is considered important.
- The need for discipline is quite well understood.
- Learners experience a definite need for externally imposed order and discipline. However, it is a prerequisite that such discipline must be consistent and fair, devoid of racial bias. Feedback or some form of reward for good behaviour is important.
- Uniforms create a sense of pride in and belonging to the school.
- Teachers are generally considered to be approachable and supportive.
- Mutual acceptance based on individual characteristics and not on group characteristics can be regarded as a powerful facilitating element.

It is clear from these findings that while several problems exist, learners also recognise facilitating elements, and these elements should be developed to facilitate these learners' accommodation at school.

The eight learners interviewed provided a realistic insight into their worlds.

These interviews were supplemented by the interviews with the teachers, as discussed in the rest of Chapter 6.

6.6 INTERVIEWS: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS OF TEACHER INTERVIEWS

The findings of the teacher interviews are discussed in the order set out in Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2: Stumbling blocks and facilitating elements that contribute to the accommodation of black Grade Nine learners, as viewed by the teachers

<p>STUMBLING BLOCKS (inhibit multicultural school accommodation):</p> <p>INTERCULTURAL DIFFERENCES Overcompensation Colour blindness School ethos Noise level Racism Social interaction</p> <p>INTRACULTURAL DIFFERENCES Scholastic pressure Social interaction</p> <p>HIGH PERCENTAGE OF FAILURE Language difficulties Latecoming/Absenteeism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Cultural aspects • Distance <p>Educational background: Home/family situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental expectations • Housework • Parental discipline • Emotional support <p>Educational background: School/formal situation</p> <p>INCREASE IN DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR Substance abuse Theft Violence</p> <p>DIFFERENT AND DIVERSE SOCIAL VALUES INABILITY TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTIONS</p>
<p>FACILITATING ELEMENTS (promote multicultural school accommodation):</p> <p>DISCIPLINARY PROCESS SENSE OF BELONGING Cultural activities Sport Social activities</p> <p>SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE UNIFORM</p>

All the main hindrances to the meaningful accommodation of black Grade Nine learners as identified by the eight teacher respondents during the interviews were considered to be “stumbling blocks”. Those elements that promote multicultural accommodation are discussed under the heading of “facilitating elements”. Some of the teachers preferred to answer in Afrikaans. Excerpts from these interviews have been translated into English. The original Afrikaans excerpts are included in square brackets below the translations.

6.7 STUMBLING BLOCKS: THE TEACHERS' POINT OF VIEW

6.7.1 Intercultural differences

In this section those elements that have the potential to cause misunderstanding and conflict between cultures and can therefore be considered to be flashpoints are discussed.

6.7.1.1 *Overcompensation*

In an attempt to side-step the stereotyping of learners and the harbouring of preconceived ideas, some teaching staff have overcompensated in their efforts to accommodate black learners. Overcompensation can be regarded as patronising and condescending, which could in turn elicit feelings of inferiority. Therefore, overcompensation can counteract a sense of true acceptance and belonging to the school.

“... I would say by and large it has been an adjustment – taught us tolerance between the different cultures ... And ... initially I would say people went out of their way to make them feel at home and to accept them ... I think people's whole approach was ... to make the transition, to make the adjustment ...”

“From my way as a teacher, it's very strange, it's like so different. Every time you looked at them, you saw colour ... uhm, I suppose we ... I certainly would say that I ... I ... I tried very hard. You almost overcompensated for the fact that they ... are black. You expected them to be, maybe, weaker academically. You expected them to react quite different to what you're accustomed to, but I certainly think we were prepared to make a lot of concessions.”

Crozier (1989:78) refers to Sharp and Green's (1975) observation about a patronising attitude: “If black people have been ridiculed, debased and hidden from history, as they have, then it is patronizing and trite to simply assert that somehow they now matter.” It appears

that the dividing line between rendering aid to somebody and patronising is not easily discernible and, if handled incorrectly, could become a cultural flashpoint.

6.7.1.2 *Colour blindness*

One respondent refused to acknowledge any cultural and racial difference. Such a policy of denial can harm good cultural interaction in the school.

“I don't want to talk about racial problems in the school, because for me a child is a child ... With regard to culture they are equal to the white children. There is really no difference between black or white.”

The term used in the literature for the above phenomenon is “colour blindness” (Klein, 1993:128; Anderson & Herr, 1994:66; Atmore, 1994:162-163). Teachers who pride themselves on being “colour blind”, and therefore treat all learners the same without acknowledging that some learners have entered a “foreign” environment do these learners a great disservice (Anderson & Herr, 1994:66; Atmore, 1994:163). According to Anderson and Herr (1994:66-67), when teachers acknowledge that they live in an imperfect, stratified society and are prepared to listen, they can empower learners to develop “voices” which can be heard. Kelly (1994:71) argues that denial of issues surrounding sexism and racism can lock “pupils and staff into a situation of *ad hoc* responses which breeds distrust and injustice”. Klein (1993:114) says that some schools use the attitude that they experience no problem and that the children are all happy as a defence. According to Epstein (1993:100), maintaining a neutral stance within the context of race relations is impossible and could lead learners to experience teachers as dishonest rather than as neutral. Furthermore, by assuming that racism is simply a matter of prejudice and ignorance, the institutional aspects of racism and the processes which produce and reproduce it are ignored.

6.7.1.3 *School ethos*

The ethos of a school can be described as the “particular atmosphere of the individual school, which resides in values and attributes that are implicit in the behaviour and interactions that are characteristic within the school. 'Ethos' is the code by which pupils and staff operate in schools” (Cooper, 1993:163).

One teacher appeared particularly concerned about how the ethos of the school would be affected in the long run:

*"It's almost as if our ethos is still hanging in there, because we're about 30% black. If we were 50% black, I think we would somehow, things would change – the discipline, the noise level ... they almost don't have much time for ... a woman ... discipline with women ... we want children to be neat, we want children to be polite, we want children to be punctual, we want children to have manners. At the moment we're **just** hanging in there ... I'm worried about ... if we are 50-50 or a 60-40 ratio, I don't know how well-mannered and polite and whatever else we can think of, we'll be."*

In line with the above teacher's feelings, a black Zimbabwean learner interviewed by Frederikse (1992:8-9) in another study mentioned being unhappy, because, as more black learners entered the school, he "felt the system was dying". The learner admitted to ambivalent feelings, as he had gone through the system and did not want to miss out on the privileges normally afforded the senior learners. In fact, he was looking forward to being respected by the juniors, since, as a senior he would have as much say as anybody whether the juniors were white or black. Consequently, when the white learners started to leave, he felt bitter about it, because he had gone through "something" with them.

Klein (1993:129) refers to the subtle differential attitudes that underlie the way many teachers perceive and treat their pupils according to the "like me" and "other than me" principle. He points out that attitudes are extremely resistant to change, and that, even when change does come, the process is slow. Schools have to find a way to accommodate all the stakeholders in their ethos. This must be done in such a way that nobody feels threatened or loses privileges.

The following remark should be seen in the light of the above: the transitional period is difficult. Some ways of doing things were experienced as very difficult and hard to accept.

"Initially there were possible adjustment problems to the school rules ... they may not have beards or moustaches ... and very few of them like to shave. They do not like to wear socks ... and they are regularly reprimanded since they have shoes on without socks. The whole adjustment to westernised school rules presented ... problems. In the beginning ... they did not know where to change for sport practices. If the change rooms were full, they would just change on the stoep. While the longer they were part of the school, the more they conformed to the way in which we do things and I would say gradually the adjustment became easier. Especially ... where they've attended ... other city primary schools."

[“Aanvanklik was daar tog moontlike aanpassingsprobleme by die skoolreëls ... hulle mag nie baarde of snorre hê nie ... en baie min van hulle skeer graag. So ... dra hulle nie graag sokkies nie en ... word hulle ... gereeld aangespreek omdat hulle skoene aanhet sonder kouse. Die hele aanpassing by westerse skoolreëls het ... probleme gelever. En aan die begin ... het hulle nie ... geweet waar om ... vir sportoefeninge aan te trek nie. As die kledkamers vol is dan trek hulle maar sommer op die stoep aan. Terwyl hoe langer hulle deel geword het van die skool, hoe meer het hulle gekonformeer met die manier waarop ons dinge doen en geleidelik sou ek sê het die inskakeling al hoe makliker geword. Veral ... waar hulle alreeds in ander stedelike laerskole was ... ”]

Klein (1993:112,114) says that a school's ethos is difficult to alter, but that the performance of learners and the handling of issues of equality depend on such a change. She claims that an attitude of openness on the part of school managers can help to foster a good ethos. Kelly (1994:64) concludes that, in multicultural situations, learners develop their ethos, their responses to conflicts and their hierarchies on the playground, since this is the only place where they can encounter such a cross-section of society. It is also during this process that they learn how the hierarchies of prestige, status and authority operate.

6.7.1.4 *Noise level*

All the teachers found the noise level hard to accept.

“ ... they are tremendously noisy during change of classes, also when they enter a classroom ... when he as an individual talks to you, he will noticeably talk very much softer.”

[“ ... is dat hulle geweldig raserig is tydens wisseling van klasse, ook met die inkom in 'n klas ... wanneer hy as 'n individu met jou praat, dan praat hy weer opmerklik baie sagter.”]

“The noise level to me at my age is the biggest thing to control, to cope with. It's an incredibly noisy bunch of kids. The laughter - unnecessarily we may think - but maybe I'm not reading it correctly ... the amount of noise generated when the class changes can be phenomenal.”

“They are very noisy as a group, but that is part of their culture.”

Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995:20) say that the audible levels of language use differ between cultures. Usually Xhosa speakers, for example, tend to speak loudly, while mother-tongue English speakers tend to speak more softly (see also Section 6.3.3.3(a)).

6.7.1.5 Racism

Racism in the form of name-calling and verbal abuse featured quite prominently as a problem mentioned in the interviews (see also Section 6.3.3.2). Some incidents involving harassment also featured. One teacher put it this way:

"I think other adjustment problems are the decent children, the socio-economically stronger children that ... suffer under negative white children that call them names and push them over on the stoep, that will trip a girl when she passes and then it is a nice child. And then it is a child that is in the academic team. Then I am immediately furious with that boy that said that to her or did that, since she is far ahead of him."

["Ander aanpassingsprobleme dink ek is maar die ordentlike kinders, die sosio-ekonomiese sterker kinders wat ... swaarkry onder negatiewe blanke kinders wat hulle name noem en omstamp op die stoepe, wat die meisie sal pootjie as sy sou verbykom en dan is dit 'n oulike kind. En dan is dit 'n kind wat in die akademiese span is. Dan is ek onmiddellik woedend vir daai seun wat dit vir haar gesê of dit gedoen het, want sy is vir hom ver voor."]

"There was conflict between the white and the black children ... Derogatory comments to one another. Some of the white children got up and sat down somewhere else as soon as a black learner came to sit down next to them, so racism was displayed."

["Daar was konflik gewees tussen die wit kinders en die swart kinders ... Beledigende aanmerkings teenoor mekaar. Van die wit leerlinge het opgestaan en op 'n ander plek gaan sit sodra daar 'n swart leerling langs hulle kom sit het, so daar is rassisme geopenbaar."]

Harassment can be defined as causing pain, as it involves "impersonal, unreciprocated and unwelcome physical contact, comment, suggestion, joke, attention. The mistreatment is offensive to the person/s concerned and causes the victim/s to feel threatened, humiliated, patronised, embarrassed; it dehumanises, makes objects of the victim/s" (Kelly, 1994:66).

Kelly refers to the situation in the United Kingdom, where the Home Office estimated that Asian and black people are far more likely than white people to be harassed through incidents such as verbal abuse and spitting. Harassment seriously damages the quality of life of members of ethnic minority communities. In addition, research indicated that Asian and Afro-Caribbean learners experienced substantially more comments about their skin colour than did white learners (Kelly, 1994:65,67).

6.7.1.6 *Social interaction*

It appears that, interculturally, there is social integration at school, but it is not without reserve.

The general feeling among teachers was that there was not much intercultural mixing during break.

“No. Not at all ... we often spoke about things that were black – white issues, and they said to me that there's a lot of division ... And I've asked other kids and yes ... it does seem as if quite a few of them are divided.”

“They fit in well, but I do notice that they stick to their own groups during breaks.”

“Separate, very much.”

It appears that black and white courtships are actively discouraged in some instances and are seen as strange:

“Her parents wanted to send her ... to [another country]. His parents did not approve of it either ... Neither did his friends.”

“But we've had the exceptions for example we've had our matric dance recently, you know it could be a black guy and a white girl, and it's seen as strange.”

During sport and cultural activities, intercultural division is less pronounced.

“On the sportfield or on the stage, you know there is no difference I ... think ... ”

Intercultural interaction depends on individual preferences, individual personalities and how a person relates to others. Some teachers attributed the types of intercultural interactions that occurred to differences in sophistication or social class. Skin colour appears to be relatively unimportant.

“You'll find ... a black child and a white child and all together chatting quite happily, and they're not thinking of each other as black or white. But you will find groups that are just black or just white ... but it is a matter of more your personality, your likes and dislikes and the facts that you have in common.”

“There are cases where there is fantastic mixing ... Really he is my buddy! ... [name] has never been to a township school. [Name] thinks he is English speaking. He is white in a black body.”

“So he thinks he's white?”

“We think he is white ... Ja, he is whiter than everybody else. I've never thought of

[name] as being black ... [name] just speak beautifully. He speaks better than I do ... I don't think we're racist. I think we're snobs. I think it's class – class difference ... It's not colour – it's class. ... Because I don't think of some of these children as being ... [gestures, indicating black skin colour]. But some of them again I look at him and I think 'You look like a thug – and then I think because you are [gestures - indicating black skin colour.] And it is not true. It's not true! ... It's the class that hangs together. That's why these children say it's the brain that's what makes you - separates you - how much you know - isn't it?"

“Those who are in the parallel stream ... do not mix socially outside their group ... Our experience is also that those children who are in the double-medium stream, fit in better in the sport and social functions at the school, since they have friends amongst the white learners.”

[“ ... terwyl daardie leelinge wat in die parallel stroom is ... nie regtig buite hulle klasgroep assosieer nie ... Ons belewenis is ook dat daardie kinders wat in die dubbelmedium stroom staan ook meer by sport inskakel en by sosiale funksies by die skool omdat hulle ook maats onder die wit leerlinge het.”]

The literature mentions a tendency for children to choose playmates of the same race, even in multi-cultural societies such as the United Kingdom and United States (Smith, 1994:42-43). Girls in the British and American studies displayed more same-race preference. This could be due to boys spending almost two-thirds of their time in rule games, implying that during team games, racial considerations could be of less importance than when small groups of people gather.

Kelly (1994:68-73) says that it appears that much sexist harassment occurs at school and is regarded as “normal”, especially in co-educational schools, where boys normally dominate physically and verbally. Consequently, the girls learn to avoid groups of boys in order to avoid being harassed by the boys’ behaviour. It seems that the games boys play could take up so much space that little space is left for the activities of the girls. Positive school ground policy can “liberate children for freer play and the absence of such policy generates injustice and tension” (Kelly, 1994:70).

In line with this suggestion, and to challenge intercultural sexual and racial harassment, schools should plan to create environments which will meet the requirements of “safe schools”. In such an environment, all learners can experience accommodation and they can thrive. In this way the “full potential of social learning is to be unlocked in a safe and just environment” (Kelly, 1994:72). In this way, learners can unlearn the prejudices and discrimination that legitimise victimisation.

The fact that the current study has shown that, in the Gauteng schools studied, girls tend to be more likely to mix suggests that this can make a positive contribution to bridging intercultural gulfs (see also Section 6.3.3.3(d)).

Smith also points out that a preference for same-race partners (and playmates) does not necessarily reflect prejudice as such. He does concede that limited different-race interaction in schools with a fairly equal mix of racial groups could worry those who wish to promote multicultural attitudes. Same-race preference could, however, simply be a manifestation of the consolidation of racial identity. Alternatively it could even reflect real differences in activity preference.

In line with the one teacher's sentiment about class differences as a determinant of mixing, Bot (1992:98) quotes Braun and Wieland (1989) as saying that, in Zimbabwe, a society that is very class aware has taken the place of a society that was very racially aware, and the elite is now being recruited from the upper stratum of African society.

6.7.2 Intracultural differences

Within black cultures, there is much pressure to conform to group expectations. In this regard, scholastic pressure and social interaction are discussed.

6.7.2.1 *Scholastic pressure*

Those learners who excel in any way are often exposed to tremendous stress to keep up their performance (see also Section 6.3.3.3(d)).

*"I can see that for the rich black kids that are in these schools, it's a major issue that they must be nearly perfect ... the very rich black kids in our school, the moment that they struggle scholastically, it's like devastating to them, because ... then they're going to give the other kids the reason to throw stones at them. It's like the poor kids are waiting for a reason to nail them: 'See you're not as smart as you thought you were!' They **cannot** handle it when they fail, or they can't pass or when they battle."*

6.7.2.2 *Social interaction*

It appears that intraculturally, mixing depends on differences in social class (as mentioned in Section 6.7.1.6) and socio-economic differences, the places where the learners live, origins (South African or otherwise) and language (see also Sections 6.3.2.2 and 6.3.2.4).

“There's a lot of antagonism uh ... uh ... if you don't fit into the black group.”

“As a matter of fact the black kids uh... reject the other black kids that do not want to speak the black language. Uhhhm ... I've often heard that if our children go to the townships, the township kids will also mock them, or uhmmm ... put them down, or don't want to have anything to do with them, because they are in an English school. Uhhhm ... There are quite a lot of class differences, like if you are a rich, black kid, uhmm ... then you kind of keep yourself isolated from the other kids, because they immediately think you think you're better than they are. We have the problem with water sharing – that the rich people would have water, and then when the kids are friends with poorer kids, those kids' parents would come and ask for water and that would bring problems. So some of the relationships ... the parents prefer that if you are rich and you live in a township, that you stay isolated, because it brings other problems.

*“You ... have children uhmm where it is felt that they are too white. You know they, they enjoy speaking English ... Their standards of living is very different – they have not lived in a township ... and then there are children – who ... black children – who will as it were ... uhmm ... almost shun those few ... They also tell me that if you come to this school and you live in [name of] township, the rest of the kids that go [to the township high school] call you a snob ... **within** the township they say: 'Ma'am they hardly even greet you. They say: Ag no, you, you don't want to know us ... The rest of my buddies in the township tell me OK, you want to go to school with the whites – you don't want to associate with us and we don't want to associate with you.’ “*

“What is interesting is that black kids that come from other African countries fit in with the white kids. They don't fit in with the black kids. They're more readily accepted. But these Rwandans ... They are clever children. They are not accepted by our black children. They are accepted by our white kids. In South Africa, there's division, and we're not keen to take you from Zambia or Angola ... I get the impression they're threatened – the average to maybe a little bit below average kid ... doesn't think much of kids coming from other African states. That's the feel I get ... there's the snob value amongst their society – it exists. Certain people think they're better than others, simply because of the language they speak.”

According to Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995:36-38) and Zimbabwean learners quoted by Frederikse (1992:27), language can symbolise group-membership, indicating that when people identify with a particular group, this identification is reflected in their speech. Such

language and group identification can lead to social prejudice against other groups and lead to the “them” and “us” syndrome. People are also categorised according to their speech, hairstyle, clothing, and other observable factors as well as their educational levels. A change in language use or accent could be regarded as “snobbish” or “prestigious” and lead to old school friends commenting: “I’ve got nothing to say to those guys any more – they even speak differently” (Kaschula & Anthonissen, 1995:37).

6.7.3 High percentage of failure

The following elements appear to be directly related to a high failure rate at school.

6.7.3.1 Language difficulties

Every respondent pointed out problems centred around language. These problems varied between an inability to understand either English or Afrikaans or learners competency level in a specific language. Learners’ competency may not be good enough to enable them to cope scholastically (see also Sections 6.3.3.1 and 3.5.2.3(a)).

“The initial problems which are the same problems that we have now, is that the children cannot speak English and they ... cannot follow what's being done in class.”

“ ... the children cannot master the English language and therefore cannot pass ... ”

“I think the language problem is still one of the biggest problems ... They don't follow what's going on in class. I find that when someone comes from X or Y college, I think the medium there is English – but I find when they come from any of those colleges they still battle. I would say if they spend at least two to three years in A or B [primary schools] then they don't battle as much when they get here.”

“Maybe I should mention first the language competency that they do not possess. Maybe they would have achieved better in an English school.”

[“Miskien moet ek heel eeste dalk noem die taalvaardigheid waaroor hulle nie beskik nie. Hulle sal dalk in 'n Engels-medium skool beter gevaar het.”]

It appears that some teachers are themselves struggling to cope with English terminology:

“Because we are an Afrikaans-medium school ... They interrupted in English ... Some teachers that are not fluent in English, just never explained in English at all.”

[“Omdat ons 'n Afrikaans medium skool is ... Hulle het onderbreek in Engels. Party onderwysers wat nie Engels vaardig is nie, het net glad nie in Engels verduidelik nie.”]

One school found that learners who cannot cope, partly due to language difficulties, simply stayed away:

“ ... when he can't cope, then we just find that he starts staying away. ”

[“ ... as hy nie kan 'cope' nie, dan tel ons nou maar op dat hy begin wegbly ... ”]

In South Africa, many black parents prefer to send their children to schools where the medium of instruction is English, because they consider fluency in English to be empowering (Kaschula & Anthonissen, 1995:59; Lemmer, 1996:325). Often these learners are sufficiently fluent, according to English assessment tests administered upon enrolment, but lack the command of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) that, according to a theory by Cummins, is required to ensure successful scholastic performance. Teachers from a wide spectrum of South African schools have endorsed this theory (Lemmer, 1996:332).

6.7.3.2 *Latecoming/Absenteeism*

In all the schools, latecoming presented a problem to a greater or lesser degree (see also Section 6.3.3.3(b)). The distance between the parental home and school, as well as unreliable transport, were blamed. In some instances, living far away from school was fraudulently used as an excuse.

“Coming late was a very big problem last year ... but we clamped down on them ... We didn't accept any excuses ... The problem isn't that big any more.”

“ ... you might find that there are a handful who are regularly late and that is a problem, because it is something foreign to our culture. ”

“ ... latecoming in the mornings. They sometimes arrive here at school at half past nine, ten o'clock. School starts at half past seven. ”

[“ ... laatkom in die oggende. Hulle kom tot partymaal halftien-tienuur hier by die skool aan. Die skool begin halfagt. ”]

“Especially initially, I think they found it difficult to be on time for school, and they thought it was strange to see that teachers are on time for school. They – and I have spoken to them a lot – they were not used to that.”

[“Aan die begin veral – ek dink hulle het dit moeilik gevind om betyds by die skool te wees en dit was vir hulle snaaks om te sien dat die onderwysers betyds by die skool is. Hulle – ek het nou baie al met hulle gepraat – hulle was nie gewoon daaraan nie.”]

“ ... one of the biggest frustrating factors still is that they are not as watch-bound as we are.”

[“ ... een van die grootste frustrerende faktore op die oomblik nog, is dat hulle nie so horlosie-gebonde soos ons is nie.”]

Local research by Pacheco (1996:239,243,245) indicates that learners regard it as normal to arrive as late as nine o' clock for school in the townships, with no fear of punishment for the offence of arriving late. She also found that black learners at these schools also complained that their teachers were late or did not turn up for school at all (Bot, 1992:79).

- Transport

One of the problems related to latecoming was transport, especially since many learners depended on unreliable transport to get to school. Lack of reliable transport was blamed for latecoming, lack of participation in sport and other cultural activities. All the respondents identified transport as a problem:

“You have a problem with the taxis and that ... the transport when they have to come for matches ... ”

“The problem that they have is ... is ... a real problem and that's the convoys of the taxis.”

“Latecoming is a problem, but this is due to transport.”

“Their excuses then are always transport.”

[“Hulle verskonings is dan altyd vervoer”]

- Cultural factors

Unreliable transport is also blamed when learners do not come to school at all. At one school, absenteeism presented a particular problem and appeared to have an additional cultural cause.

“ ... we have a very high percentage of absenteeism amongst black learners ... We find especially a big tendency amongst many of them to be absent on Fridays and Mondays ... The absentee letters that they always bring ... is that they had to go to some distant place for a funeral and first had to struggle to get transport again. It's always funerals.”

[“ ... ons kry 'n geweldige hoë afwesigheidspersentasie by die swart leerlinge ... Ons kry veral 'n groot tendens onder 'n groot aantal van hulle, dat hulle op Vrydae en

Maandae afwesig is ... Die afwesigheidsbriewe wat hulle altyd bring ... is dat hulle een of ander ver plek toe moes gaan vir 'n begrafnis en eers moes gesukkel het om weer vervoer te kry. Dis altyd begrafnisse.”]

The cultural component of the problem voiced by the teacher above related to the frequency with which black learners have to attend funerals. It has already been mentioned that the family concept varies in black cultures to include a vast extended family (hence, many family funerals). In a township, group solidarity also demands attendance at the funerals of neighbours. Attendance at funerals cannot be cut short, but must include the service, the actual interment and refreshments at the home of the family of the deceased (see also Section 3.5.2.5).

- Distance

Another demographic factor associated with latecoming and transport is the distance that learners have to travel every day.

“There are some ... who travel quite a distance every day ... ”

Distance from school was sometimes used as a convenient, but not necessarily true, excuse for coming late.

“The black kids that were living the furthest from us were coming on time. The black kids that were living up the road were late.”

The general feeling was that if the child stays far away from the school, participation in extra-mural activities usually has to be forfeited.

“Sport ... they take part, but it depends on where the child stays. If he stays in [name of township] and has to take a taxi home immediately, then he cannot stay for sport, so it is those that stay close to the school that are involved.”

[“Sport ... hulle skakel in, maar dit hang maar af van die kind waar hy bly. As hy in [naam van township] bly en onmiddellik 'n taxi moet huis toe haal, dan kan hy nie bly vir sport nie, so dit is die klompie wat om die skool bly wat meer betrokke is.”]

Literature on the South African situation indicates that learner and parental involvement can really only occur if the school is close to the community from which it draws its learners. For this reason, Bot (1992:68-69) stresses the importance of schools' being situated in areas where they are more easily accessible to the local community.

The education system in Zimbabwe faced the same problem. Frederikse (1992:32) quotes one interviewee as saying that distance and transport make learners late for school and prevent them from taking part in sport.

6.7.3.3 *Educational background: home/family situation*

- **Parental expectations**

Parental expectations appear to be high and therefore there is often huge disappointment when such expectations are not realised (see also Section 6.3.1.1). Such expectations often cause tremendous stress and emotional problems for the children, as is apparent from the following statement by one teacher:

“Another problem is that the parent expectations are very high of their children and then they feel very disappointed, because the children cannot master the English language and therefore cannot pass ... The parents are very disappointed and then they are very harsh towards the children, and that causes emotional problems in the children ... I think the parents work very hard to get their children into these schools. They pay a lot of money and, and they've got this vision of uhhhh ... of a good education. They are really providing a good education, and then they are very disappointed.”

“ ... the parents want to give these learners an education of a higher standard ... ”

[“ ... die ouers graag aan hierdie kinders 'n opvoeding wil gee van 'n hoër standaard ... ”)

South African research indicates the following that while black parents value better education, the increased expectations may not always be met (Bot, 1992:79). Cleaver (1994:12) points out that many parents regard their children as extensions of themselves and dream that their children will succeed where they have failed. The literature shows that black parents may well subject their children to harsh treatment at times in their concern to toughen their children in order for the children to cope with being powerless in a victim system – this can turn into abuse if carried too far (Chinkanda, 1994:182,184).

Pinderhughes (1982, as cited in Lemmer 1996:337) suggests that black parents often enrol learners in all-English schools and encourage them to abandon the use of their mother tongue. Also they could apply exorbitant pressure on the learners to acquire the English language as quickly as possible, which in turn could create severe stress for these learners.

Much is also expected from the school. Coutts (1992:55) says: “Many parents will make great demands of teachers, as they see the school as an avenue to social advancement in a discriminatory society.”

- **Housework**

The family structure may disintegrate when parents are often unavailable for their children. This leaves the children responsible for housework and sibling care, for which these children have neither the time nor the maturity. Therefore household tasks can become a stumbling block to good scholastic performance. It also appears that parents often do not understand the scholastic demands of the school (see also Section 6.3.1.1).

“The children are responsible for a lot of the chores, like fetching the brothers and sisters from crèche, making the supper, cleaning the house, and by the time their parents get home, they are very tired ... so the children ... they've got responsible chores. Sometimes they even have to wake up the family in the morning and see to it that they get onto the buses, so, you know, they've got a lot of work to do at home ... when it comes to the exam time and we work out their timetable – that we actually have to call the parents and say ... or tell the child to go and talk to the mom: Can I maybe only dust the house Thursdays and ... and Mondays and not like every day? Can't you help me out with the cooking? And then the parents are willing. It's like they don't really realise the pressure the children are under here, as well as looking after the household ... that the parents would actually accommodate their tough programme so that they can have more time to study, because they literally finish round about six o'clock with all the cooking, the chores, bathing brother and sister and then they're quite exhausted to start to study then.”

“The mothers are going out at 6 o'clock in the morning to keep the pot boiling. It seems to me that the father is very absent in the black home – terribly absent ... ”

“ ... many of the girls ... have complained to me that they have many tasks at home. They have to look after small children. Mother and father work, arrive home late, they have to do the housework and prepare food and look after their siblings so that they really have little time to study.”

[“ ... baie van die dogters ... het al by my gekla dat hulle baie pligte by die huis het. Hulle het klein kindertjies na wie hulle moet omsien. Ma en pa werk, kom laat by die huis, hulle moet die huiswerk behartig en die kos maak en na die boeties en sussies kyk, dat hulle werklik min tyd kry om te leer.”]

In some households little time is allocated to schoolwork. Liddell *et al.* (1994: 60) found that in larger households, little time was spent in school- or literacy-related activities. One reason could be that older children, especially the girls, are often given the responsibility of

housework (Pacheco, 1996:244). At times they are even absent from school in order to deal with the workload.

Healthy development in children depends on parents' awareness of the dangers of demanding too much of their children (Cleaver, 1994:12). Bot (1992:66) mentions various educationists who are of the opinion that parents need to be educated and informed along with their kids, as many of the parents really want to support their children, but lack the skills to do so.

- **Parental discipline**

It appears that in some cases, parental discipline amounts to verbal and possibly physical abuse, instead of following more healthy disciplinary measures.

“ ... they want to see those same qualities in their children. But when their children don't pass, or they see their children lack in discipline or they don't study as hard as they should, they start really getting abusive ... verbally abusive, as well as, maybe ... it's physical abuse. I don't know if it was always part of their culture. But the children will come to me and say that they are scared of their parents, that the mothers especially would like to hit the children. They would ... uhh, they would have short tempers and then they lose their tempers and then hit the children. They wouldn't really like gate them or take their money or follow behaviour programmes. They would physically and verbally put the children down.”
“You've had the experience that they actually come to you?”
“Oh yes - lots of them.”

The school staff is sometimes seen as the ultimate authority and disciplinary body. In cases where there is a complete breakdown in communication, the teaching staff is expected to mediate between parent and child.

*“The **mother** phoned us and said my child won't listen to me. It's almost as if so many of them live only with the mother who's not really coping ... would we please deal with this child? ... we called the girl in and the mom – and they wouldn't look at each other ... And then ... the child came back, she said my mother has hidden all my clothes. She won't let me go out. Will you please tell my mother to stop this.”*

A study by Cleaver (1994:9-11) showed that black parents wish to instil their own norms and values in their children. The mothers appeared to enclose and protect their children, while the fathers shield their children through power and control. Some fathers indicated that dominance over children counteracted a feeling of subordination in the workplace. Coutts

(1992:63) says that many parents display a remarkably severe and authoritarian view on discipline.

Cleaver (1994:9-11) found that the youth displayed an increasing tendency to defy authority and to practise anti-normative behaviour, which often left the parents feeling powerless to instil a responsibility and a desire towards learning in the child. Parents viewed teacher involvement as a possible solution to an academic inability to supervise their children's homework, and when this was not realised, it led to disappointment.

Note should be taken of a quantitative analysis of the rates of command and information in African children's language exchanges by Liddell *et al.* (1994:61). This found little evidence to suggest either a general pattern or a greater degree of authoritative interactions in the black rural as opposed to the black urban settings. This means that there was little evidence of an authority-based communication structure for either rural or urban children.

- **Emotional support**

Often parents do not render the necessary emotional support to their children. Speaking about personal matters appears to be particularly fraught with difficulty (see also Section 6.3.1.2).

"There was no communication. Not as much as in the white home – sorry ... And they don't want to talk to them ... they say they can't speak to their parents."

"No, they tell me their parents don't listen to them ... And she dated this guy for ages and she said my father will kill me if he knows. There isn't that openness."

Good communication depends on the parents' availability. When parents or caregivers return home from work, they are often exhausted. Consequently they are not readily available for communication and quality communication suffers.

... I found that the parents were very busy. A lot of the parents come home very late ... So they are not always available."

" ... again it has a lot to do with the job situation of the parents where in some instances ... they're out all day and they don't have a chance to see them."

In the case of single-parent families, the problem is compounded.

“It all depends on the structure that they have at home, whether there's a father and a mother and a support structure and the mom really tends to the emotional needs of the children. But I often find single mothers that have more than one job to keep the children in this school. Sometimes they even study and then ... they won't always sleep at home.”

“ ... mostly the mother. And that in itself can also have problems. I mean social problems where eventually there's a new man in a situation where he doesn't like the child ... envy and so on, you know. Some of these children have a very hard life.”

There may be a lack of communication between the black family home and the school.

“I know that in some of the schools you know that it is a problem just to get those parents in ... ”

“The parents are ... not very involved.”

One respondent found the lack of communication particularly disturbing, especially in the case of a family crisis, when the school needs to be notified in order to render the necessary support to the learner concerned.

“ ... I think that you are not always aware of how to read them emotionally – or to read how they are experiencing it. So it takes a little longer to pick up the essence of the problem. I mean sometimes for example if a white child's mother or father has died, you know virtually immediately – somebody will phone and tell you. But, that's not always the case in the black family ... It might take a day or two before you'll actually hear the child has lost a parent ... It has got to come from the family sometimes – it's slow ... ”

The general unavailability of black parents for their children (mainly due to socio-economic reasons) appears to influence the emotional support learners receive greatly. The literature mentions that many parents are forced to choose between employment to ensure survival and attending to their children's emotional and intellectual needs (Ramphela, 1992:23). A study by Liddell *et al.* (1994:61) indicates that rural children interacted more often with adults than urban children did. Cleaver (1994:11) found that when questioned about need satisfaction, mothers especially mentioned physical exhaustion, possibly resulting from the physical tasks involved in child-caring and/or displaced frustration.

Long-term positive emotional engagement with caring adults is an essential aspect of sound human development. Deprivation of such experiences may lead to an increased vulnerability to the effects of adversity and to ineffective parenting (Rutter, 1989, as cited by Richter,

1994:44). Learners deprived in this way most probably require focused accommodation structures within the school situation.

Even in private schools, it was found that contact between the school and the learner's homes was fairly limited (Bot, 1992:67). She points out that among the black community there is no tradition of parent participation. More contact between home and school could foster a feeling of belonging to the school.

6.7.3.4 *Educational background: The school/formal situation*

Basic primary education is very important. The learners' scholastic coping skills depend on the learners' previous scholastic background.

"Or they haven't had the basic primary education and therefore they really battle when they come here. That first year they really battle."

"If they come from the townships, they can't cope at all ... if they fail their first year, they'll do better the next year. Some of them battle uhmm ... I won't say it's more than the whites. All depends on the primary education."

"The achievement in their schoolwork is to a large degree connected to their previous background. So there are children who speak English very well and are well read and therefore cope well. But there are some of them who do not have an English background, but want their teaching to be in English ... while maybe their language capability is not so good. This is naturally detrimental to their performance, since they do not always understand. But there are a number of individuals who rise above the others."

["Die vordering van hulle skoolwerk is in 'n groot mate gekoppel aan hulle vorige agtergrond. So daar is kinders wat baie goed Engelssprekend en goed belese is en dus ook maklik vorder. Maar daar is van hulle wat nie Engelse agtergrond het nie, maar hulle wil hulle onderwys in Engels hê terwyl hulle ... taalvermoë dalk self nie eers so goed is nie. Wat dan natuurlik 'n nadeel is vir prestasie omdat hulle nie altyd so goed verstaan nie. Maar daar is 'n hele klomp individue wat uitstyg bo die ander ... "]

It appears that many learners lack a culture of learning, especially with regard to adequate study methods.

I don't think they really have a culture of learning ... for example, they do not talk of learning – 'we learn – we read' – so they think that just by reading something over and over, a person learns ... and then it is a revelation for them to realize that they should make summaries and do revision ... and with many their attention is easily distracted ... I don't think that they are used to homework, a daily study routine, like most of our children are from Grade One."

[“Ek dink nie hulle het regtig 'n leerkultuur nie ... hulle praat byvoorbeeld nie van hulle 'leer' nie – 'we learn – we read' – so hulle dink deur slegs 'n ding oor en oor te lees, leer jy ... en dan is dit vir hulle 'n openbaring dat hulle besef maar hulle moet opsommings maak en hulle moet hersiening doen ... daar is baie wat baie aandagafleibaar is ... Ek dink nie hulle is van graad een af soos ons leerlinge gewoon aan huiswerk, 'n daaglikse studieroetine, soos wat die meeste van ons kinders is nie.”]

“It really appears that a total culture of learning is missing ... They do not do their schoolwork.”

[“Dis werklik asof daar 'n totale leerkultuur ontbreek ... Hulle doen nie huiswerk nie.”

Pacheco (1996:260) has researched the subject of a lack of a culture of learning, and came to the conclusion that learners do not know how to plan or execute a study programme. An important factor that facilitates scholastic as well as intercultural adjustment is exposure to a stimulating, advantaged and supportive educational background, preferably already from primary school level.

“Well I think you've got two differentials between black children coming from a disadvantaged educational background uhhh and black children coming from a perhaps more advantaged situation – private school and ... people living in say lower income group areas and children who had a higher standard of living ... ”

“ ... initially a lot of them spent another year in Grade Eight or Nine ... so a lot of them repeated and then they were fine. They were pretty average. I won't say they're fantastic, but certainly we are now seeing kids that are really very, very good academically.

6.7.4 Increase in deviant behaviour

6.7.4.1 Substance abuse

From the interviews it appears that the transitional period is difficult and that behaviour patterns have not stabilised. Substance abuse in the form of drinking alcohol, as well as taking dagga, was mentioned by some respondents.

“ ... white kids ... have a problem with dope, with dagga. Our black kids have got the same problem with drink ... they don't really have a problem with dope like they have with drink.”

“Alcohol I think is used over weekends, particularly at parties and so on.”

“They don't drug. That's one thing, the girls don't drug ... The boys all drink. The boys all smoke ... and they smoke ... whatever they call it - dagga ... A lot of them will tell me it's medicinal. He smokes it for his blood pressure, he smokes it for this, he smokes it for his asthma, all sorts of wild and wonderful things ... The girls are ... beginning to drink ... ”

Generally speaking, it appears that the girls do not abuse drugs, alcohol or tobacco to the extent that the boys do. Nevertheless, one respondent mentioned that girls are starting to drink alcohol. Another respondent ascribed the fact that black girls are now beginning to smoke to the influence of Westernisation.

“ ... a Westernised influence ... in that we have now even caught black girls who smoke, while before that never happened.”

[“ ... 'n verwesteringsinvloed ... deurdad ons al selfs nou swart dogters gevang het wat rook, terwyl dit vroeër nooit voorgekom het nie.”]

The literature refers to a strong linear relationship between smoking and acculturation. Landrine and Klonoff (1996:4-5) mention a Latin-American study which shows that acculturated Latino youths smoked the most, bicultural Latino youths smoked less and those with strong traditional ties smoked the least, or not at all. The importance of this finding is that analyses have shown that the Latino youths not only smoked as frequently as whites did, but they smoked for the same reasons as the whites did.

6.7.4.2 *Theft*

Theft is a problem that every school experiences to a greater or lesser degree. Some respondents are of the opinion that the occurrence of theft has a cultural connotation, while others insist that this problem has always been present and therefore cannot be laid at the door of a particular cultural orientation. It is noticeable that all the schools have instituted strict disciplinary measures to contain the problem. These measures appear to be generally very effective (see also Section on the facilitating elements especially the disciplinary process.) Some remarks of the respondents in this regard are the following:

“Stealing does happen in the school, but that goes for all.”

“Theft increased ... In many cases, about 95% of the cases that theft could be proved, it was black learners.”

[“Diefstal het toegeneem ... In baie van die gevalle, daar wil ek sê omtrent 95% van die gevalle wat bewys kon word – die diefstal – was swart leerlinge.”]

“Terrible, terrible and I have to say it's got worse since I have had black kids in this school, since I've seen black kids ... some kids are openly – well they're known and recognized as children that have stolen ... And kids say: 'Why are they still here?' Black kids say why are they still here!”

Text books are much in demand by would-be thieves due to their good resale value, since the school buys the textbooks back at the end of the year.

“But we do have a problem with stealing ... The problem ... is that at the beginning of the year the children take each other's text books, then they keep it and they sell it at the end of the year back to the school ... ”

“Uhhh ... our text books get taken ... he's taken it to sell it, because a lot of them have to buy.”

One school experienced the theft of school cases.

“At some stage last year we had a major problem with ... cases being stolen.”

It appears that it is extremely difficult to get some learners to admit to this particular form of transgression.

“It can take up to two days in the headmaster's office ... Before they will ... We had a child who ... took a bicycle the other day ... And they literally stopped him and they got him off the bike and he still wanted to say that that child said I can ride the bike. I was not stealing it, I was riding it ... !”

One of the teachers' bicycles was stolen at school when it was left unlocked for a short while. During assembly, the teacher made an impassioned plea to the learners please to return his bicycle and provided very convincing reasons as to why he needed his bicycle. This resulted in the return of the bicycle, but not without a warning note attached to it:

“Attached to his bike about a week later was a note: 'Sir, if you leave your bike there, then obviously you don't want it, so please look after it.' ... It was returned! It's marvellous – it's remarkable. But the gist of the message was: if you leave it there, you obviously don't need it ... ”

From the above excerpt it appears that if goods seem to be lying around “unneeded” and not looked after, that could be regarded as items looking for a new owner. The teacher interviewed also remarked that it appears that some form of “ethics” could at times determine the act of stealing at school, namely that one does not take from other black learners.

“Sometimes they say they will be returned. Things ... a bag will go missing and then they'll see it's a black kid's bag and they will put it back. Ummm, there does seem to be some sort of ethics that you don't take from black ... with some of them, but it doesn't seem to be everywhere.”

In other instances, if items are not adequately secured and are easily replaced by the owner, this is apparently taken to indicate that these items are obviously not missed.

“But ja, look if something is left lying about, somebody is going to steal it, whether they'll need it or not.”

“And it's almost as if there is this bit of the haves and the have nots ... You seem to replace it quite easily, whereas my parent have told me it's an impossibility - I cannot have those Nike tackies. They cost R500. My parents can't afford that.”

South African research shows that property left in the classrooms is often either vandalised or stolen by the learners (Pacheco, 1996:249-250). However, the theft and vandalism is also partly due to the community living around the school. The legacy of theft and vandalism can lead to stereotyping when black learners enter traditionally white schools. Frederikse (1992:29) quotes a Zimbabwean learner: “When anything is stolen, we high-density students are the first suspects” (here, the term “high density” refers to the townships).

Not many references can be found in the literature regarding the aspect of theft at schools. This is probably due to the contentious nature of the subject. What is important though, is that this study demonstrates that the problems surrounding this issue could be a stumbling block to harmonious multicultural accommodation. More research in this field could provide answers and help to clear up misconceptions.

6.7.4.3 *Violence*

Another aspect of deviant behaviour that threatens an accommodating climate at school is the use of violence to solve conflicts, especially conflicts with a racial connotation:

“We had cases that we never had before. It also resulted from racism, where ... one of the white boys was stabbed with a knife by a black boy.”

[“Ons het gevalle gehad wat ons nooit voorheen gehad het nie. Dit het ook maar uit rassisme voortgespruit, waar ... een van die blanke seuns met 'n mes gesteek is deur 'n swart seun.”]

"We had a case where a black girl broke a white girl's nose at school ... a racist conflict took place."

["Ons het 'n geval gehad van waar ... 'n swart dogter 'n wit dogter se neus afgeslaan het by die skool ... daar het 'n rassistiese konflik plaasgevind."]

The political violence in South Africa is compounded by domestic and criminal violence, especially in poor areas (Dawes & Donald, 1994b:5). Letlaka-Rennert *et al.* (1997:237) refer to Daniels, Nicholas and Dean (1994), to Kedijang (1991) as well as Sachs (1990), all of whom mention gender-directed violence such as rape and domestic violence. According to Mokwena (1992:39), there is a growing violent and criminal youth culture which manifests itself in an escalation of youth gangs in the townships. In a study by Liddell *et al.* (1994:62), the finding that rural children fought less often than urban children correlated strongly with the fact that there was less community violence in the rural areas than their urban counterparts experienced. Rudenberg, Jansen and Fridjhon (1998:112) refer to Fraser's (1974) statement that aggression learnt through observation and modelling may be generalised into other areas of a child's life (see also Section 6.3.3.3(c)).

Although learners are not necessarily negatively affected by violence, circumstantial evidence does suggest a tendency to resort to violence as a means of conflict resolution. The accommodation of learners who behave in this manner cannot be undertaken only by the school, no matter how motivated the school is. The origin of such behaviour must be sought mostly in the condoning of violence in society and/or at home and remains a project to be undertaken by the school in collaboration with the home and South African society at large.

6.7.5 Different and diverse social values

Individuals life-worlds dictate to a large extent the values and norms that these people honour. These values might conflict with the values and norms the rest of society insists on, which in turn can lead to confusion regarding which coping skills are permissible and which values should be upheld.

*"... a black child also told me last week, that I don't understand what it is to stay in a township. When you steal, you are like on top of the world. You get **recognition** when you steal. It seems like it's a total different set of social rules. He says ... and then, when they come to our schools, we enforce a total different set of rules and we actually punish for the theft for which they get recognised in the township ... He says it confuses him ... He's also a gangster. He says when he goes home, he's like on top*

*of the world, but here he gets punished for ... being a gang member, for stealing and for being tough ... [excitedly] But he **needs** to be tough to survive where he stays! ... Which causes a lot of frustration and that comes out in anger."*

According to Mokwena (1992:41), social deprivation has led to the acceptance of crime as a way of life in some sectors of South African society. Passive acceptance of crime can even be found among many adults who have found honest employment. Some learners are exposed to parents who not only turn a blind eye to crime, but sometimes tacitly encourage it by buying stolen goods or by pilfering at work. Also known criminals boast about their "achievements" in public.

The learners' home background does have an important role to play. According to two teacher respondents, it appears that the level of acculturation could, in some instances, be related to problematic behaviour, and that more problems are associated with acculturated learners. One respondent said:

" ... Yet, yet these are the kids that's giving us grief this year ... in Grade Eight and Nine these are not township kids. It's almost as if the township kids have better manners ... They were a bit scared when they got here. They were a bit wide-eyed and you know bushy-tailed and prepared to do things for you – listen to you."

In a study on the acculturation levels of Latino youths, Landrine and Klonoff (1996:4-5) found that the children who displayed behaviour problems were not the ones from traditional homes, but the acculturated ones.

One teacher felt strongly about the influence of role models on the junior learners. The essence of what the respondent conveyed indicates support for an assimilating approach. Such an approach suggests value preferences and could reinforce a "them" and "us" divide. In turn this could detract from the quality of accommodation the school has to offer.

" ... the present Grade Tens are somewhat of a negative group and the juniors see that but this is how they act, let's do the same ... the first learners we had ... blended more easily with our culture, because they were in the minority ... there are negative elements like in any class, and many of the juniors tend to follow the example of these negative leaders."

[" ... die huidige graad tien groep is 'n bietjie 'n negatiewe groep en die juniortjies sien maar dis hoe hulle optree, kom ons doen dieselfde. ... die eerstes wat ons gehad het ... Hulle het makliker ... in ons kultuur ingeskakel, omdat hulle in die verre minderheid was ... daar is negatiewe elemente soos in enige klas maar, en baie van die juniortjies is geneig om hierdie negatiewe leiers nou na te volg."]

Learners sometimes expect extra trouble to be taken for them. In certain instances, this could indicate a degree of the adoption of a culture of entitlement.

“ ... they expect that trouble should be taken for them ... there is a subtle unspoken demand that one encounters from their side.”

[“ ... hulle verwag nogal dat daar moeite gemaak moet word vir hulle ... daar's so 'n subtiele ongesproke 'demand' wat 'n mens van hulle kant af kry.”]

Ramphele (1992:22) refers to individual entitlement. It is up to black students to apply themselves to their studies and utilise any available resources or support programmes to reach success. Pleading victimisation and demanding special treatment is futile, unless individuals are determined to take responsibility for their own success.

6.7.6 Inability to take responsibility for actions

It appeared that the inability of some learners to take responsibility for their actions threatens the establishing of good intercultural relations and an atmosphere of accommodation at school, especially since such behaviour concerns the discipline and the code of conduct in a school. It appears that learners often refuse to “own up” and also ignore punishment such as having to attend detention class. This can lead to despondence amongst the teaching staff. Two respondents felt particularly strongly about this aspect. One of them mentioned the following:

“And if they are caught in the act, then they will dispute it and say that actually this one said they should do it. They always try to excuse themselves totally ... But black learners do not admit guilt easily, not at all easily ... they argue to the end.”

[“En sou hulle op heterdaad betrap geword het [tydens die begaan van die oortreding], dan sou hulle 'n hewige dispuut van eintlik het so een vir hulle gesê hulle moet dit doen. Hulle probeer hulself altyd verskriklik verontskuldig ... Maar ... die swart leerlinge erken nie sommer maklik nie, glad nie maklik nie ... hulle stry tot op die einde toe.”]

“They simply do not turn up for detentions ... They ignore the school's code of conduct ... We become despondent at times.”

[“Hulle daag eenvoudig nie vir die detensies op nie ... Hulle ignoreer die skool se gedragkode ... Ons raak nogal by tye moedeloos.”]

“ ... when a person works [individually] with a black learner on a problem or a trespass that occurred, a greater degree of rebelliousness can be detected from the black learner than one gets from a white learner. Yes, they ... become rebellious and do not just want to accept things.”

[“ ... wanneer 'n mens met die swart leerling werk oor 'n probleem of 'n oortreding wat begaan is, is daar ... 'n groter mate van rebelsheid te bespeur as wat jy by die blanke leerling kry. Ja, hulle ... raak makliker rebels en wil nie sommer net dinge aanvaar nie.”]

Kelly (1994:72) says that learners are generally in touch with what is happening amongst the group. Therefore they are more likely to “own up” if the atmosphere is trusting and involved as opposed to distrusting and authoritarian.

6.8 FACILITATING ELEMENTS: THE TEACHERS' POINT OF VIEW

The discussion below focuses on those elements that promote a sense in black Grade Nine learners that they are accommodated in and belong to the school.

6.8.1 The disciplinary process

The respondents generally felt that negative behaviour can be controlled with the correct disciplinary procedures. Good and fairly applied discipline promotes a just and therefore accommodating school environment. Respondents also emphasise personal responsibility rather than blaming the group or external factors regarding transgressions. This means, for example, that being late cannot be blamed on external factors, since with good planning it can be prevented.

“ ... it was acceptable for a very long time, but the moment that we said sorry, we're not going to accept it any more , we – we have a no-tolerance policy at the school, which goes for black, white whoever, and we applied it to the latecoming as well – whatever your excuse, we're sorry. And I would say after about four months of applying it, we saw the results.”

“But you have to address it, you have to then go back to the parents ... We've got a system whereby if they're late on one day, any child that's late on one day, they have to stay for detention.”

“The black kids that were living up the road were late. And that is why we said - no way. You come from [name of township] and you're here at 7 o'clock? Why should you not ... why should you not see the others being punished that rock up at 7h45 in stead of 7h40? And we started punishing them. We stopped them there – we take their names ... And they do detention on the day and its come down incredibly from 60 to 10 to six to two. I think there were two late yesterday.”

"If an individual is late, he or she is punished, however. There is room for pupils to arrive late during the ten minutes allocated for Devotions."

Local research has shown that learners display a need for external discipline and order (Pacheco, 1996:237). However, since children display a preoccupation with fairness (Blatchford, 1994:29), fairness could be a prerequisite for learners to abide by disciplinary measures. Learners will even accept corporal punishment as long as the matter is dealt with fairly (Pacheco, 1996:241).

Klein (1993:119-120) points out that people tend to experience a just environment as a safe environment. Schools are made safer by the strict application of rules preventing any form of abuse, harassment or bullying. If learners experience security in their schools, it will lead to more positive interaction. Klein refers to research by Eggleston, Dunn and Anjali (1986) and Smith and Tomlinson (1989) that has shown that, if learners experience security in their schools, more positive interaction will result and consequently they will learn more. Rules should be enforced through sanctions, but should first be agreed to within the school.

If learners are given responsibilities, they appear to try harder to conform with that which is expected from them.

"But there is ... a still bigger adjustment when ... responsibilities are given to them. So children that have a specific task, ... that are classleaders, that are members of the SRC ... we get a stronger, bigger sense of obligation to be on time, for instance."

["Maar daar is ... 'n al groter aanpassing wanneer ... verantwoordelikhede aan hulle toegestaan word. So kinders wat 'n spesifieke taak het, wat ... 'n klasleier is, wat 'n lid van die SRC ... kry ons 'n sterker, groter verantwoordelikheid om byvoorbeeld betyds te wees."]

Charlton (1996:56,59) mentions that there is a trend to take note of learners' opinions by involving them in school affairs. If learners are meaningfully involved in the decision-making process, they are more likely to develop a healthy interest in school matters and understand and support the decisions and subsequent rules.

Discipline is administered by teaching responsibility for one's own actions and for taking care of one's own belongings.

"... we told the children that they had to look after their own suitcases. You've got to keep it next to you, you can't leave it alone."

“But then we instituted a system whereby never to leave your bag alone for any time and during breaks no bags are left out. You have to move before break to the next period after break, and so bags are locked in the classrooms.”

“ ... we have installed lockers and the child can ... lock his sport equipment or such things away safely.”

[“ ... het ons ... sluitkaste geïnstalleer en die kind kan ... sy sporttoerusting of só veilig ... toesluit.”]

Blatchford (1994:29) believes that an approach which seeks collaboration with pupils may be an effective approach to effective supervision, because children are more likely to be committed to decisions and rules that they had a part in devising. It is also advisable to allow them responsibility for actions on the playground. It is important to determine the appropriate adult role in effective supervision.

6.8.2 Sense of belonging

Taking part in cultural, sport and social activities fosters a sense of belonging, collectiveness and cultural integration, and vice versa. The general feeling amongst the teachers interviews was that not enough learners take part in extra-mural activities. They also acknowledge that taking part in cultural activities can encourage a sense of belonging to a school. This feeling creates a positive spiral, in that a sense of belonging encourages learners to participate in extra-mural activities. Van der Merwe (1996:284-285) points out that it is only when young people feel secure in their relationships and experience a sense of belonging that they can accept responsibility for their own lives and not engage in delinquent behaviour. Belonging in this sense implies strong institutional ties with families, schools and communities and it can be strengthened by involvement in cultural activities, sport and social activities (see also Section 6.3.2.4).

6.8.2.1 Cultural activities

One teacher had the following to say about the participation of black learners in cultural activities:

“Cultural activities – our biggest Christian organisation is run by black kids ... Very committed, very enthusiastic. Quite charismatic ... Lots of singing, loud praying ... quite outspoken ... they're not half-heartedly into anything. They ... don't compromise ... They do come together to spend time together or just to sing songs, they come together, they pray in chains, they pray for each other, they give each

other teachings ... I think ... if you look at our SRC ... there are more black kids than white kids there ... ”

“They love to perform. They love to sing for us at clan evenings. Our choir is virtually black ... Not every child is involved, but then, not every white child is involved.”

Although different tastes in music has been shown to be a potential stumbling block to accommodation of these black learners at school, Atmore (1994:160) says that music, movement, singing and playing musical instruments is enjoyed by learners from all cultures. Therefore, a multicultural range of music is a means of learning about, developing respect for and enjoying what other cultures have to offer. Events such as festivals, special holidays and celebrations provide similar opportunities to introduce the relevance, history, purpose and content of the occasion, especially if approached from an educational perspective. According to Coutts (1992:80,82), school plays that involve a large cast can strengthen the communal ties within a school. Also, cultural evenings provide learners with the opportunity to display the more visible and spectacular aspects of their particular cultures.

6.8.2.2 *Sport*

Most of the teachers said that, although the majority do not participate in sport, sport is enjoyed very much by those learners who do.

“Soccer is big ... Netball is big ... Hockey!”

“Ja, they're actually quite enthusiastic ... I was involved with the softball and they're very enthusiastic ... and committed.”

“ ... the girls like netball very much.”

[“ ... die dogters hou baie van netbal.”]

“Some of them are doing very well. The favourite activities are volleyball and soccer, also netball. Some do swimming and cricket. It's difficult – I won't say there's a vast majority taking part.”

Coutts (1992:80) is convinced that school sport as part of the non-formal curriculum can facilitate the accommodation of the multicultural component of the school. Sport can develop positive attitudes and create social bonds in the participants. Qualities such as fair-mindedness, co-operation and perseverance can also be fostered, while inter-school leagues can broaden interracial and interschool contacts (see also Section 6.8.2.3).

It must be mentioned that although the teachers in this study agree with this view, they point out that the majority of learners are not taking part. Poor participation could be related to the distance between learners' homes and the school. A local study by Van der Merwe (1997:195) found that, although schools create many opportunities to encourage participation in sport, the learners were not much involved.

It would appear that many Zimbabwean learners also do not share the enthusiasm of traditionally white schools for school sport (Frederikse, 1992:8,29). One Zimbabwean learner attributed it to the fact that black learners come to school with the sole aim of learning, while another said sport was overdone at school. In the present study, one of the female interviewees experienced ridicule by the group for taking part in a such a babyish activity as sport. Another could not explain why black learners do not participate in sport.

The literature offers several explanations for this lack of enthusiasm, which includes the school's emphasis on sport and the types of sport offered.

According to Klein (1993:160-161), there is a perception in the United Kingdom that sport is what black learners are best at. It also appears that teachers there "disproportionately foster black pupils' enthusiasm for sport". Such an approach could be seen as patronising and racist should the pupils have to forfeit lessons to pursue sport. The South African situation differs from that in the United Kingdom, in that sport (excluding physical education) is scheduled as an extra-mural activity. It is encouraging that of the respondents who completed the questionnaire in this study, 196 of 388 responses in a multiple choice question indicated that the respondents participated in sport as an extra-mural activity (see Table 5.8 (b)).

Coutts (1992:80) might have the answer to the lack of participation in sport when he suggests that the emphasis should move from Western, Euro-centric sporting favourites such as rugby and tennis, to whatever the community as a whole might prefer.

6.8.2.3 *Social activities*

Social activities can also serve as a barometer of the degree to which a school has succeeded in creating an accommodating atmosphere. Again, most of the teachers interviewed felt that

not enough learners were involved, but they spoke positively of the atmosphere when there was intercultural participation.

“And I think you will find there that either some of the teenagers do their dancing in groups and then the black-white group mix, but if it's one and one we seem to find that it's a black couple or a white couple. But we've had the exceptions for example we've had our matric dance recently, you know it could be a black guy and a white girl, and it's seen as strange.”

“They are not prepared to come if the duration will be short. They want a long social and therefore they ask for the social to last throughout the night – they speak about a 7 to 7 ... they've got their own rhythm that they like and they gather in the courtyard, but outside the hall, but if they hear a certain tune, they rush inside and then they enjoy it tremendously.”

[Hulle is egter nie bereid om te kom as dit vir te kort tyd is nie. Hulle wil 'n lang sokkie hou en hulle vra dus ook vir 'n deurnagsokkie. Hulle praat van 'n '7 to 7' ... hulle het hulle eiesoortige ritme wat hulle aanstaan en hulle kuier ... by die vierkant, maar buite die saal, maar as hulle 'n sekere deuntjie hoor dan storm hulle binnetoe en dan geniet hulle dit verskriklik.”]

Coutts (1992:81-82) states that social mixing can reinforce the aims of the non-formal curriculum in that socialising can lead to more inter- as well as intracultural insights by learners.

To illustrate the point: a sense of belonging to a school fosters participation in school events. A school that experienced intercultural interaction rather negatively said the following about integration in sport and culture, emphasising the value of sport and cultural activities in cultivating a sense of belonging:

*“There was only **one** black boy that took part in the cultural activities this year. This includes the choir, revue, play – everything ... there are very few black boys ... that take part in the winter sports ... since they prefer soccer and we do not offer soccer ... There's a couple of boys that play rugby ... then there are about ... four or five girls that play netball.”*

*[“Daar was slegs **een** swart seun wat aan die kultuur deelgeneem het vanjaar. Dit sluit die koor, revue, toneel – alles – in ... aan die winter sportsoorte is daar baie min swart seuns ... wat deelneem ... want hulle verkies sokker en ons bied nie sokker aan nie ... Daar's 'n paar seuns wat rugby speel ... dan is daar so ... vier of vyf dogters wat netbal speel.”]*

Although sport could be an obstacle to a sense of belonging, if this facility is appropriately handled, sport could also be a strong facilitating element, especially if learners' needs are met

(see also Section 6.8.2.2). Coutts's (1992:80) suggestion of shifting the emphasis (or at least including) to types of sport popular with black learners could be very helpful in this regard.

6.8.3 Supportive school infrastructure

It appears that it would be required of the school to fulfil a supportive role and provide an infrastructure to supplement the role of the family. This allows children a safe context within which they can develop the various facets of their personality.

"Some children ... their parents will drop them off at six and they will pick them up at six at night ... so they can do whatever in the afternoon and do their homework and so on and then go home ... Sometimes they sleep over ... one of our top music students ... she sometimes has to sleep over ... "

"We've had quite a number of children ... having come in you know, years ago, already – 5 or 6 years ago – so of course to them it was an adjustment, some of them are now in matric ... but there again it was their frame of mind, whether they wanted to achieve, you know and they made use of the help ... Their frame of mind, their motivation, their determination to succeed really is extremely important."

Chinkanda (1994:194-196) says that the school needs to empower black learners by helping them to take control of their lives and shaping their destiny. Direct or indirect obstacles should be identified as early as possible and strategies to reduce these blocks should be instituted. Where the infrastructure of the school is lacking, all available community resources should be utilised to address the problems identified.

6.8.4 Uniform

The teacher respondents all felt that the school uniform was an element that was regarded with pride. In this sense it can be regarded as an element that provides a sense of belonging.

"Yes , they're very proud to wear a uniform."

"... they are very neat regarding their school uniform. They are in fact continuously busy shining their shoes in the classrooms and they all walk with toilet paper in their pockets to clean their shoes. And where a tie ... is not compulsory for our boys, many of them wear a tie ... and the parents buy school blazers at great cost, while white learners are not used to wearing blazers any longer. So there is a sort of pride in their school uniform ... To identify with a particular school appears to be important. Maybe it also makes them feel important ..."

[... dat hulle baie netjies is op hulle skooldrag. Hulle sit trouens voortdurend in die klaskamers en skoene blink vryf en hulle loop almal met toiletpapier in hulle sakke

om hulle skoene skoon te maak. En waar 'n das ... nie by ons seuns verpligtend is nie, dra baie van hulle uit eie keuse 'n das. En so koop die ouers ten duurste skoolbaadjies aan, terwyl blanke leerlinge uit die gewoonte geraak het om skoolbaadjies te dra. So wat hulle gedrag betref, is daar tog 'n soort van 'n trots op die skooldrag ... Om te identifiseer met 'n bepaalde skool lyk nogal vir my belangrik. Miskien laat dit hulle ook belangrik voel ... ”]

“They've got a tremendous pride in them that we don't find at all with the coloured or white, but he ... wants to wear a blazer and he wants to be neat ... ”

*[“Hulle het 'n geweldige trots in hulle wat ons **hoegenaamd** nie by die kleurling, **hoegenaamd** nie by die blanke kry nie, maar hy ... wil 'n kleurbaadjie dra, hy wil netjies wees ... ”]*

According to Pacheco (1996:264) learners who feel that they belong to their school, are proud of their school. They avoid behaviour that can damage their school's good reputation.

An Zimbabwean interviewee quoted by Frederikse (1992:28) demonstrates this point very well; he said that wearing his school uniform prevented him from pushing in or from pushing old ladies in the bus queue.

6.9 SYNTHESIS OF TEACHER INTERVIEWS

6.9.1 Intercultural differences

- Teachers sometimes overcompensate in their efforts to accommodate black learners.
- It appears that colour blindness could result in a policy of denial that can harm good cultural interaction in a school.
- Teachers find the transition period difficult and are worried about the long-term effects of intercultural schooling on the ethos of the school.
- Learners have a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) level, which makes it difficult for both learners and teachers to communicate on learning content.
- Teachers find the noise level unacceptably high in the school context.

- Latecoming is a problem – reasons given include transport, the distance from the school and cultural factors.
- Racism in the form of name-calling and verbal abuse features quite prominently amongst learners.
- Intercultural social interaction during break is limited.
- It appears that black and white courtships are actively discouraged, or at least regarded as strange.
- During sport and cultural activities, intercultural division is less pronounced.

6.9.2 Intracultural differences

- Much pressure is exerted on learners to conform to group expectations.
- Those who excel in any way are often exposed to tremendous stress to keep up their performance.
- Intracultural interaction depends on differences in social class.

6.9.3 Educational background: home/family situation and school/formal situation

- The reasons given for latecoming and the lack of participation in extra-mural activities are usually related to the distance of the parental home from the school, which in turn forces learners to make use of unreliable transport.
- Parental expectations are high and cause much stress when learners try to conform.
- Parents are very disappointed when these expectations are not met.
- Learners (especially the girls) are expected to take responsibility for housework and sibling care, which leaves them with too little time to attend to their schoolwork.
- In some cases, parental discipline amounts to verbal and possibly physical abuse, instead of parents' instituting more healthy disciplinary measures.

- School staff is sometimes seen as the ultimate authority and disciplinary body, and is expected to mediate between parent and child.
- Parents often do not render the necessary emotional support to their children.
- Good communication between the family home and the school is lacking.
- The learners' scholastic coping skills depend on the learners' previous scholastic or educational background.
- There is a lack of a culture of learning amongst many learners.
- There is an increase in the use of alcohol and the smoking of tobacco and dagga, especially amongst boys. Girls are also starting to smoke and drink.
- Theft at school is perceived as a real problem, and could be due to items not being properly secured or appearing “unnecessary”. If an item could be easily replaced by the owners, such an item is more likely to be stolen.
- Learners do not admit easily to transgressions, although they may be caught red-handed.
- Violence is used at times to solve conflicts, especially conflicts with a racial connotation.
- Learners are often confronted with a different set of values at home from those that the school expects them to honour, which leads to confusion for learners.
- Learners are often not willing to take responsibility for their actions, for example, to turn up for detention classes.

6.9.4 Facilitating elements

- Good, constant and fairly applied procedures are an important element in controlling negative behaviour. Some teachers place a high priority on viewing transgressions as individual, rather than as group-oriented problems.

- Involvement in sport, cultural and social activities can strengthen a feeling of belonging.
- The school needs to fulfil a supportive role and provide an infrastructure to supplement the family's role.
- Learners feel very proud to wear a school uniform, and this provides a sense of belonging.

6.10 FIELD NOTES

Disclosing the realities of one's life-world to a stranger is a brave and trusting act. This realisation plus an awareness of the accompanying ethical responsibility were experienced by the researcher throughout the interviews.

First impressions of a school's atmosphere are usually formed during interaction with the administrative personnel at the reception desk. In most schools, the welcome was extremely friendly and forthcoming, but at two schools the interaction amounted to mere courtesy. In one instance, the researcher observed interaction with black parents and she detected an undertone of misunderstanding and resentment in both parties. This could have been due to a language problem which clearly complicated the communication.

The teachers were generally very co-operative and went out of their way to accommodate the researcher.

Four of the learners interviewed were particularly impressive, due to the self-assurance, enthusiasm and sense of purpose that they displayed during the interviews. The rest of the learners appeared more subdued and there was some initial display of closed body language. Still, they co-operated very well and answered the questions with forthrightness and honesty. Two learners were noticeably less fluent in English than the others, although they could still express their thoughts and feelings. These learners came from less affluent surroundings and their parents were clearly ambitious for them, since their enrolment at the particular schools was at their parents' insistence.

The researcher picked up an underlying message that learners felt caught between their fortunate status versus impostor status. Although the respondents viewed themselves as fortunate to be able to attend their schools, time and again they referred to experiences of not feeling totally accepted. Racist incidents or incidents which ignored the principle of fair play appeared to be the causal factor. Blatchford's (1994:29) comment on children's apparent preoccupation with fairness when left to their own devices is important in this context. He says that, paradoxically, cheating can only be understood in the context of a shared awareness of what is fair. It appears that the respondents are caught in a double-bind situation of wanting to be accepted at school and still wanting to retain their cultural ties.

One teacher subscribed to the policy of denial and "colour-blindness". The teachers interviewed all appeared to be dedicated educationists who displayed appreciation for the complexity of the situation and were truly concerned about the welfare of all their learners.

The interview length varied, but interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes each.

Interviewing the learners in the "natural" setting of the school meant exposure to some degree of background noise associated with the normal school day routine. Fortunately, this did not interfere with the interviews.

It was a privilege to interview the respondents and share in their experiences.

6.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the interviews were analysed according to identified elements that could either prevent or promote effective accommodation in the school. The findings were discussed according to existing relevant research to ensure a literature control and to heighten the reliability of the research. Syntheses of both the findings from the learner and teacher interviews were also given.

Chapter Seven contains the summary, final conclusions and recommendations of the study.