LEARNER AND EDUCATOR INTERACTION IN MULTICULTURAL SCHOOLS

by

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CHAPTER ONE

LEARNER AND EDUCATOR INTERACTION IN MULTICULTURAL SCHOOLS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous South African government created an environment of imbalanced conditions in all spheres of life. The education system promoted racial, cultural, economic, political and gender inequalities. The existence of racially exclusive departments, provinces, homelands and self-governing territories resulted in the fragmentation of the education systems into nineteen different departments. Such a fragmented management structure prevented the implementation of a single national policy on any matter pertaining to education. The Department of National Education merely acted as an umbrella department for general policy.

When apartheid practices were prohibited in South Africa, multicultural schools in Johannesburg (Gauteng) mushroomed and many black learners moved to suburban schools. The South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 states that South Africa seeks to "provide the education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a foundation for development of all people's talents and capabilities."

Currently South Africa is undergoing the process of change which began in April 1994. This is changing from the apartheid era has instituted a constitution that brings democracy to all its citizens. The democratic constitution does not mainly concentrate on politics or health systems, but also gives strong emphasis on the education system. As evidence of this transformation, especially in education,

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where a learner is involved, I wish to note that the government that is striving for democracy has presented legislation that will promote positive learner and educator interaction in multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg and in South Africa as a whole.

The legislation is known as the "South African Schools Act 84 of 1996". The Act states in its preamble that "this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, and provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners, and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all people's talents and capabilities" (SASA, 1996:2(a):11).

The Act has provided a new method of implementation in respect of school management, governance and learner involvement. In multicultural schools it aims to promote a positive learning atmosphere, encourage learner interaction, which includes involvement as well as making multicultural environments as effective as possible.

Transformation, particularly in education has brought about change in people's perceptions. Previously educators were expected to be the ones who know more about what is good for learners, and learners viewed as people who should receive what they were being given without questioning. Seeing that the study examines the influence of learner-educator interaction in multicultural schools it is, therefore, necessary that "learners must be motivated to question inequalities in society and strive for structural changes to promote a fair, just and equal society" (Davies, 1992:10).

The abovementioned information moved me and tempted me to undertake a process of research which is above all, driven by an interest in wanting to gain a wide view on how learner and educators interact in class, as well as how learners interact among themselves inside and outside the classrooms.

The interaction that this study revolves around (in simple terms) has to do with the involvement of a learner in class activities such as group discussions; reading; leadership roles and openness with the educator on issues that need clarification.

The advantage with a learner who is open and participates in activities such as those mentioned above is that he/she becomes exposed to many of life's realities which he/she has never experienced before for example, by knowing the fellow learners better and their different cultures, as well as acquiring skills and self-actualisation in leadership roles and in many facets of education in multicultural schools. In the end these enable him/her talents in and outside the classroom. Such behaviour influences the interaction between learner and educator positively in multicultural schools. One might say this is a planned interaction in the sense that a learner and the educator have both reached a common goal, which is for the educator to educate and for a learner to learn. A learner is in a position to interact and contribute positively in society in future.

The study revolves around the influence of multicultural situations in classroom on learner involvement. In this study it is important to highlight to the reader that, the concept 'learner involvement' may have different connotations which could still have learning implications, but my interest and drive for this research lie on how a learner, as someone who is in the process of wanting to know or learn something, and the educator, as someone who imparts knowledge to the learner -who does not know or knows little of what is to be learnt-, interact with each other. The study revolves around multicultural situations. Therefore, learner involvement in this regard focuses on how two human beings (that is, educator and learner) of different colour interact in class and also how learners of different colour interact inside and outside the classroom. For example, do black and white learners understand each other well, or do black learners understand white

educators well? The positive interaction between these two parties will strengthen relations inside as well as outside the classrooms.

In gathering data for this study, I will observe how the learner and the educator interact (first) at the classroom level and later outside the classroom. This refers to the two selected multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg (Gauteng district eleven). The observations involve the teaching of Afrikaans, English and IsiZulu. The reason why I chose the above-named subjects is because they are languages which are taught in the selected schools and, as a matter of fact, I consider language to be a driving vehicle for all what is to be learned. This is supported by Shuter and Shooter (1992:72) when they write; "a language is a vehicle for the exploration of a new world of meaning."

The learner's thoughts in the classroom (in particular) should be extrinsically interpreted in a form of language. Quite often is the language that the learner is conversant with, so that languages such as "Afrikaans, English, Zulu, Sesotho and Xhosa remain strong and viable choices" (Shuter & Shooter, 1992:72). Vygotsky and Chomsy (2003:71) argue that "language and thought are inextricably linked and for their cognitive development all children need language to underpin and evolve their thoughts. They further say if children are denied their primary language during their formative years and are not yet efficient in their second language to form cognitive concepts, their cognitive development is and remains irretrievably inhabited … ."

Learners belonging to different racial groups (except IsiZulu) are interested in learning more of IsiZulu in, as well as outside, the classrooms. This proves the point that "South Africa has a rich diversity of languages with high degree of multilingualism. In the past, however, Afrikaans and English were elevated to 'super languages' and the African languages designated as inferior 'home languages'."

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The core concept of this study revolves around 'culture', and my argument is that each culture is practised and strengthened through its language. Therefore, multicultural secondary schools should encourage such practices by including multi-languages in their curriculum design.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem statement emanates from the introductory paragraph, which identified the need for an investigation into a learner-educator interaction in multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg (Gauteng) particularly those in district eleven. This study will determine how a learner involves himself/herself in school activities inside and outside the classroom.

The research problem revolves around the questions listed below

➢ What is the influence of multicultural situation on the relations and the interaction between a learner and the educator in, as well as outside, the classroom?

➢ What strategies can be put to place in an attempt to encourage learner involvement in a multicultural school?

➢ What are the implications of the interaction between learner and the educators inside and outside the classrooms?

1.3   THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research is to examine how multicultural schools in Johannesburg influence learner involvement and the interaction between learners and the educators inside and outside the classroom.

To achieve the above-mentioned aim, the following objectives are being identified:

➢ to explore the influence of multicultural situation on the relations and the interaction between a learner and the educator inside as well as outside the classroom; and

➢ to explore strategies that can be put to place in an attempt to encourage learner involvement in a multicultural school.

1.4   THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.4.1   Research design

For me to be in a position to examine the influence of multicultural situations in the classroom on learner involvement and the interaction in the two selected schools, a qualitative research method will be implemented. According to Borg, Gall and Gall (1993:287), Salvin (1992:196) and McMillan (2000:252) "a qualitative research approach is associated with the study of behaviour as it occurs naturally and provides an in-depth understanding of context and behaviour. They say the focus is on why and how behaviour occurs as well as the participants' understanding and meaning they assign to these."

De Vos, et al. (1998:82) say "data collection methods are the ways in which the research data are obtained." Therefore, data for this study will be collected by way of conducting interviews with relevant stakeholders mentioned above on the research methodology, and that will be collected from two multicultural secondary schools in the suburbs of Johannesburg.

For the purpose of this study, the observations and individual interviews will be conducted in both school A and B; followed by the focus-group interviews only in

school B. The purpose of conducting focus-group interviews in school B is because I want to ensure the accuracy of the data collected in individual interviews together with what I observed during lesson presentations. "The qualitative research methods that will be used in this study will allow for interaction and could lead to understanding attitudes, behaviours and context from different point of view" (Platton in Richard, 2003:11).

This will be an exploratory study in order to gain knowledge on how multicultural situations can influence learner involvement and interaction in the classroom. According to Mouton and Marais (1990:45) "a goal to pursue in exploratory study is the exploration of an unknown research area in order to gain a new insight into the relevant phenomena. They say that such a study will lead to insights and comprehension, while involving the use of in-depth focus-group interviewing." A study having a contextual interest is bound to the unique context of the domain phenomenon (Mouton & Marais, 1990:50).

The sequence and structure of the research study is set out below.

Chapter one: The background and overview serves as an introduction of the study whereby the identification of the problem; the aim of the study; a brief description of the research methodology and a clarification of concepts will be highlighted.

Chapter two: This presents the literature review on matters related to multicultural education as perceived by different authors.

Chapter three: This chapter will explain the research design and methodology in detail.

Chapter four: The data gathered in chapter three will be analysed and interpreted according to the findings resulting from the research processes.

Chapter five: This chapter will make recommendations and conclusions based on the research in the schools and from the literature.

1.5   CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The concepts of culture, school culture and that of multi-culture education were found to be necessary for purposes of the study and therefore these will be clarified in depth.

1.5.1 Culture

The definition of 'culture' varies considerably, but the idea of shared values and norms seem to be common characteristics. Different authors define 'culture' as follows:

According to Shuter and Shooter (1992:97) the word 'culture' which is derived from the Latin 'cultura' (to cultivate land), has a long history of usage in French and English. The term gradually came to mean cultivation of the human mind. They say that at a later stage still, the concept came to mean civilisation. They mention that culture means "the body of ideas, beliefs, values, activities and traditions that are common to a group of people." They conclude by saying, culture is the 'map of reality' that groups of people willingly share and reinforce, and that culture is dynamic, usually transmitted in modified form from generation to generation.

Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:65) refer to culture as "the implicit rules, assumptions and values that bind an organisation together." According to Banks

(1994:82) culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Culture is the system of beliefs, values, customs and traditions shared by members of a group who often also share the same physical objects, symbols and language (Steenkamp, Wade & Robbinsons, 2002:37).

Swartz (1998:7) in his studies on culture says, "the concept of culture is often concerned with growth and change. It is also concerned with refinement and sophistication." Helman (1994:2) in Swartz (1998:7) identifies culture as "a set of guidelines, which directs people's worldview and understanding of how to conduct themselves in their communities and how to convey these principles to the next generation through symbol, language, ritual and art." Helman (1994:2) continues his definition by saying, "this is a focus on the ways in which societal rules are enacted, experienced and transmitted. Culture cannot be static as interpretation of rules changes over time with different circumstances."

Therefore, Bullivant (1984:4) cited in Banks (1994:84), defines culture as "an interdependent and patterned system of valued traditional and transmitted to present new members, both symbolically and non-symbolically which a society has evolved historically and progressively modifies and augments, to give meaning to and to cope with its definition of present and future existential problems."

1.5.2 School culture

According to Banks (1994:117) school culture "reflects the values, perspectives and behaviours of the students and the educators." Much has been said on the subject of 'culture' and I believe that 'culture' and 'school culture' share almost

common characteristics. For this reason, I will now focus on the term 'school' as one of the concepts found in the study.

Sibande (2000:20) said that culture is, "a school which is characterised by respect, tolerance and co-operation, and that, it will have educators that will work well with the principal. He further says they will support one another and in the process there will be harmony between the educators. In conclusion he says in turn, "the working relationship between educators and learners will be conducive to work." Van der Westhuizen (1996:631) calls this "educational climate of the school."

Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993:92) endorse the above-mentioned definitions by saying that culture is "a set of understandings or meanings shared by a group of people. Typically, these meanings are facility held and serve to define the group as being distinct from other groups."

Culture is a pattern of meanings embodied in symbols which are transmitted historically. Culture controls action, as well as how people attach meanings to their perceptions (English, 1992:75).

A further elaboration on the definition of culture by Adler (1993:29) is as follows:

- something that is shared by all or almost all members of some social group;
- something that the older members of the group try to pass on to the younger members; and
- something (as in the case of morals, laws and customs) that shapes behaviour, or structures one's perception of the world.

In conclusion, I understand that learning about different cultures in a multicultural secondary school, is a part of the curriculum needs which have to be fulfilled by the school. Such curriculum reduces discrimination and enhances active learner

involvement and interaction in and outside the classroom. Foster (1990:37) supports this by saying, culture means learning about other cultures and traditions and that will reduce discrimination within, and eventually outside, the classroom. Hargreaves (1995:86) express his feelings by saying, "culture may be understood as the human production of meaning and value…"

1.5.3 Multicultural education

Foster (1990:38) says multicultural education is "a whole curriculum which also involved an attitude to life." According to Sonia Neito, (1992:208) cited in May (1994:6), "multicultural education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students." She also says it challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism …that students, their communities and educators represent. She continues that, multicultural education permeates the curriculum and instructional strategies used in schools, as well as the interaction among educators, students and parents, and the very way that schools conceptualise the nature of teaching and learning, because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis) as the basis for social change. She concludes by saying that "multicultural education furthers the democratic principles of social justice."

Multicultural education is a broad concept that encompasses ethnic studies, multi-ethnic education and anti-racist education. It consists of education reform that is designated to reform the school environment so that many different kinds of groups, including ethnic groups, women and learners with special needs, may experience educational equality and academic parity (Banks, 1992:19).

Boutte (1999:15) emphasises that "although this definition is in essence very similar to Banks' definition; it adds depth to the understanding because it explores all the characteristics that will influence change and reform. The

curriculum, as well as the relationship between all the role players in an institution like the school, provides a very important factor towards creating an anti-bias and anti-racism ethos. In essence, multicultural education is simply three things: it is a concept, a reform movement and a process."

According to Swartz (1992:44) multicultural education needs to be conceptualised as a broad-based school reform, and therefore she defines it as "a restatement of sound educational pedagogy and practice that requires the representation of all cultures and groups as significant to the production of knowledge. Multicultural education is an education that uses methodologies and instructional materials which promote equity of information and high standards of academic scholarship in an environment that respects the potential of each student."

1.6   LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

There are a number of multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg (Gauteng – district eleven), but this study will be limited to two schools which are also situated in the suburbs of Johannesburg   The study will revolve around the learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools, which also involves learner involvement inside and outside the classroom.

1.7   SUMMARY

This chapter sets out a framework for the intention of the study. My argument is that multicultural education can easily influence learner involvement and interaction in a positive manner. Schools in Johannesburg can achieve far more than they do at present) if the aim and purpose of this research can be taken into consideration.

This is an attempt to build a positive perception of multicultural schooling by focusing primarily on findings, recommendations and providing encouragement to those who teach and learn, to make multicultural schools in Johannesburg work. Above all, a climate of free inquiry, free discussion and respect for the views of others will improve multicultural education in secondary school in Johannesburg (Gauteng Province).

Motaung (2003:13) writes that "learners need encouragement, support and guidance from parents and educators, and that all these are acquired gradually during interaction by all concerned."

Chapter two will focus on the literature review relating to how multicultural education can influence learner educator interaction in the classroom.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

A thorough understanding the practises of apartheid during the era before April 1994, results in the observation would assume that even after 1994, most South Africans still encounter racism, which automatically and unintentionally exists in multicultural secondary schools.

In terms of the new dispensation in 1994, South Africa became a mulitcultured country which practises non-racism, non-sexism as well as non-discrimination. The best driving route in practising non-racism is through multicultural education whereby school policies would be drawn up and practised to ensure sustainable and democratic non-discriminatory education.   Richard (2003:15) says; "Multicultural education is the popular term to describe education policies and practises that recognise, accept and affirm human differences and similarities related to gender, race, handicap and class."

The study revolves around the influence of multicultural situations inside and outside the classrooms on learner - educator interaction.   Considering multicultural education in a new South Africa, one has to consider a curriculum which satisfies the needs of all learners and those of the societies from which the learners come.   Thus, Foster (1990:38) clearly states that multicultural education is "a whole curriculum which also involves an attitude to life."   This would include the attitude of educators, learners and also the rest of the community including the parental community, the broader community and official role players like the state and departments of education.   If a learner comes to school with a positive attitude towards learning and acquiring knowledge and skills, and if the parental

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the methodological structure, that is, how data was collected to examine the interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools. This includes the instruments used for this study.

In accordance with the topic of this study, the researcher found the qualitative method suitable for data collection. A brief research design is discussed below.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is a general plan or blueprint of the investigation which the researcher uses to obtain evidence to answer the research questions (De Vos; Strydom; Fouche; Poggenpoel; Schurink & Schurink, 1998:80).

Mouton (1996:107) defines the research design as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in order to reach a certain goal. The guidelines include the aim of the research, the selection and design of a particular method, and the consideration of validity.

Considering the ideas of these authors, it is clear that the design of the research includes the overall approach to be taken and how the research will be done. I

did mention in the introductory paragraph that the qualitative research method is the one that has been selected for gathering data on how a learner and educator interact in multicultural schools.

According to Brotherson (1994:103), qualitative research design is characterised by three key assumptions. The first assumption is the belief that multiple constructions of reality exist, so qualitative research will seek to find an understanding of human relationships in the web of interaction and interconnected factors, events and processes as they are constructed in the minds of people. This is an important aspect to consider for this study, as the issues of the learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools, especially in the classroom, are interconnected within human relationships and, as such, have multiple realities.

Secondly, in qualitative research the inquirer and the participant interact and influence each other on a certain extent. The qualitative research methods that are used in this study, such as observations, individual and focus-group interviews, allow for interaction and could lead to understanding attitudes, behaviours and context from different points of view (Platton in Richard, 2003:11). Thirdly, in qualitative research truth is believed to be primarily a matter of perspective. Considering the varied experiences the participants have had in a learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools, the above assumption is considered to be relevant. Roy (1991:105) asserts that qualitative techniques are based on valuing personal understanding above allowing the numbers to speak to themselves.

It is important to note the demographic composition of the educators who were involved in the process of the interviews in both schools which reflect as set out below.

In school A – three educator participants were all females that is:

educator A was a White female offered Afrikaans;

educator B was a Black female offered IsiZulu; and

educator C was a White female offered English.

In school B it happened spontaneously that I interviewed three male educators and they are being categorised as follows:

educator A was a Black male who taught IsiZulu;

educator B was a Coloured male teaching Afrikaans; and

educator C was a White male teaching English.

3.2.1 Qualitative research

According to Rudestam and Newton (1992:31), qualitative research implies that data is in the form of words, and that are (data) reduced to themes or categories and thus evaluated subjectively. Since I intend studying the interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools, I have decided to use individual interviews in or from the first school and, individual as well as focus-group interviews in or from the second school with which interviews will both be in the form of words, but I will reduce data which are collected to themes or categories will be evaluated objectively due to the sensitivity of the theme itself. This qualitative research method (objective evaluation) will be more likely to address the aim and purpose of this study.

In qualitative research, I tend to become involved with the phenomenon. A qualitative researcher is at times prepared to be part of that which is being studied (Mouton & Marais, 1990:163).

According to Cresswell (1994:162), qualitative research occurs in natural settings, where human behaviour and events normally occur. The focus of

qualitative research is on the participant in the original setting. In this research, educators' and learners' perceptions about the theme will be considered, as I am interested in a broad understanding of how a learner and educator interact in multicultural schools. It is important for me to \mention that much as the focus is on a learner and educator interaction, it also includes how a learner becomes involved in and outside the classroom. It is again important to note that, how a learner and educator interact inside and outside the classroom, might have positive or negative implications, depending on the outcomes of the interviews.

McMillan and Schumacher (1997:10) describe qualitative research as "a naturalistic phenomenological philosophy, which assumes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective definition of the situation." Most of the ex-Model C schools in Johannesburg (district eleven) have transformed themselves into multi-cultured whereby Black, Coloured, White and Indian learners are found in the same school. I therefore, accept that multiple realities of a learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools may exist. It is vital to note that the understanding of the events, as well as people in their natural state without taking anything for granted, is important.

Qualitative research can be objective as the researcher involves her/himself in the situation or immerses her/himself in the persons she/he is studying, but is nevertheless able to objectively transfer this information in the data with depth and detail (Charmaz in Silverman, 1997:10). In doing as above I am trying to represent the person's view or situation fairly and portray it as consistent with their meaning.   Richard (2003:80) argues that collaboration with other researchers may retard the process but is necessary in the area of research.

The above-mentioned argument is relevant to this study in the sense that 'multiculturalism' in Johannesburg (district eleven) schools is an interactive concept portraying the way in which people react or perceive situations. It was therefore, important for me to be aware of this at all times, and the qualitative

research design, together with other methods of data collection, was helpful in obtaining different perspectives.

Qualitative studies are those where the description of data is not easily expressed in quantitative terms. The researcher gathered data through individual interviews, focus-group interviews and observations. Limited measurement was involved as exists in quantitative research.   The qualitative paradigm is appropriate in this study, as the researcher produces findings without reducing them to statistics (Best & Kahn, 1986:147, cited in Richard, 2003:80).

The research was explorative in essence and very little information was known before research processes took place. Perceptions and attitude in relation to the interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools in and outside the classroom cannot be adequately measured using quantitative methods. Although instruments may be available, it is still not an ideal method of measurement.   It was relevant for me to use a variety of methods such as interviews and observations that might determine attitudes and perceptions.

3.2.2 Method used for data collection

Data collection methods are the ways in which the research data are obtained (De Vos, et al., 1998:82).   I have collected data from the two multicultural secondary schools with which school A is fifteen kilometres from the other, but in the same district eleven.   The reason for selecting two schools with such a distance difference is to determine if schools in the same geographical areas differ in the way the learners are involved and how the multicultural schools influence the involvement. I first observed (in both school A and B) the lesson presentation from the morning until the afternoon (13h40), and then started with the individual interviews with learners. Educators were interviewed during their free periods whenever I had finished with learners. For how participants were selected, please refer to 3.3.2. This process lasted for a period of a week in each

school. The differences with school B was that after I had completed the individual interviews, I decided also to conduct focus-group interviews, something which was not done in school A. The reason for conducting both individual and focus-group interviews in school B was that, I wanted to ensure the certainty of the data collected in individual interviews together with what I observed during the lesson presentations. It was necessary to do focus-group interviews in the second school because the situations were similar in both schools. The focus-group assisted in clarifying issues and getting certainty about some of the issues. Therefore, I wanted to gather more data from different learners, and that gave me confidence in the data collected.

It is important to note that individual interviews involved only the grade twelve learners in both schools and for focus-group interviews in school B, only the grade eleven learners. The reason that I selected the grade eleven's was that I had doubts that if I selected grade twelve learners for focus-group interviews, those who were engaged in the individual interviews might inform the focus-group learners about the questions to be asked in the interview sessions and hence, a neutral group was needed.

I perceived learners from both schools as being senior learners who could provide me with the information relevant to the study. Using more than one research method played a major role in that the information gathered the first time, could be confirmed and strengthened by that gathered the second or the third time. The following methods, namely observation; individual and focus-group interviews, are discussed below.

3.2.2.1   Observations (unstructured)

Observations occur in a naturalistic setting without using predetermined categories of responses. Observations were used to investigate and clarify the research setting (Mertens, 1998:317). For this study I preferred this type of

observation because "unstructured observations call upon the researcher to note activities, events and people systematically" (Chambers, 1992:297).

The observations were unstructured in the sense that I observed learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools from the moment I entered the school gate, and proceeded to the reception and to the classrooms. Mertens (1998:317) says unstructured observations occur in a naturalistic setting without using predetermined categories of responses. Prior arrangements were made for a school visit. The first day of arrival in school A, I was warmly welcomed by the receptionist who later called the lady principal. The principal then came and assigned one lady educator to allocate me to different classes on different days. The lady educator then allocated me to classes of three different languages (that is, IsiZulu, Afrikaans and English). I did not observe classes of my choice, but I was accompanied to those classes on different days by the lady delegated to perform that task (a white lady educator).

It is worth noting that on the first day, after the lady educator presented me to the subject educator of IsiZulu, one of the black boys threw a piece of paper throughout a window next to which I was standing. The subject educator (who is a black lady) when asked who had done that, learners in class identified him. The educator took that boy learner to the principal's office. The boy was told to bring his parents along the next day. The boy came with his mother the following day. I was called and the educator related to the boy's mother what had transpired the previous day. The boy was made to apologise to me and the educator, and promised not to repeat the same mistake. Even though the boy had apologised, his classes were suspended for three weeks and he had to serve the (detention) punishment by doing the garden.

I felt pity for the boy, because I did not take it as negatively as the educator took it. For my observations, that was a harsh decision to take for such an offence.

Another thing that I had observed in school A is that no learner is allowed to move outside classes during teaching and learning periods. Every leaner has a diary whereby his/her behaviour (good or bad) and progress are recorded. For example, whenever a learner leaves the classroom for a particular purpose, the educator who is present at that moment, signs the diary so that even if a learner meets with another educator outside, he or she (the learner) should be in a position to produce a diary which indicated that he or she has been granted permission to be where he or she is. If a learner is found outside without a 'dairy', he or she is put on detention list which means he or she has to do a certain duty for a certain period every day after school. I perceived that as a good method of maintaining a sustainable discipline which had a considerable and positive influence on classroom situations.

The welcome which was given to me by the receptionist in school B was not as warm and impressive as in school A. In school B, I waited for twenty minutes before the receptionist attended to me and again waited for three hours before seeing the principal of the school who later referred me to the deputy principal who was a lady. I was very disappointed by the treatment I received, especially when I compared that with how I was welcomed in school A.

The purpose of this study is to examine how learner involvement takes place in an interactive process of multicultural education in secondary schools. For this reason, I had an opportunity to do classroom observations in the selected multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg (Gauteng-district eleven). The major area on which the classroom observation focused on was the interaction between learners and educators during presentation of the lessons, and also to observe how learners become involved in the classroom activities and subsequently to observe how learners become involved in the extra-mural activities such as sports. I was first placed in the IsiZulu class where there were four different ethnic groups, that is, black, coloured, whites and Indian learners. A visit to both schools (A and B) where there were differences in the interaction

between learners and educators in and outside the classroom, was an interesting exposure for me. All subjects were presented in English, as the medium of instruction was said to be English, except during the Afrikaans period where the subject was presented in Afrikaans. Secondly, I was placed in an Afrikaans second language class where all four racial groups mentioned before were present, and lastly, I was placed in an English second language class. These allocations took place on different days. I saw learners of different racial groups (that is, black, coloured, whites and Indians) sat in groups and interacted with ease in the classrooms.

The classroom observations, therefore, assisted me to gather additional information on the integration of learning area, group work, use of the resources, and learners' responses towards the lessons presented, which answered most of the questions reflected on the interview schedule. These observations gave me first hand information about what transpires in multi-cultured classrooms. In each of the classrooms, I was able to gather a list of additional information at the end of each day. I also had an opportunity to have personal interaction with multicultural situations in action. Despite the fact that learners and educators differed in their interaction in the classrooms as well as in sports, the events during observations enhanced my understanding on the various facets of how a learner and educator interact in multicultural schools; interaction which clearly indicates how a learner becomes involved in his/her school activities.

During break time, learners sat in multicultural groups and enjoy their lunch-boxes. During sports days, they shared sport activities together, sports such as volley ball, tennis and rugby. Those are the most popular activities that I had observed. In school A, they had their 'assembly' on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10h20 to 10h40.

Observing how 'assembly' was conducted in a multicultural school in Johannesburg, was an interesting and inspiring moment for me. After the

scripture had been read by one educator, learners sang the National Anthem, 'Nkosi Sike leli' Africa in Sesotho, Zulu, English and also in Afrikaans.   All learners sang with enthusiasm and with powerful voices.   I was impressed to realise how multiculturalism had impacted on the relationship among learners and educators.   That action proved South Africa to be a democratic country in action since the year 1994.   I am certain that I am right in assuming that before the April 1994, during the apartheid regime, blacks, whites, coloured and Indians would not be registered in the same school, hence schools were separated according to racial classifications (that is, schools for blacks, coloured, whites and Indians).

3.2.2.2   Individual interview as a research method

The interview was semi-structured because I did not only focus on the questions prepared prior to the interviews, but I asked additional questions to gain more clarity on what is being studied, which allowed for open discussion.   "Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication.   They can be used both to given and receive information."

Individual interviews were semi-structured.   Seeing that I wanted to learn more about the interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools, I did not only focus on my interviews schedule but also asked question randomly for clarity where I did not understand during the process of interviews (see Appendices A and B).

An interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people (but sometimes involving more) i.e. directed by one party in order to get information from another (Bogdam & Bikklen, 1992:96).

In qualitative research, interviews may be used in two ways: they may be employed in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or other techniques. In all of these situations, the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words for the researcher to develop insight into the ways subjects interpret an aspect of the world (Bogdam & Bikklen, 1992:96).

It is important to mention that although I did not stipulate time frame for individual interviewees, each took thirty to thirty five minutes in each school whereas the focus-group took an hour. Individual interviews in school A and B involved the grade twelve learners (boys and girls), and the focus-group in school B only involved the grade eleven learners. For more clarity on this issue please refer to 3.2.2.

Altrichter (1993:101) emphasises the fact that an interview is a conversation between two people which is not casual or non-directive, as its purpose is for the interviewer to seek responses from the interviewee. Interviews give access to other people's perceptions, including the thoughts and attitudes that lie behind behaviour. It is for this reason that interviews were used in this study, because an interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools is often a difficult topic to raise, doing it conversationally while at the same time directing the participant to achieve the necessary responses. However, the interviewee only reveals what she or he thinks and her or his interpretations at the time of the interview. This leads me to the discussion of focus-group interviews.

3.2.2.3   Focus-group interviews

Krueger (1994:6) defines focus-group interview as "a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment." Focus-group interviews are one of the best qualitative research techniques to use in examining an interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools in the Johannesburg

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(Gauteng – district eleven) schools. After individual interviews were conducted for a week (after school) in school A, I travelled fifteen kilometres to school B, where I also conducted individual interviews for three days (that is, Monday to Wednesday) and then conducted focus-group interviews for two days (that is, from Thursday to Friday).

The focus-group interview schedule which I prepared prior to the interview session, is set out in Appendix B. Open-ended questions were asked based on the interaction between a learner and educator in multicultural schools. The interview was tape-recorded to avoid forgetting and mixing of valuable information gathered. I tape-recorded the interviews with the permission of the respondents and also transcribed them (transcripts will appear in Appendix C as a sample copy of a focus-group interview). I did not place any time constraints on the responses. As a result, responses were fully and clearly explained and learners were focused on the questions asked. In their enthusiasm they all wanted to respond to the question asked the same time, especially when they all shared the same ideas. It is important to note that interviews conducted in both multicultural schools were conducted in English, as the medium of instruction in both schools is English.

Through focus-group the researcher was able to expand the information gathered from individual interviews in school A. The focus-group in this research consisted of twenty-four learners, that is, eight blacks (4 boys and 4 girls), eight coloureds (4 boys and 4 girls) and eight whites (4 boys and 4 girls). Questions for focus-group interviews were prepared prior to the interview session. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:200) and De Vos, et al. (1998:323) stress the importance of presenting questions in a conversational manner. They emphasise that the questions should be direct and simply put. They further emphasise that questions be ordered from the more general to the more specific, and that the questions of greater significance must be placed at the beginning and those of lesser significance near the end. They conclude the paragraph by mentioning

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that it is vital that positive and less threatening questions are asked before the sensitive questions. This is what I have tried to maintain when formulated the interview schedule.

Both individual and focus-group interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

3.3   SAMPLE

Hardyk and Petrinovich (cited in Richard, 2003:88) define a sample as "those members of a given population on whom instruments were used to obtain relevant data." This sample was a stratified purposive sample, in other words, there gender, race and culture balanced, specifically applied to grade eleven and twelve learners. Purposive sampling increases the likelihood that the variable common in a social phenomenon will be present in the data gathered (Gillham, 2000:12). The vital role that the qualitative researcher should play is when he or she has to decide on the sample of participants to be selected for the investigation. De Vos, et al. (1998:253) emphasise that the participants formed an integral part in the selection of the sample for this study. I will now focus on the schools selected for the research.

3.3.1   The selected schools

Two multicultural secondary schools were selected as follows: They are both situated in Johannesburg-Gauteng Province in district eleven. They are presently known as ex-Model C schools.

3.3.1.1   Selection of school A (purposive and convenient)

I selected one (school A of the two) multicultural secondary school with a purpose. I selected it because I had a lady friend whom I knew, and I thought that through her, (friend) I would have access to the school to gather the

information needed. This school (A) was convenient to reach and one could reach it with public transport if one did not have one's own transport.

This school is situated in a high-class socio-economic and multi-cultured area (even though Whites are in the majority). The area influenced the climate of the school.

Even though efforts were made to make the sample representative, the concept of generalisability had to be considered, as the sample was restricted to one education district. There are eight (8) schools in the above-mentioned district. These two multicultural secondary schools are the best academic performing schools with regard to matriculation results and the development of the schools in general.

To maintain the anonymity of the selected schools, I preferred to name the first school, school A, and the second one school B. The same method was applied to all participants. Due to the time constraints of the study, I confined it to two multicultural secondary schools in order to ascertain the validity of the study.

To provide a clear picture of how the two selected multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg-district eleven are composed, I tabulated the composition of both schools' learners and educators below, starting with school A.

3.3.1.2   Composition of school (A) learners and educators

I have made mention earlier on that the medium of instruction in both schools is English, therefore, English was the medium of communication until the end of interview processes.

Learners: 1500 =   900 girls and 600 boys.

Educators: 45   =   40 government paid educators with female principal
                                inclusive.

                                5 school governing body paid female educators.

3.3.1.3   Number of learners and educators from different home language

Learners: 650 - Whites ⟶ 200 = Afrikaans speaking

                                            450 = English speaking

                    500 - Blacks ⟶ 300 = Sesotho speaking (South Sotho)

                                                60 = SeTswana speaking

                                                80 = IsiZulu speaking

                                                50 = Sepedi speaking (North Sotho)

                                                10 = Venda speaking

            250 - Indians

            100 - Coloured

Educators: 10   - Males 6 = Whites = English and Afrikaans speaking

                                2 = Indians

                                2 = Blacks ⌐ 1 Zulu speaking

                                            └ 1 Sesotho speaking

            35 - Females   25 = Whites = 15 = Afrikaans/English speaking

                                                        10 = English speaking only

                                4 = Blacks ⌐ 2 Zulu speaking

                                            └ 2 SeSotho speaking

                                4 = Indians

                                2 = Coloured

3.3.1.4　Criteria for selection of learners for individual interviews – school A

Learners who took part in the investigations in the selected multicultural secondary school were senior learners (grade twelve) who had registered for the three languages (that is, English, Afrikaans and IsiZulu). The reason for selecting interview learners who were doing these languages was that I wanted to verify what I had observed in the classrooms during the lesson presentations. The criteria applied for selecting learners was that, out of twenty-four learners selected from each school, twelve learners must be boys and the other twelve girls. I selected learners of the age seventeen and eighteen (17 and 18 – 12 per age group). The reason for selecting these age groups was that these learners have life experience and are aware of political and social issues.

Twelve learners in each group had to be divided in such a way that six of them were the best performing and the other six the poor performing. The idea of dividing them that way was that I wanted to ensure the accuracy of the information I had gathered from all the participants. Referring to the selection of grade twelve learners in the above paragraph, the idea that I had was that, as senior learners they might have the advantage of being able to provide me with all the relevant information concerning what was being studied because they had been there longer than the learners in grade eight and nine.

As mentioned prior in the sample of schools selected that the anonymity of the schools and participants will be maintained, the researcher will therefore, name learners by letters of the alphabet. This has been done to collect sufficient data from learners of different racial groups and also to enhance the authenticity of the data gathered on each group. The sample of all participants will be analysed carefully in chapter four.

3.3.1.5   Criteria for selection of educators (for observations and individual interviews)

Still in school A, the educators who took part in the investigations were senior subject educators who happened to have taught the grade eleven and twelve learners for three successive years and were still involved in the same grades. The motive behind this idea was that these educators knew learners of the school better than the educators who met learners for the first time, that is, how learners are being influenced in the classrooms through the interaction with the educators.

I observed three language educators during their lesson presentation.   This concerns languages such as English, Afrikaans and IsiZulu.   It must be noted that in this school A, I observed and interviewed three female educators (in senior classes).

3.3.1.6   Selection of school B – (not purposive)

In school B, which is the second selected school, I did not have anyone whom I knew before, but I had an interest in the school as one of the multicultural schools in Johannesburg - district eleven.   The area in which the school is situated is Coloured dominated, followed Blacks with the minority of whites.   The socio-economic situation of the school is middle-class, which is highly influenced by the environment.   The school has registered learners from three racial groups, namely, coloured, blacks and whites, with educators of the same racial groups. At first I did not have any idea about the relationships in the school until I was engaged in the observations and interview processes, although the selection of the school was not purposive.

This study enriched the researcher's knowledge concerning how a how multicultural school (particularly) in the classroom had an influence on learner involvement.

3.3.1.7   Composition of school (B) learners and educators

The medium of instruction is English and therefore, English is being used for communication in all the processes.

Learners: 1400 =   844 girls and 556 boys.

Educators: 35   =   35 government paid educators with male principal inclusive.

3.3.1.8   Number of learners and educators from different home languages

Learners: 900 - Coloured

350 - Blacks

150 = IsiZulu speaking

95 = Sesotho speaking (South Sotho)

50 = Setswana speaking

30 = Tsonga speaking

35 = Xhosa speaking

20 = North Sotho speaking

150 - Whites

120 = English speaking only

30 = English/Afrikaans

Educators: 15 - Males 8 = Coloured

4 = Blacks   2 Zulu speaking

1 Sesotho speaking

1 Setswana speaking

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3 = Whites = all Afrikaans and English speaking

20 - Females   10 = Coloured English and Afrikaans speaking

6 = Blacks ⎱ 3 Zulu speaking
            ⎬ 2 Xhosa speaking
            ⎰ 1 SeSotho speaking

4 = Whites = Afrikaans and English speaking

3.3.1.9   Criteria for selection of learners (for individual interviews and focus-group-school B)

Learners who took part in the investigations in the selected multicultural secondary school (B) were senior learners (grade twelve) who had registered for the three languages (that is, English, Afrikaans and IsiZulu). Ages of learners who participated were the same as those in school A. For more clarification on the reason for selecting the grade twelve learners, as well as the criteria for selecting them, please refer to sub-heading 3.3.1.4.

I observed the lesson, presentations in the mornings and conducted individual interviews in the afternoons for three successive days (that is, from Monday to Wednesday) and thereafter (Thursday and Friday), I conducted focus-group interviews. Special attention should be paid to the fact that I only conducted individual interviews with the grade twelve learners, and later was involved in the focus-group interviews with grade eleven learners (the same number as that of the grade twelves refer to 3.3.1.4). Learners who participated in focus-group interviews were all sixteen (16) years of age. They were selected for this type of interviews because I felt that they (learners) have life experience and are also aware of political and social issues. Again, I selected grade eleven learners

because they were not involved in the individual interviews and that they would not be aware of the interview schedule.

I conducted focus-group interviews after I had conducted individual interviews. The reason for doing that was to enable me to gather more information on the subject being studied and also to ensure authentic results on how a learner and educator interact in multicultural schools.

3.3.1.10   Criteria for selection of educators (school B) for observations and individual interviews

The educators who took part in the investigations in this multicultural secondary school were senior subject educators who happened to have taught grade eleven and twelve learners for three successive years and were still involved in the same grades. Educators in school B were selected the same way as those in school A.

I observed three language educators during their lesson presentation (that is: English, Afrikaans and IsiZulu). Fortunately, race, gender and culture balanced automatically without any difficulty.

3.4   VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Validity is concerned with whether what one is measuring is what one really intends to measure. Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of measures (Rose & Sullivan, 1996:19).

Voght (1993:65) states clearly that "when repeated measurements of the same thing gives identical or very similar results, the measurement instrument is said to be reliable. For example, if you climbed on your bathroom scale and it reads 75 kilograms, you climbed off and on again and it reads 72 kilograms, repeated the

process and it reads 77 kilograms, your scale would not be very reliable." He continues, "if however, in a series of weightings, you obtained the same answer (75 kilograms), your scale would be reliable. Suppose you knew that you actually weigh 70 kilograms then your scale may be reliable but is not accurate (valid)."

When one attempts to examine the interaction between learners and educators in multicultural in secondary schools using semi-structured research methods, it is important that it is valid and reliable.

Silverman (in Hall & Hall, 1996:209) propose that it is important to pre-test interviews to discover whether the same results can be reproduced to claim validity. In this research, the pilot study and sample used independently with the same method of interviews with educators and learners in both schools, have allowed me to emphasise the validity of the claims when examining the data.

It is vital to mention that the visits and the observation processes that I have undergone was on a short-term basis. The first day's visits to both schools were unannounced to the learners therefore, they could not stage their relationships and the interactions in the class and especially on the school grounds during breaks.

With the educators, the principal did inform them in their staff meeting that I would be in their midst for a short period (1 week) for the purpose of my studies. I do not want to believe that the seating in both schools was influenced by the notification of my visit. I believe that the seating arrangements in the classrooms were done long before my visit, the answer that the seating was long being arranged to be like that since the beginning of the year and that is their culture at the school to sit like that.

It is important to note that I <u>first</u> conducted interviews with the educators individually in both schools (A + B), and <u>secondly</u> with learners. A focus-group

interview was done only with school B and with the grade eleven learners, not with the grade twelve learners as in the individual interviews. A semi-structured method was used to ensure an in-depth examination of what is being studied.

Examining the interaction between learners and educators in and outside the classroom in multicultural schools is a very sensitive subject and participants may feel obliged to respond in a particular manner. To ensure accurate data, different methods of data collection should be applied to achieve triangulation. Gurek (in Gillham, 2000:93) confirms this by saying the implication for assessing the validity of interview data is that interviews need to be part of a multi-method approach.

A reflective activity, observation in classroom and in sports were also used to examine whether there was a change of perception with regards to the interaction between multi-cultured learners and educators. Group and individual activity during data collection was also a significant strategy as participants were actively engaged. To maintain the reliability and validity of this study, a reflection of participant responses in the group, as well as in the individual activity, was recorded.

3.5   ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics is a set of moral principles that offers behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards participants (De Vos, et al., 1998:24). Ethics in research plays an integrated part of the research planning and the implementation process (Mertens, 1998:23).

In the first sample multicultural school, I found that there were four racial groups (namely blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians) and in the second sample multicultural schools there were three racial groups (namely blacks, coloureds

and Whites). The ethical issue on which I want to focus is that of 'blacks' which I know and understand best.

It is worth noting that in the black racial group, one finds the following ethnic groups namely Zulus, South Sothos, North Sotho, Tswanas, Vendas, Tsongas, Swazi's and Xhosas. I will therefore elaborate briefly about each of the abovementioned ethnic group.

It is vital to clarify to the reader the meaning of 'tradition' and 'culture' before elaborating further on the ethical issues of each ethnic group. These two concepts seem to be confusing, especially to other racial groups besides that of blacks, hence clarification is important.

When blacks talk of 'tradition' they are referring to their dress code and the songs they sing and how they dance to the songs during their celebrations. 'Culture' refers to the manner in which things are done on that day of celebration (for example weddings, feasts and so on) as well as their standard of living.

3.6   CONCLUSION

Chapter three focused on how the research was designed, showing that a qualitative research method was preferred with regard to data collection for this study. Different methods such as individual interviews, focus-group interviews, observations were applied during the process of data gathering, and I clearly outlined them. The sample of schools visited, how educators and learners were selected, are discussed in this chapter. The validity and the reliability of the information gathered, have also been confirmed through different methods applied.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF SELECTED SAMPLE OF EMPIRICAL DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three focused on the design of the research instrument and empirical investigation. It also focused on the questions relevant to the influence of learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools. The sample utilised similar to multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg – district eleven. It will also resemble similar schools in this province and probably also in the rest of the country. Chapter four will describe how data was collected and interpreted. This is done as a report on observations; individual and focus-group interviews which were conducted.

It is important to note that the observations will be included in the data from the interviews. This chapter will then give attention to the aspects listed below.

- The first is the background of the study which includes:

  - educators perception about multicultural schools;
  - understanding multiculturalism;
  - the influence of multiculturalism relations and interaction in the schools; and
  - activities focusing on multiculturalism and focus group perspectives.

- The second is learners' perception about multiculturalism which includes:

  - understanding multiculturalism;
  - the influence of multiculturalism on the relations and interaction in the schools; and
  - activities focusing on multiculturalism and focus group perspectives.

4.2 EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MULTICULTURAL INTERACTION (SCHOOL A + B INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS)

4.2.1 Understanding multiculturalism and culture

I have clearly indicated in chapter three that in school A only female educators were involved in the interview processes and in school B only males. In both schools the understanding of multiculturalism is that multicultural schools involve learners and the educators from different racial and cultural backgrounds. In answering the question: *What do you understand by a multicultural school?* Educator A, B and C in both schools responded in almost the same way and said: "It is a school that has stakeholders coming from different cultural backgrounds."

My observations confirmed what was said by educators in both schools because I have seen learners, as well as educators of different racial groups, which means they came from different cultural backgrounds. The common response and the understanding of the question by educators from both schools was: **"different cultural backgrounds".**

I again posed a question: *How many cultures do you have in your school?* In response, the educator B who was a Black female in school A said: "there are learners and educators coming from four different racial groups which means

when talking about culture, we are specifically referring to culture of four racial groups found here at schools, namely, whites, blacks, Indians and coloureds."

Subsequent to the above question, I asked: *What do you understand by the term "culture?"* Educator A, B and C in both schools had more or less the same ideology on the concept mentioned above and said: "culture refers to a lifestyle which a particular community practise on a daily basis, this include standards, norms and values of that particular community." From the educators' perspective, it is understood that the term "culture" has to do with the common behaviour of a particular society which is practised on a daily basis. This response is supported by the literature in chapter two when Mead, cited in Sewlall (1996:15), points out that, "the term culture applied to the total shared, learned behaviour of society."

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

Multiculturalism can have an influence on the relations and interaction in the school in many ways. For me to know exactly how does that happen in school A and B and also to gather more data on what is being studied I had to ask a question. *What do you think is the influence of multiculturalism on your relationship with the learners in your class?* Educators in both schools stated that, "we understand each other well and that the relationship grows" Curiously I asked: *How do you understand each other well and make the relationship grow?* Common responses were provided and were closely related to the religions of educators. One said: "The culture of my religion (namely, Islam) allows me to knock-off at eleven o'clock on Fridays for prayer meetings at church." The educator B who is a Black female at school A said. "I normally attend Women Fellowship at church (Presbyterian) every Thursday which compels me to leave school at ten o'clock." Each stated that the process of learning to know each other well and to make the relationship grow emanates from the fact that when

such times come, learners know they should be in their classes and concentrate in the work given. The following day the educator marks the work done previous day without any problem being experienced by the learners.

The Department of Education makes it clear that …"Various religious traditions should be presented objectively and neutrally as part of a secular programme of education. The object is to educate learners about a variety of religious traditions, not to indoctrinate them into any tradition.

Planning for educators and administrative support staff's absenteeism due to religious holidays/festivals must be completed by the end of the previous academic year and submitted to the District Senior Manager. Where religious holidays/festivals will result in large numbers of learners and educators being absent from school on a particular day, the school may consider closing the school for that specific day (Department of Education, circular 67/2002; Guidelines on the handling of issues of religion in Public Schools in Gauteng).

In addition, educator B informed me that: "Here at school we have our assembly on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10h20 to 10h40. We have a special time-table of educators conducting assembly. The educator who conducts the assembly first reads the Bible in English and explains briefly what the text was all about and thereafter asks learners to sing the National Anthem before announcements, if there are any." The educator B who was a male in school B responded the same way but mentioned only three racial groups, namely: whites, blacks and coloured.

In my observations in school A, I attended the assembly with the educator B. It was touching to see the way in which learners sung the National Anthem (which first started with Zulu followed by a South Sotho stanza then English and the last one in Afrikaans). What the educator B told me about how they conduct their assembly was exactly the same as what I have observed.

I listened to the way learners from other racial groups (except Blacks) pronounced lyrics in Zulu, and also listened and observed Blacks when they sung and pronounced lyrics in Afrikaans and in English. My observation was that their differences in culture did not make any difference when they (learners and educators) were at the assembly. They all sang with enthusiasm.

Coming to learners, the male educator C in School B who is a coloured said: "There are some learners who when they are sick must be taken to traditional healers for their ailments, that I cannot hide because educators and the principal know about such incidents. Such learners absent themselves whenever the time comes for treatment. Some bring their traditional medicine to school in small bottles and when a person asks to go and drink outside, as an educator, I do understand and let him/her go. Such understanding between learners and educators makes the relationship grow. When there are deaths at home, the culture of some learners compels them to be away from school until the time of bereavement is over. These are norms and values which other cultures have here at school. By simply learning about these cultures, the relationship grows."

The only exception to the response stated above with regard the question posed, (namely, What do you think is the influence of multiculturalism on your relationship with the learners in your class?) come from the white female educator A in school A who responded to the question by saying: "I do not see colour, I do not see culture, I do not see anything, but I teach." A clear interpretation of this response will be provided in chapter five.

Observing individual educators in both schools when presenting lessons, I could see that there was something in common which was mutual acceptance and understanding of individuals and their cultures. In my observations, I saw a black boy-learner coming to a white female educator C in school A to borrow an English dictionary which was placed at the window. When the educator took and gave the dictionary to the learner, before the learner could take the dictionary, he

first clapped hands and half knelt-down and later took the dictionary and went back to his seat. I was amazed not to hear the educator saying anything about that action, but later I realised that the educator understood the learner well. In African culture, the boy-learner was actually saying "thank you". I then began to understand what the black female educator B in school A had meant earlier on when she said: "We understand each other well and so the relationship grows."

The proceeding question was: *How do learners interact among themselves within and outside the classrooms?* The responses to this question seemed to be more or less the same, and each educator said: "In class I make learners sit in mix-racial groups so that they can share and exchange ideas together, befriend people easily so that they can also know one another better. This structured seating makes them discuss things freely with the peers of different races." The response was with regard to the interaction between themselves within the classrooms. Outside the classrooms what I have observed was that learners group themselves according to peer class-mates with mixed-race when they enjoy their lunch-boxes during break times and also when playing football together. Watching learners of the same multicultural school (especially school A) in Johannesburg and their involvement in sports was an interesting moment to me. Multiculturalism influenced the relations and the interaction outside the classrooms positively due to the fact that learners were enjoying being together regardless of culture. That attitude promoted effective learning in different sports activities such as, for example, tennis, soccer, netball and so forth. The above-mentioned observations apply to school A in particular.

In school B, learners were structurally seated, as in school A and the relations and interaction were effectively promoted by way of working together in class, but outside the classrooms what I observed was that the majority of learners preferred to group themselves according to their races, only the minority grouped themselves as in the classrooms that is, in mix races. This study therefore, concludes that multicultural schools there should be a uniformity with regard to

the relations and in the interaction between learners and the educators in all the schools. I also observed that in school B learners shared or became involved in a particular sports activity according to their friendship.

What surprised me in both schools (A and B) was that when it came to rugby, white learners predominated. In school A I saw three black boys playing rugby and in school B I saw only two. For interest sake I asked. Why is this sport dominated by white learners? There was a common response from the educator participants of both schools that: "Most learners (except whites) seem not to be interested in this sport and we cannot force them to play it, because everyone has to choose and play a sport which fits in with his/her own interests." That was what I observed about learner interaction among themselves outside the classrooms.

My observations also identified obedience and respect by learners to their educators. The literature in chapter two makes it clear in Table 2.1, which reflects the differences between small and large power distance in societies. On the large power distance it is stated by Hofstede (1991:27) that, "the students treat teachers (educators) with respect, and parents teach children obedience." This means parents from different societal groups teach their children obedience which goes hand in hand with culture. When one looks at Table 2.1 (p.6) there are imbalances in the dimension of culture hence, the inequality in society and inequality in organisations. These imbalances took place and were implemented by those who were in authority in societies nor organisation before April 1994. however, since the new dispensation after April 1994, the education system introduced a new perspective and was termed 'a critical multicultural education'. This enables learners in multicultural schools to interact effectively among themselves within and outside the classrooms.

Still on the influence of multiculturalism on the relations and interaction in the school, I posed the question: *Does your relationship with learners in class*

influence the climate and learner involvement? How? The most common response to the question was: "Giving them the same love, treatment in class create a climate which always promotes active learner involvement." O yes, I can see white learners, blacks, coloureds and Indians showing their interest in the subject (i.e. IsiZulu) wanting to know more about the subject by asking questions which make the climate conducive for effective teaching and learning."

During the time of my observations, I was moved by the positive attitude which learners of colour had (i.e. whites and coloured) when asking questions wanting to know more about what they do not understand in the subject of IsiZulu. They were trying to communicate in Zulu, although the accent was not perfect (like of a Zulu speaking person) but they were trying their best. I also observed that their enthusiasm in their schoolwork influenced the classroom and school climate in a very positive manner. In school B the white and coloured educators responded to the above question and said: "The climate here at school is welcoming because learners and educators do work together in harmony in that learner involvement is encouraged."

My observation in school B was that, even though the educators responded that way, I could see some learners were restless and noisy in class. The educator kept on saying; "Keep quiet please." The educators had already voiced their understanding of what the term "culture' means and also explained in the study that they no longer celebrate 'cultural' and 'heritage' days due to the reasons provided, which will reflect later in the study. The question was: *How do the two above-mentioned days influence the interaction among learners and the educators?* This question will be answered under the next sub-heading.

4.2.3 Activities focusing on multiculturalism and focus-group perspectives

For me to understand how multiculturalism influences the interaction and the relations between the learner and the educator, I have to know the activities

which the stakeholders participate in and I asked: *Do you often involve learners in discussions based on multicultural issues? If yes, how?*

The white female educator A in School A responded. "No, I neither teach nor involve them in such discussions because I have never found it necessary to talk about it." The responses from other educator-participants (B and C) on this question were similar to each other. They said: "Yes, by making each learner to come to the front and explain to the classmates how they celebrate their cultural feasts and deaths, other ask questions where they do not clearly understand."

During the time of my visit in both schools, I did not hear learners discussing their cultures but I was shown books where they wrote about that, which confirmed what the educators have told me. According to what I have read from the learners' books, I think multiculturalism has broadened their minds about cultural diversity.

Subsequent to the above question, I asked: *Do you teach your learners different cultures? If yes, mention a few that are found at school.* In response, the White female educator A in school A answered briefly and said: "No". The black female educator B in school A responded: "We have four different race groups here at school namely, whites, blacks, coloured and Indians.

"Yes, I do teach my learners about different cultures. For example, we have what we call 'French club' here at school where I make them (learners) cook food which is cooked and enjoyed by people from different cultural groups on daily basis like for example, 'masonja' – these are 'worms' enjoyed most by the "Northern Sotho" and the "Tsonga" speaking people. They eat these worms with porridge. Learners who have never seen 'masonja' (worms) were very much interested in seeing how they looked like and also to see how they were cooked."

Three male educators (black, coloured and white) in school B produced similar responses to the question and said: "There are three different racial groups found at school, namely, coloured, blacks and whites. Yes, I teach learners about different cultures because I want to make them understand cultural diversity. I have pictures of people belonging to different cultural groups on the walls of my classroom to remind them (the learners) of different cultures."

In my observation I saw classes (those which I was placed in) with pictures on the walls displaying people from different cultural groups in their traditional dress. To me that indicated that indeed learners at school B are being taught about cultural diversity.

It must be noted that with the White female educator A in school A there was nothing to discuss further as she limited her reply to "No". It is for such reasons that Lynch, cited in Richard (2003:45), identified two major goals for schools and says: "These are social cohesion and cultural diversity, without social cohesion society may disintegrate and without diversity 'alienation' and 'discontent' may result. The idea is to reconcile the two goals so that schools propagate both social cohesion as well as diversity."

To gather more data on the topic, I asked: *What activities (in and outside the classroom) do you find interesting to all learners?* The white female educator A in school A said: "In our school we have Valentines Day which is something you have to experience, we do not have school day, we have the whole day of fun, the whole day programme, learners enjoy it. On Valentine's Day learners carry plastic bags selling sweets to try and make money. We go to children's homes and the informal settlement to deliver food and clothes. That is why we have these monies to provide lunch to learners who cannot afford here at school. In May we have a fashion show where the learners have to sing. They have different designs and designers and they have shoes that they cut. Such activities become a great fun and are usually done over three evenings (i.e.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday). Learners also choose a male and female model of the year and the best actor. In September learners dress in white and ask for contributions from outside societies".

The black female educator B in school A in responding to the question of activities said: "The activities which I find interesting to all learners are music and dance." The common response from educators in both schools with regard to the above mentioned question was: "Inside the classrooms learners enjoy discussions and reading. Outside the classrooms they enjoy playing and sharing their lunch-boxes together during lunch breaks/play-times." That is what I observed during the time of my visit.

In my observation I could see that the attitude towards multiculturalism is positive especially in class and therefore influences the relationship between learners and the educators in a positive manner. Foster (1990:38) confirms my observations and writes that multicultural education is a "whole curriculum which also involves an attitude to life."

In my interviews with educators in school A and B, I continued with questions and I asked: *Do you and your learners normally celebrate cultural and heritage days? If yes, how and why?* The white female educator A in school A said: "We have on Fridays a "Hindu day" I eat Hindu food and ask all who belong to that religion to tell me what Hinduism is all about." The Black female educator B in school A said: "We no longer celebrate cultural day, we have stopped because some white learners used to laugh at blacks (namely, Zulus) in their traditional dress. Rather, we have changed 'cultural day' into a concert at night where learners are asked to cook and sell different kinds of food which are preferred by their cultures like that one of 'masonja' (worms), They demonstrate to the audience how they cook indigenous types of food and later give audience a chance to taste and commend on how the food tastes." The literature in chapter two confirms that

"multiculturalism is not only taught through formal lessons but must be demonstrated at all times" (Marulis, 2000:27).

I tried to ask the above-mentioned black female educator B in school A whether the laughter by white learners was in a positive or negative mood, and was that why the school stopped that? She said: "the laughter (by white learners) was negative because they would laugh when they saw Zulu learners in their animal-skin clothes which they call mabheshu in Zulu. They would laugh (white learners) and say Zulu learners are going around naked. The laughter would continue for five or more days. I say the laughter was created in a negative impression because we, as educators have received complaints from Learner Representative Council (LRC) about this. At first we (educators) thought the laughter emanated from the entertainment, but later after we received complaints we realised that it was perceived by learners the other way round." The white female educator C in school A explained and said, "Before we stopped activities on cultural day, we sat down and agree that to avoid conflict among learners of the same school, celebrations of that nature should be cancelled. Rather, let them celebrate such a day by having the educators choose learners who will each recite on a concert a poem (s) in his/her language and later tell the audience what the poem was all about."

The cancellation of such a day may make them feel inferior and unimportant. That action is confirmed by literature which explains alienation the following way: "The experience of feeling one's culture unwelcome, one's ethnicity acknowledged, and one's tradition unimportant" (Duarte & Smith, 2000:173).

With school B all the three educators gave the same response and said. "Here at school we do not celebrate 'cultural' and 'heritage' days as we did not include in our school curriculum." A follow-up question was asked. *Do you feel satisfied with that?* The response by the male educator A, B and C was common and they said: "Yes, because I do not see any necessity to include them (days) in the

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curriculum, but I continue to teach." Lynch (1989); Banks (1997); Bennette (1996); Nieto, (1992) cited in Richard (2003:47) argue that: "the multicultural approach is not separate from critical pedagogy. This is a very important point and if educators develop and encourage critical thinking will automatically introduce reflection and diversity within the curriculum."

After such a thorough focus on activities on multiculturalism I then asked: *How do the two above-mentioned days influence the interaction among learners as well as educators?* The white female educator A in school A responded: "The above-mentioned days influenced the interaction among learners and educators in a negative way and caused conflict in the past within the school environment (conflict among learners). The white female educator C in school A said: "since we have changed or stopped the celebrations on 'cultural days' and resorted to another method of utilising that day in a different manner, everyone (especially learners) enjoys it, in that the interaction among learners and the educators is influenced positively."

In my observations in school A I was not aware that there had once been a conflict among learners which emanated from the celebration of a 'cultural day' because what I saw was a welcoming climate in and outside the classrooms. This means the changing of the curriculum concerning such activities brought about change of attitude among learners. Everyone now accepts and understand that multicultural education is a "whole curriculum which involves an attitude to life" (Foster, 1990:38). In school B the response from the educator A, B and C seemed to be the same and they said "The above-mentioned days do not have any influence because they are not included in the curriculum, therefore we do not celebrate with learners at school". The literature in chapter two identifies the argument expressed by Foster (1990:21) when he says; "all pupils need to acquire knowledge and sensitivity to their cultural groups through a curriculum which offers opportunities to study other religions, languages and cultures…"

Due to the above-mentioned responses, this study concludes that this white male educator does not have confidence in the black and coloured learners' intelligence and that there is a chance that they will not mark white learners fairly. His attitude towards black and coloured learners leads him to the practise of racism which is discredited by the new South African Constitution. Nieto, (1992:1) in chapter two argues that no educational philosophy or programme is worthwhile unless it focuses on two primary concerns which are:

- raising the achievement of all students and thus providing them with an equal and equitable education; and
- giving students the opportunity to become critical and productive members of democratic society.

4.3   LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MULTICULTURAL INTERACTION (SCHOOLS A AND B INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS)

4.3.1 Understanding multiculturalism

Learners in school A and B seemed to have the same understanding on multiculturalism that it has to do with different cultural practises which have to be accepted and affirmed by all parties involved. The following response came from the learners interviewed when this question was posed to them: *What do you understand by a multicultural school?* The common response from the learner A,B,C and D of both school A and B was: "a multicultural school is a school where different races; different culture; traditions and religions come together as stakeholders of the same school. The exception to this was one learner (white) C of school A who responded passively and said: "I do not understand".

In order for me to see how do learners understand multiculturalism, I asked the following question. *Does your school as a multicultural school have a welcoming*

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climate for: all stakeholders of different cultures? Two white boy-learners (A and B) of school A responded: "The school has a welcoming climate for all stakeholders of different cultures because at school we respect one another as well as his/her culture. The respect for one's culture makes us as learners to learn the culture of other stakeholders with ease and we really enjoy that, but sometimes the climate in our school become unwelcoming because of few mischievous learners who normally smoke and drink liquor within the school premises and when they are caught by the 'prefects' they cause chaos which makes the climate unwelcoming."

Following the above-mentioned responses I asked*: Who are those learners?* They said: "They are boys and girls of mixed racial groups but there are not more than fifty of them." I again asked: *How does the school address this matter?* "The educators punish those learners by putting them on detention after school to clean the school environment, scrub the toilets for three weeks and thereafter the detention is over." *Do their parents know about their children's behaviour at school?* The response from boy-learner A was: "I do not know", white boy-learner B said. "Yes, their parents know." Another question was. *Do those learners still continue even after their parents having been notified?* The response was. "Yes, they still continue."

Two Black girl-learners (C and D) at school A and two Black boy-learners (C+D) of school B responded to the question of a welcoming school climate by saying: "The climate at school is welcoming because everyone who enters the gate receive a warm welcome from the educators and learners, no one feels like a stranger." These learners never mentioned the mischievous behaviour of their peers but following the above information gathered from other learners earlier on I asked: *Do you experience the situations where learners here at school abuse substances such as drugs and liquor?* The response was: "Yes, we do but there are very few of those."

These responses were ironical to those provided by the educators in both schools who never mentioned anything concerning mischievous behaviour of learners on substance abuse. Such information would have been provided to answer this question: *Does your relationship with learners in class influence the climate and learner involvement?* (see p.11). It must be noted that I only described what I observed in both schools concerning the above question. The hidden information which I was not told about, I could not include in my report.

Coming back to what learners have said above during my visit in school B, I saw learners (mixed racial groups – but coloured boys and girls were in the majority) cleaning the school yard and toilets after school. When I asked one educator outside he said: "I am sure they are being punished for not having done their school work." Then I believed what he told me.

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

In my interview with learners I wanted to find out whether learners do understand how multiculturalism influences the relations and the interaction in the school and I asked a question. *What do you think is the influence of multiculturalism on your relationship with educators in your class?* The common response from the learners A,B,C, of both schools was: "Being in a multicultural school has taught me to learn more about different cultural backgrounds, our educators accept us as we are and they learn about our cultures from us." The white boy-learner D in school B said: "The influence is because we love and respect our educators."

The school as an organisation accepts learners as they are and introduces them its culture to them by way of familiarising them (learners) with school policy, so that even though learners are from different societies, but at school they must speak the same language and behave the same way. Literature by Lynch in

Richard (2003:68) says "policy must be implemented so that every one at school speaks the same language."

Another question was posed to learners: *What do you think is the influence of multiculturalism on the relationship with learners in-and outside the classrooms?* The common response from learners in both school A and B was as follows: "The influence of multiculturalism on the relationship is that we, as learners, have an open communication among ourselves, our interaction as learners is focused on school work and team spirit; outside the classroom we interact in a formal and informal sport activities."

Open communication which was mentioned by learners of both school influences the relations and interaction among learners of different racial and cultural groups, by working together in class and playing formally and informally outside the classroom. The literature states clearly that "multicultural education is ongoing and dynamic. It is a process because it is about building the relationships" (Richard, 2003:47).

If the relationship is good between learners as the responses have indicated, it is also important to know about the influence on the climate in the classrooms/schools and I asked: *How do multicultural situations influence the climate in the classrooms/schools?* The black girl-learner A (who is a prefect grade 12) in school A responded. "Every single school has its problems, we also have problems with learners in different grade levels which we prefects normally shelve." The question: *Why shelve problems?* The answer: "We sometimes feel as prefects that the more problems we report to our educators, the more time we will spend outside the classrooms trying to resolve such problems, so the best thing to do is to put aside the problem. The problems which we cannot shelve which influence the climate of the school in negative way are those which involve fights and name-calling which happened last year and never again." I wanted to know more about the fighting problem and I asked. *What did your educators say*

about these fights and name-calling and what stopped all that? (Never again). She responded: "The educators together with the principal called the parents of boys who were fighting (white & black) and related the matter to the parents and promised to expel them if they did not change their behaviour. Those boys were suspended from class and were given tasks to do outside the classrooms for a week and came back to class. Since then (2003 to date) (that type of problem) we have never experienced again".

The ironical part of the whole set up in school A, was that the white boy-learner and the black boy-learner B and C (not prefects) responded to the above question asked together with the learner A, B, C in school B by saying: "The climate in the classrooms is warm and inviting for learner involvement. Outside the classrooms, the situations influence the climate in the sense that we participate in different sport activities and enjoy sharing the sport together as in the classrooms.

My observations confirmed what the black girl-learner A in school A mentioned when she said: "every single school has got its problems." When one black boy-learner threw a paper through the window where I was standing he ended up in the principal's office together with his mother. I was called so that the learner could apologise to the subject educator B (of IsiZulu) and to me as well as in front of his mother. These are some of the problems which are found in multicultural schools in Johannesburg, which and if shelved, can cause more problems and hinder the relationship and the interaction between learners and the educators, and can also influence the climate in the classrooms and the school as a whole in a negative manner.

To gather more information on the topic which revolved around the "learner and educator interaction in multicultural schools", I continued to ask questions such as: *Does your educator treat learners from different cultures differently?* The common response from learners A, B, C of both schools was: "Our educators

give us love and care the same way regardless of the colour of our skin." My observations did not identify any discrimination on the part of the educators. What I have observed was love which the educators gave their learners. I realised that to the educators all learners are important.

Subsequently I asked*: Do learners from different cultures treat each other differently?* All of them from both schools said: "No, we love one another and learn about different cultural backgrounds." This common response confirmed what the educators had told me.

In my observations in school A and B, the same learners whom I saw seated together in class, I would still see them being together even outside the classrooms. I could see the understanding of one's culture and the acceptance of one's colour of skin. I would only see few learners of the same skin colour standing together outside the classrooms during break, but the majority were always mixed just as in the classrooms.

4.3.3   Activities focusing on multiculturalism and focus-group perspective

The learner and educator interactions in multicultural schools also include the activities taking place in such schools and for that reason I asked: *Do you normally celebrate 'cultural' and 'heritage' days in your school? How and why?* A white boy-learner A of school A responded. "Before yes, we used to celebrate, but since 2003 our educators stopped that and introduced a concert in the place of "cultural day". Following this information I asked: *Why did your educators stop you from celebrating the cultural day?* He answered: "There were few naughty white boy learners who used to laugh at the black boy-learners who when wearing their traditional dress made of animal skin. The laughter provoked conflict and ended in the principal's office and later we were told such celebrations would be cancelled." I continued to ask*. What happened to those*

white boy-learners? In what grade level were they? And where are they presently?

In response he said: "The principal called their parents to school and related what transpired at school after the celebration of cultural day; The white boy-learners (culprits) were in grade ten by then (2003), but they are still at school doing grade twelve and one of them is a perfect."

A black boy-learner B of school A responded to the question and said. "Not exactly, but people who believe in a Hindu culture, have got this other celebration. Their Christmas is before ours so, they are given time off from school even though it is exam time educators let them go to celebrate their Christmas." The learner C of school A and the learner A, B, C of school B responded to the question briefly and said. "No, no, we do not do that."

My interviews with learners in both schools (A & B) confirmed what the educators had mentioned earlier on when I had interviews with them. For example, in school A, a White female educator talked about a "Hindu day" which was mentioned by a learner above. The black female educator B in school A made mention on how "cultural day" was cancelled at school which is something one of the learners in school A had mentioned. The learner C of school A and the learner A ,B and C of school B answered that they did not celebrate such days at their school which was what their educators had mentioned of (see pg.6).

At school A something like a "concert" has replaced the "cultural day" whereby some activities are done, but in school B they do not celebrate cultural day at all according to the data gathered from the respondents. This suggests that culture of the stakeholders is not acknowledge nor important, as described by Duarte and Smith (2003:173): "the experience of feeling one's culture unwelcome, one's ethnicity unacknowledged and one's traditions unimportant."

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The critical multicultural education in a new perspective allows educators to expand their curriculum to satisfy the needs of its stakeholders and the demands of the communities. Educators should therefore be flexible and introduce another kinds of activities which would substitute the dress-code on cultural days to avoid conflict among learners which was caused by laughter (white boy learners). As a multicultural school, each learner should benefit and be quipped with cultural diversities (especially those found at school) so that stakeholders understand each other better, as mentioned above by the interviewees. School A did the right thing to replace the cultural day, but school B which does not celebrate the day at all, should start to expand their curriculum and include such days. Educators and learners will have a broader knowledge with regard to different cultures found at school, as some cultures are coherent and interconnected because "human rights principles provide a solid moral base and coherence and interconnection for a global multicultural curriculum" (Lynch, 1989 cited in Richard, 2003: 45).

I continued with the interviews and I asked: *How do these two abovementioned days influence the interaction among learners and educators?* The white boy learner A of school A said: "At first the interaction among learners and educators was negative because of what other white boy learners would do or comment after the celebration of such days, but since the matter has been settled, the interaction is being influenced in a positive manner because on that day (i.e. concert day) we learn more about different cultures." Learners A, B, C of school B responded in a similar and said: "The interaction among learners and educators remains the same (positive) but it is not influenced by those days because at school we do not celebrate such days. To us they are normal school days."

Another question was posed: *Do your educators educate you on different cultures? If yes, mention all cultures you have at school.* The learner A, B of school A responded and said: "When we were doing grade 8 and 9 there was

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'Life Orientation' as one of our subjects, that is where we actually discussed cultures but as we go into upper grades (10, 11, 12) we do not do that."   The white girl learner C in school A said: "Yes, my educator (IsiZulu) normally educates us on different cultures like the one of eating 'worms' which are enjoyed by Northern Sotho and others. We have culture of whites, blacks, coloureds and Indians here at school."   Learner A, B, C of school B said: "We have three different cultures of school, that is, the one of whites, blacks and coloured. Our educators sometimes give us topics on culture to discuss and write about. We also have pictures on the walls in class which display people of different cultures in their traditional activities."

Most learner interviewees made mention of being taught about different cultures when they were in grade 8 and 9 doing Life Orientation, but in the upper grades little has been focused upon with regard to culture, but they also stated that pictures are pasted on the walls to remind them of different cultures.

It must be noted that I have observed grade eleven and twelve language classes and due to time constraints I could not do observations in the lower grades. But in the grades that I have observed (languages), not much based on culture had been done as in grade 8 and 9, but the black female educator B of school A only got a chance to elaborate more on cultural diversity when dealt with poems.

The approach of dealing with cultural diversity when teaching poems is still an appropriate and the good method in influencing the interaction between learners and the educators in multicultural schools. The literature in chapter two indicates clearly that, "multiculturalism must be immersed in the classroom curriculum – 'a multi faceted approach' must be used to establish a learning atmosphere where multiple truths and perspectives are encouraged and represented" (Marulis, 2000:27)

What learners of both schools have said above confirmed what the educators in the two schools have mentioned during the interview sessions with them (see p. 13). The little that the educators do on culture in the higher grades, adds to what was learnt prior in the lower grades. Acceptance of different cultures as well as its teachings must always be practised in all the grades at school. Richard (2003: 47) wrote: "Multiculturalism should be a holistic approach that encompasses and permeates the curriculum…there should be an acceptance of all the cultural contributions of learners."

After I had gathered information on the questions asked, I continued to ask questions and I wanted to know from each learner: *Are there things which you think are not done the right way at school and which you think impede the smooth functioning of the school, or the positive interaction between learners and the educators inside and outside the classrooms?* The black girl learner A (prefect) in school A responded and said: "Things which are not done the right way here at school are caused by certain groups of pupils not the whole school. We are 1600 pupils and maybe 50 of them do not want to co-operate. They are naughty and do not want to wear school uniforms. I think their behaviour impedes the smooth functioning of the school." Learners B and C of school A said: "Yes, learners who drink and smoke at school really have a negative influence on the smooth functioning of the school so that the interaction between learners and the educators becomes tense."

Learners A, B, C of school B responded in the same way by saying. "Learners who smoke and drink liquor at school are normally taken by prefects to the principal's office. Later they are suspended from classes to work in the garden for three weeks or a month and then they come back to classes. That influences the interaction between learners and the educators in a negative way, they must be expelled from school and stay home because they do not want to learn."

I then asked: *when and where do these learners smoke and drink liquor?* The coloured boy learner of school B said: "They drink and smoke during break times."

What do you think might be the cause of such behaviour? The white boy learner A in school B said: "Sometimes the educator in not in class during his/her period and the learner(s) feel tempted to go to the toilets to drink and smoke."

My observation especially during my visits in school B was that most of the time when I moved outside, few learners were always outside. Because I did not know them, I could not say whether they were the same learners or not, and I did not know the reason. In school A no learners would move outside during school hours and I did not know about mischievous behaviour of few learners until I was told during interview sessions. The staff room is made for the educators to do their work in. Whenever I saw educators in the staff room I took it for granted that they were free and that they were busy with their work, not being aware that some of them were supposed to be in class.

The last question was: *what strategies do you think if implemented will encourage positive interaction between learners and the educators in the classrooms?* The black girl learner A in school A said: "We have about forty (40) prefects at school who will at all times be at a certain place and we also have more matrics who are given the privilege of helping around the school areas with the smoking and everything. I think the number of people smoking and drinking can be reduced here at school because more people would be helping to prevent this behaviour."

A white boy learner B in school A said: "We should learn people's culture where people come from, maybe we can understand each other better and alleviate more problems here at school."

Learners A, B, C of school B had the same feeling and said: "At school educators should begin to implement disciplinary measures such as not allowing learners to go to the toilets during teaching hours because that disturbs the smooth functioning of the school." The learner C added by saying: "The few educators who are normally late for their periods should improve and come in time to class and stop staying in the staff room when it is not necessary. Their presence in class will prevent the learners from doing wrong things. During my visit in school A and B, I did not realise that there were educators who were not obeying their timetable as they should. The educators' irresponsible behaviour left room for learners to abuse alcohol and drugs as well as the cigarette. Even though educators disobey their periods, I was told by learners that not all of them behave that way. Only a few of them do that but the rest are doing their best to enhance the relationship between learners and the educators and also to influence the climate of the school in a positive manner.

4.4   SUMMARY

This chapter focused on what transpired during the process of interviews with learners as well as the educators in the two sample multicultural secondary schools in Johannesburg. The educators and learners were asked different questions although some questions were the same. The focus was mainly based on the following sub-headings:

1. understanding multiculturalism
2. the influence of multiculturalism; and
3. activities focusing on multiculturalism and focus group perspectives.

This chapter clearly outlined how learners and the educators were involved in addressing different cultures. My experience when dealt with this chapter was that I realised how important it was for learners to become actively involved inside the classroom, because that also builds confidence in the learners

themselves which prepares them to contribute meaningful in the societal gatherings. Richard (2003: 47) writes: "The classroom ambience should provide social confidence for all learners." In addition, Townsend (1994: 20) writes: "involvement means that the purpose of classroom and school activities is shared with learners. The educators discussion with pupils promotes active learning and builds confidence."

The understanding of multiculturalism in the sample schools proved to me that since 1994, South Africa has been a democratic country in action which practises the interaction which never existed before April 1994 (that is, the interaction among blacks, coloured, Indians and whites registered in the same school.) The interaction between learners and the educators influenced the classroom situation, as well as school climate, in the sense that learners coming from different cultural backgrounds were loved and cared for by all the educators in the same way, regardless of their racial groups.

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 multi-cultured stakeholders.   The literature in chapter two states clearly that

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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 five 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.

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