

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 THE CONCLUSIONS

This study identified and described the nature of the influence of learner and educator interaction inside and outside the classrooms in multicultural schools. The conclusions listed below can therefore be drawn from the results.

5.2.1 Educators' and learners' individual interviews (school A and B), and learner focus group interviews (school B only)

This chapter will now focus on the similar ideas of the educators, learners as well as the focus group. These similar ideas will form the basis for the recommendations.

5.1.1.1 Understanding multiculturalism

This study concludes that the individual educator and learner interviews namely, A, B and C of both school A and B, as well as learner focus-group interviewees of school B, all understand what multiculturalism means, based on the data gathered during interview sessions.

This study also concludes that the perception of educators and learners about multicultural interaction, as well as their understanding multiculturalism, are

based on the positive influence that the educators have on learner involvement and the interaction inside as well as outside the classrooms.

The study concludes that the mutual-acceptance of culture between learners and the educators influenced learner involvement and their interactions. The problem of learners abusing substances such as cigarettes, alcohol, drugs etc., exists in both school A and B but it seemed to have been resolved amicably in school A by means of the diary signed by the educator present in class whenever a learner leaves the classroom. This study therefore, concludes that in school B and all multicultural schools in Johannesburg should implement same method of learners carrying diaries as in school A. There are still negative and the positive behaviour was practised in the sample schools.

The focus-group in school B dispute the information gathered from learner-participants and, therefore, this study concludes that the three white male educators display negative behaviour (racism) at the wrong place (multicultural school), in the wrong dispensation (democratic era) and that such educators should refrain from that behaviour. The study also concludes that all educators in multicultural schools should learn to accommodate all stakeholders, to enable positive relationships and harmonious interaction to reign in school premises and also to influence the climate inside as well as outside the classrooms in a positive manner.

The above response compels the study to conclude that multiculturalism in school B influenced the interaction and the relations between learners and the educators in a positive as well as a negative manner. Positive in the sense that learners were empowered with knowledge on different cultures especially those found at their school and that some learners were able to make friends easily outside the classroom through the influence of seating inside the classrooms. It was negative in the sense only a few educators can make learners feel they are in a multicultural school.

5.1.1.2 The influence of multiculturalism on the relations and the interaction in the school

The seating in both school A and B was structured and planned by the educators. The motive be to enable learners to share, exchange ideas, make friends easily and also to know one another better. Lynch (1989) cited in Richard (2003:45) identifies two major goals for schools and says they are 'social cohesion' and 'cultural diversity'. He argues that "without social cohesion, society may disintegrate and without diversity 'alienation' and 'discontent' may result". When the educators in both schools structured the seating they were trying to reconcile the two goals, so that schools propagate both social cohesion as well as diversity. According to my observations the structured seating in the classrooms did not work because learners were able to interact with ease by way of exchanging ideas.

This study also concludes that the structured and planned seating in the classrooms links with the literature in chapter two in the sense that it is a basic human relationship in multicultural situations. The educators as the people in charge must make a learner as the subordinate understand practically how multiculturalism influences the relations and the interaction in the classrooms (in particular). Support for Hofstede's ideas is shown in this study when it is stated that; "The boss-subordinate relationship is a basic human relationship. Both as bosses and subordinates, people can be expected to carry over values and norms from their early life experiences and children and school pupils" (Hofstede, 1991:97). This study concludes that in school A, the planned and structured seating worked well also outside the classrooms. In school B it worked well efficiently inside the classrooms because learners interacted positively among themselves and the educators. However, outside the classrooms fewer learners were mixed in racial groups than in the classrooms and a large number of them decided to interact with the friends of the same racial group. I think the negative

attitude and practises of some white male educators towards learners influences the relations and the interaction among the learners (learners) especially outside the classrooms.

The conclusion is that love and equal treatment have a positive influence on the interaction and involvement. In the case where educators are not promoting these values (white males), it is different.

Educators and learners felt that the climate in their schools (A + B) is welcoming because they respect one another as well as their cultures. The respect for one's culture makes them learn the culture of other stakeholders with ease, which is something they enjoy. The learners who cause chaos and the unwelcoming climate are those from different cultures who normally smoke and drink liquor in the toilets during school hours.

The educators in both schools (A and B) confirm that the influence of multiculturalism on the relationship with learners in and outside the classrooms is positive because learners have an open communication between themselves. Therefore the study concludes that their interaction as learners is focused on school work and they have team spirit. The study also concludes that, according to the information gathered, learners also interact in formal and informal sport activities. The study also concludes that the interaction in school B should be in structured situations, not in non-structured situations, e.g. during break, because of the reasons provided (see 5.1.1.2).

In school A, the climate in the classrooms was influenced in a negative manner due to the problems they encountered previously with learners in different grade levels. The negative influence caused name-calling and fights between black and white boy-learner, but since they were strongly reprimanded, the behaviour was never repeated and there has been harmony at the school which influences the climate in the classrooms in a positive way.

According to the data collected in both school A and B, the climate is generally welcoming but sometimes it is not and therefore, the study concludes that the relations and the interaction between learners and the educators should be enhanced in order to influence the climate of the classrooms positively and that of the school as a whole, and also to make all stakeholders (parents, educators and learners) feel respected and accepted at school.

In school B, both individual and focus-group interviews confirmed that role-playing and the discussions influences the climate in the classrooms and school.

The study concludes that in both school A and B multicultural situations influence the climate in the classrooms positively, due to the positive attitudes and acceptance of diversity, difference and unique cultural attributes.

The response from learners of both schools was that their educators gave them all love and care the same way regardless of the colour of the skin.

A focus group provided different responses from those I received from the individual learner participants. According to my perception focus-group learners were free and transparent in their responses. The responses contradicted the responses in the above paragraph by stating that a white male educator was not treating them fairly in class with which his actions made them (learners) feel humiliated.

This study concludes that to reach the aim of the research, which is to explore the influence of multicultural situations on the relations and the interaction between learner and the educator inside as well as outside the classrooms, this white educator has to change his negative attitude towards learners of different skin colour, because the environment (multicultural school) allows for multicultural stakeholders. The literature in chapter two states clearly that

multicultural education is “a whole curriculum which also involves an attitude to life”. This will include the attitude of educators, learners and also of the rest of the community including parental community, the broader community and official role players like the department of education.

The common response from learners of both schools was that they love one another and are learning about different cultural backgrounds.

This study concludes that the learners from different cultures love and respect one another due to the treatment they give to one another.

5.1.1.3 Improving interaction in multicultural schools

Concerning the responses from the educators and learners of school A, the literature of this study, therefore, argues that “multiculturalism is not only taught through formal lessons but must be demonstrated at all times” (Marulis, 2000:27).

The three male educators of school B responded to the question of celebrating ‘cultural’ and ‘heritage’ day at school by saying they did not celebrate such days because they were not even included in their school curriculum (see p. 19 Chapter 4). The conclusion is that failure to acknowledge multicultural situations does not improve multiculturalism.

This study concludes that the abovementioned responses from the participants in School B represented as a neglect on cultural values of one’s culture. The influence of multiculturalism on the relations and the interaction between learners and the educators in the classrooms will be based on cultural alienation is clearly defined by the literature in chapter two, by Duarte and Smith, (2003:173): “the experience of feeling one’s culture unwelcome, one ethnicity unacknowledged and one’s traditions unimportant”. This action of ignoring such activities to be celebrated at school B, is discouraged by Richard (2003:47) when he said: “there

should be an acceptance of all the cultural contribution of learners and the classroom ambience should provide social confidence for all learners”.

This study concludes that in school A the level in which educators encouraged for learner involvement in discussions which deal with the culture of individuals, gave space for openness and invited freedom of speech in a learner to deliberate further on issues concerning his/her culture. In that way a learner could come to know his/her fellow-learner better than before. Such activities indicated that multiculturalism influenced both the classrooms and the school climate positively, and that the aim of the research has been achieved.

This study also concludes that this white female educator A of school A will never reconcile the two goals which schools should propagate. These are ‘social cohesion’ and ‘cultural diversity’ which Lynch (1989) in Richard (2003:45) identified (see pp. 4-5). The conclusions are also: if educators educate learners about that, learners will be brought minded and be empowered in as far as cultural diversity is concerned and social cohesion which is of importance especially in multicultural schools will take place with ease. If educators do not educate learners on ‘social cohesion’ and ‘cultural diversity’ the opposite will happen.

According to the responses from the three male educators of school B, and that of the educator B and C of school A, this study, therefore, concludes that the above educators support the literature that says: “Multicultural education is ongoing and dynamics. It is a process because it is about building relationships and also focuses on teachers, expectations, learning environment, students; learning styles, and other cultural variable that are absolutely essential for the schools to understand in order to be successful with all of their students” (Lynch, 1989; Banks, 1997, Bennette, 1996; Nieto, 1992; cited in Richard (2003; 47). In this way the results of the interaction will be successful, based on the relationships built focusing on the educators, expectations, learning environment,

students, learning styles and other cultural variable, just as the authors have already mentioned.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations will provide indications on how multicultural situations can influence the relations and the interaction between learners and the educators inside as well as outside the classrooms. The literature review has established the importance of positive learner and educator interaction for an effective multicultural school climate, which also provides an indication of how to formulate the curriculum in multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg (district eleven).

The literature review highlighted the necessity of critical multicultural education in a new perspective which involves the policies of multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg, learners' and the educators' perceptions and language as well as the curriculum.

5.2.1 Recommendations based on the literature and the interviews

5.2.1.1 Recommendation 1

This study recommend that the seating in both school A and B, which was planned by the educators, should be encouraged in all multicultural schools. This was because, according to the data gathered during the interviews, the seating is planned in order to enable learners to share, exchange idea together, to make friends easily and also to know one another better. Lynch (1989) cited in Richard (2003:45) identifies two major goals for schools which are 'social cohesion' and 'cultural diversity'. Lynch argues that "without social cohesion, society may disintegrate and without diversity 'alienation' and 'discontent' may result."

For multicultural situation to be able to influence the relations and the interaction between a learner and the educator, the study recommends that the educator as the superior should practically continue to influence the learner, as the subordinate, to learn about values and norms of other cultural backgrounds. Thus, Hofstede (1991:97) mentions that “the boss-subordinate relationship is a basic human relationship. Both as bosses and subordinates, people can be expected to carry over values and norms from their early life experiences and children and school pupils”.

5.2.1.2 Recommendation 2

Educators must involve learners in discussion about issues based on multicultural situations because according to Lynch (1989) “schools should propagate ‘social cohesion’ and ‘cultural diversity’.” This will enhance the interaction and the relations between the educators and the learners in multicultural schools because, “Multicultural education is ongoing and dynamics” (Lynch, 1989; Banks, 1997; Bennette, 1996; Nieto, 1992 cited in Richard 2003:47).

Schools should continue to celebrate Valentine’s Day. This is an additional value which also benefits the community at large which will stimulate and enhance the interaction. The way they celebrate the abovementioned day, is significant because the funds they accumulate that day also assist people staying in informal settlements with their daily basic needs such as clothes and food. People in such settlements are looking towards organisations such as schools to bring a difference to their daily lives.

5.2.1.3 Recommendation 3

This study recommends that schools ought to include celebrations based on cultural issues in their school curriculum, even if the day can be given a different

name from that of 'cultural', just to enable learners to recognise such days as they also wish to learn more on cultural diversity as part of a multicultural school. Foster (1990: 21) says; "all pupils need to acquire knowledge and sensitivity to their cultural groups through curriculum which offers opportunities to study other religious, languages and culture..."

The study also recommend that in multicultural situations educators of different cultures should not show negative attitude towards learners of different colour, but should love and give the same treatment to all, inside as well as outside the classrooms. Any negative or unequal behaviour will be detrimental to the relations and interaction inside and outside the classroom

5.2.1.4 Recommendation 4

This study recommends that for multiculturalism to be able to influence the relations and the interaction between educators and the learners, and also to create a welcoming climate for all stakeholders of different cultures, educators should ensure that severe disciplinary measures are applied to all learners when there is behaviour which leads to chaotic situations and a climate not conducive to teaching and learning. This study also recommends that the educators with negative attitude towards learners must learn to accept and change their attitude by complying with the terms and conditions of the South African Constitution, and start to practise the principle of oneness in one country (we are one), which would simply lead to oneness in one multicultural school.

5.2.2 Recommendations for further research

5.2.2.1 Recommendation 5

This study recommends that further research be done on whether the planned seating of learners in both schools (A and B) could be applicable in other secondary schools in district eleven or not.

5.2.2.2 Recommendation 6

This study recommends further research be done in other multicultural secondary schools in the same district as to whether all schools have included the celebration of 'cultural' and 'heritage' days in their curriculum. If yes, the research should find out how the days are being celebrated and also how they influence the interaction and the relations between the learner and the educator inside and outside the classrooms. If other schools do not celebrate such days, further research is recommended to find out the reasons which stop them from doing so.

5.2.2.3 Recommendation 7

The study recommends further research on how white educators treat the learners of different colour especially when it comes to marking of class work in particular, in regard to how they exchange books and so on.

5.2.2.4 Recommendation 8

The study recommends that further research be done whether educators experience instances where white learner(s) are fighting with black learner(s) of the same school. If yes, it is important to find out how educators resolve that to enable multiculturalism to influence the climate in the classrooms, as well as in the school environment in a positive manner, and also to find out how multiculturalism can influence the relations and the interaction between the learners and the educators positively.

5.2.2.5 Recommendation 9

This study should also find out how educators in other multicultural schools involve learners in the discussions on cultural issues in different cultures which

enables people to know one another better and also influences the climate inside as well as outside the classrooms in a positive manner.

5.2.2.6 Recommendation 10

Further research is recommended on strategies implemented in other multicultural secondary schools in district eleven, on how to encourage nor promote positive interaction between the learners and the educators, and also to find out how to create a climate which is conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Lastly, this study recommends that the strategies which should be implemented to encourage positive interaction. The relations between the learners and the educators inside and outside the classrooms should be assisted by the actions below.

- Call parents of all learners who are problematic;
- All educators must attend to their periods as stated on the roster.
- All educators must acquaint themselves with the principles of the new South African Constitution which discourages racism and bias.

5.3 SUMMARY

This chapter highlighted the conclusions under those different headings, which formulated a clear structure for chapter four. These conclusions were provided based on the data gathered during the individual (educators and learners in school A and B) as well as focus-group (learners grade eleven school B) interview processes. The conclusions were linked with the questions and aims stated in chapter one.

This chapter also focused on the recommendations which are based on the literature and the interviews which were conducted. In addition, this chapter, based on the data collected during the process of interviews, recommended that further research should compare the differences and the similarities in other multicultural secondary schools which are found in Gauteng district eleven.