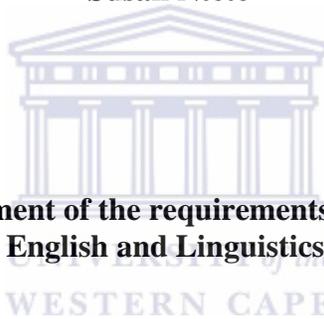


**TRANSCENDING DISADVANTAGE: LIFE-HISTORIES OF LEARNERS AT A
TOWNSHIP SCHOOL IN SOUTH AFRICA**

By

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Abstract

This is a study of the discourses of empowerment and disempowerment that emerge from the critical discourse analysis (CDA) of life-histories written by two classes of Grade 11 high school learners in a township school in Cape Town, South Africa. The line of argument presented by this thesis is that there are political, socio-economic, familial and institutional factors and the discourses that construct them which affect learners' resilience. These however do not determine this to the exclusion of individual agency. This thesis will demonstrate that these factors, discourses and individual learners' responses to them can be identified through an analysis of learners' life-histories. Township teachers particularly need to learn to elicit and interpret these life-histories so that they can identify the signs and roots of resilience and of its opposite. This will allow them to respond appropriately in ways that maximize and foster resilience in learners.

The study is situated within Late Modernity and Post-structuralism, as well as in post-colonialism. It draws its extensive literature review from the work of, among others, Giddens (1991), Bandura (2002), Noguera (2003), Pennebaker (2003), Pienaar and Bekker, (2007), Ryan (1971), Roemer (1995), Whitty (2002), Willig (1992), and Wodak (1996).

Data generation tools used in this qualitative ethnography include participant observation, semi-structured interviews, home-visits and life-histories. The qualitative lens of the analysis, probed both the content of what was being said, how the message was being put across as well as the perceived impact of the message on the reader. The quantitative analysis of the data, on the other hand, was done in line with Pennebaker's 'word count' strategy (2003). In line with this I took stock of the rate at which particular words were used in the essays, e.g. the stem of the verb 'own' and its variants which appeared to dominate particularly the Grade 11A data. Drawing on the work of Roemer (1995) the qualitative findings are grouped according to the following categories:

- The past of others;
- Their own past actions; and
- The needs of others.

To these, I added a fourth category which merits a chapter in its own right, viz. 'envisioning the future'.

The findings suggested by this study, despite their not being generalizable across contexts, present researchers, working within the South African context, with a special and unique set of circumstances, which warrants intensive study. If it is not a theory of empowerment or enablement that we can get out of this study, then the hypotheses generated here should generate new beginnings toward the development of such a theory, or at least new branches of existing theory (e.g. the theory of resilience).

Beyond the individual discourses, the study concludes that various factors as suggested in the first paragraph above, form the backdrop to an individual's discourses of disempowerment or empowerment. Disempowerment and under-achievement being somewhat interlinked, the study

commences by providing a background into some of the main issues that are seen to be plaguing education in SA today. Special emphasis is given to those issues which are seen to aggravate rather than improve the challenge of poor educational attainment among township schools. Among other factors identified in this regard is the level of attention that SA tends to give to the matriculation results. This practice has been found to disadvantage township children even more, as many schools tend to worry more about their image than the needs and the future of the learners in their care, among a number of other potentially damaging consequences.

In line with this the study brings to light some of the huge challenges that township learners and their teachers are confronted with (e.g. those pertaining to the environment itself, some to do with adolescence as a developmental stage, others revolving around the issue of poverty, etc.) which paint a bleak future for learners growing up in this kind of environment. Unless drastic and radical steps are taken to address this challenge, this study proposes poverty will remain a permanent feature of SA life. In line with the above the study concludes by making succinct some of the causes of poor educational attainment among township schools. This includes problematizing the concept of 'under-achievement' which has come to be used synonymously with township schools in this country. Rather than talk about learners who under-achieve, this study proposes that SA should rather be talking about learners who, because they under-exposed, mis-served and mis-educated are in fact victims of the very education system that is supposed to serve them.

The relevant literature consulted around the issue of poor educational attainment suggests SA needs to pay more attention to preschool education as well as the intermediate phase than it is doing at the moment. The points registered by the teachers in the current study, about their attempts to transform the one-size-fits all middle class SA curriculum, to suit the needs of their unique teaching circumstances, have been eye-opening in terms of highlighting the role of teachers and the school in combating failure. The notion of context-specificity in curricula as suggested by these comments also hints at the need for consultation on the part of policy-makers, with both teachers and learners. The positive role that the different stakeholders could play in changing things around is highlighted, with this not absolving the individual black family unit from its fair share of the responsibility.

Toward the implementation of its findings the study further explores the notion of empowering those involved in township education (i.e. learners, parents, teachers) by tapping into all the resources at hand (e.g. the church, school governing bodies, university students, targeting the individual citizen). One of the recommendations is that teachers be equipped with critical discourse analytic skills which they are to combine with life-histories. This combination is seen to have the potential of enabling teachers to better understand their learners, with a view to making it possible for the former to design context-specific teaching material.

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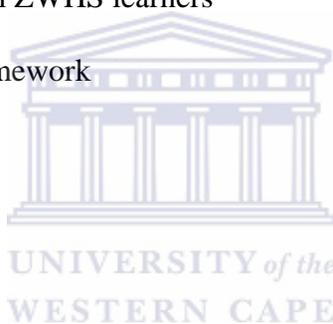
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is a study of the discourses of empowerment and disempowerment that emerge from the critical discourse analysis of life-histories written by two classes of Grade 11 high school learners (or respondents) in a township school in Cape Town, South Africa. The critical discourse analysis is supported by a detailed examination of the principal background and contextual factors that help to shape these emerging discourses. The main contention of the thesis is that such analysis is one way in which teachers in under-resourced schools could be helped to understand the causes of under-achievement in their learners.

In terms of its theoretical framework, the current study draws upon the huge ramifications of the impact upon South Africa (SA), of the concepts of 'delivery' and 'accountability', which, among others, have come to define the essence of the new democratic SA today. The new era in South Africa's history was ushered in by its first fully democratic elections in 1994, in which the African National Congress (ANC), led by former President Nelson Mandela, triumphed. The concept of 'delivery' as used in this context means the ability on the part of the government, to deliver on promises made during election campaigns. The notion of 'accountability', on the other hand captures the idea of the same government taking responsibility for any actions that may or may not result in favourable outcomes. These concepts are aligned with notions of 'redress', by which is meant attempts to bring on par this country's supposedly 'previously' disadvantaged masses, with their by far still advantaged counterparts. Determined to hold the government of the day accountable for this, the opposition parties are keenly and critically observing the actions of the mainly black ANC government in this country.

In terms of redress, the first major curriculum innovation since *apartheid* in SA, known as Curriculum 2005, which emphasizes teaching and learning 'outcomes' (hence the term 'Outcomes Based Education' or OBE), has been found by critics of the government to be an act of political symbolism (Harber 2001 and Jansen 1999). According to Harber and Jansen, the primary preoccupation of the state was with its own legitimacy, the then Minister of Education being said to have used the curriculum in such a way that his ministry (and by extrapolation the ANC government) could be seen to be doing something toward school transformation. In light of the ANC's preoccupation with its image, statistics (e.g. the number of citizens who have been given access to Anti-retroviral treatment [or ARV's] within the health department, and those who presently have access to basic needs like electricity, water, decent housing, etc. within social services, etc.) have become a big part of this organization's strategy to stay in power. Through the mass media (television in particular) these figures are displayed as visible and measurable evidence of a government responding to issues of redress.

Education has always been perceived as a catalyzing agent in the struggle for democracy by the previously oppressed masses in South Africa. Considered as the heart of the entire democratization process (Barometer 1995), this sphere of South African existence is also often represented through statistics. The matriculation or school-leaving class prior to university (otherwise known as ‘Grade 12’) is the final exit point within the schooling system (with all that this implies for the future of both the individual learner and the country as a whole). As a result, the pass rate at this level is keenly monitored and evaluated by all. In line with this it has become part of the country’s tradition, to honour and celebrate good school performance (particularly on the part of schools which have achieved a 100% matric pass rate, and/or those showing remarkable progress in this regard). Mediocrity, on the other hand, is according to Fiske and Ladd ‘bemoaned’ (2004).

Every year in SA, regardless of contributory factors or circumstances, high school is pitted against high school at the one level, while province is pitted against province at another. Achieving schools make headline news, with triumphant faces splashed all over the mass media. Colour photographs of high achieving learners, particularly those with distinctions, dominate the front page of newspapers. ‘Hard work’ on the part of the learners (usually marked by ‘straight A’s’ or an overall mark of 80% and more on subjects all done at ‘higher grade’ [HG] level) is rewarded by offers of bursaries, opportunities to study at prestigious universities, etc. Like her two predecessors, the late Prof Bengu and Dr Asmal, the current Minister of Education, Ms Pandor, also visits the successful schools. The visits result in more favourable publicity for the schools in question and their top matriculants. Promotions at times follow for principals, particularly those with consistent records of good pass rates. Unfortunately, because of the country’s history of inequality in all fields, the most successful schools in this country are those which were previously reserved for white people only, as indicated by Tables 1.1.1, 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 below.

Of the four columns in each of these tables, the fourth one is perhaps the most telling of all. The concept of ‘endorsement’ as referred to here means those learners who qualify for university access. While it is almost guaranteed that it is no less than 50% of learners from the ex-Model C know will blast their way into the emancipating doors of tertiary education, among black schools it is only 4% who manage to squeeze through, in any given year. When placed side by side with Table 3.3.5.1, Table 1.3 below speaks to the concerns of this study, about the South African democracy being nothing but *apartheid* covered in democratic robes.

Year	No. Of Matric Candidates	Percentages of Pass Rates	Endorsement Rates
2005	12 471	98.2%	51.7%
2006	12 920	97.7%	52.1%
2007	12 920	97.4%	50.7%

Table 1.1.1 Breakdown of matriculation results for the ex-Model C/ White schools in the WCP.

Year	No. Of Matric Candidates	Percentages of Pass Rates	Endorsement Rates
2005	15 876	83.7%	13.7%
2006	16 476	79.6%	12.3%
2007	17 309	75.9%	11%

Table 1.1.2 Breakdown of matriculation results for the ex-HOR/Coloured schools in the WCP.

Year	No. Of Matric Candidates	Percentages of Pass Rates	Endorsement Rates
2005	6 401	63.4%	4.6%
2006	6 619	67.1%	5%
2007	7 085	60.1%	4.5%

Table 1.1.3 Breakdown of matriculation results for the ex-DET/Black schools in the WCP.

Most of this country's 'township schools', i.e. schools in the poorer working class areas formerly reserved for African people in particular, continue to languish at the bottom of the pile. These schools are labeled 'under-achieving schools' in SA. While many of the formerly white schools (also known as 'ex-Model C' schools in the current dispensation) bask in the glory of their success year in and year out, the majority of township schools in South Africa fall under the 'name and shame' category, with their failures receiving wide publicity. Principals of these underperforming schools are not only expected to account for the failure, but also to say how they propose to change things around (Harber 2001: 62). Ministerial visits to these schools are more of a fault-finding pitch rather than a complimentary one. Harber (2001: 63) describes the situation as ministers 'descending' on the affected schools, for 'spot checks' and 'crackdowns' on 'errant teachers'. The picture painted here is apparently not unique to SA. Writing from an American perspective, Noguera (2003a) registers his astonishment at how little policy-makers generally understand about the lives of the children served by failing schools, and the complicated nature of the problems these schools seek to address. In terms of this, social, emotional and behavioral adjustments have traditionally been neglected as components of school failure, with this happening despite their demonstrated relevance (Arnold and Doctoroff 2003: 530).

In light of the above this study attempts to expose the inadequacy of two frameworks within the SA schooling system, i.e. the school readiness and curriculum responsiveness frameworks. The school readiness theory which is applied at the entry point to education, is mainly concerned with the adequate physical development of young children. Once the young learners have passed the relevant motor skills tests, they are considered ready and adequately prepared for consumption of knowledge. They are thereafter left to their own devices, and are expected to fend for themselves. What this theory fails to take into account are other factors (e.g. the kind of home, the family structure, the kind of

neighbourhood, the emotional make-up of learners, etc.) all of which shadow learners into the classroom on a daily basis. These have been found to be the very factors that stand between learners and the teachers, thereby hindering the learning process as a result. As this study will show in the chapters which follow, a lot of things happen during the twelve year span starting from the first time learners set foot at school, and the time when they finally leave high school (for those who are fortunate enough to fight it out to the bitter end). This is particularly true of neighbourhoods like the Nyanga township in Cape Town, South Africa where this study was conducted (see par. 1.3.2.1 below for a detailed background information into this township).

Theories around curriculum responsiveness as practised in SA, on the other hand, have more to do with the content part of the syllabus, rather than the ‘how’ of teaching. The need for curricula to consider the latter element can never be overemphasized. One of the points that this thesis makes though, is that rather than treat the ‘how’ of teaching in a generic one-size-fits-all fashion, it should be borne in mind that curricula do need to be context-specific as well.

In line with these shortcomings this study explores a combination of critical discourse analysis skill and written life-histories as one of many ways in which teachers in under-resourced schools could be helped to get to the bottom of under-achievement in their schools.

1.2 Laying the ground

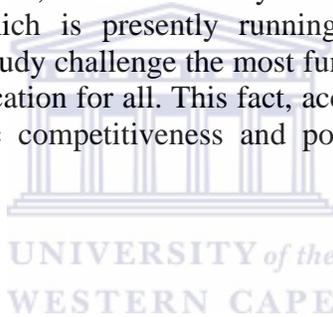
How does one begin to address the multiple difficulties faced by township schools in post-democratic South Africa? To answer this question, I think it is important firstly to acknowledge the remarkable achievements of the past fourteen years (1994-2008). This must then be followed by a plan of action.

Today in the free post-*apartheid* South Africa armed conflict has ended, national reconciliation has been achieved and a just constitutional order has been established, among other noteworthy milestones that the country is proud of. Within the SA education system for example there exists today a policy framework of peace, justice, and equal rights. In terms of reports compiled by the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) between 2001 and 2002, transformation within the SA context has meant ‘improving access’, achieving greater equity, redressing past injustices, democratizing the education system by increasing participation of stakeholders, and improving the quality of education for all (CEPD 2001: 3, CEPD 2002: 2). In comparative terms, South African education has according to Harber (2001: 7) been described as a good example of what he calls ‘transitology’, along with Hungary and other countries. The concept describes a situation in which, within a short space of time, there has occurred more or less simultaneous collapse and reconstruction of state apparatuses, economic and social stratification systems and the central value system, to supposedly offer a new vision for the future. The prevailing situation is something that has been described by some as ‘a miracle’ (Christie 2007, Grossman 2004). Christie is however quick to direct people’s

attention to the reality that in practice, many of the divisions of the past still remain entrenched in this country.

Despite the positive changes described above, the South African education system has yet to deliver more for the majority of black learners who have remained in segregated and unequally resourced schools. In recognition of this shortfall, there exists in South Africa a sense that the miracle is ‘incomplete’, in that there is still a lot of ground to cover. This state of incompleteness is understood and accepted by many in this country. The country is, after all, still ‘in transition’. It is exactly this tendency among post conflict countries like SA, to refuse to face up to the stark reality of their situation, at which Christie lashes out. She encourages a shift to a different social imaginary which leaves behind the ‘fantasy’ of transition. In terms of this South African people need to recognize that the destination has already been reached. What exists must be worked with, and changes must be built (Christie 2007).

The reality, according to Soudien (2007) and Taylor (2007), is that instead of acting as a tool for transformation, the SA education system compounds inequality. Because it enables an unequal labour market, our education system is said to directly contribute to the challenge of poverty which is presently running rampant in SA. Hence, the inequalities suggested by my study challenge the most fundamental premise of the notion of democracy, viz. quality education for all. This fact, according to the Barometer (1995: 3), poses threats to economic competitiveness and political stability in the country, among other things.



1.2.1 Poverty in SA

Since the dawn of the new democratic dispensation (i.e. 1994) this country has embarked on numerous initiatives deemed to tip the scale in favour of the formerly disenfranchised masses (i.e. black people among others). It is probably in recognition of these giant strides that some individuals seem more optimistic about the future of the country than others. The tendency among such individuals, is to speak of *apartheid* in terms of some distant and forgotten past history. This is understandable given the sweat, blood and tears that have gone into greasing the resistant wheel of fortune to turn in the right direction, albeit just for a small fraction of the distance. Despite these substantial interventions and contrary to what many South Africans are willing to admit, the elite rich in this country are getting richer while the poor masses grow even poorer by the day (Everatt and Maphai 2003).

While this study acknowledges the huge impact poverty in the physical sense of the word has on the poor masses in SA, it is an off-shoot of this physical manifestation of the phenomenon which complicates matters even more for learners from low socio-economic status (SES) environments like the Nyanga township. At the heart of the entire debate presented by the current thesis is the concept of a ‘poverty of the mind’. To gain a better

understanding of the phenomenon this study considers some of the factors contributing to 'poverty of the mind' within the SA education system.

1.2.2 South Africa's current education system

Fourteen years into the new democratic dispensation, one expects to see significant traces of transformation in the relevant spheres of existence in the country, particularly in the education of the formerly oppressed masses. The fact of the matter is that the new government has inherited a system designed to further the goals of *apartheid* (Soudien 2005). In the Western Cape particularly, initially a National Party (NP) stronghold, this intentionally inequitable system has been found to be continuing to lavish human and financial resources on schools serving White learners, while depriving and starving those with Indian, Coloured and mostly African learners. Today in SA learners in the former white schools still have access to the most resources, while former black schools occupy the other extreme end, i.e. that of the fewest resources (Fiske and Ladd 2004). The knock on effect of the current situation is that it influences performance in these schools. What this boils down to is that the affluent former white schools always attain the cream of the crop status when it comes to matric results, as Tables 1.1.1- 1.1.3 above illustrate. Because of this long established reputation, the standards attained at the former white schools have become the norm to which other schools aspire.

This is not to suggest that attempts have not been made to improve the plight of the poor. However it would appear that the pendulum of *apartheid* had swung so far to the left that it seems to have gotten stuck somewhere before it could make its backward swing to the right again. The South African democracy is already in its teens, yet in some respects it is still stuck in the old way of doing things. Many township schools in this country are still no match for their former 'Model C' counterparts. In fact, a comparison between some schools on either side of the railway line still reveals huge disparities in terms of resource allocation, the calibre of teachers teaching in these schools, the resultant quality of the matric passes, among other factors. In township schools like ZWHS where this study was conducted, the haunting presence of the country's *apartheid* past is still being felt even today.

Admittedly it would be unfair to blame all the ills of this country's education system on its *apartheid* past alone. With regard to the discrepancy in the matric results for example, it is only fair to apportion some of the blame to other deserving parties. In this case this refers to some of the country's township school teachers, among other factors. The problem has lots to do with the degree of commitment or lack thereof among these members of the teaching profession. The former Model C teachers on the other hand are known for their dedication and enthusiasm towards their responsibilities both in and out of the classroom. This, unfortunately, is not something that many township teachers can be accredited with.

It is also true that the dedication of teachers alone cannot resolve the educational disparities. Of all the relevant stakeholders in the education fraternity learners have the biggest role to play in carving out and crafting their future. Since the 1976 Soweto uprisings attempts have been made to restore the culture of learning among learners in this country, but these attempts have not exactly been successful. With the black schools being at the lowest rung of the performance hierarchy at present and for a long time to come, this is where the greatest amount of attention from education officials is usually concentrated, i.e. in terms of these schools having to measure up to their white counterparts. This, I think, is probably one of many reasons why many Africans have come to associate white-ness with all that is good and perfect. This mindset seems to have unfortunately rippled into other spheres of existence, over and above that of education. This is an issue that the current study explores at great length in the reflexivity section (par. 1.6) of this chapter.

The next section examines at close range the concept of under-achievement as applied within the SA context. To understand this we have to consider the roots of the problem, which include inequity within the SA education system.

1.2.3 Compounding inequity in South African education

The title of former South African president Mr. Mandela's autobiography '*Long Walk to Freedom*' aptly concretizes the sense of distance that the people of this country have traveled since the *apartheid* days. During this era in the Western Cape (WC) province where this study was conducted schools were segregated along racial lines into four major departments, i.e. the House of Assembly (HOA); the House of Delegates (HOD); the House of Representatives (HOR); and the Department of Education and Training (DET) for White, Indian, Coloured and African learners respectively. The categories are said to have captured the relative degrees of privilege in these schools during this period (Fiske and Ladd 2004). Within the wider South African context, black learners were further subjected to Bantu Education (BE), a system of education designed to make servants of its resistant consumers.

In the preceding paragraphs I have attempted to show how the education department, along with others like social service, health, etc., have all become subject to politicians' constant need to display statistical information as evidence that the country is making progress in aspects of delivery. Education is considered to be a gateway into the future. It is therefore not just the future of the individual learner which is considered to be affected by this but also that of the country as a whole as well. The situation is particularly troubling given the fact of SA's prominence in the global arena being shown to be growing by leaps and bounds.

How the SA government has come to entertain such uniformly high expectations of the matric class under the given circumstances is indeed confusing, given the vast literature detailing the list of ills within our education system. A study conducted by Taylor reveals how most historically poor (i.e. black) schools, which constitute '80%' of the South African schooling system, seriously under-perform even relative to schools of similar

socio-economic status (SES) in other African countries (2007). Sayed (2001: 250) traces this problem of educational inequity in democratic SA to the period of transition where it appears that the then ruling Nationalist Party (NP) government of the day and the ANC had negotiated in bad faith. In terms of the negotiated settlement the two groups are said to have conceded and compromised on a number of issues, with the key constraining feature for this settlement being an uneven one. In its capacity as both the government of the day as well as the negotiating party controlling the apparatuses of the state to boot, the NP is accused of having effected unilateral changes. It is said to have given control of formerly whites-only schools to School Governing Bodies (SGB's), in the process effectively enabling a market driven schooling system. What this has amounted to are white schools charging high school fees, in the process regaining control of their physical assets as encouraged by the current constitution. Before the ANC government had even come into power, claims Sayed, it had been stripped of considerable assets by the NP (2001: 250).

Instead of the ANC doing something to address a problem that was bound to have huge implications for the future of SA the matter is said to have been handled in line with the country's commitment to notions of redress, equity and equality. As these concepts emphasize the establishment of uniform standards and distributive justice they have culminated in equalized per capita expenditure for all South African learners, and the pushing of all learners to a certain level 'without taking away from anyone'. It is exactly the latter fact which makes the pursuit of equity and equality in SA synonymous with the country chasing its own shadow. For SA to have leveled the playing field would have demanded that the educational advantage once enjoyed solely by white schools be taken away. Instead of this being the case the SA situation is one where, as Sayed so succinctly puts it, the notions of redress, equity and justice have come to be located in a discourse of uniformity and standardization. The two notions operate according to the principle of 'sameness', a set of circumstances captured under the notion of justice being 'truly blind'. That the School Register of Needs (SRN) estimates the potential cost of equalization of resource distribution across all groups at R12b does not help matters at all either (Sayed 2001: 255).

Today, approximately fifteen years since those fateful negotiations last took place, this country is still nowhere near resolving the matter. With its institutionalized history of inequality SA is reportedly second only to Brazil in terms of the resultant widening divide between rich and poor (Taylor 2007). Sayed (2007) and Ahmed (2007), address another shortcoming in the SA education system, what Soudien (2007) calls the 'persistence of education exclusion' in a country with an explicit commitment to inclusion. In line with all of the above education has become a commodity that only the rich can afford in SA.

1.2.4 Exclusionary practices in SA education

The inaccessibility of education as suggested in the preceding paragraph is not all that confronts the poor masses in this country. According to the academics referred to above patterns of inequality in SA education correlate consistently and significantly with race

and caste. Schools in this country are also said to be shaped around middle class achievement, with Curriculum 2005 itself being considered a middle class curricular innovation (Soudien 2007).

There are several ways in which the SA curriculum could be said to be excluding township learners, particularly if the learner in question is aiming for higher education. One of these relates to the language barrier (i.e. English) which has been found to have a silencing effect on certain learners in this country, particularly those with a township or rural learning background (Banda in press). The other has to do with courses which some learners do at high school level, some courses being more rewarding (e.g. academic courses) than others (e.g. the general stream). This study exposes how the system favours respondents in the former stream over their general counterparts. The fact that schools use a bottleneck system (ZWHS being no exception to this rule) above everything else further shuts the majority of township learners out, in that it is their poor results which are most likely to bring their schools' scores down (Noguera 2003a). In a study conducted by Tett township respondents from working class schools were found to subject position themselves as people who had not been intended to enter higher education (2007: 5). The respondents were said to think of those who could access education as being people with money, status, better prospects in the form of bursaries, etc. In terms of this study township respondents were both positioning and constructing themselves as 'other' (Tett 2007: 5).

Tetts' findings are in actual fact in keeping with my own pilot study in which I singled out two learners from those in the current study. The one respondent who felt incapacitated by his lack of the relevant capital assessed his future prospects as being doomed (Ntete 2007). Tett is of the opinion that for a sense of how these learners are excluded from education one only has to focus on the way in which access is socially, culturally and economically structured (2007: 5). How learners position themselves within their classroom's social contexts was further seen to demonstrate unequal positions within classroom interactions (Peterson and Calovini 2004). The challenge here is for SA to recognize the role of the school as an actor in entrenching inequality and to move swiftly and emphatically to counter this to the best of its ability.

Educational opportunity is requisite to improving particularly the still disadvantaged young South Africans' life chances. Forces unleashed by South Africa's participation in the global village are bound to benefit those with a good and relevant education. Reimers (2000: 8) argues that unless deliberate efforts are made to increase and improve the qualifications of children of the less-privileged, and to reduce educational inequality, the gap in terms of opportunities between those who are educationally and economically privileged and their disadvantaged counterparts will continue to widen. According to this reckoning educationalists have a social responsibility to continuously try and expand their knowledge and understanding of how and under what circumstances education can best promote positive development for the poor. Policy makers need to transform such newly gained knowledge into concrete action in favour of the poor.

1.3 The study

Among many teachers heeding this call (i.e. the transformation of knowledge for the benefit of the poor) in South Africa are those from *Zondelela Woyise* High School (a pseudonym henceforth captured through the use of the acronym ZWHS) in Nyanga. This school is one of many township schools in this country purporting to be giving children from the black working class a foothold in the highly competitive global village. ZWHS' brazen claim, embodied in its motto '*Ad astra per aspra*' is hoisted up high at the entry point to this school, for all to read, regardless of its meaning being hidden from the very readership it is supposed to attract. This fact again confirms the idea of education being a middle class aspiration. Through this Latin motto this school promises to render its local community a service. In terms of this public declaration of intent ZWHS pledges to help Nyanga township learners to not just 'reach for the stars', but to actually go even 'beyond' those stars, as one member of the school's senior management team (SMT) so ambitiously pointed out. As far as the teacher in question is concerned, it is this vision that is the driving force behind this school. It is one of the central aims of this study therefore, to evaluate the extent of ZWHS' potential to produce learners with sufficient skills to access both higher education and the job market. This is in view of the current demands of the global market on South Africa.

Despite education being supposedly free and accessible to all in SA, a tour of Nyanga Township reveals the presence of many teenagers who are neither attending school nor employed. This study therefore seeks to establish the degree of agency to which some of the learners at ZWHS take ownership for their supposed slice of the action, as suggested by this school's motto. What is it about their thought processes and actions as embodied in the life-histories they write, could be said to have the potential of moving them toward the realization of this goal?

1.3.1 What is being measured?

In an attempt to answer this and other pertinent questions regarding the potential for future success or lack thereof among the respondents in the current study, for the analysis chapter I have drawn quite a good deal from Onyeani's book with the title 'Capitalist Nigger' (2000). This source's sub-title, '*The road to success*', establishes it as a relevant source. This is in line with the concerns of this study (i.e. measuring the inclination to succeed) and the kind of respondent (i.e. learners from poor homes who share the same racial identity as the intended readership of Onyeani's book) involved in this study. Through their article with the title '*One kind of freedom: Poverty Dynamics in Post Apartheid South Africa*' Carter and May (2001) suggest that black SA needs more than just political freedom to level the playing field. They cite Onyeani in their analysis of how this section of SA's population could be given the most important of freedoms, i.e. economic freedom. Though not necessarily condemning the reconciliatory tone of SA's new democracy (indeed Onyeani's book is not necessarily intended for any specific country), in this book this author does what most of his countrymen are afraid to do. He

attempts to level the playing field between blacks and whites, and the haves and have-nots, in the process calling a spade a spade. As far as the purpose of this study is concerned he provides me with a yardstick by which to assess and measure the degree of the slant toward his idea of economic success among the respondents in this study. As the title suggests it is his wish that all members of the black race (whom he captures by the concept of ‘niggers’) could forget about the ‘blame game’ and, among other things, be capitalistic in their approach to life instead (1990: xvii).

The Xhosa expression ‘*ukufa kusembizeni*’ (which literally translates into death being said to be ‘in the pot’) appears to inform Onyeani’s writing. The ‘inside job’ tone of this saying captures a scenario where whatever has been causing a particular African family grief or pain, has been found to actually originate from within the household itself. Onyeani is a member of the African family, and a seasoned one at that, if page xvi of the said book is anything to go by. He is not just any family member but one who has taken it upon himself, to ‘confront the truth of [his] misfortune’. Having identified the culprit as nobody else but himself, a discourse which is in itself empowering, it was deemed necessary to see what he perceived to be ailing the larger black community in general. In his diagnosis Onyeani compares black people to an ostrich which while busy parading haughtily as a beautiful and fine bird extending its feathers in all directions, ‘forgets that its behind is wide open’, among many other things. He expresses his concern at a race which consumes everything while producing nothing. It is this display of economic ignorance on this race’s part which appears to have motivated the writing of this book (2007:168).

Being written by an insider about his own race, this book’s thought-provoking and rather blunt content hits home when it comes to analyzing how the black mind generally functions, much to the latter’s own detriment most of the time. The author does not mince his words but critically shows how the African victim mentality has allowed this race to be conquered historically, culturally, socially and economically by its white counterparts. More importantly for the purposes of this study this author not only corroborates many of my hunches where the African race is concerned, but helps the study make sense of some of the patterns which emerge in the analysis section of the current thesis. Onyeani goes as far as to propose a movement which he calls ‘*Capitalist Niggerism*’, among other things. In his opinion such a movement could jolt blacks out of what he calls their ‘indolent inertia’ (2000:177). For a sense of how ZWHS could be contributing to the current state of affairs among the black race the study now directs the reader’s attention to what it considers to be the focal point of the study, ZWHS itself.

1.3.2 The context of the study

Kallaway suggests that the dominant tradition of educational research tends to hide from view a whole history of the construction of schooling, and to encourage a belief in some history of educational progress, a history with no ambiguities, costs, nor straggles (1984: 4). ZWHS is certainly not without a history. If one is to do justice to the investigation into this high school therefore, the reader needs to first see a portrait of ZWHS in context.

Before I may proceed to do this it is best to first situate this school within the larger context, i.e. the Nyanga township.

1.3.2.1 The Nyanga neighbourhood and its inhabitants

The Nyanga township (once dubbed a ‘ticking time bomb’ on e-tv’s July 05, 2007 news bulletin), within which ZWHS is situated, is one of three mainly black townships in Cape Town. Together with other Coloured squatter areas (or informal settlements) these freckle or ‘clumsify’ (as those cited in Blommaert’s 2007: 23 study have been known to describe the situation) the otherwise spotless beauty of Cape Town. The fact of this city being the second biggest in South Africa makes it an almost natural immigration magnet and tourist attraction drawing to itself people from all walks of life. Despite its natural beauty, a large number of the people (particularly the African masses coming from rural SA) who come pouring into this city do not come here just to appreciate the breathtaking view and the spectacular flora and fauna provided by the Table Mountain and the Kirstenbosch Gardens, among many other tourists attractions. Rather they swarm here in pursuit of greener pastures. It is in shanty towns like Nyanga and the others that the thrust of the migration tendencies is felt (Awotona *et al.* 1996: 2). In 2005 CT was reported as bursting at the seams trying to accommodate an influx of a minimum of 400 000 migrants on an annual basis. It is probably this kind of situation which contributes to the high levels of unemployment and the resultant high crime rate in townships like Nyanga. Needless to say, poverty is the order of the day here.

Like its other township counterparts Nyanga plays host to the above-mentioned together with many other unfavourable living conditions, as well as unsavoury activities. Among these are homelessness, the rampant HIV/AIDS pandemic, gangsterism, drug and alcohol abuse, taxi wars, violence, etc. ZWHS being in the hub of this flurry of activity also boasts very interesting neighbours indeed. Within both eyesight and earshot of this school are an informal settlement, a vibrant informal trading centre, noisy taxi rank, bus terminus, tavern, salon, panel-beating workshop, some shops, etc. (see Appendix K). ZWHS is right at the heart of it all.

Schools generally being regarded as a microcosm of society; the constant sneezing from a township as diseased as the one ZWHS finds itself in, is bound to leave this school in the grip of an endless cold. This somewhat negative depiction is however not the reason why ZWHS is at the centre of this inquiry. Rather, the opposite is indeed true, as the reader is about to find out in the paragraphs that follow below.

1.3.2.2 The school itself

ZWHS is not just any township high school. The school was first catapulted into the glare of the spotlight when it miraculously shot from a matric pass rate (or maybe failure rate, depending on how one chooses to look at it) of 47.55% to 87.61% literally overnight (i.e. between 1997 and 1998, respectively). Despite the occasional bad years the school has been able to sustain a relatively good pass rate over a period of ten years¹, with some

¹ 1997- 47.6%; 1998- 87.6%; 1999- 63.1%; 2000- 80.5%; 2001- 80.1%; 2002- 87.0%; 2003- 68.2%;

years being worse off (38.1% in 2006) than others (87.6% in 1998). One member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) in this school blamed these occasional lapses on the fact of the school having volunteered to participate in the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) project which The Western Cape Department of Education (WCED) was piloting at the time. According to the teacher in question, both teachers and learners had had to adjust their traditional way of doing things in an attempt to adapt to the demands that came with this innovation. As is always the case with any innovation, the transition had not exactly been smooth for both learners and teachers in this school.

ZWHS's holding on to the good matric pass rate for as long as it has been able to do therefore is something so rare as to be unheard of among many a township school in this country. It is this fact that has earned this school its reputation for success that it has been enjoying since 1997. It is this success story that has brought ZWHS under close scrutiny, particularly from those involved in education. Of late this school has however been drawing attention to itself for various rather unsavoury reasons which are beyond its powers. It is in fact against this formidable combination of factors as discussed below that the school's quest for success has to be considered.

The fact of this school having been able to hold on to a good pass rate for as long as it has been able to do is something so rare as to be unheard of among township schools in SA. It is this fact that has earned the school its reputation for 'success' (the notion of 'success' being relative, as one member of the SMT was quick to point out). It is exactly this success story that has brought this school under close scrutiny in this town, capturing particularly the curiosity of those involved in education, among others. Living conditions being said to be most likely to deteriorate in neighbourhoods where the state seems to have retreated (Newman and Massengill 2006: 436) sooner or later ZWHS was bound to find itself embroiled in one kind of mishap or the other. In this particular case the challenge has to do with violent outbreaks. In the not so distant past this school had been the talk of the town because of the good example it was seen to be setting for other township high schools around Cape Town. It would seem as if those moments of glory in the sun are fast becoming a distant memory for the current ZWHS community.

Of late this school has been drawing attention to itself for various unsavoury reasons. It has now become notorious for gang-related attacks so far having targeted only learners, with some of these learners having been affected in the most serious ways (i.e. at least two deaths at the time of the writing of this thesis). In line with these ZWHS has been dealt its fair share of negative publicity by the local mass media. The latest incident in the build-up toward this negative reputation is a knifing incident which took place on the school premises on November 14, 2006. According to Kassiem (2006), the victim of this incident has 'partially paralyzed' legs by which to remember his high school days.

When asked to comment on the spate of violence in the school one member of the SMT linked the school's record low matric results (i.e. 38.1% in 2006) to gang-related instability which was said to be wreaking havoc in this school. As far as this teacher was concerned the violent incidents were 'symptomatic' of an even sicker society whose

sickness was spilling over to infect the school. Whatever the cause of the rough patch that the school was going through at the time, the situation was seen as having very serious educational implications for both the teachers and learners in this school. It is against this formidable combination of factors and those still to be discussed below, that this school's quest for success has to be considered. Why this study deemed it important to focus attention on the Grade 11 class is the subject of the next section.

1.3.3 Why the Grade 11 class?

Within the South African education system schooling is divided into three broad banded levels, i.e. the junior, intermediary and senior phases. The three phases cover grades 1 to 4, 5 to 7 and 8 to 12 respectively. Between the entry and exit points therefore are twelve years of study, with the Grade 12 class sometimes being referred to as the 'matric' class. Matric is then followed by the tertiary phase. Whether by fault or fate, at this point students then have to choose between what was once known as a technical and university education.

As the gateway to tertiary education, matriculation holds the key to learners' academic future. The quality of results obtained at this level is almost always right at the heart of the Technicons versus university admission debate. The tendency for many matric exemptions is to follow the academic route because their results allow them choice, while the non-exemptions are mostly drawn towards the technical domain. There are of course institutions which are sensitive to the plight of students in the country, like the University of the Western Cape, which devise ways and means of making university education accessible to all. The question now is why I have chosen to focus on Grade 11 when so much of learners' futures seem to be hanging on Grade 12?

The Grade 11 class has been made the focal point of one section of this study for a few but very crucial reasons. First it appears to be common practice among many high schools in this country, to use this grade as a sieve which decides which learners may/may not filter through to Grade 12. It is also this gate-keeping role which makes this grade as strategic a starting point for analysis as any, especially for an investigation which revolves around academic success in schools. Also, despite the tendency among many researchers, to focus on the Grade 12 class, the findings of the current study suggests it is what learners are able to achieve in Grade 11 rather than in Grade 12 which matters. In this sense the former class could be described as a stepping stone into the sunshine or a dark bottomless pit filled with misery.

1.3.4 Why compare Grade 11A and Grade 11E?

The current study critically analyzes, compares and contrasts discourses used by two Grade 11 classes in ZWHS, i.e. Grades 11A and 11E classes. The juxtaposition of the two streams was deemed necessary for reasons tabulated below:

The Grade 11A group follows what is known in South African terms as the ‘academic’ stream. Their content subjects include Accounting, Economics, and Mathematics. For Grade 11E on the other hand the subject combination normally includes History, Geography, and Biology. The adjective ‘general’ is used to qualify the latter stream. As the latter concept suggests, the subjects are less challenging than their academic counterparts, and therefore considered inferior by most. It is on the basis of this rating that those registered in this class feel like they are being looked down upon. West and Newton, although writing from a different context, reiterate the same sentiments around this particular band. In the British context the latter group is said to be labeled ‘educational failures’ (1983: 86). All that the two streams have in common therefore are the three languages that accompany the respective content subjects.

Within the ZWHS context specifically, one of the history teachers complained about the general stream being treated as some kind of a ‘dumping site’ for learners perceived not to have the necessary intellectual make-up to cope with the academic subjects. Irrespective of whether or not these learners had a background in history, those who fail Grade 11 in the academic stream were said to be dumped on the history class. What this teacher found even more frustrating was the fact of this being overlooked at the end of the year when matric results were being analyzed. Another interesting comment about the Grade 11E class was that many of the male learners in this class were in actual fact criminal offenders. They were said to be using the school as a sanctuary from the police rather than the place to learn that it is.

Being in this kind of class did not seem to be doing wonders for the relevant learners’ egos. They did not derive any sense of self worth from doing this subject. One respondent expressed deep regret at being in a class he had thought would give him access to a law degree. Since discovering the duration of this degree he had had to rethink his plans for the future. This piece of knowledge had apparently come too late as there was a sense that the respondent in question felt like he was stuck with the subject. Two comments coming from this respondent with regard to history were that he had no clue what other career options there were out there for him. He was also not happy about history being reputed to be a subject for the ‘lazy’. Clearly then, if it were left up to the respondents to choose streams, it is doubtful that anyone of them would willingly want to be associated with the general stream. The question now is what the respondents in the ‘E’ stream tell themselves as they look in the mirror. Is it the face of success or that of failure that they perceive to be staring back at them? How does the kind of self-perception in question manifest itself in the kind of language that these respondents use? These are some of the questions the current thesis attempts to have answered as the study unfolds. For the moment the readers’ attention is drawn to the other side of the coin, i.e. the Grade 11A class.

The ‘A’ stream is not named as such for no reason. This team is the face that represents most high schools. In recognition of the very demanding nature of academic subjects, only a select few are allowed access into this class’s exclusive ranks. Due to this fact these learners have acquired the status of being the cream of their school’s crop. This, among other reasons results in the ‘A’ stream being the more coveted of the two classes.

Perhaps the single most important spin-off of being in the academic class is the good job prospects that this guarantees those who make a success of their careers. This, however, comes much later in the learners' lives. At school level the advantages manifest themselves in physical, psychological, intellectual terms, etc. In many township schools the senior academic class is almost always the most favourably positioned of all classes in a school. Its general counterpart is usually tucked away in some dark corner away from the public eye, like the foster child it is considered to be.

In the general stream a teacher-learner ratio of 1:60 raises no eyebrows. For the science classes, the ratio is almost always half of this proportion. This does not necessarily mean that the majority of learners lack the necessary capacity. The tendency is for result-obsessed teachers to streamline things in a way that is going to give their schools a good public image. Most of the time the image is achieved at the expense of learners who are condemned as incapable without being given a fair chance to prove themselves. Some principals will even show blatant preferential treatment for the A-class. This may be achieved by investing in educational outings, laboratory equipment, etc. for the science class, while nothing much is being done to make life easier for learners in the general stream.

The school that gets the biggest number of 'A', 'B' or 'C'-symbols in its academic subjects during the end of the year matric exams earns itself both the recognition and respect of both the education department concerned, and the public in general. This is the kind of school that every parent generally wants to send their child to. If learners show excellence in academic subjects over and above generally good performance to boot, it is all the better for the image of the school in question. A symbol breakdown conducted at the end of the matriculation year is the kind of detail that the intellectually sophisticated parent latches onto when shopping around for schools.

If the reader is still in the dark as to what it means to be an 'A' stream learner, they need look no further than the kind of attention that the mass media, particularly television and the newspapers, give matric achievers. In simple terms being an A learner resonates with the expression of a feather in one's cap. It equals positive self-esteem. Because it spells opportunity it therefore invariably guarantees a bright future for the learner in question. This boils down to these learners being the object of envy.

That the two streams are not on par with one another should be more than self-evident by now. Herein lie the major differences between learners registered in the two classes. To use the relevant terminology of the day, one could argue that the two grades are academically speaking differently empowered. It is this study's aim therefore, to ponder the question of how all of these impact on the affected learners' self-esteem, self-identity as well as their outlook in life.

1.3.5 The future of SA as viewed through an historical lens

Having read the illuminating differences between the two streams, and picked upon the academically-inclined tone of the SA education system (as discussed in the findings i.e.

Chapters 4 and 5; and the recommendations, i.e. Chapter 6 sections of this study), and as we allow the study to guide us through an analysis of their long-term implications, it seems appropriate that the reader be given another perspective from which to assess the future of SA. To this end we analyze words from one of the history teachers at ZWHS, as cited below:

‘As much as the economy is the base for any country, this also gives rise to problems. To understand poverty one needs to understand the economic basis along which poverty rests, which can only happen if one knows history. A balance in the economy of the country makes everything okay. This kind of information is inaccessible to someone doing 1+1. I have no problem with the idea of poverty alleviation, but I think the issue is to tackle the core. I think the government is trying to produce more Maths people than historical students. At the end of the day history will speak for itself. As more people suffer, the country tends to be ungovernable ...’

According to this teacher, SA’s *apartheid* history is at the heart of the poverty alleviation debate. By ignoring this history South Africans are still as far from tackling ‘the core’ of the poverty challenge as they have ever been. The history teacher maintains the country owes its weakness as a new democracy to its blinkered focus on the ‘1+1’ of its economy-based outlook, which comes at the expense of its historical background. Indeed despite many positive interventions on the part of the new government the legacy of this particular aspect of this country’s history continues to make its ghostly presence felt in certain spheres of South African existence even today. It is in the most haunting of voices that this ghostly past continues to rear its ugly head, as the grade 11E essays about to be analyzed below will indicate.

The word ‘ungovernable’ may not be considered an accurate description for the South Africa situation at present, the concept also being relative in nature. There is however no denying the fact that certain members of this community, with specific emphasis being placed on this country’s working class, do indeed continue to ‘suffer’ at the merciless hand of poverty. Many learners from ZWHS have learnt what it means to be poor from the best hand in the business i.e. poverty itself. Some of the most graphic stories told by these respondents are part of a database that falls outside the ambit of this specific study. In terms of these stories respondents talk about the unflinching grip that poverty has over their lives. Their concerns range from not being able to afford lunch, not being able to afford school uniform, to going to sleep on empty stomachs, among others.

As far as uniform was concerned some found themselves in a catch 22 situation. With the interviews I was having with them provoking them into seriously thinking things through and weighing their options they were being forced to see things differently. There was a sense that school life with uniform (a requirement they had been taking for granted all along) was definitely the better of the two evils (the other evil being a schooling life without uniform). In terms of this, while some parents were struggling with the purchase of uniform (with money being an issue), respondents grudgingly acknowledged that their financial situation would be worse off without the ‘unifying’ effect of this necessary evil.

These respondents (female in particular), were happy that the school was strict with regards to external appearances as this saved those who could not afford from having to buy 'hair extensions' and 'designer' clothes, among other concerns. In that uniform was seen to camouflage different financial backgrounds, they agreed it was good for them.

Where lunch was concerned respondents were extremely unhappy with the new school regulation which saw them confined to the school premises during the two lunch breaks. The school gates being locked (to curb late-coming and truancy) meant they could not rush home for a quick meal. Rather than bring their lunch to school some were prepared to go without food for the whole day. Bringing one's lunch to school was equated with bringing under the scrutiny of other respondents one's sad financial home situation. While it was still permissible for them to go home for lunch the respondents claimed they could eat their 'left-over' food in privacy, and away from the ridicule of prying eyes.

From the sentiments expressed by these respondents the mathematical expression of '1+1' (i.e. all that is associated with schooling) appears to add to their suffering (i.e. in light of the expenses that come with concerns about lunch, uniform, school fees, etc.) while success is not even guaranteed to make the whole endeavour worth their while. No matter how many times the current minister tries to sell the idea that '1+1=empowerment', and that 'empowerment – poverty = success', this message is likely to fall on deaf ears where some of these respondents are concerned. Regardless of the number of times she varies the intonation of her voice, and despite how stern or encouraging the expression on her face may be, all that she is to learners like those in ZWHS is just a distant face and faint voice that is seen and heard respectively, once in a while. The minister is just one of many people who live in the television box, or provides wall paper for some of the shacks. She is probably roped in with the rest of most politicians, who do not live up to the promises they make. She is someone they have never met and are unlikely to ever meet in the future. With poverty, on the other hand, many ZWHS learners seem to enjoy an intimate relationship.

It appears as if in its personified form (e.g. 'this guy Poverty', as one of the respondents in my pilot study chose to refer to the concept) (Ntete 2007), the phenomenon diligently does its rounds in the Nyanga working class community. Many ZWHS learners from this community speak of it in familiar terms, as one would of a regular visitor (whether welcome or not), whom one has learnt to accommodate in one's life. The two parties seem to have developed a language understood only by themselves. Unlike politicians who pay lip service to some of the promises they make to the working class, poverty appears to practise what he preaches. The gist of the teaching content in this case appears to be one which says '1+1' equals even higher levels of poverty.

Consider as evidence of this the high failure and drop out rates, the consequential high unemployment rate and the sense of frustration that accompanies all of these. For many township inhabitants the content of these lessons is not just cheap talk, but rather lived experience. Thus poverty speaks with the silent authority of someone who is in control. Like its ancestral father (i.e. *apartheid*) neither needs a physical form for its presence to

be felt. Now that the context of the study has been established, what follows next is what the respondents in the current study intend to do about their dire circumstances.

1.4 Research Questions

It is the aim of this investigation to search for answers to the following questions and more:

- Poverty being such a huge factor in the learners' lives, does it sound like they are inclined toward beating the phenomenon, or are they likely to give in as suggested by the respondent in Ntete's (2007) pilot study?
- The notion of success being defined in global terms within SA these days, what does ZWHS respondents' use of language suggest about their capacity to succeed in life?
- The concept of democracy being said to foster a belief that opportunities are open to all, is this notion registered in the respondents' mindsets? To what extent is this the case?
- What is it about the language that the respondents use, that could be said to betray feelings/attitudes of disempowerment or empowerment, and/or enablement or disablement?
- Are the respondents able to define problems and seek solutions to these?
- Is the fact of being an 'A' or 'E' learner registered anywhere in the respondents' discourses? If this is indeed the case, with what implications for their perceived educational and future prospects?
- Does respondents' view of the education setting permit them to set their sights on the potentially emancipating role thereof?
- If the answer to the preceding question is negative, is there perhaps a language of empowerment out there? If there is, how can this be taught?

1.5 The aim of the study

A statement made by a body with the acronym LAST (i.e. Lothian Apprenticeship Scheme Trust) as cited in Tett (2007: 3), aptly covers the concerns expressed in the current study. In terms of this the current study seeks to achieve equality of outcomes for people whose circumstances (i.e. geographic, physical, cultural, economic, etc.) would otherwise not permit them to consider becoming professionally qualified.

In an environment which fosters a belief that opportunities are open to all, like the SA democracy appears to be misleading its people into thinking, the tendency is for people to blame themselves for their failure in education and the labour market (Evans 2007: 90). Poor educational achievement is a major concern in SA. The current study concerns itself in particular with an off-shoot of the physical manifestation of the phenomenon of poverty. This phenomenon, which I call 'poverty of the mind', seems to be gaining ground among mainly learners from low SES environments like Nyanga. Language being identified as playing a big role in promoting inequality (Entwistle 1970, Fowler 1985, van Dijk 1985, etc.), this study uses life-histories written by high school learners from Nyanga, to investigate the extent to which these respondents' discourses might be said to imply disempowered/or empowered mindsets on their part. The current study attempts to further explore the possibility of a discourse of enablement or empowerment which teachers working in under-resourced environments could use, in order to free their learners from what Baynham and de Fina refer to as their shackled mindsets of 'incapacity' (2005).

It is with what Fornas calls an 'optimistic curiosity' that this research approaches its young respondents (1995: 1). This it does from an economical, political, psychological and pedagogical angle, the idea being to determine the degree to which these are prepared to carve a future for themselves. In terms of the findings of a study conducted by Evans past habits and routines were found to be contextualized, while future possibilities were said to be envisaged in the contingencies of the present moment (2007: 85).

1.6 Where I stand in relation to the current study

Davies (1991: 1) suggests that all researchers are to some extent connected to a part of the object of their research. According to this, depending on the nature and extent of the connections, questions arise as to whether the results of research are artifacts of the researcher's presence and influence on the research process. This is a viewpoint echoed by Polkinghorne (1995). In the latter author's view the storied findings of a narrative analytic enquiry are not a third-person objective representation of a subject's life as it actually occurred. Rather it is the outcome of a series of constructions. Peshkin (1988), on the other hand maintains it is no more useful for researchers to acknowledge simply that subjectivity is an invariable component of their research, than it is for them to assert that their ideal is to achieve objectivity. In terms of this, acknowledgements and assertions are not sufficient. Rather, narrative analysts need to be attuned to their contributions to the constructive aspects of their research and to acknowledge these in the write-up. Continual alertness to one's biases and subjectivity is said to assist in the production of trustworthy interpretations (Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 147). Such alertness should lead to researchers systematically seeking out their subjectivity (Peshkin 1988: 17). This, according to the latter author, should not be done retrospectively when the data have been collected and the analysis completed. Rather it should happen while the research is actively in progress, the point behind such an exercise being to enable

researchers to be aware of how their thinking may be shaping their inquiry and its outcomes.

The interplay of subject and object, self and problem is said to be usually taken for granted in both qualitative and quantitative research. Yet, as far as Peshkin (2000) is concerned, the researcher's orientation and definition of the situation cannot help but have ramifications for the way people are treated and thought of. Because of the role played by the analyst in configuring the storied outcome (which the reader has to find plausible because it is compatible with the reader's background knowledge of how and why humans respond and act), the story is said to be often told in the former's own voice (Polkinghorne 1995: 19). It is in view of concerns like these that considerations of reflexivity are thought of as important for all forms of qualitative research. Though closely related to but not necessarily identical to objectivity (Davies 1991: 4), reflexivity is said to be particularly of central importance in the case of social research where the connection between researcher and research setting is clearly much closer. This is also the case where the nature of research objects, as conscious and self aware beings, make influences by the researcher and the research process on its outcome both more likely and less predictable (Davies 1999: 1).

Doctoral candidates are generally known to choose research topics which deal with issues closest to their heart. The passion that comes out of the resultant commitment to the project at hand is almost likened to the wind in their sail. In the case of the current research one could say the topic was imposed on me. I stumbled upon both this predetermined research topic and site because of my involvement in the UWC-based CLIDE (i.e. Culture, Language and Identity) research project as assigned to those in the Arts Faculty within this institution. CLIDE is one branch of an even bigger joint venture between the University of the Western Cape and the Flemish Inter-University Council institutions in Belgium. CLIDE investigates the kind of role that studies into culture, language and identity could play in enabling the exploration of the Dynamics of Building Better Societies (DBBS), which is the umbrella body of this research initiative. Within this body of research my mandate was to establish what it is about ZWHS that was responsible for its then rolling record of success (as discussed in par. 1.3.2 above).

The fact of my being neither 'the author' nor 'the principal' (as Goffman cited in Johnstone 2000: 406 would put it) of the research topic at hand did not rob me of the kind of passion and enthusiasm which one would expect of analysts working on their brainchild. Below I present aspects of my identity which made it feel like self and subject were 'joined' (Peshkin 1988: 17). According to this author it is important that researchers not be caught red-handed with their own values at the end of their pen (Peshkin 1988: 18). To guard against this happening, this author suggests that researchers systematically identify their subjectivity throughout the course of their research.

Like all the subjects in this study I not only grew up in a township, but had attended only township schools all of my school-going life. Not only do I share the same racial background with the respondents, but we share an ethnic consciousness as well. In terms of Peshkin's proposed audit of 'subjective I's' in my case this would be my 'Xhosa I'. It

is this aspect of my identity, among many relevant others, which happens to shape my life (1988:18). Being an isiXhosa-speaking individual whose area of specialization is in the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language (ESL) made it fairly easy for me to make sense of the subjects' life-histories. There were however a few instances where this task was found to be particularly daunting. My being isiXhosa speaking had the effect of enabling rapport between myself and the parents in the study, the tendency among the latter being that of feeling self-conscious because of their illiterate status, their humble way of life and probably the perceived social standing of those doing research. The thesis I had written in partial fulfillment of my Masters' degree focused on township learners who were success stories. This kind of exposure laid the foundation with regard to what worked and what did not when conducting interviews with isiXhosa-speaking township respondents. Having been to some of the current participants' homes, and spoken with some members of their families also provided me with another piece which I could use toward the completion of the puzzle, i.e. in addition to the interviews and the life-histories the respondents had written.

In career terms I have spent the better part of my life teaching at high school. The few years I had spent teaching at entry level at UWC have made me acutely aware of the academic demands tertiary education makes on incoming students, particularly those of African descent coming from township and rural schools. Because of its Historically Disadvantaged Institution (HDI) status UWC continues to be perceived by some as being of lower academic status when compared to the formerly White institutions like UCT, Stellenbosch University, and others. This is despite its much improved academic image and impressive research output. A recent SA-based study investigating factors behind student choice where tertiary education is concerned revealed that it was mostly post admission that students would rate UWC positively (Cosser *et al.* 2004).

Within this institution I have been struck by the hierarchy which, having been passed on from the high school teaching context, continues to thrive at UWC in terms of student performance. This is probably the case in other institutions of higher learning elsewhere in SA. At the time of this research white students formed an almost non-existent minority in the UWC student population. This appeared to have the effect of propelling Indian students to the top of the academic list, i.e. in terms of performance levels in my classes. This racial group would then be followed by Coloureds, with Africans being last. The 'Proctor's List' (i.e. a page in a UWC newsletter once used to publicize student offences), was sadly the one area where African students used to gain the most prominence at UWC.

The fact about white-ness being associated with success (as suggested by the matric results) appears to have resulted in black-ness being equated with failure. This state of mind unfortunately appears to dominate many a sphere of African existence. Because of their long established reputation for success white standards within the schooling system have become the norm which the mainly black (i.e. township and rural) schools must aspire to. With township and rural schools occupying the lowest rung in the achievement hierarchy, the tendency is for the SA government to apply the greatest amount of pressure to those working in these schools (see par. 1.2.2 in this regard). The benefits associated

with fluency in English, a language mostly spoken by those living in geographical areas which favour this in this country, also contributes to the situation. This is something that appears not to have escaped the attention of one of UWC's Flemish collaborators (i.e. with regard to the CLIDE project), Prof Blommaert (2007: 8). He writes about there being a 'colossal awe and belief in the upwardly mobile power of English' in SA. This, understandably so, is probably one of many reasons why many Africans have come to associate white-ness with all that is good, beautiful and worth identifying with, while the opposite is true of being black. This mindset seems to have unfortunately influenced other areas of African existence, over and above that of education. Whether this assimilationist attitude is a survival tool or an indelible scar left by the *apartheid* era remains everybody's guess.

While I was growing up African children in my township used to associate the sweet smell of newly-bought items with the smell of a white person. This was understandable, as all new and beautiful things came via white people at the time. Despite many black people having made a name for themselves (e.g. the world-renowned Nelson Mandela among many others), placing black SA on the map in the process; and despite some black people being owners of big businesses among a host of other noteworthy achievements, this mindset still lingers. Today if one black person lends money to another, for example, and the transaction is 'surprisingly' (as the situation seems to suggest) handled without hassles (i.e. in terms of the loan agreement being adhered to, as in the money being given back at the agreed upon time, etc.), a common expression that would be used in this kind of scenario would be for the impressed money-lender to call the borrower '*umlungu*' (which is an isiXhosa word for a 'white person'). What this means in simple terms is 'good behaviour equals white person'. When a black person does something unbecoming on the other hand, one hears of comments like the situation being about black people 'just being black'. In the long run people tend to internalize these discourses, with the current study proving just this point (see par 4.3.2.5a below for one example).

Some trace the problem to media portrayal of black people as reinforcing a negative image of what it means to be black. All that the black American actor Wesley Snipes (among many other black actors who tend to be depicted in this light) for example ever does on cinema and television screens, is constantly fight and/or run away from the law. Over and above black people being depicted as criminals Parham also blames the media for portraying this race in ways which cause them not to be taken seriously, as either 'entertainers' (e.g. comedians) or 'athletes' (1999: 796). There is of course nothing wrong with these professions, but if these are the only prominent images associated with blacks, while white people are mainly portrayed as business moguls and other models of success, this is bound to be internalized as if it is natural for black people to always fall short of their white counterparts. The impact of these 'folk theories' (Noguera 2002), the media's portrayal of being black (as under-achievers, crooks, etc.) all put together culminate in low self-esteem among many people belonging to this race. In the fall of 2005 I had an opportunity to attend a wonderful paper which was presented by the famous novelist and story-writer from Ghana, i.e. Ama Atta Aidoo. This was at the University of Massachusetts, USA. She was talking about how a man purportedly 'strutting his stuff' on some sidewalk had attracted her attention and inspired the writing

of one of her masterpieces. Halfway through the presentation an African student from Ghana who was studying at this university at the time raised his hand to ask Ama a question. The essence of the question was why it is that there are no noteworthy 'inventions' associated with African people.

What had started off as innocent childish prattle at first (i.e. in the township scenario established above and possibly other African-populated areas elsewhere in SA) seems to have served the inculcation into people's minds, that black people are stupid, untrustworthy, amount to nothing, and many other negative stereotypes. Language is one of the tools used in achieving all of these, with those lacking native-like proficiency (in English) being almost always assumed to be less intelligent than their more articulate counterparts. The sad thing is that among the Xhosas themselves, the tendency is for some isiXhosa-speaking individuals to police one another's degree of proficiency where the English language is concerned. With isiXhosa on the other hand nobody could care less if one isiXhosa-speaking person lacked the necessary isiXhosa vocabulary to express themselves in a specific context, or used a sub-standard variety of the language.

This discussion coupled with some of the findings of the current research provide evidence to suggest that these negative stereotypes about African-ness have in fact rippled into other spheres of African existence in SA today, in the process assuming gloomier proportions. With Africans being free to live in any residential area of their choice in the new democratic SA today, the tendency for the upwardly mobile black middle class is to buy property in the formerly 'white' residential areas. For quite a number of these people, the decisive factor on which the selection of housing is made has become the degree to which other Africans populate the designated area or suburb. In terms of this mentality 'the fewer' Black families with their 'African way' of doing things there are in the desired area, then all 'the better'.

This class also happens to send its children to the former Model-C schools, because this is where the best education is. Within the school context the criterion used to select good classes for these black middle class children again takes into consideration the number of black faces in the class concerned. Again the fewer the black faces there are in these classes, the better. The subtext obviously is that these children are to attain almost native-like proficiency in the English language. This is something Cheru compares to a quest for an ability to speak English 'with an Oxford accent' in his part of the world (2002: 74).

Consider as an example here the question of three black female University of Cape Town (UCT) students I once overheard just as they were being joined by two students from UWC. The occasion was a non-academic moment among friends or acquaintances all supposedly sharing isiXhosa as a common mother tongue. The last two to join the group were appalled to find the threesome 'churning discourse' (as Banda in press would put it) in isiXhosa, when they should have been expressing themselves in English as implied by the tone of the former's utterance. Suggested by this is a sense that using isiXhosa (i.e. within the UCT context) was viewed as the students concerned talking themselves down. This kind of orientation challenges Banda's (in press) general claim, that isiXhosa-speaking university students (within the UWC context where his study was conducted)

have relegated African languages to casual conversation, or as a way to affirm their African roots. In the given scenario it would seem as if English has assumed a role bigger than that of a mere language for 'educational modernity and socioeconomic status' which Banda would like to believe it simply is. In the UCT example it is clear that English is viewed as conferring on its users some sought-after higher status level. Using isiXhosa, on the other hand, appears to be viewed as taking one in the opposite direction. Given adolescents' general quest to be associated with what has come to be known as 'the hip and happening' within the SA context, this could be the very reason why English rather than isiXhosa (which is incidentally perceived to carry no future prospects) would enjoy so much more currency.

What makes the UCT example a particularly interesting case is the students' apparently negative conception of those who choose to express themselves in isiXhosa. The former students had gone as far as to coin a somewhat anglicized version of the word 'Xhosa'. For them click-free 'X-hosa' (as the students called it) was considered more acceptable. This again is probably because the word sounds un-African. This finding again challenges De Klerk's view of language and identity as being inextricably interwoven (2001); and of language specifically being at the core of a consciousness of belonging to a group. What the findings of the current study suggest is that the UCT students in question and many other Xhosa-born individuals who share similar sentiments, may have in fact ex-communicated themselves (even if unconsciously so), from their Xhosa membership. Given the tone of this discussion it is safe to suggest that for some individuals being Xhosa/or black has come to be considered as being of lower status, with usage of African languages being viewed as amounting to degrading oneself.

The UCT students referred to in this paragraph are by no means an isolated case. I have also been brought to book in the past myself, by an isiXhosa-speaking friend, over the fact of my not owning an English bible. This is despite my attending a township church where isiXhosa is used at least 98% of the time, if my being isiXhosa-speaking is not good enough a reason for this.

The bulk of familial conversations in many African middle class homes has come to be conducted in English. This has resulted in more African children growing less and less competent in their mother tongue. To register concern over this phenomenon, the concept of a 'coconut' seems to be gaining more ground in South African social circles. Not only has this concept been recently featured on South African national television (e.g. Noleen Maholwana-Sangqu's popular talk-show called *'3Talk'* and on *'Weekend Live's'* book review slot), but it has also found its way into recent black literature. An example here is a book with the title *'Coconut'* which was written Matlwa (2007). The author was herself a teenager when writing the book in question. The concept of a coconut is directed at black individuals who, though 'appearing' to be black on the outside, are in fact 'white' on the inside.

It is not this study's aim to downplay or deny the problematic power that English enjoys within the SA context (see Ntete 1998: 4 in this regard). On the contrary I acknowledge the kind of pull that English has for most upwardly inclined Africans, given the

weighting that this language enjoys both nationally and internationally at present. What I fail to understand is why proficiency in English has to come at the expense of one's identity, and sense of belonging as seems to be happening among many black South Africans at the moment. I have witnessed first hand how the fact of some Xhosa-born children not being able to express themselves in their mother-tongue, has become a source of pride and something to brag about among some isiXhosa-speaking black parents. This is something some always try to bring to others' attention whenever an opportunity to do so presents itself.

Quite a few black South Africans seem to be slowly moving in the non-direction of identity loss in this country. Exceptionally long-haired wigs and hair extensions (as part of the latest fashion trends) appear to be speeding the process up, with these causing some wearers to be caught up in the habit of constantly flicking their hair backwards, just as white people do when a wayward strand of hair gets in the way. The problem is further aggravated by the fact of the isiXhosa language not having sufficient vocabulary for it to be used in its purest form (i.e. without code-switching or borrowing from other languages, if it is possible to achieve this with other languages). The demand for a good command of English is particularly true of the academic context in SA. In addition to this I shall also be the first one to acknowledge the fact that English is also the language of work in SA. Whether or not the situation demands that black people should deny who they are, a direction that some respondents in the current study appear to be headed for, is however something totally different.

Cheru also raises concern over the phenomenon of what he calls a deeply-ingrained 'beggar' or 'dependency' mentality among some Black elites. This he defines as an almost holy worship and adulation for Europeans. He couples this with African people's rejection of anything African. The first step toward the emancipation of the African continent, he argues, would be the reversal of what he calls a 'colonial mental trap' (2002: 21).

In as far as some spheres of SA existence (education in particular) the current thesis demonstrates that the new SA is nothing but *apartheid* SA clad in democratic robes. What Davies (1999) says in his volume, about the past never dying has some serious relevance for the current study. The scenario just described suggests that instead of South Africans talking about the ashes of *apartheid*; they should rather be thinking of ways and means to address the problem in its new and subtle guise. Refer to par. 1.2.1 above where the current study identifies one of the after effects of *apartheid* as leading to what I term 'poverty of the mind'.

As a site for the struggle against all forms of segregationist tendencies and oppression therefore, the South African school deserves some attention. In support of this the current study proposes that teacher training facilities and the one-size-fits-all kinds of textbooks which have been in use for a long time in this country both be given a complete overhaul. This is if we are to equip teachers in training for environments like that of the South African township. If this is not attended to as a matter of priority, the affected teachers may find themselves ill-prepared for the kinds of challenges that the actual South African

township scene presents them with. As the author of this thesis I am therefore not a disinterested onlooker, but rather someone driven by a multiplicity of concerns, some of which have been raised above.

1.7 The structure of the thesis

There are three subdivisions to this thesis. The first section (i.e. this chapter or Chapter 1) provides a context for and sets the scene for issues and themes which are addressed in the second section (Chapters 2 and 3). The final section (i.e. Chapters 4, 5 and 6) discusses, analyses, and concludes on the basis of the findings of the current study.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature to provide a theoretical framework underpinning the study. The main areas of the literature reviewed include Discourse Analysis (DA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), life-histories, the socio-political context of SA, other studies on the effects of poverty and language, etc.

Chapter 3 addresses issues around research methodology, with grounded theory informing the qualitative and ethnographic study. Some of the tools used in the data collection include semi-structured interviews, participant observations, life-histories, etc. The chapter then concludes with a discussion of some shortcomings.

Chapters 4 and 5 tackle results and analysis. Chapter 5 is a continuation of Chapter 4. Both chapters put CDA into practice in the analysis of the life-histories being compared. They compare, contrast and simultaneously report on findings based on responses to various issues as given by the respondents from the two streams (or tracks) being analyzed.

The conclusions and recommendations of the current study are covered in Chapter 6. Other than these the chapter provides guidance on concrete steps which could be taken to empower working class people. The four main sections covered in this chapter include the introduction, conclusions, recommendations, and implementation.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers two main sections. First it locates itself within the relevant theoretical framework (2.1). In the next section the related concepts and ideas are unpacked and explored in an attempt to establish their relevance to the main areas of concern addressed by the thesis, i.e. poverty and underachievement among black members of the working class (2.2).

2.1.1 Late Modernity and Post-Structuralism

Habermas (cited in Cherryholmes 1988: 11) sees a need among philosophers, to attempt to maintain unity of reason, and to distill the common characteristics of a rational activity that must be implicitly presupposed in the argumentative collisions between universes of discourse. For reasons listed below, the current study locates itself within studies which fall within late modernity, post-structuralism and post-colonialism.

2.1.1a High modernity, post modernity and late modernity

Modern social life, according to Giddens (1991: 2), is characterized by profound processes of the reorganization of time and space, coupled with the expansion of dis-embedding mechanisms which prize social relations free from the hold of specific locales, while recombining them across wide time-space distances. While Fornas (1995: 4) seems to be in agreement with Giddens (1991: 3) in as far as the radicalizing and globalizing aspect of modernity, in an attempt to transform the content and nature of day to day social life, the former author encourages what she calls a 'Swedish' spin on research. Such a spin supposedly enables other scholars to see how, in certain respects, this phase diverges from previous patterns. Were it not for this fact scholars would make what Fornas (1995: 4) calls 'vague references' to modern aspects or characteristics, with this being done 'without any historical specifications'. The other good aspect about the Swedish approach is that it is said to make it clear that late modernity does not necessarily turn previous relationships upside down, but rather carries on and radicalizes forces and processes enshrined in the old hypotheses that are several centuries old.

With doubt as its pervasive feature the modern school of thought is said to insist on all knowledge taking the form of hypothesis. While the claims made may very well be true, they are however also said always to be open to revision, and may have to be abandoned at some point. Within the critical reason of high and/or late modernity, what Giddens refers to as 'our present-day world', the self, like the broader institutional framework in which it exists, has to be reflexively made. This task, according to this author, has to be accomplished amid a puzzling diversity of options and possibilities (1991:3). The influence of distant happenings on proximate events and on intimacies of the self are said

to become more and more commonplace within high modernity. Youth, in terms of this reckoning, is considered to embody future hopes, promises of a new life and the progress of modernity. It is this optimistic view of this physiological developmental phase of being that resonates with the African dream for its youth.

Research into youth culture itself being, according to Fornas (1995: 1), of an ‘adolescent character’ (i.e. flexible, mobile, divergent, shifting in different directions, etc.) it is no accident that this culture is said to be pervaded by an interest in modernity and modernization. According to this author the concept of youth captures what is ‘young’ and ‘belongs to the future’. Over and above this young people have been associated with what is new in culture.

In terms of this school of thought this could put either a positive or negative spin on things. In terms of the former the youth has long been associated with hopes for the future, the promise of a new life and the progress of modernity. Regarding the possible future impact of the youth, Bloch, cited in Fornas (1995: 2), enumerates three future ‘seedbeds’ which in his opinion offer ‘good grounds for curiosity’. According to this among young people, among these relatively free creative people and amidst rapid social change, future tendencies show themselves especially intensively.

The ‘negative’ aspect regarding the youth is that this section of the community can be associated with the dangers of the future. In terms of this the fear of the unknown is combined with a culturally pessimistic diagnosis of degeneration in which morals and norms of youth become sure signs of the sins of transgressions of modernity. Young people’s inclination toward testing out new media and genres is said to be the substance on which this critique of youth culture is based (Fornas 1995: 1), among other concerns. This author further labels as ‘blue-eyed’ the risk of idealizing youth as reflected by those who, like Bloch, adopt a strictly the positive outlook where this physiological, social and cultural entity (i.e. youth) is concerned.

As researchers into youth culture are said to be driven by a variety of motives, Fornas identifies ‘youth’, ‘culture’ and ‘late modernity’ as ‘three key concepts’ informing research of this kind. In terms of this it is impossible to delimit and define each of these unequivocally (1995: 3). Among other definitions the author describes youth in terms of the positive and the negative that are associated with it. The concept of culture is according to Fornas ‘controversial’, in that in some settings it can be defined in broad anthropological terms that embrace a way of life. The narrow definition of the concept, on the other hand, could be restricted to the aesthetic as in artistic expression.

Post modernity, a concept which according to Haglund (2005: 9) is often used interchangeably with late modernity, is characterized by more flexibility and mobility and less security. This era, which is associated with new forms of cultural production and consumption, comes about as a result of changes in socioeconomic circumstances, SA’s participation in the global market being an example in the context of the current study, among other influences. In the prevalent democratic dispensation this country’s strengthening economic muscle (depending on where one is standing) presently confronts

it with a new challenge in the form of a burgeoning black middle class. Modernity being held responsible for producing difference, exclusion, and marginalization (Giddens 1991: 6), differential access to forms of self-actualization and empowerment seems to be already gaining ground in this country. Access or lack thereof to education, depending on whether one comes from a middle or working class background seems to be a case in point in this regard.

Late-modern literature in particular implicates school as being a key site in the construction of subject positions, e.g. in terms of sex, gender, sexuality (Aveling 2002, Tett 2000, Youdell 2005), and other categorizations like class and race (Archer 2001: 432) among learners. The preceding chapter has illustrated how this has been achieved within SA, with Curriculum 2005 and certain language-related issues creating just some of the barriers to the acquisition of education. According to Aveling choices are never wholly free (2000). Discourses are themselves embedded in social institutions and discursive practices, with the subjects or identities being differently placed or positioned by different discourses (Hall, cited in Reimers 1995: 129). When expressed in institutions like school, discourses are said to cease to be monolithic. They compete among themselves, offering individuals subject positions with varying degrees of power. In Weedon's (cited in Aveling 2002) view, social relations are always relations of power and powerlessness. These in turn determine the range of subject positions open to individuals on the basis of gender, race, class age, cultural background, etc.

2.1.2 Post-Colonialism

Mishra and Hodge (1994: 276) posit the idea about post-colonialism foregrounding a politics of opposition and struggle. Leroke (1998: 53) appears to concur with this view of the concept. The latter suggests that the historical emergence of this concept generally has everything to do with the struggles against colonialism and oppression, particularly in Third World countries of which SA is an example. As such the anti-colonial discourses which typify this era are said to articulate the experiences of those who were colonized and oppressed. Though SA is a developing country in its own right, Leroke however cautions that its situation be treated as an exception to this general rule, particularly within the social sciences. In his opinion, the prefix 'post' should not be equated with that in international post-colonialism, post-modernism, post-structuralism and post-modernity. Within SA, the concept is said to be neither inscribed with reference to the period after colonialism nor does it have a relationship with colonialism. Instead, the prefix in the SA context is said to refer to an attempt to articulate new research questions and concerns within the limits of mainstream social sciences. Simply put, Leroke likens this association (within the social sciences) to a moment that seeks to shift the boundaries of intellectual discourse. In terms of this it is only in this respect that international post-colonialism has led to the emergence of post-colonialism in SA (1998: 57).

The local post-colonial thought within SA not being a mirror image but rather a specific variant of post-colonialism, the concept is said to emerge through a process of selective appropriation of themes like difference, marginality, multiplicity, heterogeneity,

discourse, identities, knowledge/power, etc. (Leroke 1998: 57). In light of these themes, post-colonial thinking becomes relevant for this SA-based study.

2.1.3 Post-structuralism

Rapport (1999: 7) defines a post-structural world as one in which individuals are seen to choose and make cultures, rather than vice versa. In terms of this existential kind of thought, the reality of individual identity is always something above and beyond membership in a particular social group or community traditions. Evidence of the kind of mentality just described with regard to the current study comes particularly in the non-conformist attitude of the female respondents in the science stream (Grade 11A). Not only are they nonchalant about traditional societal expectations which discourage the conception of children outside the institution of marriage, but they also could not be bothered with the name calling associated with this. Their strong anti-marriage/sexual partner sentiments are another example. This fact together with the manner in which their attitude seems to be defying even nature itself (i.e. by deciding which aspects of their families' past they are going to allow into their future) prove this is a breed of youth which determines its own terms. In this thesis, individual identity in a post-cultural world is explored via the methodology and ethnomethodology of the narrative.

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) defined in relation to the current study

Pienaar and Bekker (2007: 542) define as a key aspect of CDA its attention to struggle in discourse, the way in which discourses compete for hegemonic status in a particular society or community. According to this, discourse is a site of social struggle. Fairclough (cited in Pienaar and Bekker, 2007) is said to describe three dimensions to any piece of discourse. In terms of these, discourse:

- is a written or spoken language text. Despite its emphasis on life-histories as the main data collection tool this thesis also draws from other texts, i.e. home visits, observation, etc.;
- is an interaction between people, involving processes of producing and interpreting the text; and
- it is also part of a piece of social action.

There are three types of values that all textual features are in turn said to have. These are according to Pienaar and Bekker (2007):

- the experiential value which is said to describe text-producers' experience of the text;
- the relational value, which supposedly describes the social relationship enacted by the text through the linguistic choices made; and
- the 'expressive' value, by which is meant the text tracing the text producer's appraisal of the reality represented in the text.

In terms of its aims Van Dijk (cited in Pienaar and Bekker 2007: 541) describes CDA as aiming to explain the intricate relationship between text, talk, social cognition, power, society and culture. In terms of this CDA is said to facilitate an understanding of how macro-level social relations are enacted at the micro-level of a text, to produce a range of intersecting, overlapping and sometimes conflicting ideologies.

2.2.1 Why CDA is relevant for the purposes of the current study?

The following factors are some of the reasons why this approach was considered relevant for the current study:

- CDA is said to be attractive because it allows the analyst to problematize the categories used in mainstream psychology (Willig 1992: 2). In the case of this thesis, I include, among others, the psychological sense of blame coupled with helplessness to change one's circumstances. In unpacking the concept of underachievement as applied within the SA context for example, the current study manages to shift the blame from the victim (e.g. the township learner) to the culprit (i.e. mainly the ANC government and the Education Ministry; and to a lesser extent the school, the teacher, the parent, etc.).
- At the core of CDA's political agenda is its emancipatory goal by which it seeks to have an effect on both social practice and relationships (see Chapter One for some of the objectives of the current study in this regard). Because it is concerned with social problems it attempts 'to make human beings aware' of the reciprocal influences of language and social structure of which they are 'normally unaware'.
- CDA-inclined research is said to allow analysts the opportunity to explore the ways in which particular categories are constructed. Power relations being communicated via the kind of discourse being employed, CDA is said to study both power 'in' and 'over' discourse (Titscher *et al.* 2000: 146).
- Language issues being right at the heart of these concerns, with language use being viewed as secretly ideological, CDA is said not to be concerned with language or the usage thereof as such, but with the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures. In terms of this society and culture are said to be dialectically related to discourse. By this is meant that society and culture are shaped by and at the same time constitute discourse. In Wodak's view (1996: 17-20) every single instance of language use reproduces or transforms society and culture, with this including power relations.
- CDA is said to enable the researcher to identify subject positions which may constrain or facilitate particular actions and experiences. Examples from this study include the female respondent who subject positions herself as a proud future mother to three children whom she describes as 'beautiful, despite a socio-

- cultural context which would have qualified them as ‘illegitimate’, while a male respondent in Ntete (2007) could be said to be ‘other’-ing himself (Tett 2007: 2);
- CDA-inclined research is said to enable the questioning and challenging of dominant constructions of psychologically-relevant concepts being used (e.g. the concept of under-achievement that is constantly being used synonymously with township schools), and with what consequences (e.g. ‘coconut’ mentalities, low self-esteem, hopelessness, etc.);
 - While the relationship between text and society is said ‘not’ to be a direct one, but rather manifested through some intermediary such as the socio-cognitive argument within the socio-psychological model of text comprehension, it is Volosinov’s (cited in Titscher 2000: 145) opinion that linguistic signs are the domain of the class struggle, a struggle concerning the significance of signs. It is in my interest as a discourse analyst therefore, to uncover the subtle means by which text and talk ‘manage the mind’ and ‘manufacture consent’ on the one hand, while articulating and sustaining resistance and challenge on the other (Titscher 2000: 147);
 - While qualitative methodologies other than discourse analysis work to understand or interpret social reality as it exists, Phillip and Harding (2006: 6) argue that this approach on the other hand endeavours to uncover the way in which this social reality is produced. It examines how language constructs phenomena but not how it reflects and reveals it.
 - Even more important for a study which seeks to understand issues around empowering and/or disempowering discourses as its primary goal, the advantage that comes with such a deconstruction is that CDA is then able to demonstrate that things could be better (Willig 1992: 2). In terms of this CDA demonstrates that people’s customary ways of categorizing and ordering phenomena are reified and interest-driven rather than simple reflections of what people consider real. It is exactly this message of hope this study wishes to communicate to members of the working class, i.e. that failure is not necessarily hereditary, but that with the appropriate kind of environment, children do and can succeed. This it does by attempting to mobilize all the relevant stakeholders (e.g. the church, community, etc.) into action.

2.2.2 How CDA was applied in the current study?

Willig (1992: 2) defines discourse analysis as being concerned with the ways in which language constructs objects, subjects and experiences, with this including subjectivity and a sense of self. According to this analysts conceptualize language as constitutive of experience rather than representational or reflective. The linguistic categories people use in order to describe reality are not in fact reflections of intrinsic and defining features of entities. Rather they bring into being the objects they describe. Furthermore, I contend that there is always more than one way of describing something. People’s choice of how

to use words to package perceptions and experiences gives rise to particular versions of events and of reality. It is in this sense that language is said to construct reality.

Of the number of different approaches to discourse analysis Potter and Wetherell (as cited in Willig 1992: 3) differentiate between two kinds, both of which are said to address psychological activities though differing in terms of their focus. In terms of this the one approach focuses on:

- Discourse practices or concerns with what people do with their talk and writing, something which this study defines as the action orientation of discourse. This approach is said to allow analysts to study psychological activities like remembering and making attributions.

The focus of the other approach is on:

- Discursive resources that people draw on (or interpretive repertoires or discourses), with this being seen to allow analysts to explore the role of discourse in the construction of objects and subjects, the self included. The female learner in this study who, because she perceives her family to be successful, also tells herself there is no reason why she also cannot be successful would be an appropriate example of the function of this particular discourse type.

2.2.3 Analytic shortcomings associated with CDA

Over and above other analytic shortcomings associated with discourse analysis, Burman (2007: 1) warns about the possible danger of under-analysis. According to this author the following are three ways in which this could be achieved:

- Uncontested readings
- De-contextualization, and
- Not having a question.

In terms of the author referred to above there are two reasons why the kinds of problems listed above have to be highlighted. These are:

- To scotch the sort of errors that give comfort to the traditionally-minded who accuse discourse analysis of being an 'anything goes' approach; and also
- To help those who are said to approach discourse analysis enthusiastically but in an environment where there is no support and less opportunity to test and refine methods among sympathetic listeners (Antaki, cited in Burman 2007: 1).

To guard against these possible shortcomings, care has been taken in the current study:

- Not to summarize or describe at the expense of genuine analysis;

- Nor to allow my opinions and/or political commitments to substitute for the analysis, despite it being said to be difficult not to take side. In line with the latter the reader will, from time to time, find evidence of the ‘solidarity/hostility’, or ‘sympathy/scolding’ dichotomies suggested by Antaki (as cited in Burman 2007: 3);
- To make its analysis in relation to a declared set of theoretical presuppositions, as well as specific questions generated in relation to these. This, according to Burman (2007: 3), is said to provide the basis on which the analysis can be evaluated; and
- To take seriously how the tools of my own discursive practice inevitably speak of their own assumptions, as failure to attend to these is said to lead to decontextualized and objectivist claims (Burman 2007: 3).

2.2.4 Analyzing and interpreting texts using CDA

Pennebaker *et al.* (2003: 547) believe that text analysis allows the analyst to reliably and quickly assess features of what people say, as well as the subtleties in their linguistic style. In terms of this the way people use words conveys a great deal of information about themselves, their audience, and the situation they are in. Individual words are further said to hint at their users’ social status, age, sex and motives. Not only is word use said to be a meaningful marker and occasional mediator of social and personality processes, but the words people use are also said to be diagnostic of their mental, social, and even physical state. In a nutshell the **un**conscious is said to assert itself through language, with this fact making language the bridge to reality (Pennebaker *et al.* 2003: 548).

Most narrative researchers are said to assume that language is by definition contextual. As a result, phrases, sentences or entire texts must be considered within the context of the goals of the speaker as well as the relationship between the speaker and the audience. In terms of this meaning is believed to be sufficiently multi-layered for it to be decoded by human judges who evaluate what is said or written. Qualitative analysis is said to provide the researcher with broad impressions or agreed upon descriptions of text samples. It is for this reason that there are only a few discourse analysts relying on numbers and statistics (Pennebaker *et al.* 2003: 549).

Describing writing as ‘an act of faith’ Green (1996: 5) outlines two tasks of the discourse-interpreter:

- To understand what the writer has said with this being achieved by constructing a mental model of the situation which the writer is indicating exists, (Green 1996: 5).
- To evaluate that model and use it to update his/her own model of the world. This involves drawing conclusions which add to one’s knowledge of the world and to one’s model of the speaker (e.g. inferences about what the writer knows, what the

writer believes the addressee knows, what the writer believes the addressee believes to be false, how the writer feels about individuals, situations, and events that have been referred to in the text). This author uses the ‘toolmaker metaphor’ to describe the processes of ‘crafting’, ‘art’, ‘divining’ and ‘risk’ that are involved in the communication event (Green 1996: 5).

2.2.5 Strategies used in the analyses of data in the current study

The data in this particular study was analyzed according to two strategies of analysis, i.e. linguistic and content analyses. The former method is quantitative in nature, in that it takes stock of what Pennebaker *et al.* (2003) call ‘standard grammatical units’ or ‘psychologically derived linguistic dimensions’ in word usage. With reference to the criterion of standard grammatical units (e.g. verbs, nouns, pronouns, etc.) attention was given to the tautologous use of one specific word by mainly respondents in the one stream (Grade 11A) and less so in the other (i.e. Grade 11E). The word in question is the verb stem ‘own’ as well as other emerging word patterns (i.e. variants of the word) related to it. An example of this would be when a respondent uses this stem as an adjective as in the phrase ‘my own business’, and as a noun as in ‘owner’, and combines the two to produce an utterance like ‘I want to be the owner of my own business’.

2.2.5a. The word count strategy

According to these authors, word count strategies are based on the assumption that the words people use convey psychological information over and above their literal meaning, and independent of their semantic context (2003: 549). This turned out to be the case in the current study, in that the prominence of this achievement-related word was found to be indicative of an optimistic world-view (i.e. that those using it have the world at their feet). In the other class where the word was less prominent, the respondents in question were found to be less optimistic in comparison to their Grade 11A counterparts.

2.2.5b Content Analysis

The categories generated by the data as about to be exposed in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis were found to meet Merriam’s criterion of ‘efficacy’. This is in terms of them being both ‘sensitizing’ (i.e. being sensitive to the data) and also ‘reflective’ of the purpose of the research (i.e. answering to the research questions as to which aspects of the respondents’ language usage hint at the potential for or tendency toward self-empowerment or disempowerment on their part). In that some units of the data fit into other categories as well, the analysis may be said ‘not’ to be mutually exclusive, as Merriam suggests it should be. This, I however do not necessarily regard as a shortcoming. Since it is the data that are supposed to lead the way, all I could do as an analyst was go wherever these sent me. It seems to be in the chameleon-like nature of the data collected in this study, for the data to assume the different colours, depending on which lens is being used at the specific point in the analysis. The study moreover meets ‘the most difficult’ criterion of all in the given guidelines. This is the need for categories to be ‘conceptually congruent’. By this is meant that the same level of abstraction

characterizes all categories at the same level (Merriam 2001). In line with this the findings do blend in well with the categories developed.

Glesne and Peshkin's (1992: 132) argue that the process of data analysis implies the making of connections among stories. With this in mind I have asked myself what is being illuminated, how the stories connect, and what themes and patterns give shape to the data. The data having spoken for themselves the information was then transformed into a form which communicated the promise of this study's findings. Miles and Huberman's (cited in Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 137) risky one-directional 'cause and effect' arrows model was further used, to link the one code or category to the next. This study being largely of a temporal orientation, (i.e. concerned with the interplay between past experience, the present circumstances and future goals), it was this particular quality which was seen to enable it to pull together three very significant strands of data. These are the degree to which its subjects are said to be 'pulled to behave' by their conceptions of the future, 'pushed to act' by their recollections of the past, and primarily 'driven by current exigencies' (Karniol and Ross 1996: 594).

2.3 Why Life-Stories?

Hallden defines self narration as a process of identity construction where a person, while telling her or his story and presenting herself or himself in relation to important people, creates a self identity or a version of self (1999: 1). The narrative is seen as being linked to a discourse in which the narration is organized using particular elements of style, imagery and structure. It is an account of a person's conception of particular experiences as he or she interprets them within the frame of reference of a particular cultural context. In terms of this the self is given content, delineated and embodied primarily in narrative construction or stories (Kerby 1991:1).

According to Rapport (1999: 10) narratives may be understood as defining the stories people tell about themselves and their worlds. As such they propagate a meaningful sequence across time and space. In Rapport's opinion narratives embody a perceived routine, and in their telling they maintain this routine despite seeming temporal, spatial and experiential disjuncture. In a world of motion, these are said to provide the world traveler, be it the anthropologist or the subject under study, 'a place cognitively to reside and make sense, a place to continue to be'.

A functional life-story is one that addresses the issue of personal identity by describing how a person came to be the current self via the remembering and interpretation of past experiences, with this idea being endorsed by Karniol and Ross (1996: 594). As far as these authors are concerned individuals often react to the present as if they were reliving the past. The past, as represented in people's memories and in their conceptions of history, is also said to influence motivation.

The stories that people construct about their lives are seen to be influenced by how they see themselves at a particular time. In this sense identity is a life story (Whitty 2002: 212). Narrative and self are said to be inseparable in that the former is borne out of

experience while it also gives shape to experience. Narrative being considered a version of reality, and as such an essential resource in the struggle to bring experiences to conscious awareness (Ochs and Capps 1996: 20), this study analyses life-histories written by teenage learners who were doing grade 11 at ZWHS in 2004.

Writing from within the US research context Ostroff (1995: 37) maintains that all that published diaries have documented where the youth is concerned are preadolescent responses to current moments of daily existence. In terms of this it is only occasionally that attention has been given to teens' past experience more broadly or reflectively. The 'rare life-story', said to have been presented from the vantage point of the teenager in the past has focused on the foreign, the sensational, the shocking, the juxtaposition between violence and loss of childhood innocence. Ostroff argues that it is not only possible and useful but also 'important' for adolescents to constructively reflect on their own experiences. Using the concept of what she calls 'a cultural geography interview process' she tries to aid adolescents to objectively come to terms with the mental baggage of their pasts, in order to connect with the outside world with which they must interact as adults (1995: 52). It was concern about the myriad challenges facing youth living in SA townships (Mampane and Bouwer 2006), among other concerns, which had prompted my interest in the current study.

Karniol and Ross (1996: 593) are of the opinion that in order for one to examine conceptions of the future it is important to determine how the individuals in question 'bridge' the present and the future. It would appear as if the past is central to their argument in that it is in view of their past that people tend to project to certain future goals. The co-authors use the concept of the 'motivational push' of the past to capture the significant impact that this aspect can have on an individual's life. They investigate the impact of current goals on recall, as well as individual differences in using the past. It is specifically these aspects of this study that resonate with the current study being carried out. In light of the new democratic dispensation it is important to determine whether the subjects in this study intend to allow themselves to be paralyzed by the ghost of *apartheid*, or whether they intend to use this ghastly past as some form of scaffolding for the future.

2.4 Why the youth?

According to Arnold (2003:532), little or no research has targeted mental health difficulties among under-achieving children. This is particularly true of the SA context as well. Because mental health and academic achievement and/or difficulties seem to exert a reciprocal influence on each other, these children are seen to face compounded risks where academic achievement, job prospects and breaking the cycle of poverty are concerned.

From a developmental point of view Pasupathi *et al.* (2006) are of the opinion that it is during later childhood and early adolescence that people begin to construct a sense of their abstract and enduring characteristics. It is also at this stage that issues of personal consistency become important. Prior to adolescence it is said there is no life story to

develop. Instead what exist at this stage are mere precursors to the life story, an example of which is the ability to narrate events. Because personal identity is said to be fundamentally a developmental problem, Whitty (2002) sees adolescence as an appropriate stage to examine in terms of life choices.

2.4.1 The youth of SA

Blood, sweat, and tears have been expended in SA, in an attempt to keep the past (i.e. *apartheid*) where it belongs (i.e. in the past). It would appear as if all of this has been all in vain when it comes to issues which matter the most (e.g. education and poverty alleviation). Bangeni and Kapp's (2005: 3) observations are accurate, about the present being perceived by many black people in SA as a moment of societal transition. The expectation is that the present era brings in its wake 'previously unheard of possibilities' (Bangeni and Kapp 2005: 3). The current study however suggests the contrary. This is exactly where the youth of this country comes in.

Many heads are probably still reeling from an incident which recently took place in this country. This concern finds expression in a recent political upheaval, the first challenge of its kind to have hit SA since the inception of the new democracy fourteen years ago. The aftermath of the upheaval in question is still unknown at the moment. The root of the problem revolved around what had come to be known as 'the succession debate' (i.e. concerns with who the country's president will be after President Mbeki). The incident in question, which had the effect of steeping SA in a lot of pandemonium and uproar for a short but highly charged while, saw President Mbeki being stripped of his power as a leader of the ANC party, while retaining the presidency over the country. This was an outcome no one could have predicted. The period has since been followed by a lull (or shocked silence for some) and a sense of bated breath as the country quietly wait things out under the controversial leadership of the new ANC president, Jacob Zuma (JZ). It was the same youth which had brought the country to a standstill in 1976, as it took to the streets in protest against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. This had led to the well-publicized 'Soweto uprisings'. Since that fateful day the date i.e. June 16 has since been declared a public holiday in this country.

The point of this section is not so much about the politics around whether or not JZ makes a better president for the ANC party. Rather it is more about the role played by the youth, and the implications that this could have for the future of this country. Those who were watching closely from the sidelines, saw the crucial role played by a sector of SA youth (through the ANC's Youth League), in bringing about this potentially life-changing reality. From the incidents cited here it is clear that issues to do with the future (i.e. with these revolving around the youth) are indeed a legitimate concern for this country's delicate democracy, as far as many SA are concerned. This is not so much at presidential level as alone but also at the level of the broader base (i.e. citizenship) as well.

A recent article appearing in the *Sunday Times* (Malefane 2008) screens and scrutinizes the potential leader of the youth of this ruling party (i.e. the ANC Youth League/ANCYL). This young man's (named Julius Malema) rather stern 'no nonsense' facial

expression, combined with the caption below it, which depicts him as a ‘straight talker’ whose view it is that ‘the older generation must make way for the youth’, both suggest SA may be in for even bigger surprises. In terms of this article, this young man who claims to have been in politics since ‘the age of nine’, owned up to ‘never’ having played sport. Instead, he had spent his after school hours engrossed in ‘political education’.

By the look and sound of things, this potential leader not only has a clear sense of direction (i.e. where he wishes to take the ANCYL, and by extrapolation SA as a whole), but also a strong sense of identity (i.e. who he is and where he fits in in the scheme of things). Malema is apparently not one to follow in the footsteps of predecessors in a ‘monkey-see, monkey-do’ (as some would call it) fashion (as appears to be the case with the older generation of politicians referred to in the introductory section to this thesis). According to the article referred to here Malema is said to be harbouring ‘other ideas’. What those ideas are, only time will tell.

2.5 The notion of the ‘self’

In line with concerns raised above the current study uses Whitty’s (2002: 224) and Markus’s (as cited in Karniol and Ross 1996: 596) model of three ‘possible selves’. It uses this model as a tool for measuring how young people construct their adult identities, orient themselves to the present while also projecting themselves into the future. Both authors link these selves to imagined end states which influence behaviour, with Markus introducing a temporal dimension to the equation. According to these authors imagined end states are said to motivate current behaviour to the extent that individuals can link their present conditions to these potential outcomes. This is said to be achieved via a set of self-representations supposedly leading to the end states in question. According to Markus (cited in Karniol and Ross 1996: 596) people choose between selves they would like to achieve or avoid, with these being largely influenced by their experiences, self-knowledge, current moods and expectations. He identifies the selves in question as:

- the ‘expected’ (or ‘ought’) self, a self said to be the person one believes one can realistically become. This self supposedly acts as a focal point for one’s energies as one strives for the future (Whitty 2002: 214);
- the ‘hoped for’ (or ‘positive’) self, on the other hand, is said to be farther away from the present self, and may/may not be realistic (Whitty 2002: 214);
- the ‘feared’ self is defined as a motivator. Because this being is the possible self that individuals do not wish to become, the latter are said to take action which will enable them to avoid the possible self in question.

In detailing the actual process Carver and Scheir (as cited in Karniol and Ross 1996) maintain that individuals may try to achieve the desired end states by reducing discrepancies between their current self and their ideal. They could also avoid the undesired end state by increasing discrepancies between the current self and those states. The two basic types of guiding end states, the ‘ideal self’ and ‘ought-self’ guides, are said

to represent people's hopes, wishes and aspirations; and to include duties, obligations, and responsibilities, respectively. For evidence of this the analysis chapter of the current study shows how respondent drew from experiences in their past lives, in order to shape a better future for themselves. One specific example in this regard would be the respondent who was determined 'not' to have five children when her time came around, like her mother had done in the past. This the respondent saw as contributing to high stress levels.

2.5.1 The self and identity formation

When it comes to issues of identity-formation the concern expressed by the respondent above, appears to echo Roemer's (1995) belief system. This is with regards to the relationship between people and the life-histories that they tell or write. In the same way that the respondent just referred to above appears to have decided what she is not prepared to tolerate in her own life, i.e. five children, with this mindset being informed by actions of those before her (i.e. a mother who is perceived as having been stressed by having made this error in her judgment) it is Roemer's opinion that every story is over before it begins to be told. In terms of this the journey into the future to which people are said to gladly lend themselves, is just an illusion. In terms of this 'no story' begins at the beginning. In Roemer's opinion there is always a given, something that the characters did not make (1995). We see from the example just given how the respondent's situation appears to have existed before she could appear in it.

In terms of Roemer's idea that 'we were the land's before the land was ours', stories are said to appear to be moving into an open, uncertain future which the figures try to influence, when in actual fact they report a completed past they cannot alter. According to this line of thought the novel is said to lie bound in people's hands before it is read, actors are said to know their lines before the curtain rises, while the finished film has already been threaded onto the projector when the lights dim. The viewpoint presented by Roemer (1995) here is something which the respondents in the current study appear to be challenging. While some aspects of the respondents' past lives appear to have robbed the former of opportunities to make certain choices about how to live their lives (e.g. the fact of their not having been able to get the kind of education they would have liked), the respondents however appear to have every inclination to break away from the bondage of their past lives. This is demonstrated by their preoccupation with the future as discussed in the whole of Chapter 5.

Life-histories being a medium that comprises those events in a person's lifetime that have made them what they are, the former are said to give a largely coherent account of events, activities and decisions that have led the person to where they are at the moment of telling about their lives (Treichel 1993). Put like this, an individual's story becomes a subjective construction of episodes filtered by the narrator's perception and understanding of relevance of those events, activities and decisions mentioned. Telling the story therefore implies giving sense to a number of single stories that are temporally and/or causally connected, by integrating them into the large context of biographical relevance.

According to Kehily (1995) the process of story-telling is further influenced by the audience (among other factors). If reflected upon carefully it can be used as an educative process, as it is said to reveal the influence of the past on the present. By analyzing the content and style of a story therefore, analysts are enabled to discuss its topics and underlying themes of how they are influenced by the discourse and the genre (Hallden 1999: 2). Narratives have been found to be a primary embodiment of our understanding of the world, of experience and ultimately ourselves. In this sense, narrative employment appears to yield a form of understanding of human experience, both individual and collective, that is not directly amenable to other forms of exposition or analysis.

In terms of the above, questions about the kind of self are linked to notions of personal identity and, as the literature implies, to adolescence. What stories to choose, how to organize them, and how the self will be presented and whether the account is going to be plausible are all deemed to lie in the hands of the narrator. The narrator is said to exercise choice in assuming or attributing responsibility for successes and defeats. Because of all that goes into the crafting of the end-product, the stories contained in that life-story are taken to make a point about the narrator, rather than about the way the world is (Treichel 1993).

Whitty suggests that when identity is conceptualized as a lifestory research needs to consider story-writing methods in their investigations into identity-formation. To know a person therefore is, according to Whitty, to know the story in which that person is participating. In terms of this making sense of others is said to require knowing their subjective experience as people are said to live in and through their stories. What this implies is that identity is a life story (2002: 212). It is this combination of features of the life-history, alternatively referred to here as a 'narrative', which makes it a suitable investigative tool for a study of this nature.

2.6 The analytic process

Description is considered to be the most basic presentation of data. Because of this care was taken not to leave readers to draw their own conclusion. As Merriam (2001) advises, to prevent the risk of readers misinterpreting things as well as trivializing the results, I made the necessary connections which only I as researcher could have made. The next level of analysis was the construction of categories or themes. Being both intuitive and systematic in nature, the exercise was informed by my orientation and experience, by meanings made explicit by the respondents themselves, as well as by the study's purpose.

With regard to the categories developed here Patton (cited in Merriam 2001) considers it a fundamental purpose of language, to tell people what is important, by giving it a name. By so doing language is said to separate one thing from other things with names. In line with this the category schemes generated here have been derived from the data themselves. From this the reader may gather, that while the categories have the effect of describing the data, to some extent they also serve to interpret it as well (Merriam 2001). Atkins (as cited in Merriam 2001) maintains there are no formulae or recipes for the best way to analyze life-histories elicited and collected. Sociological and sociolinguistic

models of narrative analysis, together with the psychological approach, were among some of the approaches employed in the current analysis. I must however add here that the distinctions used for the content analysis do not always provide a neat fit, so that in certain cases traces of the one category can be seen in the other.

2.6.1 Categories of analysis

Flett's notion of the 'perfectionism dimension' has been found to be crisp, articulate, to the point and relevant for the presentation of data analyzed in this study. Due to this fact his system of classification has been allowed to guide the analysis (1991). The four broad categories suggested by the data analyzed were:

- the past of others in the respondents' lives,
- the respondent's own past actions,
- the needs of the collective, and
- envisioning the future.

The four broad categories referred to above are covered in the analysis chapters (i.e. Chapter 4 and 5). Using Flett's (1991) model these have been subsumed under the categories of:

- 'the other-oriented' (i.e. the past of others),
- 'the self-oriented' (the respondents' own past actions and their vision for the future), and
- 'the socially- prescribed' (i.e. the needs of the collective).

Flett's (1991) system of classification also having been found to confirm Maslow's theory of motivation (as cited in Heylighen 1992) both models have been allowed to guide the discussion on the respondents' behaviour. Infused in almost all of the categories given above, is an underlying sense of the new black South African government in particular having failed, and still continuing to fail the respondents in more ways than one (refer to pars. 1.2.3 above and 3.2.7 below) for a fuller exposition of some of the kinds of challenges faced by South African youth today).

2.6.2 Points considered in text interpretation

Emmott describes the reading of a story as 'an astonishing feat of information processing' which requires the reader to perform complex operations at a number of levels (1999: v). Because of this fact communication is said to misfire more often than people realize (Green 1996). This, according to Wodak (1996), is largely because comprehension is said not to function on the basis of a *tabula rasa* in the human mind. To a large extent understanding is said to be dependent upon what the latter author calls schematic prior knowledge. Upon hearing news about an accident, for example, a listener, through the employment of accident schema, is said to draw inferences that transcend the explicit information given. Wodak (1996:111) distinguishes between the following three types of schema:

- ‘cognitive’,
- ‘formal’ and
- ‘emotional’ schemata.

In terms of the first type of schemata, based on prior knowledge readers or listeners are described as being capable of extending the propositional content of the message above and beyond the information provided by the text. Because they recognize the intentions of the individual or groups involved, readers are able to elaborate on this content, drawing inferences in the process. According to this it is only when a conceptual framework for a particular context is present in a given individual situation, that participants will be adequately informed. In fact, the more structured the schema, the easier it is to understand the text.

2.6.2a Complexity in text-processing

What Cherryholmes (1988: 8) says about the processes involved in the reading of texts confirms sentiments regarding the complexity of the process of reading with understanding as expressed above. In his opinion the reader must move from what is written to what is not written and back again; from what is present to what is absent, from statements to their historical setting. The meaning of texts is said to depend on other texts that are related to yet other texts. Wodak uses the concept of ‘intertextuality’ to explain this phenomenon (1996). The life-histories in the current study were analyzed against the background of participant observation, home visits, and interviews with parents, learners and teachers, etc.

Schencken (cited in Titscher 2000: 97) suggests that text analysis begins with what he calls an ‘analytic mentality’. By this he means an intuitive sensitivity to the way language is used. Van Dijk (1985) warns that the difficulty in the linguistic criticism of texts lies not so much in the linguistic construction thereof as in relating the textual structure to social theory and social context. The social context of the discourse is rather said to need an initially independent description into which the linguistic description is to be reintegrated. Experienced discourse analysts are said to be acutely aware of the tendencies for certain structures and certain contexts to correlate. They are fully cognizant of the danger of simply reading off a specific significance on the basis of having simply observed a specific structure (van Dijk 1985: 77).

In terms of the ‘Western way’ which is said to involve attributing internal states to others, interpretation is also said to be a process of correctly recovering a speaker’s intention (Johnstone 2000). According to this, audiences are in one way or another ‘co-authors’, sometimes contributing to the construction of form and sometimes to the determination of meaning. Goffman (cited in Johnstone 2000: 406) warns that writers may sometimes occupy overlapping footings at the same time, with regard to their discourse. In terms of this, the animator or physical producer of a string of words may or may neither be the author nor principal of his own utterance. Someone else other than the writer may actually be the force of those uttered words. This was found to be the case with regard to

one of the respondents in the pilot study (Ntete 2007) which preceded the current study. At face value the relevant respondent in the study being referred to here sounded like he had his future carefully mapped out. Within the broader context of the analysis the respondent was found to be in fact trying to live out somebody else's dream.

2.6.2b Socialization as a tool in text-processing

The socialization process is said to play an important role in the implementation of the formal and emotional schemata. Readers with knowledge of the degree to which texts of a given form are normally structured are said to be usually intuitively acquainted with particular text types, and their conventional forms. The more relevant a text proves to be for a given reader, the more intensively it will be processed, and the better it will be retained in the memory. Conditioned by the socialization process, profession, age, gender etc. readers are bound to harness all of these in their interpretation of texts. Comprehension on the part of the reader is further said to be enhanced or reduced depending on the emotional distance between reader and text. In terms of this a text that evokes a strong reaction, be this positive or negative, is said to be most likely to aid both the comprehension and retention thereof. This, in actual fact was how I was able to identify the two respondents for the pilot project (Ntete 2007). They stood out from the rest (i.e. about 183 essays) because of the reaction their texts elicited in me.

According to Wodak's integrative model of text comprehension, the text cannot be viewed in isolation from the context in which it is written, as well as of the interacting agents. Important, heuristically tested variables like gender, class, age, culture, personality, level of education, previous knowledge, textual experience etc. should also form part of the analysis (1996: 113). In this fashion the reader is said to initially attempt to assign what he reads to a frame, and to employ certain strategies to the scanning of the original text, in order finally to obtain the textual basis. The whole process is said to involve the reader in constructing a representation that is not an exact copy of the text. The fact of the Grade 11A respondents in the current study being more vocal than their Grade 11E counterparts, on issues relating to the concept of ownership, was linked to the more enabling subjects that the former group was doing. In sharp contrast to this a sense of limitation was seen to characterize the Grade 11E essays. As discrepancies arise from the interaction between context social factors and cognitive ones, the reader is then said to construct a second representation, that of the social context. Comprehension being said to be a cyclical process involving top-down and bottom-up cognitive processes, it is on the basis of a combination of some of these strategies that the reader is enabled to interpret the text.

According to the integrative model of comprehension, text comprehension is described as also being dependent on the socio-psychological influences which are important in text production (Wodak 1996). In terms of this reckoning hearers and readers first classify the text according to frames, and approach the original text strategically. By this is meant that readers interpret the text in order to construct its textual basis, and ultimately to understand it. It is Wodak's (1996) view that there is 'no general textual basis which is valid for all hearers and readers'. Rather, hearers and readers are said to construct not

only the text but also the social context, while the text and context are thought to interact with one another. In the given model comprehension is taken to be a ‘cyclical and interpretative’ process.

2.7 Language

According to van Dijk language is not only a reality-creating social practice (my point of emphasis when it comes to learners constantly being labeled under-achievers) but also an instrument of inequality (1985: 62). Discourse analytic research being interpretive and explanatory in nature is said to seek, through close and detailed analysis, to shed some light on these aspects of language usage. Entwistle (1970), Fowler (1985), and van Dijk (1985) implicate language in promoting inequality. In recognition of this aspect of language usage the current study uses life-histories written by working class high school learners from Nyanga Township in Cape Town, South Africa, to investigate the extent to which these respondents’ discourses might be said to imply disempowered or empowered mindsets.

None of the respondents in this study speak English as a first language. Indeed the possibility of English being a third language for some cannot be totally ruled out. English being almost a language of strangers (Katan 1999: 254) for most of the respondents, their degree of linguistic competence has been given some attention. The few essay samples displayed in Appendices G to I together with par. 4.2.3 below (i.e. on aphorisms) both testify to the huge linguistic challenge that many township and rural learners are confronted with in this country. In fact, Frank’s (1995) analogy of the ‘wounded storyteller’ provides just the kind of frame within which to situate this challenge within the SA context. In the same way that the wounds on the ancient story-tellers in Frank’s book were said to be the ‘price of the stories being told’, the reader of the current thesis should also view the respondents’ incompetence as evidence of what Labov would have called their ‘social situation’ (1972). In terms of this, people’s social situation (see par. 1.3.2 above and par. 3.2.7 below for some of the challenges confronting these learners) is the most powerful determinant of verbal behaviour. The lack of competence demonstrated by the respondents in this study is according to Labov (1972) evidence of the truthfulness in their utterances. They, unfortunately, are not the only ones grappling with this problem as the paragraph which flows from this one will show.

2.7.1 The language problem in SA education

According to Severson and Guest (1970: 309) any sensitive person who has worked with disadvantaged children in whatever capacity can testify to the fact that differences in language separate these children from those whose families enjoy membership in the socio-economic mainstream. Classroom learning being shown to be reflexive and interactive, language in the classroom is said to draw unevenly from the sociolinguistic experiences of children in the home environment (Lareau 1987: 73).

Within the SA context the question of language has always been a bone of contention, this having been the case since the *apartheid* era. With this kind of history behind SA one

would expect the ANC-led government to handle issues around language with some degree of consideration for the interests of those who were ‘formerly’ disadvantaged by the injustices of that past. Despite this government’s rich history of political activism, with the aftermath of June 16, 1976 as a horrible reminder to boot, this is sadly not the case at all. Banda’s (in press) paper lends voice to many SA who are still trying to figure out why it is that a black government has continued to practice the same language policy as in the *apartheid* and colonial eras? Even more confusing for this author is why this is happening despite the country having put in place legislation that advocates the contrary. Banda’s concern over this issue is fuelled by his observation of tertiary institutions deliberately turning a blind eye to this enormous problem. In terms of this, these institutions overlook the fact of unequal access to the dominant language of academic discourse which students have been exposed to, with this largely being a question of whether the student in question has a rural or urban schooling background. According to this academic, the achievement gap is increasingly becoming less the product of the black-white divide in post-*apartheid* SA, but more of a wedge, between those who have appropriated English against those who have not (Banda in press).

Needless to say, the situation described above again hits hardest at working class children as it is socioeconomic conditions which have been identified as differentiating between students who succeed in tertiary institutions, and those who do not. Despite isiXhosa being one of three official languages within the Western Cape Province (i.e. alongside English and Afrikaans), in practice the two mainly non-black languages enjoy greater currency in comparison to isiXhosa. Since the relevant legislation to effect the necessary change is already in place, Ruiz’ (1997) advice, about the need for the practice of shedding minority status in children’s natural language, is not exactly news to policymakers in the SA context. That it would be good for isiXhosa in the given scenario, to share power with Afrikaans and English (Ruiz 1997: 319) exists only on paper. All that one can maybe do in this regard is remind the relevant officials of the need to put their money where their mouth is, i.e. that this piece of legislation be re-enforced.

2.7.2 Language and Power

It is Blakar’s (1979: 112) opinion that all language use implies structuring and influencing effects. In terms of this a single word out of one’s mouth positions one, causing one to exert influence. Because of this it is said to be impossible to express oneself neutrally. Whether deliberate or not, a sender’s choice of expression when sending a message therefore is said to inadvertently affect the receiver’s understanding. This structuring and influencing capacity of language and the language user is said to be captured through the concept of language as a means of social power. To explain the notion of power Blakar (1979: 112) advises that the reader goes beyond mere concerns with the most correct expressions in the purely linguistic or stylistic sense, and to explore the interests or perspectives that lie behind a particular verbal expression. In this sense the language user’s influence is thus defined through effect or consequence, regardless of whether or not the effect of these was intended (1979: 113).

2.7.3 Language and gender

According to West and Zimmerman (1985: 103) early ethnographic reports on the relationship between discourse and gender tended to focus on the use of isolated elements of language as spoken by strange and exotic tribes other than researchers' own cultures. The current kind of study is described as having come a long way since those days. In their chapter these co-authors debate whether women and men speak differently, how gender affects their being talked to or talked about, and what the relationship is between the structure of a language and the use of that language by the genders who speak it. Bearing in mind Spender's (cited in West and Zimmerman 1983: 105) simple observation that man made language, these authors warn against the tendency to mistake difference for deficit.

Smith, also cited in this thesis, also adds to the cautionary flavour of the discussion. In his opinion the mere association of gender with a feature of speech is insufficient to directly link the two. He warns that unless the correlation is perfect, the association may be due to the relationship between gender and some other variable like socio-economic status, age, etc. In this sense, gender-stereotyped talk may be less a reflection of gender than the fact that the discourse is associated with activities that tend to be segregated by gender as in occupational domains of action. According to this, speech registers are linked to activity types, which are in turn subject to the exigencies of the gender-based division of labour. In the absence of gender-exclusive forms (i.e. all or no differences) West and Zimmerman warn that we cannot conclude that differences in the talk of the genders are directly linked to gender differences. The social context being just as important to the discourse analyst as the how and what of language usage, the analyst should also seek answers to the question why these differences occur.

Even more relevant to the concerns of this particular study is the feminist angle given by the Personal Narratives Group (1989: 101) on the issue of narrative writing. They look at the practice of writing narratives through a gendered lens, with special attention being given to the writing practices of women. In their opinion the narrator of the life-story, whether telling her story or that of another person, creates the life as she organizes and tells it. The form of the narrative is said to be shaped by cultural and historical contexts which make available a striking range of possibilities relative to one's gender and status in society. The forms available to men are said to often differ as limits placed on women's lives may also affect what models are available to them for telling their stories. In this sense the writer's gender becomes relevant to the choice of narrative form. In order to be able to do justice to the interpretation of narrative form, the interplay between context and form then has to be taken into consideration. This then calls upon analysts to attend to cultural models, power relations and the individual imagination. Looking at this phenomenon from a masculine point of view Hallden (1999), posits the idea of humour being a distinctive feature of boys' culture. According to Hallden this is a technique for regulating masculinities, while also being an organizing principle in the lives of young men in school.

2.7.4 Language and identity

According to Palmonari *et al.* (1984:95) the need for a viable identity is particularly acute during adolescence. This is because physical, relational and social changes during this period, together with widening social and political interests are said to disturb the previously established self-system or the system of categories which are used to define the self. Adolescents are said to have an urge to redefine 'who I am'. Treichel (1993) argues that the negotiation of identity operates at the interface between content and process. This in turn illustrates an analogical relation where the development of content is projected onto language production processes.

It is Widdicombe's view (cited in Burman and Parker 1993) that identity is negotiated through talk. To capture some sense of the identity that a writer or speaker is constructing for himself, the analyst first has to develop sensitivity to the way language is used. This should then be followed by giving attention to the inferential and interactive aspects of talk. As self-narration is defined as a process of identity construction where a person, while telling his or her story and presenting himself or herself in relation to important people, the process is associated with creating a self-identity or a version of self (Hallden 1999: 1). According to Hallden, the narrative, influenced by audience as it is, is an account of a person's conception of particular experiences as s/he interprets them within the frame of reference of a particular cultural context. While qualitative research experts battle over the question of the relationship between life-history and narrative approaches and post-structural thought (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995: 121), Hallden (1991), Widdicombe (cited in Burman and Parker 1993) and Treichel (1993) argue for the relatedness of the two concepts. In their view, life-history and narrative approaches, and post-structural thought are necessarily not synonymous, in that not all life-histories or narratives are post-structural. Neither is all post-structural work said to be in life-history or narrative form.

Treichel's (1993) sentiments about the need for the teacher to gain access into the backstage of learners' minds when it comes to issues of identity formation speak to the concerns of the current study. If carefully reflected upon particularly within the school context, it appears as if both the process and the product of story telling, both written and oral, can be used as educative tools which could help teachers design effective interventions. An analysis of the whole phenomenon of self-narration promises to reveal the influences of the past on the learners' present. An opportunity like this is not something that teachers working particularly in under-resourced schools and troubled environments like Nyanga township can afford to overlook. This kind of exercise is likely to give teachers some insight into some of many factors which hinder learning in contexts like these. Not only does this present the teacher with an opportunity to gain access into the kinds of baggage that learners bring to their classes, but it also provides the former with opportunities for fruitful interventions. The current study is an exploration of how critical discourse analysis can be used to create optimal learning conditions for learners in under-resourced schools. A combination of CDA and life-histories is further used to unpack and demystify the origins of the concepts of poverty and underachievement within the SA context.

2.8 Poverty and under-achievement in SA

The chicken and egg relationship between the concepts of educational under-performance and poverty is well-documented in the literature (e.g. Noguera 2003, Weisband, 1989, Williams 1970, Willis 1977, etc.). It is in failing to address this very concern, among other things, that SA education has been found wanting by some. This oversight has had some concerned academics bending over backwards, in search of an effective antidote for this country's education system.

The question of how poverty could be alleviated is supposedly foremost on the agenda of the new democratic South Africa. Despite prominent reforms in the form of improved standards of living of especially the less privileged, and remarkable country-wide achievements during the last decade, not only does poverty seem to be on the rise, but educational inequalities also continue to thrive in this country (Fiske and Ladd 2004). Banda (in press) identifies as one of the most enduring traits of the *apartheid* legacy, the fact about those who suffered inferior education under white *apartheid* rule, still not having seen any substantial change in their fortune even with this country's new democratic dispensation in place.

Education has always been identified as the catalyst in the struggle for democracy by the formerly oppressed masses in this country. The inequalities suggested by the present study however challenge the most fundamental premise of the notion of democracy, viz. quality education for all. This, according to the Barometer (1995: 3), poses threats to economic competitiveness and political stability in the country, among other things. Banda echoes Rassool's (2007) bafflement over the ruling ANC government's continued usage of 'colonial languages as media of instruction'. According to Banda within the South African context it is only learners with exposure to quality education in English, who stand to benefit from the country's preferential treatment of its citizens. Black students having limited access to the language of education and the economy (i.e. English), find themselves caught up in cycle of illiteracy and poverty from which they are said to be unable to extricate themselves (Banda in press).

The fact that most blacks are still living in the *apartheid*-created townships and impoverished rural areas has, according to Banda (in press), seen to the youth of this race group being educationally excluded, among other things. Using the notion of the 'preserve of English' to make his point this author articulates how this language has become the discourse of education, business, technology, economy, politics, etc. He agonizes over how the central position given to this language disadvantages students coming from rural areas (with attention being given specifically to those at the University of the Western Cape where Banda's study was conducted). Rural education in SA being what it is, i.e. of very poor quality, Banda's concerns with this group of students dates as far back as their preschool years. This is with good reason if one considers Prinsloo and Stein's (2004) findings. In terms of these findings, the quality of pre-school education in some parts of this country was found to be very wanted indeed. Compared to their rurally educated equivalents, Banda found township students better off. What this study suggests, on the other hand, is that within the urban scenario itself, some schools may

actually be more urban than others. The point about Afrikaans and English being more economically viable than isiXhosa in the urban Western Cape Province is a case in point in this regard. This fact, among other things, tends to have huge implications where the education of black students is concerned.

2.8.1 The naming and shaming practice

In Chapter 1 this study revealed how the naming and shaming practice is being used to supposedly curb under-achievement among schools in SA. This is a practice which Noguera has condemned in the strongest terms. Writing from an American perspective, Noguera (2003a) registers his astonishment at 'how little' policy-makers generally understand about the lives of the children served by failing schools, and the complicated nature of the problems they seek to address. In terms of this social, emotional and behavioral adjustments have traditionally been neglected as components of school failure, with this happening despite their demonstrated relevance (Arnold and Doctoroff, 2003: 530).

In its conclusion the current study details its objections to this practice, and proposes that SA get its house in order rather than bite its nose to spite its face, as some would say. One mechanism which has been suggested as a way of overcoming the challenge of poor educational performance is the notion of empowerment. It is to this notion that the study now turns its attention.

2.9 Empowerment as a way forward

Using the concept of a 'captured market' Noguera (2003a) exposes how poor parents are less able than their middle class counterparts, to hold schools accountable for the quality of education provided for their children. In terms of this these parents lack the necessary access to resource and networks which would otherwise enable them to exert influence. As is the case with ZWHS parents, being poor also means they cannot 'vote with their feet' (i.e. stage a walkout if unhappy with the conditions). This is because registration in the relevant schools had never been a matter of choice but rather that of convenience to start with.

In a study I had conducted in 2005 (Ntete 2005), ZWHS parents implied that THE school's good reputation had been a mere bonus. What had drawn them to the school in the first place was its proximity rather than the good public image one would have expected. The point about distance meant they did not have to worry about transportation expenses, and that children could always go home for lunch. Compared to the other neighbouring schools ZWHS was also said to charge the least for school fees. Moreover, given the strong tendency for delinquent behaviour, parents were pleased with the fact of their being in a position to drop by the school any time they wanted to. This was seen as affording them time to monitor their children's behaviour.

With this background in mind, various ways in which the respondents in this study could be given control over their lives and those of their children are explored below.

2.9.1 The concept of ‘social capital’

To empower poor parents the ideal of ‘social capital’ has been proposed as the only way to address the captured market problem (Noguera 2003a: 97). In terms of these efforts at developing social capital combined with policies of empowerment for parents can make schools accountable to those they serve. Bennett (cited in Malhotra *et al.* 2002: 4) concurs with the strategic combination (i.e. empowerment and social inclusion) proposed by the former author. The latter defines ‘social capital’ as the enhancement of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups; to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions which affect them. For this to happen he sees the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives as crucial if one is to increase access of diverse individuals and groups to assets and development opportunities. This, in turn was seen as leading to the second concept, that of ‘social inclusion’.

In terms of these authors empowerment operates ‘from below’, while social inclusion requires systemic change which may be initiated ‘from above’. Both are seen as important, if one is to sustain the empowerment initiative over time. The notion of ‘agency’, defined by Malhotra *et al.* (2002: 8) as the process of removing various types of unfreedoms which constrain individual choice, could well be the defining feature of the concept of empowerment within the SA context. There is an urgent need in this country to alter relations of power which constrain option and autonomy.

2.9.2 Self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulation

As a foundation for the recommendations which this study advances toward the end of this chapter (i.e. the notion of people empowerment), Bandura’s most informative study makes the following key points around the notions of self-efficacy beliefs, self-regulation and human agency (2002: 3) which are integral to the concerns of the current study:

- **Impact:** People are producers as well as products of their social systems. In terms of this they have a hand in shaping their personal lives and the social and economic life of their societies. They make choices, motivate and regulate their behaviour on the basis of belief systems.
- **Personal efficacy:** Among the mechanisms of self-regulation none is more central and pervasive than beliefs of personal efficacy (also Bandura and Locke 2003: 1, Ozer and Bandura 1990: 472). In terms of this, unless people believe they can produce desired outcomes and forestall undesired ones by their actions, they have little incentive to act or persevere in the face of difficulties. This belief forms the foundation of the concept of human agency.
- **Motivation:** Whatever other factors serve as guides and motivators, these are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to produce changes by one’s actions. This is said to be a key factor in how people construct their daily lives.

- **Outcomes:** People are said to regulate their life course by the outcomes they expect their efforts to produce. These outcomes may be expected material costs and benefits, positive and negative social effects, and one's self-evaluation.
- **Human action:** After people adopt personal standards they do things that give them self-satisfaction and self-worth, and refrain from behaving in ways that bring self-reproof.
- **Commitment:** The stronger the perceived efficacy the higher the goal challenges people set themselves, and the firmer their commitment to those.
- **People power:** People's shared belief in their combined power to achieve the desired results is a key ingredient of collective agency.

2.9.3 The notion of empowerment

To ignore the possible impact of stress as a major factor in the lives of township learners would amount to a folly. In Chapter 4, the analysis of issues to do with certain aspects of the respondents' 'past' among the other categories illustrates the point about the presence of the past. These sections show how the learners are born into situations that they can hardly escape from, and also how some negotiate their way out of sticky situations. Today's uncertain world being said to present people with a very little sense of security, Brown proposes that individuals come to terms with the fact that security resides within oneself (1999: 35). Adding to the notion of Whitty's desired self (2002), in terms of Brown's notion of the 'serviceable self', one can only engineer a version of oneself that is robust and flexible enough to withstand the manifold and varied demands of modern life. In line with this Looker and Gregson (cited in Brown 1999: 35) compare the human body to a car. What this analogy does is highlight the potential of the human body for what these call 'peak performance'. In the same way that the car is serviced and tuned to avoid or reduce problems and breakdowns, so too can the human body be prepared to run smoothly and perform well.

Successful adaptation in the context of significant threats to development would then be a good measure of one degree of one's serviceability, a concept which Mampane and Bouwer (2006: 444), and Masten *et al.* (1999: 143) qualify as 'resilience'. According to them, when a child is described as 'resilient', it is reasonable to infer that this kind of judgment has been inferred on the basis of a pattern of characteristics as in when the child has been deemed to be doing well on major developmental tasks, despite exposure to extraordinary circumstances of adversity. Resilient individuals as depicted in Mampane and Bouwer's study are those who, against expectation, survived adverse events in their care-giving environment. In terms of this reckoning the concept relates to how effectiveness in the environment is achieved, sustained or recovered despite adversity. In terms of this reckoning those deserving to be labeled as such are said to have a 'hardy personality'. They are so-labeled because they employ adaptive coping strategies rather than maladaptive ones like denial or behavioural avoidance (Mampane and Bouwer 2006: 444). Seligman's (cited in Tough 2006) notion of 'learned optimism' sounds like one

other concept one could use to describe the kind of learner being analysed in this study. According to this attitude is said to be just as important as ability.

2.9.3.1 Empowering by fostering ‘resilience’

In terms of the notion of resilience the many stress factors (otherwise identified as ‘key barriers to learning’) confronting township adolescents demand a certain calibre of learner, if the learner in question is to beat the odds (Mampane and Bouwers 2006: 443). In order to cope with and bounce back from the stressful experiences associated with this kind of environment, the situation is said to call for the ‘resilient’ type of learner. While these authors highlight the significance of protective social factors, it is to individual characteristics of resilience among learners that this section of the study now devotes its attention.

2.9.3.2 Measuring resilience

In the analysis that ensues I measure these respondents against Bradshaw and Wallace’s (1991: 157) idea of ‘ideal-typic’ models (of which there are two in this case). One yardstick relates to the concept of ‘resilience’, while the other is that of ‘self-actualization’ as proposed by Maslow (cited in Heylighen 1992). Literature on the two concepts suggests the two are somehow related, with the one type of individual appearing to complement the other. Simply put, for a young person to become resilient, s/he needs to have the kind of motivation that is typical of self-actualizing individuals.

Using the yardstick of resilience as the first lens for analyzing the respondents in this study, I heed Masten *et al.*’s suggestion that I begin the process of operationalizing this concept by specifying:

- the ‘provocation’ or threat to respondents’ development or sense of well-being;
- the criteria by which adaptation was judged to be successful; and
- the features of the environment that may help explain resilient outcomes.

2.9.3.2a The provocation

There appears to be consensus among the relevant sources I have consulted on the concept of resilience, that the motivation to succeed begins with some form of stressor, catalyst, provocation or threat (Heylighen, 1992, Kumpfer, 1999, Mampane and Bouwer, 2006, Masten *et al.* 1999, Schoon and Parsons 2002). This, according to Lord and Hutchison (1993: 3), could take the form of some experience, an event or a condition threatening to the self or the family.

In the case of the current study, paragraphs 4.3.1- 4.3.2.2, where respondents discuss aspects of their past lives they have no wish to see being repeated, and the kind of future they look forward to, could be said to have provided them with just the kind of stimulus needed. Mampane and Bouwer’s (2006) broad overview of SA township life in general, combined with some utterances from parents, teachers and learners in this study all lend

even more weight to the individual circumstances addressed in the paragraphs referred to above. The respondents' reactions to the prevailing circumstances provide the motivation that influences their choices of which activities to engage in (e.g. not to get married), their level of engagement in those activities (to completely exclude potential sexual partners or remain celibate), as well as their degree of persistence (to completely push the prospect of children out of their mind), etc. (Winfield *et al.* 2002).

2.9.3.2b Criteria used to judge resilience

Masten *et al.*'s (1999: 144) warn about there not yet being a widely accepted standard for diagnosing resilience. With this in mind I allowed the working definition of the concept of resilience as given by Mampane and Bouwer (2006) below to guide my analysis.

According to these authors this is said to be someone with the disposition to identify and utilize personal capacities, competences (strengths) and assets in a specific context. This supposedly happens when the individual is faced with perceived adverse situations. This definition was found to sum up succinctly the kind of respondents analyzed in the current study. Other relevant words and phrases used synonymously with this concept are positive coping, persistence, adaptation, and long term success (Winfield 1991: 7).

In line with this the kinds of criteria used to determine the respondents' degree of adaptation were three-dimensional. The respondents were measured against criteria suggested by Mampane and Bouwer (2006: 444), Schoon and Parsons (2002: 262), and Garmezy (1983) (as cited in Winfield 1991: 6), respectively. Of the criteria suggested in the three different studies I considered only those which could be accommodated by the linguistic nature (the learners in this study not having been subjected to other forms of resilience testing) of the current study. To triangulate these initial findings, Kumpfer's resilience model was also used. Added together, these criteria should approximate a resilient township learner.

For Mampane and Bouwer (2006) the resilient qualities include:

- The ability to construe experiences positively and constructively (e.g. the absent father and asthmatic aunt who seemed to fuel one of my respondents to greater heights rather than cast her in a victim mode);
- A positive self-concept (e.g. the respondent referred to above believing she 'can make [her] future wild' despite circumstances which others could have interpreted as debilitating);
- A proactive, achievement-oriented nature, the ability to plan and have aspirations (e.g. learners negotiating their way to success via scaffolding techniques, detours, contingency planning, etc.);
- Assertiveness and problem-solving abilities (e.g. a Grade 11E male learner who chose to socialize with girls rather than expose himself to potentially explosive and violent talk with other boys);

- Identification with competent role models (e.g. Mandela, Martin Luther King, Bill Gates); and
- An internal locus of control, with a sense of purpose, challenge, commitment, responsibility and independence, etc. (e.g. the ‘no matter what’ attitude displayed one gangster-cum-businessman hopeful in this study).

Within the domains of education and employment (Schoon and Parsons 2002: 262) resilient young people from disadvantaged backgrounds were said to be:

- less likely to leave school with no qualifications at all, when compared to their more vulnerable counterparts (this resonates with findings from Ntete 2007);
- more likely to obtain degree level qualifications, when compared to their more vulnerable counterparts (this still has to be verified for the current study); yet
- unlikely to achieve to the same levels as their socially-advantaged peers, the tendency being for the former group to lose out to the latter (this again speaks to the findings from Ntete 2007).

According to Winfield (1991: 6) a resilient individual therefore:

- possesses social skills (e.g. the 11E respondent who befriended girls to avoid violent talk with other boys);
- exhibits a high degree of social responsiveness and sensitivity (e.g. respondents’ general concerns with the needs of the collective);
- has empathy (e.g. respondents’ concerns with the plight of street kids and orphans); and
- employs critical problem-solving skills (e.g. the subconscious decision to acknowledge only those hereditary genes they consider supportive to their future plans, while suppressing those deemed somewhat retrogressive and/or counterproductive); etc.

Given the fact that the notion of resilience to some degree measures one’s ability to handle challenges and/or obstacles, Kumpfer’s resilience model (1999: 183) was imposed on the data in this study. See par. 2.9.5 on how the respondents plan to handle future obstacles.

2.9.3.2c Features of the environment that explain the resilience

In terms of the Resilience Process Model (RPM) as reflected in Mampane and Bouwer (2006: 446), individual and other protective factors contribute to the type of reintegration that learners will experience. Be these of the internal or external kind, they are said to

help learners overcome adversity and experience healthy reintegration, especially after exposure to negative influences. As far as the respondents in this study are concerned, they appeared to be drawing their sense of strength from various sources starting mainly with themselves, their family members, some members of the community, a conducive teaching and learning environment, and other supporting factors.

Lord and Hutchison (1993: 2) and Mampane and Boucher (2006: 444) associate certain 'personality' types with resilience. A 'hardy' personality as the latter pair of authors would call it appears to be the respondents of the current study's strongest source of power, as will be seen from the results of the data analysis in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.9.4. Environment-related problems which test the level of resilience

Challenges associated with township learning are highlighted in this study, first by some of the learners from ZWHS itself (see par. 3.2.7), and by Mampane and Boucher (2006), among others. Among other challenges the respondents in the current study are concerned about is the fact of their school being located in the midst of a taxi rank, bus terminus, an informal trading market, an informal settlement, etc. The noise that comes with these is the least important of their concerns. More pressing concerns which they have to contend with include the fact of their school being used as an asylum by those seeking refuge from taxi-wars, among many others. In moments of unrest this school was further said to work according to a 'marathon' timetable, by which is meant shortened school hours. This was seen by the students in question as working toward their detriment.

On a more general tone Battistich (1997) identifies at least three categories of behavioural problems associated with children studying in environments like Nyanga, all or some of which have been experienced by some SA township learners at some point in their learning lives. These are:

- learners' use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana (to which one could add cocaine, 'tik', etc. within the SA context);
- learners' involvement in at least ten delinquent behaviours, e.g. skipping school, carrying weapons, threatening to harm someone, involvement in gang fights, stealing money or property etc. (to which we could add drug peddling among others within the ZWHS context), and
- their being the subjects of victimization acts at school (e.g. being insulted, called names, made fun of, bullied, physically attacked). One male respondent in my study, for example, confessed to having declared the school toilet a 'no-go zone' at some point in his school life, while a female learner complained about having been called '*iiqhwatsi*' (a word seemingly used by ZWHS learners to refer to 'new-comers') and also being expected to polish the shoes of her victimizers.

About the question of how resilience could be fostered, Winfield (1991: 9) outlines four characteristics in the process of fostering resilience:

- The process is said to be long term, developmental, uses the language of potential; etc.
- It views children as having strengths rather than deficits and risks, with this being seen to include believing in learners;
- It nurtures protective processes so that children can succeed by changing systems, structures, and beliefs within schools and communities; and
- It includes, among others, effecting a positive school climate which benefits both learners and teachers alike, etc.

2.9.5 The profile of a resilient learner

At this point of the discussion I would like to insert a word of caution, viz. the respondents in this study have not been exposed to the ‘multi-method’ kinds of tests (i.e. of both the behavioural and academic nature as suggested by Kumpfer’s Resilience Framework, Boyd and Eckert Resilience Model, Learning Behaviour Scale, performance tests, etc.), to qualify them as ‘resilient’ learners in the true sense of the word. As the analysis was only carried out from a linguistic and/or psychological perspective, more rigorous testing as has been done in other studies of resilience (Kumpfer 1999, Mampane and Bouwer 2006, Masten *et al.* 1999, Schoon and Parsons 2002, etc.) is recommended. What this thesis does is propose that we use the respondents in the current study as models (and indeed work in progress) for the kind of learner which township schools should be aiming to breed and nurture. For us to be able to do this some of the characteristics that make these respondents stand out from their non-resilient or more vulnerable counterparts (at least from a psycho-social linguistic point of view) need to be explored to some degree of depth.

2.9.5.1 The self-oriented and the yardstick of ‘self-actualization’ (SAc)

Maslow’s Theory of Human Motivation (as cited in Heylighen 1992), suggests that the respondents in this study to some extent do meet the former psychologist’s concept of ‘self-actualizing’ individuals. This theory, which is said to define a maximally healthy personality, is characterized by a hierarchy of needs which the individual in question has to have satisfied. This concept is based on the belief that each individual has a lot of hidden potential or competencies he/she could develop. These potentialities of the self are said to be made actual or actualized in a continuous process of unfolding. Self-actualization not being a fixed state, it is likened to a process of development which does not end.

Given the high-risk nature of South African township environments in general, one would never have expected the concept of self-actualization to be mentioned in one

breath with learners coming from environments of this kind. The part about self-actualizers being a work in progress recognizes potentialities or talents which the individual could develop but have as yet not come to the surface. These potentialities are said to be actualized (i.e. made actual) in a continuing process of unfolding.

2.10 The role of the family

Parental attitudes, child-rearing styles and exposure to language in early childhood have been identified as some among many key characteristics separating working class (WC) homes from their Middle Class (MC) counterparts (Tough 2006). Indeed the WC home has been associated with quite a few socialization practices which tend to be counterproductive where school children are concerned. In their crisp conversations with their children WC parents were found to use quite a number of discouragements, prohibitions, words showing disapproval, etc. MC parents on the other hand were said to engage children in conversation as equals, treating them like apprentice adults and encouraging them to ask questions, challenge assumptions and negotiate rules. All of these would have been considered disrespectful in a WC environment. Some members of the African MC whose children have been exposed to the ex-Model C kind of education are finding it very hard to stomach what they experience as ‘disrespectful’ outbursts coming from some of their children. On those occasions these parents have been known to insist that their children translate their ‘careless’ English utterances into isiXhosa, in an attempt to bring to the attention of the children in question one of the differences between the two cultures. If the more understanding MC parents can find this kind of situation this challenging, it is anybody’s guess how this would affect their WC counterparts with the latter’s traditional outlook.

This thesis has also been very informative in identifying some key aspects with regard to the socialization of some WC children, as revealed by an analysis of the respondents’ written responses to the essay topic ‘My educational experiences’, among others. This is mainly in as far as issues regarding children’s first encounter with education are concerned. Time and again during the analysis I would come across a comment about how one learner’s eyes, for example, had been ‘closed’ with regard to the general purpose of schooling. Some children owned up to having had neither ‘clue’ nor ‘idea’ why they had to go to school. In actual fact, according to one female learner’s misinformed opinion, school was supposedly where one who had ‘lost a father’ could go, in order to ‘forget about the problem’ and to ‘have fun’. Utterances like this one would be funny if they were not sad. Linked to the television coverage about to be discussed below, these snippets somehow reveal something of the school un-readiness culture of some African working class homes. These are unfortunately not all there is to the problem.

Among a number of broadcasting niches covered by one morning television channel currently operating under the programme title of ‘Morning Live’ in SA, is to report live on homes with children who are about to attend school for the first time in their lives. In my experience the coverage has so far targeted mainly White, Coloured and/or Indian homes. In addition to the picture perfect and ready to charge school child (i.e. obviously well-fed, appropriately dressed in school uniform, with books and all the relevant

accessories) being brought to viewers' attention would be the voice of a proud parent (in most cases a mother who is able to express herself and respond to interview questions in the language of school, i.e. English).

More often than not the mother would be detailing how the child in question had been impatiently waiting for this very significant day in her/his life, among other things. Over and above this the child most probably having been previously exposed to a relatively healthy preschool education, the listener/viewer would sometimes catch snippets and be able to piece together glimpses of how the home may also have assisted in psyching up and grooming the child in question, in preparation for her/his first experience of formal schooling. In some instances this would have been achieved via a combination of activities which had been carried out over time. These would include crayon scribbles, bedside stories, talk about school life, etc.

In sharp contrast to this, as covered by 'Morning Live' again, many black children, particularly those from rural areas, would still be waiting for the 'month-end' before they may be in a position to meet the financial requirements of schooling. Some township parents elsewhere would still be undecided which school their children should be attending. Township children who are lucky enough to have decisive parents on the other hand would still be queuing outside schools' administration blocks, applying for admission. All of these happen when children should have been inside classes, and already learning.

Some of the record-breaking few learners who make it to school on Day 1 are most likely to turn up without school fees, proper school uniform, etc. It is usually a small section of the black working class population whose children come to school ready to take full advantage of the first school day or week, with other external factors like the logistics of delivering stationery to some remote rural schools complicating the situation even more. That some of the township children in the current study have never seen the inside of a school building or preschool (as evident from comments expressed in the previous paragraph) does not make things any easier for both the child and teacher in question. The list of ills to do with the education of black children in this country is endless. In the interest of time and space, suffice it to say the situation is anything but ideal.

In trying to identify some of the cracks in the SA education system which I think contribute to the challenge of poor educational attainment, I have focused on two major phases within the SA schooling system, i.e. pre-school (i.e. par 2.10.1 below) and high school education (i.e. par 2.10.2 below). This is not to suggest that the intermediate phase is the least important of all. Indeed a study conducted by Oakes (n.d.) and the findings of this thesis (see par. 6.2.2b) suggest the contrary. What makes the two phases relevant for this particular study is the fact that they mark the entry (i.e. pre-school education) and exit points (i.e. matriculation) within SA's schooling system. Other issues which are considered central to the debate on poor educational achievement (i.e. the curriculum and issues around language) will also be dealt with, albeit briefly. First I attend to the problem with our pre-school education, and the extent to which this phase might be said to contribute to the challenge of under-achievement that township schools are faced with.

2.10.1 Pre-school education

The assertion by Ball (1994: 11), that ‘good houses need strong foundations’ drives the point of this section of the study home. In terms of this it is implied that if all of SA’s children were to be given a good start, there would not be much risk of things going wrong later. When children are not given this good start, and things do (as evident from the poor levels of educational attainment, high dropout rates, prevalence of HIV/AIDS infections, teenage parenthood, drug and alcohol abuse, etc. within the SA context) it becomes very difficult to put them right (Ball 1994: 11). Judging by the tone of the post-1994 arguments presented by those who have taken the trouble to investigate the SA education situation (Banda in press, Bonthuys 2004, Burger *et al.* 2004, Carter 2001, Christie 2007, De Klerk 2001, Donaldson 2001, Everatt, 2003, Fiske and Ladd 2004, Grossman 2004, Guerraggio 2007, Harber 2001, Jansen 1999, Mampane and Bouwers 2006, Taylor 2007, etc.), things are indeed spiraling out of control at the moment. Some recommendations on how to tackle this challenge appear in par.6.3.1a below.

2.10.2 The matriculation class

In this thesis I propose that one of the root causes of the challenge of under-performance affecting South African township schools is this country’s obsession with window-dressing gimmicks. In this context these are captured under the euphemistic concept of ‘delivery’. The matriculation class is one of many mirrors which SA uses to check its political image, hence the tendency to fixate on this pass rate. Bonthuys’ article with title ‘Matric mania hiding ‘problems’ proves just this point (2004). Through the ‘name and shame’ slogan failing schools in this country have been publicly humiliated and pressured, with the swooping finger of blame being pointed at everyone and everything but the government and its disabling system (see par 1.1 above). Concern with public opinion has turned high school teaching into a results-driven endeavour where the end is seen to justify the means.

With regard to the matter Harber critiques the fact of formal schooling overemphasizing the cognitive at the expense of the affective. In terms of this schools are seen to be saying testable knowledge is somehow separate from and also more important than personal understanding and learning how to handle feelings, values, behaviour and relationships (Harber 2001: 70). According to Epp (cited in Harber 2001), as long as facts, words, and numbers are treasured while personal feelings are subverted and discouraged, children will grow into adults who believe that facts, words and numbers are the most important aspects of life.

What one sees in the disposition of some of the respondents in this study could perhaps be said to explain the beginning of this phenomenon. The learners in question seem to have developed a utilitarian approach to the concept of a relationship. One male student, for example, seemed to equate women with sex. One gets a similar sense in the case of the female respondents as well. Concerns over money matters actually saw to one learner dismissing men from her future life as she predicted future problems with the combination (i.e. her money and men). In terms of the literature the purposeful neglect of

the personal suggested by the respondents in this study will be fuelled by, and also contribute to a dehumanized society (2001: 70). Since the school curriculum (and by extension, language) are central to the specific issues just raised, the study investigates the role played by these entities in the scheme of things (i.e. perpetuating under-achievement and poverty).

2.10.3 The school curriculum

According to Jansen the school curriculum supposedly holds important symbolic value in transition societies (1999: 57). Weiler (cited in Jansen 1999: 58) maintains that over and above concerns about the how and what of teaching and learning, the curriculum is tasked with addressing political constraints, conflicts, and compromises in and around issues of the state. It was with this kind of understanding and expectation within the SA context, that former education minister Dr Bengu's call for public comment on essential alterations to school syllabuses is said to have been welcomed by many. Given the urgent need to purge the *apartheid* curriculum of its most offensive racial content, inaccurate and outdated course content, people are said to have agreed that such an intervention was not only overdue but also reasonable (Jansen 1999: 58).

In the said paper Jansen exposes the appalling details suggesting how and why it is that today's SA township learner is still being used, through this curriculum, as a sacrificial lamb so that the ANC government may continue to look good on paper. Of the several explanations given in this thesis for why things are what they are today I would like to focus on the three which I think speak directly to the concerns of this study. These are deemed important because they appear to have the potential to nullify any possibility of positive change in the future of SA.

The one explanation, about SA wanting to present a beautiful image actually resonates with the concern already expressed in the current study, about the present government's fixation on the matriculation pass rates and other visible mechanisms for garnering votes as discussed in par. 1.1 above. According to Jansen (1999: 63) the idea was that this ruling party (through the Education Ministry) be seen to be delivering. This was to be achieved by procuring short-term political legitimacy for a ministry that was crippled. The other reason is said to have been a concern 'not' to rock the boats of the bureaucrats of the time, to cite the words of a teacher referred to in this source. This concern unfortunately still appears to be in place in SA today. Jansen alludes to these being done in the spirit of former President Mandela's concept of reconciliation (1999: 61).

2.11 Tackling the challenge of under-achievement

The points just raised above establish the concept of under-achievement as mainly a function of the environment (i.e. school practices, teaching styles, lack of resources, etc.) rather than problems to do with the individual learner (e.g. low IQ, being African or of WC origin, etc.) as the concept of under-achievement would lead one to believe. To make matters worse the current curriculum in operation in SA schools has also been declared

flawed (Jansen 1999). All of these combined suggest a need for the SA and its education system to get their house in order.

Through his concept of a 'person-context' Vondracek (2006) suggests a need for a systems view of township learners. In terms of this, there needs to be three components of theory guiding research on person and context relations. In terms of this the researcher involved in this kind of study needs to:

- have some conceptualization of the nature of attributes of the persons being studied,
- take into account features of the person context; and to
- consider the relation between the individual's attributes and the contextual features.

The holistic approach proposed here seems particularly appropriate. This is in view of the inevitability of learners in these kinds of circumstances bringing into the learning situation the kind of baggage most likely to hinder the teaching and learning encounter. In line with this, Clough (2002) argues for a need for rigorous research which does not ignore but rather addresses the complexity of the various aspects of schools and schooling. The kind of research undertaken would need to explore and take into account different objective experiences and subjective perspectives. It would further have to acknowledge that qualitative knowledge is essential, both in its own right and also to make full and proper use of quantitative indicators (Clough 2002: xi). This is something the current study has attempted to achieve, through linguistic and content analyses of the learners' essays.

2.12 Conclusion

In this chapter attempts have been made to tease out some of the pertinent issues around the challenges of poor educational attainment and poverty in SA. Factors perceived to contribute toward the situation (e.g. the possible role played language, flaws in preschool education, the negative impact of SA's middle class curriculum, obsession with matriculation results, etc.) have been identified. The role of the different stakeholders (the individual learner, the teacher, the school, the family, etc.) has also been highlighted, and possibilities (e.g. empowerment) for the future suggested. Some of the issues raised here are taken one step further in the last chapter, i.e. Chapter 6 where decisive and sustainable steps designed to derail poverty are given.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

It is Warren's view that communities, whatever their scale, continue in heterogeneous ways to reconstitute themselves as they make the world their own. This is said to be particularly true in cases of tremendous economic and political upheaval. Due to this fact Anthropology is said to have increasingly become the study of instability and fragmentation of systems caught in contradictory currents of change. As South Africa moulds and remakes itself therefore it seems important that those doing research into issues affecting the country heed Warren's words. He advises that this problematic be framed in terms of ethnographic feasibility (2002: 380). Ethnographers' task is said to be generally that of collecting life-histories. This is purportedly not so much out of mere interest in the individual story, but more in an attempt to improve understanding and knowledge of social and cultural processes (Davies 1999: 169). Toward this end some life-histories have been made the main data collection tool for the current study.

Blumenfeld-Jones (1995: 25) maintains that narrative enquiry, the main research tool used in the current study, has become an acceptable mode of qualitative research. He describes as 'useful' Connelly and Clandinin's definition of the calibre of the enquirer involved in this type of research. The latter is said to be someone who describes lives, collects and tells stories of them, and writes narratives of experience. Blumenfeld-Jones distinguishes between two concepts which the narrative enquirer may find confusing, i.e. 'analysis of narratives' and 'narrative analysis'. While the former captures those who analyze narratives in order to generate themes for further analysis on the one hand, the latter concept is said to represent those who focus upon the stories of individuals as stories with meaning. The first type, which is inductive in approach, is said to assist the researcher develop concepts from the data, rather than imposing previous theoretically derived concepts.

From the foregoing it would seem as if the essence of narrative analysis revolves around telling a story about stories. Hermanns' (as cited in Flick 1998: 98) step by step unpacking of the concept of a narrative sounds like a good starting point for unraveling this particular plot. According to this definition the first step in narration outlines the initial situation, what the author refers to as an explanation for how everything started. This is said to be followed by a selection from the whole host of experiences, of events considered to be relevant to the narrative. The events are then to be presented as a coherent progression which provides answers to the question about how things developed. The final phase covers the end of the development, in which the narrator responds to the question 'what became'. To configure the data elements into a story that unites and gives meaning to the data as contributors to a goal or purpose, the analyst is not only expected to harness these different strands of information together, but also to strategically weave in the different voices, among other things. At issue here is balancing the story of the individual in all its uniqueness with the larger social, political, economic

contexts which frame it and are, according to Hatch and Wisniewski (1995: 120), in turn reinforced or challenged by the individual's actions and response. The meshing of these ideas, it is said, has to be done in such a way that the final story fits the data while at the same time bringing an order and meaningfulness that is not apparent in the data themselves (Polkinghorne 1995: 16).

By seemingly concurring with Faulkner's (as cited in Davies 1999: 159) idea about the past never dying and it not being even past, below Kallaway provides one of many frames in which the current study could be situated within the South African context. As I attempt to display linkages among the different data elements as part of an unfolding development, which will hopefully culminate in Polkinghorne's notion of the 'denouement' (1995), it seems appropriate that Kallaway be roped into the discussion as well. The latter author warns about the tendency within the dominant tradition of educational research in this country, to hide from view the whole history around the construction of schooling, while encouraging a belief in some history of educational progress, a history which is said to harbour no ambiguities, costs, nor struggles (1984: 4). By foregrounding the relevant aspects of the SA history therefore, the following section of this study attempts to provide a context and establish relevance for the methodology implemented here.

In terms of Babbie and Mouton's (2001) concept of 'contextualist' or 'holistic' research ideal, it is expected of the qualitative researcher to describe events within the natural context in which they occur. This is supposedly done to facilitate understanding rather than explanation (Davies, 2001: 272). If one is to do justice to the investigation into ZWHS therefore, it seems appropriate that the reader first be presented with a portrait of this research site in its context, something akin to Atkins' (1990) idea of a 'topographical' description of the school. The kind of study undertaken here satisfies the definition of a case study. Merriam (2001) defines such a study as an intensive holistic description and analysis of a single bounded unit. In terms of this thought process, conveying an understanding of the case is of paramount consideration in analyzing the data.

This being the case it seems appropriate therefore that I foreground my 'foray into mapless urban ethnography' as Parnell (2002: 147) would put it, so as to provide a backdrop against which methodological concerns may be viewed. The discussion that follows below provides the kind of cultural context in which this storied case takes place. To enable the process I as the storyteller have drawn from experiences, those of my own enmeshed with those reported by others, in the process transforming these in such a way that they become the experience of those reading my story (Emihovich 1995: 39). To this end Stake (cited in Merriam 2001) advises the reader to analyze episodes or text material with 'correspondence'. By this concept he means 'consistency within conditions'. What this means is that through the analysis the reader should try to understand behaviour, issues and context with regard to the specific case. They must try to find the pattern or the significance through direct interpretation, asking themselves what the instances in question mean. With regard to more important episodes or passages of text this author urges readers to take more time, and to look them over again and again. While all of this

is happening readers are moreover expected to reflect, triangulate and be skeptical about first impressions and simple meanings (Merriam 2001).

3.1.1 Laying the ground

This chapter is mainly divided into seven distinct though not necessarily independent sections. The introduction precedes the contextual issues around which the study revolves. Methodological concerns are then carefully rolled out starting with the framework for the study, the tools used in conducting it and methods of analysis, all in this exact order. The main concerns of the study are next, with a discussion of the limitations thereof closing the curtain of this particular episode.

3.2 Zimisele Woyise High School (ZWHS) in context

Burman (2007) argues it is logically impossible to claim to identify the whole context of the text. In her opinion what matters is to provide both a rationale for it as a meaningful text to analyze, and to indicate the stance from which the analysis is conducted (in this regard see par. 3.3.9 where I talk about the notion of ‘reflexivity’). Some of the questions to be addressed in this regard include how the study has come about, why it is important, who has which kind of stake in it, how and why? In line with Burman’s (2007) view, the description that follows here should ward off the incipient objectivism that is said to dog so much psychological research, and the corresponding but mistaken (her emphasis) alternative position of subjectivism.

3.2.1 The school grounds

In an attempt to insulate itself from its immediate and contagious surroundings as described above, ZWHS is armed with a high all-round barbed-wire fence. At the point of entry to the school tall gates with heavy chain serve as further reinforcement for this fence. More gates within the classroom area (see Appendix K) cordon off and divide the school blocks into separate sections. Unless otherwise permitted by the school caretaker, the gates and the fence are supposed to (my emphasis) make it difficult for both learners and criminal elements alike, to either access or exit certain sections of the school premises. This scenario Fiske and Ladd liken to an ‘armed camp’ (2004: 55). Given the fact that it is mostly people from the community who have been responsible for the most heinous crimes to be perpetrated within this school’s premises, rather than those inside ZWHS (i.e. learners themselves), the attempts to secure the school have clearly been all in vain. It would appear as if the school’s ‘Pollsmoor’-ish (i.e. a maximum security prison located just outside Cape Town) appearance has been just that, a mere look. Broken windows, poor sanitation facilities, etc. testify to vandalism tendencies which are yet another symptom of poverty.

The combination of single and double-storeyed face brick structures constituting the actual school building however look fairly pleasing to the eye. During school hours an aura of orderliness prevails in this school. The school’s mission statement, which is expressed in the form of its Latin motto ‘*Ad astra per aspra*’ and emblazoned on its

badge, is hoisted up high at the entry point to the school, for all to see. Regardless of the slogan's meaning being hidden from the very people it is supposed to attract, through it the school promises to render its local community a service. According to this public declaration of intent ZWHS pledges to help the Nyanga youth to not just 'reach for the stars', but to actually go 'beyond' those very stars, as one member of the school's SMT so ambitiously and proudly pointed out. In the principal's office is an impressive array of numerous cups and trophies. A newspaper clipping capturing the school's moment of victory with the 1998 matric results (i.e. 87.61% pass rate) is also pasted on the wall. Combined together most of these give the impression of a school trying to get somewhere, albeit on clipped wings.

Complementing the portrait of ZWHS painted thus far are accounts of lived experiences of learners speaking from inside this school's walls. This cultural exploration not only helps the reader situate the school within the larger frame of its immediate surroundings, but also records what Atkinson calls points of local colour and traces of local history (1990). With this goal in mind the lens of the study now zooms in for a more detailed close up shot of the school.

3.2.2 Learners at ZWHS

The 1650 African learners who attended ZWHS as at the beginning of 2005 were mainly isiXhosa speaking. They were distributed into 31 classrooms with an average of about fifty four learners per class. They were the responsibility of forty-four teachers; forty-two of which were African, while only two of those were of Coloured descent. Were it not for the uneven distribution of teaching tasks (an issue brought about by the hierarchical arrangement or roles), the situation would have suggested a teacher-learner ratio of about 1:37.5. Instead teachers, particularly those at P1 level (i.e. Post Level 1 or the lowest teaching level) with less administrative duty and more junior classes to teach, were faced with much bigger class numbers.

The matric class (i.e. grade 12 or exit point within the SA schooling system) was streamed into three classes, all of which were doing the three languages (i.e. isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans) considered to be official within the Western Cape Province (WCP). The streams included the Science (i.e. Mathematics, Physics and Biology); Commerce (i.e. Mathematics, Economics and Accounting) and the General (i.e. a combination resulting from a selection among the following subject combinations- Geography or History, Geography or Mathematics, History or Home Economics) classes. For the latter stream (i.e. the 'general' class) Biology formed the third content subject. All in all Grade 12 learners were registered for a total of six learning areas (i.e. three content subjects and three languages).

School facilities included an ill-equipped library and science laboratory, a technology room with a few novice 'inventions', a Home Economics (HE) classroom, a computer laboratory with 25 computers which were donated for the sole use of Mathematics learners (with the idea being a sore spot for non-Mathematical learners), etc. This unfortunate condition, imposed by the sponsor concerned, highlights the kind of status

that Science learners generally enjoy over their History-oriented counterparts in this country. Extramural activities on the other hand covered sport, choral music, debates, the Student Christian Movement (SCM), about ten projects (e.g. the Amy Biehl Trust Foundation, *Molo Songololo*, the Telkom Project which had donated a further 8 computers for the exclusive use of grade 8 learners), and several others.

3.2.3 Teachers at ZWHS

From a qualifications' point of view these teachers' qualifications were said to range from a Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate (JSTC) to Honours and/or Bachelor of Education graduates. Some of the teachers were said to hold numerous certificates that had been obtained through Life Long Learning (LLL) initiatives. These initiatives took the form of workshops, training courses, etc. Other teachers in this school were still pursuing further education. With regard to their work the teacher interviews also revealed that ZWHS teachers adopted a collective approach to teaching. In terms of this they were said to work as a team, and also to pull together. This was said to be especially true in times of challenges.

When dealing with the senior classes for example, a seasoned teacher was said to work alongside an inexperienced one. In this manner the old and the new were seen to merge into one as the teachers exchanged information and shared experiences. Through this arrangement teachers were said to enrich one another, a fact one member of the SMT thought very crucial, in the interest of 'creating reserves'. The school was also described as being quick at narrowing gaps. For this to happen the staff was said 'not' to capitalize on one another's downfall. Rather, they were said to provide room for improvement. One teacher claimed ZWHS teachers were 'closest' to one another than in any other school he knew.

3.2.4 ZWHS activities

After school hours the school would come alive with activity. Learners would literally litter the parking lot as car after car would come in (with some visiting individuals coming to offer one form of service or another) and drive out. Of these there was one regular visitor, a seemingly dedicated community member who was assisting with choral practices. Other than this some visitors came to collect learners for participation in one project or another. While all of this was happening, grades 11 and 12 learners would be attending their afternoon classes under the watchful eye of the principal. The latter would not only take the attendance register, but also monitor everything till some time after five o'clock in the afternoon.

As far as sporting activities were concerned it was difficult to tell learners apart from members of the general public. Community members also used the ZWHS sports-grounds for practice. Teachers from other schools in the Nyanga area were also said to prefer ZWHS as a venue for meetings and other activities; because of the school's strategic positioning (i.e. its proximity to the taxi-rank).

Given the fact of the learners being the main subjects of the current research it seems appropriate that they be the ones to provide concluding remarks for this section of the study. Complementing all that has been discussed so far therefore is a collection of some informative utterances from ZWHS learners. These offer just a thin slice of this one aspect of their learning lives. What they say about their school seems to suggest the concept of the whole being more than the sum of its parts.

3.2.5 Concluding remarks from ZWHS learners

One female Grade 12 learner in this school wished she could have gone to a private school, which her domestic servant aunt obviously could not afford. Informing this learner's preference to ZWHS is the proximity of the taxi-rank to the school (see Appendix K). The fact of some taxi-men taking refuge in the ZWHS yard when taxi-wars flared up was found to be particularly unacceptable by learners in this school. What this was said to boil down to at times was a 'no school' ruling on the part of the teachers. The learner in question was also unhappy over the idea of what the school termed 'marathon' days¹, as well as some learners' involvement in gang-related activities, etc. The bullying and lack of security at ZWHS was yet another sore spot for this learner. She even cited an incidence of near-violence (i.e. an attempted rape) that had once occurred on the school grounds.

Registering similar concerns around safety issues was another male learner. For him, the one thing which had once threatened to cast a shadow on the good reputation which ZWHS had been enjoying in his eyes before he joined the school, had been the initiation ritual. According to this learner the situation had not only made the toilet a 'no go area' for him, but also had him virtually imprisoned in his class, reading his books 'all the time'. At some point ZWHS learners had also had to do without water for a considerable period of time, due to the consequences of vandalism (see par. 6.3b(i) on what Oakes thinks of school environments like this one).

Two of the school's classes, referred to as 'bungalow' classes, were as far as these learners were concerned far from suitable for human habitation. These were said to have neither windows nor light bulbs, thereby exposing the younger learners housed therein to the harsh elements. Learners in the senior classes also had their concerns to worry about.

Due to a lack of sufficient classroom space, three different streams were said to share the same classroom space, with this being said to happen to learners at matric level. When one subject teacher (who was supposed to take the relevant group out of the class) was absent, the idle learners were said to congregate outside the class, making a lot noise in the process. As if this was not enough these idlers would mischievously call out names of those inside the class, by so doing disturbing the teaching and learning process. Learners whose names were being called out would then be sent out of the class (by the teacher whose class was being disturbed) as a result, much to the former's discontent. This

¹ Days when teaching hours are reduced, and learners are set free for various reasons.

example provides a glimpse of the sense of helplessness experienced by some SA teachers, especially those who had relied heavily on corporal punishment in order to effect discipline. This is in view of this form of punishment being prohibited by law in SA education today. The situation described here results in the victim being punished for the sins of the culprit.

Compared to other schools ZWHS was perceived to be poorer in terms of facilities and equipment like toilets. The latter were said to be in bad shape and stripped of aluminium taps, also due to vandalism. Compared to the fifty-five to sixty teachers that other high schools with less the kind of enrolment that ZWHS had, the latter school was said to have only forty-six teachers (the actual figure, I was later told, was in fact forty-four). This the learner in question blamed on the school's popularity. The popularity also resulted in the number of learners in the ZWHS classes being more than that in the other neighbouring high school. Viewed against an enrolment of 1650 learners, the 25 computers which ZWHS had were considered too few. Use of these was moreover restricted to Mathematics learners, and even then only to those doing Grades 10 to 12.

From the detail provided above it is clear that turbulence forms a big part of these learners' lives. This is especially true if this is to be viewed against the canvas of the new democratic dispensation with all that comes with it, as laid out in Chapter 1 of the current thesis. In its state of flux SA has seen at least four curricular innovations of the OBE approach within a period of approximately twelve years (i.e. from the National Curriculum Statement, Curriculum 2005, through to the 'Revised' National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), and then back to the NCS again (Participant Manual 2004). Using the concept of 'ongoing gyration' Zabusky describes the process of the 'making and unmaking' of centres which appears to be so reminiscent of the SA education system today (2003: 113).

In moments and contexts of spiritual, social, political, educational, etc. reconstruction and instability like the ones depicted in this study, Zabusky suggests that both ethnographers and participants alike confront and move not through social fields but widening gyres in which the centre cannot hold. In contexts like these centres are said to displace centres, while peripheries mutate into centres. Centres and peripheries are said to pile atop one another, with this having the effect of dissolving the distinctions and creating them in another place. According to this reckoning no one is in control of this kind of situation. Rather it is in moments like these that people stumble through gyres, improvising some place to stand for a moment so that they may get some work done (Zabusky 2002: 113).

The words 'unstable' or ungovernable (as referred to in par. 1.3.5 above) may not apply to SA in the strictest sense of the words (i.e. at least at the moment of the writing of the current thesis). This is especially true when it is placed side by side with neighbouring Zimbabwe. The findings of the current study however suggest SA does have good reasons for concern (see par. 6.5 for some of these). The sooner something is done to address the situation depicted in this section of the current study, the better for all living in this country.

3.3 The Methodological Framework

It is the nature of the research question that Strauss and Corbin recognize as a valid reason for turning to any kind of research technique, rather than it being the researcher's preferences or experiences (1998: 11). In line with this the ensuing discussion of methodological concerns was deemed to speak to the concerns raised above and elsewhere in the current thesis. Qualitative researchers always attempting to study human action from the perspective of the social actors (Babbie and Mouton 2001) as implied in par. 3.1 above, what follows below is an exposition of the relevance of this broad methodological approach to the study being carried out (i.e. a critical discourse analysis of life-histories).

3.3.1 Qualitative Research

Strauss and Corbin (1998: 11) define the qualitative type of research, of which ethnography is but a part, as one which produces findings not arrived at by means of quantification. In terms of this qualitative research is by its very nature mainly interpretative. Qualitative data is however said to be quantifiable. In this form it is said to come in as mainly background information (e.g. census) to the qualitative type of data accumulated. Qualitative inquiry, so emphasize the co-authors referred to above, refers to a non-mathematical process of interpretation which is carried out with the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data. These concepts are then said to be organized into a theoretical explanatory scheme. Persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, organizational functioning, etc. are just some of the research areas that this kind of research is said to interrogate. An analyst attempting to understand the meaning or nature of experience of persons who have undergone divorce, for example, would according to these authors find this an appropriate approach to use.

The methodology is further said to have three major components, i.e. 'data'; 'procedures' and 'written and verbal reports'. The first is said to come from interviews, documents, records, etc. while the second are procedures that researchers can use to interpret or organize data (e.g. reducing and conceptualizing data, elaborating categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, and relating through a series of prepositional statements). The third component includes written and verbal reports (e.g. articles in scientific journals, in-talks or conferences or in books). The self being said to be an instrument in the data collection and analysis process; Rew *et al.* (cited in Strauss and Corbin 1998: 6) identify appropriateness, authenticity, credibility, intuitiveness, receptivity, reciprocity and sensitivity as necessary attributes for one embarking on qualitative research.

While there are said to be many different types of approaches to doing qualitative research, 'grounded theory' (GT) has been deemed appropriate for the purposes of this particular study. Because the basic strategy of the constant comparative method is said to

be compatible with the inductive, concept building orientation of all qualitative research, the comparative method of analysis is said to have been adopted by many researchers who are not seeking to build substantive theory (2001). With constant comparison at the heart of this form of analysis, the researcher begins with a particular incident from an interview, field notes or document, and compares this with another incident in the same set of data or in another. In terms of this the comparisons lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances. Comparisons are said to be constantly made within and between levels of conceptualization, until a theory is formulated (Merriam 2001).

3.3.2 Ethnography

Ethnography is defined as a method of inquiry which, while including observation and interviewing, is also said to require of the researcher to spend large amounts of time observing a particular group of people, by sharing their way of life (Travers 2001: 5). Atkins argues that the ethnographic text conveys the authority of its account largely through its persuasive force. In terms of this the sociological message is conveyed through the use of descriptive writing in which implicit analysis and points of view are inscribed. The data which have gone through several stages of processes of translation and transcription are said to consist of authored representations of social scenes. Field notes form the first stage of conventional, textual representation, with the ethnographer operating as a day to day chronicler of the transactions and reflections of field experience (1990: 57). Geertz (as cited in Peshkin 2000: 20) is said to have cautioned against researcher's ethnographic accounts becoming blatantly 'autobiographical'. In terms of Geertz' definition of the latter concept all ethnography is 'part' philosophy while a good deal of the rest is said to be 'confession'.

To avoid the trap of being perceived as having sought out and served my untamed subjectivity (Peshkin 2000), I now refer the reader to par. 3.5 for a blatantly ethnographic account that is based on two phases of data generation. The process spanned a period approximating seven months, i.e. between October 2004 and May 2005. The first phase, a period of participant observation, lasted for two weeks. This was coupled with informal talks, field notes and document analysis. The latter mentioned of the two phases just referred to, which is part of the case study of ZWHS, captured the day to day lives of four Grade 11 classes (i.e. Grades 11A, 11E, 11G and 11H) as well as their teachers, in their natural habitat.

I might also add here that the resultant portrait about to be exhibited is by no means all there is to both this research site and the participants under investigation. Indeed the concept of a snapshot would be a more appropriate caption for the analysis that is about to unfold here. A much more comprehensive though by no means complete account is spread throughout the length and breath of this thesis, in sections considered most fitting for the kind of detail at hand. The pockets of information are released in a systematic way, where and when it is deemed strategic to do so. The issues raised and points discussed below therefore are those considered to be relevant to this aspect of the discussion of methodology.

3.4 Research Tools

Over and above the other research tools referred to in the preceding paragraph, Titscher's (2000: 75) claim about text analysis probably being the most prominent application of GT, among other things, led to the adoption of this approach. GT procedures, though equally applicable to non-textual data, are seen as attributing a 'central importance' to 'text as data material'. GT, which is about to be discussed next, is said to focus on the development of concepts or categories arrived at on the basis of textual data, among others.

3.4.1 Grounded Theory

Strauss and Corbin as cited in Titscher (2000: 76) define GT as a theory that is inductively arrived at from a study of the phenomenon it represents. The theory is described as being discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to the phenomenon in question. According to this, data collection, analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with one another. Rather than begin with a theory with the aim of proving it, the grounded theorist is said to begin with an area of study. What is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge. In their volume Strauss and Corbin define the approach simply as being derived from data that is systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process (1998: 12).

GT is said to be a detailed grounding of systematically and intensively analyzed data, often sentence by sentence, or phrase by phrase of the field note, interview or other document. By constant comparison, data are said to be extensively collected and coded, thus producing a well-constructed theory. The emphasis of such an analysis is said to be not so much on collecting or ordering a mass of data, but rather on organizing many ideas which have emerged from analysis of the data. In this sense GT is said to be a school of social science methodology rather than a method that can be clearly demarcated. As such its research strategies may be summarized as follows:

- Actors react to social objects on the basis of meanings which they attribute to them;
- These meanings arise in interactions, are developed and permanently modified in the course of an interaction process;
- While language and communication are not necessarily explicit themes of GT, there are said to be many indications that interactions are primarily investigated with reference to linguistic communication.

According to Titscher (2000) the application of GT requires no specific methods of data collection. Neither should data collection be completed before analysis may begin, according to this. After the first collection exercise it is a matter of carrying out the first analysis, finding indicators for particular concepts, and expanding those concepts into

categories. On the basis of these results data are said to be further collected. Because of this, data collection is said to be never completely excluded. As new questions always arise, these can be dealt with if new data is collected or earlier data are re-examined.

To become a grounded theorist one is said to need the ability to step back and critically analyze situations; to recognize the tendency towards bias, to think abstractly, be flexible and open to helpful criticism. Just as Atkinson (1990) cautions about the hearer's understanding of an utterance not always being coterminous with a speaker's intention, and about a sentence's capacity for signification going beyond a speaker's meaning or any particular hearing, Strauss and Corbin urge sensitivity to the words and actions of respondents. According to these authors, a sense of absorption and devotion to the work process is also necessary (1998: 7). For a further exposition of practical consideration the study now tackles the notion of pragmatism.

3.4.2 Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a set of philosophical ideas that are said to combine two main tendencies. On the one hand there is a strong belief that experience is the starting point and terminus for all knowledge. Pragmatists are also known to believe in the idea that we cannot know anything beyond our experience, with experience in this instance being viewed not as a sequence of isolated sensations. Instead it is viewed as a world of interrelated phenomena that we take for granted in everyday life. According to this reckoning experience is a shared world, not something internal and subjective (Hammersley 1989: 45). Polkinghorne (1995: 20) warns that the pragmatic dimension of the evaluation of researcher generated stories is not to be confused with the pragmatic evaluation of therapeutic stories. In terms of this the narrative analyst's story should not only be useful but also be faithful to the actual historical happenings.

To satisfy the requirement of 'credibility' Polkinghorne advises that a distinction be drawn between the accuracy of the data and the plausibility of the plot. He proposes that triangulation methods in which several independent reports of an event are sought be used to help produce confidence that the event indeed did occur (1995: 20).

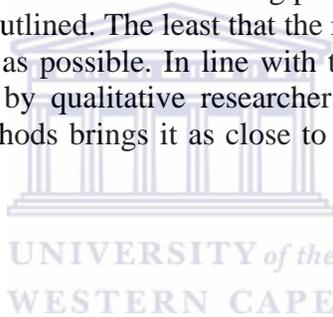
3.4.3 Triangulation

The nature of life-history analysis and interpretation being what it is (i.e. subjective, among other things), criticism against this kind of research has been known to revolve around concerns about the concepts of reliability and validity. To the two concepts Glesne and Peshkin (1992: 146) add another, that of 'trustworthiness'. According to these authors time is a major factor in the acquisition of trustworthy data. When broken down this covers time spent at the research site, interviewing, and building sound relationships with respondents. The rationale behind this is that respondents who have spent a large amount of time with the researcher are more likely to be frank and comprehensive in terms of the information they share with their researcher. Such respondents are said to be less likely to feign behaviour or feel compelled to do so. The concept of 'largeness' (i.e.

as used to describe the time spent) being relative makes it difficult to say exactly how large 'large' should have been as applied to the current study. As the analyst I may be accused of having lingered on not lingered long enough at the designated research site, but the process would be difficult to quantify, given the snowballing nature of the investigation. Counting in its favour though is the quality rather than the quantity of the time spent both at the research site and with some of the respondents. At the risk of redundancy activities captured in par 3.3.3 below should somehow testify to the fibre of the relationship that I enjoyed and still enjoy with some of the respondents in the current study.

In Glesne and Peshkin's opinion triangulation is another means by which the trustworthiness of findings can be enhanced. Denzin (cited in Babbie and Mouton 2001: 275) defines this concept as the use of multiple methods, an action calculated to raise qualitative researchers above the personal biases which supposedly stem from single methodologies. The idea behind this is to eliminate any deficiencies that may flow from the investigator or the methodology employed. This, we are warned, does not suggest that a triangulated study is without flaws. Indeed the process of doing research is said to be never neat nor tidy, as suggested in the concluding paragraph to this chapter where the shortcomings of the study are outlined. The least that the researcher could do, however, is try to get as close to the truth as possible. In line with this Travers (2001: 2) identifies five main methods employed by qualitative researchers. The fact that this study has employed all five of these methods brings it as close to being trustworthy as any other. These are:

- ethnographic fieldwork,
- textual analysis,
- interviews,
- observation, and
- discourse analysis.



To counter the false sense of security that is a possibility when one does research in a site one is so familiar with as to feel at home in, this study employs all of these methods and more. By 'more' is meant informal face-to-face talks with certain members of staff, total immersion in the school's activities (e.g. organizing an invitation for the school's Grade 11's to attend a UWC open day so as to expose them to university life, attending a candlelight commemoration held in honour of those affected and infected with HIV/AIDS as held in the school, attending three different funeral services in support of bereaved staff members at ZWHS, calling in to offer moral support upon hearing about the latest violent attack on the school as referred to in par. 3.4.4 above, etc.), and requests for textual and telephonic updates on the learners' progress, etc. To provide an example of the last point a call (made in 2007) to one member of staff at this school confirmed hunches (Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 146) developed from a small scale investigation or pilot study that I had conducted prior to the current research. The progress and/ or lack thereof which the two subjects in the pilot study had made post-study was found to be consistent with the character analysis that the study had suggested (Ntete 2007). On the basis of these preliminary findings one could safely say that what I saw was 'earnest'

rather than a product of an unconscious wish to see it (Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 147). The paper being referred to here (i.e. Ntete 2007) is yet to be published.

3.4.4 Ethnographic field-notes

It has been suggested that taking notes on the field is the first step to doing ethnography (Travers 2001). According to Davies, field notes are the most typical data produced by ethnographers. By their very nature field-notes are said to satisfy Flick's (1998: 29) three requirements for texts within qualitative research. In terms of this such texts:

- not only provide the essential data on which findings are based, and
- provide the central medium for presenting and communicating findings, but
- also form the basis for interpretation as well.

In terms of this a good field worker is said to record notes of encounters, describe the interviewee and the setting, while noting any point in the research site that is of particular interest or require further investigation (1999: 195). In line with these it has been my experience that the product of the note-taking aspect of qualitative research tends to resist confinement to any specific section or neat paragraph of any research project in the process of it being used toward the construction of reality. Due to this irrefutable fact the notes which were amassed during the participant observation phase of this study have since been infused into its textual database, so as to inform the various aspects of this entire research project.

3.4.5 Document/Textual Analysis

Flick makes a case about qualitative and quantitative research not being incompatible opposites which should not be combined (1998: 40). Fig. 3.5.1 below illustrates just this point. While both the mid-year and final 2004 mark schedules, among other documents, were analyzed for purposes of data generation, the analysis given below is based on the final (Nov/Dec) mark schedule. Of the two schedules the latter obviously carries more weight because of its predictive quality (i.e. it details which learners are likely to make something of their lives, and which ones are not). The diagram reflected as Fig 3.5.1 below is a summarized page-by-page breakdown of a seven pages long mark schedule (as reflected by the numbers 1 to 7 in column No.1) revealing the results of a total of 337 Grade 11 learners (i.e. 359 learners less/minus 22 dropouts), as reflected in Column 2, who had sat for the exam in question (i.e. final). The number of dropouts is in itself a telling feature of the kinds of challenges faced by these learners, if one considers that this number is reflective of just one grade in a school with five grades (i.e. Grades 8-12) in all. If this number of dropouts could be taken to be indicative of the general pattern in this school, then that would mean the school loses about one hundred learners in any given academic year.

To help readers figure out the table I shall take them through a step by step process. First the reader needs to ignore the first two columns for a moment, and focus on the six columns toward the right hand side. From this the reader will see that three columns in

the extreme right (Columns 6-8) report on the same kinds of categories (i.e. number of passes/ failures, mark range from the highest to the lowest mark, and symbol range from the highest to the lowest symbol) as the other three in the middle section (i.e. Columns 3-5) . The only difference between these two sets of columns is that Columns 3-5 cover learners who had passed (totaling 50 as reflected in the bottom row), while Columns 6-8 report on learners who had failed (totaling 287 as reflected in the bottom row) the examination in question.

Page No.	No. of learners p.p. minus no. of dropouts	No. Passed	Mark Range: Highest-Lowest	Symbol Range: Highest-Lowest	No. Failed	Mark Range Highest – Lowest	Symbol Range: Highest-lowest
1.	55- 04= 51	07	988 (52%) – 779 (41%)	D - E	44	695 (34.8%) - 243 (12.8%)	F- H
2.	55- 01= 54	05	895 (47.1%) – 770 (40.5%)	E - E	49	700 (36.8%) - 217 (11.4%)	F – H
3.	55- 05= 50	08	1076 (51.2%) - 804 (42.3%)	D - E	42	687 (36.2%) - 334 (17.6%)	F – H
4.	55- 03= 52	09	930 (48.9%) - 777 (40.9%)	E - E	43	716 (37.7%) - 257 (13.5%)	F – H
5.	55- 04= 49	08	1045 (49.8%) - 818 (43.1%)	E - E	41	688 (36.2%) - 269 (14.2%)	F – H
6.	55- 04=51	08	918 (48.3%) – 789 (39.5%)	E - F	43	704 (35.2%) - 306 (16.1%)	F – H
7.	29- 01= 28	05	1022 (53.8%) - 826 (43.5%)	D - E	23	668 (35.2%) - 345 (18.2%)	F – H
Total	359- 22=337	50	53.8% - 40.9%	D - E	287	37.7% - 11.4%	F - H

Fig. 3.3.5.1

Judging by the results of the analysis reflected in the table, only a select few get to see the other side of this decisive sieve (Grade 11) in this school. Depending on the temperament of the learner in question (i.e. whether she/he chooses to roll over and die, or fight back) this schedule (whose impact can be judged by the difference between the number of learners who pass Grade 11 and that of those who fail or repeat the class) has the potential to kill any sense of ambition a learner might have. Definitely its negative pinch has been felt by many, leading the current study to the conclusion that the prevailing circumstances can only contribute toward the construction of a negative self-identity among many of the learners in this school. A case in point here is the learner who, in what sounded like a very desperate tone of voice, confessed to having failed Grade 11 ‘three times’ before, while another was busy searching in the dark for whatever it is that

he could do to get through Grades 11 and 12. As appears to have been the case with these two learners just cited, the prognosis for most learners in this class was not exactly good either. As the picture painted by these tables most likely mirrors what is going on in other township high schools as well, it would appear that the poor quality of the final matric results in general is symptomatic of an even bigger educational crisis than both our educational officials and the ministry seem to realize.

All learners being analyzed above had been tested on six subjects, with the first two of the three official languages in the Western Cape (i.e. isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans) being taken at higher grade by all. Depending on the number of content subjects learners do at higher grade (i.e. with each marked out of 400) or standard grade (i.e. marked out of 300), their grand total (i.e. marks for all the subjects added together) ranged between 1900-2100. This would explain why the performance of the learner in the fourth row whose overall mark was 1076, translated into a percentage lower than that obtained by the learner on the seventh row whose overall mark was 1022. Ordinarily the learner with higher marks should also be getting a higher percentage. In this instance the percentages for the two learners were 51.2% and 53.8% respectively. This makes the learner with the highest percentage a *D-symbol* candidate, while the lowest symbol on the failing side of the scale got an *H-symbol*.

A further analysis of the current schedule also reveals, among other things, that out of a total of 337 grade 11 learners who had sat for this exam it is only 50 who passed. Within the range of those who passed the exam the highest percentage obtained was 53.8% (i.e. for a total mark of 1022), while 11.4% (i.e. for a total mark of 217) was the lowest percentage obtained within the range of those who had failed the exam. With such a huge gap separating the learner at the top end and the one at the bottom end of the merit scale, failure appears to be more of a norm than passing for the Grade 11 learners in this school. For that matter the top student himself is in fact a borderline pass. What this analysis illumines is that the issue is not so much the culling practice itself. The point is rather that these learners are just simply not coping as they should be coping.

Of even greater concern is the extremely small number of learners who are registered at higher grade in the crucial content subjects (see figure 3.3.5.2 below), when compared to the number of standard grade candidates. This is not to suggest being registered at SG correlates with good SG grades either, as some learners appear to perform badly even within this less demanding grading system itself. What the grid featured below serves to illustrate is the point that the majority of the 2005 matric class was not cut out with tertiary education in mind. Refer also fig. 1.3 above for proof that the situation is not unique to ZWHS.

Sub	Maths HG	Maths SG	Phys Sc. HG	Phys Sc SG	Acco HG	Acc SG	Econ HG	Econ SG
No. of Learns.	08	237	05	92	04	103	00	107

160 + 40%	03		00		00		00	
120 + 40%		07		07		06		57

Fig. 3.3.5.2 HG versus SG performance in the subjects considered crucial within SA

In terms of this analysis Mathematics SG boasted of 237 candidates, while only a meagre 8 learners were registered on HG. Of the Mathematics HG learners only 3 out of 8 learners got from 40% and above, while it was only 7 of the 237 learners who got 40% and above. What the latter means is all 230 of the SG learners failed the exam). In Physical Science 92 and 05 learners were registered on SG and HG respectively. In this case only 7 SG learners made it. While there were no candidates registered on HG in Economics, more than half of the SG class passed this exam. Clearly something drastic needs to happen, if the picture painted here is to change.

Although the matric pass rate reflected below looks pleasing to the eye, it is clear that the quality of these passes leaves a lot to be desired.

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
39.9 %	47.6 %	87.6 %	63.1 %	80.5 %	80.1 %	87.0 %	68.2 %	80.1 %	66.5 %	38.1 %	64.6 %

Fig 3.3.5.3 Breakdown of matric passes starting from 1996- till 2007

Local newspapers (e.g. the Cape Times) have also contributed to the mosaic of ZWHS thus formed (e.g. the positive publicity given to the school when it first shot to fame, the negative coverage of reports on violent happenings in the school which have led to its notoriety; the annual sweeping coverage of the final provincial matriculation results, etc.). Both the good (featured on the then *Take 5* television programme for the youth, whose title is indicative of the congratulatory nature of its content) and the bad (e.g. *e-tv* news bulletins depicting the violence which has resulted in death on at least two occasions at ZWHS) about this school have also been featured on national television. Interview transcriptions were also considered in the final analysis, with non-textual material including digital photographs which capture key aspects about the school and its immediate surroundings (see Appendix K for some of these photos).

3.4.6 Interviews

I had anticipated huge challenges with regard to locating the thirty houses that I was supposed to visit especially given the fact of many of these homes had no visible street numbers or street names. It was in this light that these homes had to be the first port of call, i.e. before the winter could set in. The huge number of interviews to be conducted necessitated that some kind of database of personal details (e.g. addresses, contact details, proposed time for the interview to take place, etc.) be put together, and a programme be drawn up. Thus the parents knew in advance when I would be coming around. Since the interviews were conducted in the familiar surroundings of the parents' homes the

opportunity to take stock of the surroundings was not passed up. Upon visiting one family in a section called 'The Halls' for example, I could not help but notice the noise levels from the 'neighbouring' family homes (if one may call them that, given the fact that this four-roomed house accommodated four different families in each of its rooms) (see par. 3.4.7.1 where a description of this house type is given). At one point a drunk neighbor barged in on the interview out of curiosity about the visiting researcher (i.e. myself). All the interviews happened during the week as a weekend visit to most of these neighbourhoods would have been counter-productive. I used a tape-recorder in an attempt to ensure that not even one word would escape detection.

The learners were the second group to be interviewed, with their interviews being done after school hours. In this case I conducted the interviews from my car which I had parked at the school's parking lot. This seemed like the best venue as it was thought to reduce the incidence of disturbances and distractions from those passing by. Teachers were the last to be interviewed. Initially I had planned to conduct eleven teacher interviews, because this was the number of names that had come up during the data generation phase. Snowball sampling however led to two more teachers being brought on board, as their subjects had come up in very interesting ways. The reason for sequencing teachers as the last group to be interviewed was to make it possible for me to check their reactions to issues raised by both parents and learners in the preceding interviews. Members of the SMT were interviewed in their offices while teachers at the lower end of the hierarchy came to an inner office that had been allocated to me for this purpose (this office is reflected in Appendix K). Depending on the teacher in question time taken to conduct the interviews ranged between two hours to three days to complete. Question asked differed from teacher to teacher as some were doing specialized work (e.g. the Life Orientation teacher and the Life Support Officer). The post level of the teacher concerned was also considered in determining the relevance of the questions. The semi-structured nature of the exchange made it possible to follow-up on interesting leads.

A total of seventy-three (73) in-depth semi-structured interviews resulting in sixty-five verbatim tape recordings were conducted and transcribed. Of these thirty had focused on parents, followed by another thirty with the learners. The last set of thirteen had to do with teachers. As has already been stated these were conducted at venues which were considered to be the participants' natural habitats. This was to ensure that all the participants felt as comfortable and relaxed as possible, interviews or simply opening up to strangers not being an easy thing for some people. Other than the teacher interviews which involved a lot of code-switching between isiXhosa and English, the main language of the interview was isiXhosa. The language choice was deemed important in order to prevent participants becoming so self-conscious as to become tongue-tied (Ntete 1998). On the issue of language, over and above the findings of my 1998 study as referred to above, one of the advertisements on local television (SABC TV) informed how this issue was handled.

The advert in question aptly captures the idea about people generally feeling uncomfortable expressing themselves in a language other than their own. It depicts two black individuals in a master-servant (i.e. a hotel guest being served by a waiter)

relationship, purportedly ‘blistering’ their tongues with English when, to their greatest relief and joy, it accidentally slips out that both are in fact isiXhosa-speaking. The two derive such an immense sense of relief and comfort in this discovery that they revel in their newly-found sense of brotherhood, and begin chatting away endlessly, with all the previous formalities dispensed with. With these at the back of my mind I sought to ensure that English would not become a barrier to communication.

3.4.7 The home visits

Fraser (1959: 40) outlines four familial attributes which she argues, because they are closely related to intelligence, are predictors of success, and which have a direct bearing on academic attainment. These covered the ‘cultural’, ‘material’, ‘motivational’ and the ‘emotional’ fibre of the home environment. From the possessions or money-oriented point of view she further enumerates ‘income’, ‘occupation of father’ (the current study did not restrict itself to the father figure, most homes in the given context being female headed), ‘family size’ and ‘living space’. The point about the highly contagious impact of the neighbourhood is discussed elsewhere in this study. At this point in the discussion residential areas will be referred to only briefly, because of the important structural dimensions associated with the suggestive name of the house-type in question. The match-box commune kind of residence referred to below for example, is captured under the house-type name of ‘The Halls’ by those living in Nyanga. There is nothing whatsoever even closely resembling a hall in the structures concerned, least of all size-wise. Word has it that the houses were halls in so far as they initially not being partitioned into the four separate family-spaces that they have become since the name was given.

3.4.7.1 The different residential areas

There were six different residential sub-areas of Nyanga visited. In terms of the location and size there were families who lived in an informal settlement, with corrugated iron walls so thin and houses so close to one another that it has to be absolutely impossible for the one family to keep secrets from the other. On the other hand some families lived at the mercy of landlords as backyard tenants, while a small minority counted itself very fortunate indeed that it had title deeds in its safe-keeping. In the example given above where a drunk neighbour had barged in, this one roomed home housed two unemployed parents, two teenage daughters, the teenage boy who was behind the visit, and a toddler. Obviously, this kind of home makes no allowances for the learner in question to study or do homework, let alone prepare for a serious examination like the matriculation one.

3.4.7.2 Types of homes

The kinds of roofs the people had over their heads ranged from the heat-transmitting or cold-absorbing and noisy corrugated iron, to the more considerate asbestos and finally to stylish roof tiles. The types of houses that matched these roofs ranged from informal settlements (which comprised of an assortment of zinc, wood, and whatever building material people could lay their hands on, all gawkily assembled together to supposedly

buffer the body from the harsh elements), to semi-detached, face-brick three bed roomed homes.

3.4.7.3 Family make-up and size

Family sizes ranged from two (where certain family members like children were scattered among other family members, either to ease the burden, or for the sake of convenience as in when the child had to look after a grandparent, or live closer to the school to avoid transport costs, etc.), to ten extended family members living under one roof. Family types covered sibling-headed families, single-parent homes (i.e. due to parents having conceived their children out of wedlock, spousal death, divorce, abandonment, etc); foster parenting; members of extended families stepping in to assist in any way they could; both biological parents heading the home; or grandparents looking after their grandchildren, etc. The age of parent-figures ranged from thirty-one to eighty-nine.

Fraser's observations, about children from very large families tending not only to be of average or below average intelligence, to drop out of school, but also to begin work early so as to contribute to the family income were found to be consistent with the findings of the current study. The bright children in Fraser's sample tended to come from small families. In the latter case like their siblings before them had done, the children were said to remain longer at school, and to begin earning later in their lives.

3.4.7.4 Income Generation

Of all the warning bells that Fraser sounds with regard to the notion of genuinely reflective assessment, the current study considers only those thought to be relevant to its concerns. One of these is the reluctance among some family members, to reveal their income. An example of this in the current study would be the woman who would not say exactly how much it was that she and her foreman husband were generating on a monthly basis. Some family members were not exactly forthright when it came to revealing their income. I had anticipated the possibility of some families being reluctant to reveal their true income. One possible reason for this is that some may have been afraid that by so doing they might be making it possible for Social Welfare to withdraw the grants that they were benefiting from. People with a rural background also tend to find it un-cultural to divulge that sort of detail. There is also a sense that those who were willing to reveal their financial status were entertaining some idea that I might be able to do something about the situation, with some families not being exactly sure what the purpose was behind the current research.

Children's contributions to families also varied from one family to the next. In certain cases children handed their whole wages to parents for the latter to run the household, in others the children themselves were responsible for these. It was also not unheard of for some children to only give their parents a certain amount each month, toward boarding and lodging. Means of income generation then varied from salaries generated from menial jobs, to self-employment. An example of the latter case was an entrepreneur who used the concept of 'coping' to describe her financial status. One interesting case was that

of a woman who was too arthritic to do work of any kind, too old to get a job as a domestic servant, while not old enough to qualify for an old age grant. The woman confessed to surviving on the income of her university drop-out daughter.

Of those who were prepared to divulge something about their income all that one of the respondents was prepared to reveal was she and her husband earned far beyond the R1500 that was a joint income for most households. At the other end of the scale was the single mother who earned R350 for minding a neighbour's child. External financial help came from the government. For the child and old age or disability grants respondents were getting R170 and R740 respectively at the time of the study.

I could go on splitting hairs forever, like the families had to do when dividing their meagre incomes (such that these would cover 'children's school needs', 'rent', 'food', 'electricity bills', 'rates', support for needy children in their neighbourhoods, etc.), trying to give a comprehensive breakdown of the financial situation of each home. I could also follow Fraser's guidelines and divide the total income by the number of persons benefiting from it (1959: 47) Since it is not feasible (given temporal and spatial constraints) to do all of these, suffice it to say that at least about 95% of these homes were steeped in abject poverty. As one parent so aptly put it, his family survived by 'tightening the belt'.

The situation was so bad in some of the cases that I found myself perusing newspapers in search of jobs for some of the parents. I was responsible for putting some parents in touch with the enterprising woman (also one of my respondents) who had promised she would help set them up. There was one point where I shared an emotional moment as the child-minding parent relived the challenges she faced on her R350 monthly income. In fact, some of the parents cooperated with me because some thought this would somehow benefit their children. A small minority saw the interviews as an opportunity to voice their dissatisfaction at the manner in which the school was handling certain issues affecting their children (e.g. the 89year old grand-parent who felt her grandchild was being disadvantaged by being registered to write the final English exam at 'standard' rather than 'higher' grade, an issue which had had quite a few parents up in arms).

This reaction appears to confirm Auerbach's own findings. According to this parents of colour, like their children, arrive at school with complex narratives of the purposes, possibilities, and disappointments of schooling. The tendency among such parents, it is said, is to view the educational process through their own experiences of school as learners, as well as their contact with school and their efforts to support their children's learning at home (2002: 1360). It is exactly charged emotions like the ones registered by this elderly woman which make critical discourse analysis an appropriate tool of investigation for this study. CDA is said to enable a process whereby the voices of those silenced in schools and muted in educational research (as Kallaway seems to imply where the SA situation is concerned) are heard (Auerbach 2002: 1369).

What is said above does not, however, suggest that the few parents, teachers and learners given voice here speak for all the constituencies of ZWHS. Just as is the case with Yin

(as cited in the Auerbach study) neither is the sample representative of all black working class parents and their children. What the study aims for rather is analytic generalizability of findings, rather than the findings being generalized to populations (2001: 1374).

3.4.8 Participant Observation

Because participant observation is said to be made up of a variety of methods, it is more properly conceived of as a research strategy than a unitary research method. According to Davies, the hallmark of this strategy is long term personal involvement with those being studied, with this including participation in their daily lives (1999). This is done in such a way that the researcher gains insider knowledge of the people and their situation. In terms of this, among others the cluster of techniques that the researcher can choose from includes surveys, the use of key informants, taking photographs, collecting life histories, etc.

In this particular case I set aside and spent a period of two weeks at the research site, doing participant observation. Among the range of possible roles that researchers are said to be enabled to choose from (i.e. complete observer, observer-as-participant, participant as-observer, and complete participant) I assumed the role of the observer as participant. This, however, had nothing to do with Davies' idea of the choice of role being a measuring scale supposedly determining the researcher' degree of being accepted by those being studied (1999: 72). Rather it was a conscious decision on my part, to sit back, be inconspicuous as possible, and to watch and learn. In actual fact, I had to turn down an invitation to be a guest speaker at the school's farewell function a few months earlier, as such involvement was thought to have the potential of compromising my research interests.

The observation period started with daily visits to four grade eleven classes. Three of these were English classes, two of which were being taught by one teacher. The fourth class observed was a Biology one, with this being taught by a separate teacher. The purpose behind the visit to the latter class was to check the extent to which the teacher in question used or did not use English, or code-switched between English and isiXhosa in teaching this content subject. It is not uncommon for some content teachers in township schools, to teach through the medium of the mother tongue (i.e. isiXhosa in this case), not so much because they acknowledge the crucial role played by mother-tongue instruction, but more because they do not consider themselves obliged to teach in English. The fact that learners have to express themselves in English when writing exams on these content subjects is not seen as a deterrent in some spheres. Indeed even when marking internally, teachers like these (whether justified or not, some History teachers are considered to be a case in point in this regard) would overlook language usage while they focus only on the bare 'facts'. This kind of attitude has always been a sore spot for English teachers, as it is commonly believed that it is only a concerted effort that could help learners improve their proficiency in this critical language.

Other than the purpose of data collection, the idea behind the class visits idea was also to build a relationship with the learners. The visits were to pave the way to the essay-

writing process which was to mark the end of the observation period. Both ends were achieved, though the writing of the life-stories had to be rushed in the face of a wage strike that was looming at the time, and in which teachers were to take part (see Appendix J). As a result of this strike I managed to teach only two of the three English classes.

While it was only two weeks that had been set aside for participant observation, visits to the school went far beyond this period as the school was the nucleus that controlled most of my activities and movements. The observation was by no means restricted to the school premises alone. By consenting to take part in the project the thirty parents were also allowing me access into their life worlds. A brief discussion of visits to the thirty homes follows below.

3.4.8.1 Reflexivity: my role as researcher

Owing to my personal closeness to the issues being analyzed in this dissertation (see par. 1.6 above where I talk about my stance on some of the issues raised in the current study), Peshkin's sobering paper (1988) served as a reminder about the need for researchers to be aware of their own subjectivity (see 3.3.9). In terms of this, analysts would do well to strive for 'enhanced awareness' of the impact of their subjectivity on the data they handle. This state of affairs is said to result from a formal systematic monitoring of self. In terms of this, analysts need to speak 'personally' while meaning 'generally', among other things (Peshkin 1988: 20). In recognition of this useful piece of advice, self-introspection was done from time to time throughout the length of the thesis, especially when issues that evoke strong positive or negative feelings in me were being discussed. By identifying my subjectivity through a constant 'subjectivity audit', I attempted to monitor both myself and how I was feeling (Peshkin 1988: 18). Given the fact that situations breed different 'subjective I's', Peshkin advocates the implementation of what he calls 'situational' analysis (1988).

Despite the sense of solidarity that I may share with the subjects under study (see par. 1.6 above), the analysis about to unfold here focuses not on individuals but rather the cultural frameworks of meaning that they reproduce. Burman (2007) warns about the need for discourse analysts, to take seriously how the tools of their own discursive practices speak of the former's own assumptions. According to this, failure to attend to these can lead them back toward precisely the kinds of decontextualized and objectivist claims to knowledge that discourse work in psychology was formulated to critique. Care has been taken therefore, to ensure that 'taking sides' does not amount to under-analysis.

3.5 Methods of Analysis

Cohen *et al.* (2000: 165) suggest that preparation for research involves selecting an appropriate problem and devising the relevant research question. The questions that they propose researchers should ask themselves revolve around sampling procedures, among

others. These include asking who the subject of the study is going to be, what it is that makes a good informant, etc. In the case of the current thesis the object of the study was neither ‘a great person’, ‘a common person’, the ‘selected’ nor the ‘coerced’, but rather the concept of school success as embodied by those at ZWHS. In line with this one could say the different samples in both phases of the research (i.e. the 2004 and 2005 phases involving the essay writing, and the interviews, respectively) emanated from willing volunteers. In line with the interests of the study the purpose of the research was explained to the respondents, and their questions entertained.

3.5.1 The Sampling procedure

As has already been explained this thesis draws from multiple sources of data generation (i.e. mainly life-histories and participant observation in the initial phase; and home visits coupled with interviews with parents, teachers and learners; etc. in the second phase). The respondents were aware they could choose whether or not to participate in the research. The first phase of the research drew a sample of 198 learners registered in grades 11A, 11C, 11E and 11G. Of these it was an average of about 119 respondents who wrote the essays. For one reason or another (for example late-coming, truancy and absenteeism) some learners did not manage to write their life-histories on all three of the given essay topics (i.e. ‘My family’, ‘My educational experiences’, and ‘Where I see myself in ten years’ time’). In the second phase of the research the resultant sample of thirty grade twelve learners had self-selected to participate in the study, by also getting their parents to sign the consent letter. There were ‘sleep in’ parents who, though they would have liked to be part of the research, could not do so. These included domestic servant mothers who come home only during the weekend, their places of employment, (e.g. Constantia in Cape Town) being too far, costly or inconvenient for them to commute to on a daily basis.

Other than the learners thirty parent figures and/ or guardians also participated by way of enabling semi-structured interviews to be conducted with them. To do this they opened not just the doors to their homes but talked in confidence, about their dreams and fears regarding the future of the children in their custody. Because it is in the nature of life-histories to reveal intimate details, while providing scant cover from prying eyes (Cohen et al 2000), the anonymity of respondents has been protected. Fictitious names were used for both the school and the participants under investigation (see Appendices A-F for extracts from the paraphrased interviews, and also D-F for a few essay samples).

3.5.5.1 Sampling of teachers

In line with the CLIDE mandate (see par. 1.6 above) for me to investigate what it is/ was about ZWHS that made the school succeed, the teachers interviewed here were those identified by learners as making a positive contribution in the learner’s educational lives. In terms of the learner interviews these teachers were presented as either exercising discipline, were considered good in the subjects they taught; or made life more easier in one way or another, for the learner in question (e.g. by showing loving care, as in those who brought lunch for children without the necessary means, persuaded resistant parents

about the importance of school uniform, etc.). Rank-wise the teachers ranged from post-level one (P1) to the senior management level (two deputy principals and the principal). Middle-management included seven heads of departments (HOD's). All in all a total of thirteen teachers was interviewed.

	Males	Females	Total	Codes
Post Level 1	03	01	04	P1
Top Management	02	01	03	SMT- Princ & 2Deputies
Heads of Depts.	02	04	06	HODs
Total	07	06	13	

Fig 3.5.2.1

3.5.2 Discourse Analysis

Based on Blommaert's 'nuts and bolts' concept of understanding of how language forms give rise to inhabited and inscribed identities, and how some forms of language enable some identities while disabling others he warns about the tendency among many (policy makers included) to think of language as a uniform, closed, bounded and rule-governed phenomenon (2007). This author argues for the need to consider 'function', as people are said to use language in an attempt to make themselves understood by others. This notion Blommaert refers to as people 'having voice'. Being a social construct voice, according to Blommaert is subject to processes of selection and exclusion that have their roots in the social structure. It is as the practical conversion of socially loaded resources into socially loaded semiotic action, with every aspect of this showing traces of the patterns of distribution of resources, that Blommaert urges the notion of voice be seen (2007). He describes resource allocation, accessibility and currency in terms of a continuum- from democratic to exclusive resources, from those that mark inferiority to those spelling superiority, and from resources whose functions are locked into specific niches in society as opposed to those that function well across different social contexts.

In educational environments like the SA township school the function and value of literacy is said to be likely to be different from that in a fully saturated literacy environment. In line with this I sought to find glimpses of the life-worlds behind the writers of the essays (Blommaert 2007). First I analyzed the essays as one would analyze poetry or any literary text for that matter, free of any literary influence. This kind of analysis was repeated three times as it is my experience that each repeat episode always reveals something new. A CDA paper that I had presented before using the same data base was used as a pilot study which provided guidelines for the main project (Ntete 2007). My most recent paper (Ntete 2008) has also strengthened my grip on the issues raised in the current study.

3.5.3 Essay Analysis

Whitty maintains that standardized methods for conducting narrative research do not exist. Having explored the uses of the other techniques, she is convinced about the usefulness of the narrative technique. Though cumbersome as well as time-consuming, she believes this can present a richer picture and give greater insights into the construction of identity, compared to other traditional methods (2002: 213).

As language is assumed by most to be contextual by definition, the investigator is expected to attend to the meaning of utterances in context. In terms of this phrases, sentences or the entire text are to be considered within the context of the goals of the speaker, and the relationship between the speaker and the audience. Adding her voice to the debate Willig (1999: 2) argues there is always more than one way to describe something. The choices people make therefore, in terms of how they package their perceptions and experiences, is said to give rise to particular versions of events and of reality. In exploring the idea of how differently two people may make a simple request for salt for example, Pennebaker *et al.* (2003) distinguish between linguistic style and linguistic content. According to this, utterances can reveal different features of the interactants' relationship, the speaker's personality and how the speakers understand themselves.

Of the numerous psychological word count strategies that Pennebaker *et al.* (2003) identify, the quantitative text analysis strategy sounded like the most appropriate (i.e. used alongside other analytic tools) for purposes of the current study. According to these authors, word count strategies are based on the assumption that the words people use convey psychological information over and above their literal meaning, and independently of their semantic context. In terms of this psychological word count strategies exist for both the analysis of content (what is being said) and style (how it is being said). The most current approaches here are said to cover simple word counts such as standard grammatical units (e.g. personal pronouns and prepositions), or psychologically derived linguistic dimensions (e.g. emotion words and achievement-related words). For a good measure of the latter type of words the reader is referred to par 4.2.2 below.

Titscher *et al.* (2000: 55) identify content analysis as the longest established method of text analysis among the set of empirical methods of social investigation. Originally the term was said to refer only to those methods that concentrate on directly and clearly quantifiable aspects of text content, and a rule on absolute and relative frequencies of words per text or surface unit. Because of the approach's 'neglect' of the particular quality of texts and their 'meaning content', it is said to have been met with criticism (Titscher 2000: 62). As there is need to pay attention to the reconstruction of contexts, it is via the latter method that 'patterns' and 'wholes' in texts can be demonstrated. In this way researchers can show the different possibilities of interpretation of 'multiple connotations'. Though Mayring's (1988), emphasis on the qualitative method has gained popularity in recent years, from the foregoing discussion one can appreciate the

complimentary rather than mutually exclusive nature of the both quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

In Mayring's independent and sequential model he proposes three distinct analytical steps which may be carried out 'either independently or in combination' during the analysis of texts. These are the 'summary', the 'explication' and the 'structuring' phases. The first phase attempts to reduce the material in such a way as to preserve the essential content, and by abstraction, to create a manageable corpus which still manages to reflect the original material. This is said to involve 'paraphrasing', 'generalizing' or 'abstracting' and 'reducing' the text. The explication phase on the other hand is said to involve 'explaining', 'clarifying' and 'annotating' the material. The process encompasses what Mayring (1988) sequences as an attempt at a lexico-grammatical definition, followed by the determination of the explication material, a narrow context analysis and lastly a broad context analysis. The last phase, that of 'structuring' is believed to contain nine stages, and is deemed 'the most crucial' in content analysis. Its goal being to 'filter out a particular structure' from the text, this is said to enable the analyst to structure the text according to 'content', 'form' and 'scaling' (Titscher 2000: 64).

The content part of the analysis is said to involve the determination of the units of analysis. On the basis of some theoretical basis the dimensions of the structuring are then established. Features of the system of categories are then said to be fixed, with this being followed by the formulation of definitions and agreement for coding in separate categories. Data locations are said to be marked via this first appraisal of the text, and then subsequently processed and extracted. Based on the demands of the particular situation the text could be subjected to further scrutiny. The system of categories could then be re-assessed and revised, with this necessitating a reappraisal of the material. Following this the results could then be processed.

Since the establishment by Mayring (as cited in Titscher 2000) of qualitative content analyses, it has become clear that the range of procedures in content analysis is enormous, in terms of both analytical goals and the means and processes developed to pursue them. According to this one could therefore accept as variants of content analysis, all those methods of text analysis which somehow approach texts by means of categories, as it is said to be no longer a matter only of the communicative content of texts but of their linguistic form as well. Antaki (cited in Burman 2007) refers to as 'non-analyses', examples of forms of discourse analytic work that fail to fulfill claims to discursive analyses. Adding to this Burman warns against work that founders through the under-analysis of not having a question (2007). She labels as 'uninteresting and weak' those examples which do not specify why the analysis is being done and is worth doing. The reader is referred to par. 3.2 above where I provide details as to why it was deemed important that ZWHS be studied.

The fact about the words that people use being diagnostic of their mental, social and even physical state is according to Pennebaker *et al.* not a new concept. These authors cite Freud and Lacan as having exposed how common errors in speech betray people's deeper motives or fears, and also how the unconscious asserts itself through language. According

to these authors the way people describe events and define the meanings of the events helps them keep their grasp on reality (2007). In recognition of these contributions this study has paid close attention to those features (or parts of speech) in the subjects' life-histories which were deemed to capture the writers' experiences. By this is meant the positive or negative linguistic choices they make to either talk themselves up or down (e.g. the prominent use of the concept of 'ownership' as raised in par. 4.2.2 below, etc.). In the current study the analysis has covered adverbial and/ or adjectival phrases, idiomatic expressions or aphorisms, etc. The analysis has also taken stock of the level of literacy (i.e. standard versus non-standard usage), and the degree of control (i.e. whether learners have vague or definitive control) over the language, on the part of those being investigated, among other features.

3.6 The analytic process

Glesne and Peshkin (1992: 127) describe data analysis as involving the organization of what one had seen, heard and read in such a way that one can make sense of what one has learned. Working with data is said to mean creating explanations, posing hypotheses, developing theories and linking one's story to other stories. To enable this kind of process the researcher is expected to categorize, synthesize, search for patterns and interpret the data they have collected.

3.6.1 How the life-stories were analyzed

The categories and sub-categories developed in the current study enabled an analysis of the kinds of words, phrases and expressions that keep learners motivated, focused and grounded in the face of overwhelming circumstances and seemingly insurmountable challenges as suggested by statistical evidence provided in figs. 3.3.5.1 and 3.3.5.2 above. The ways in which humans experience the world being at the heart of narrative analysis, clues, be they of a linguistic or non- linguistic nature, were regarded as part of the data to be analyzed (Merriam 2001). Description also being considered the most basic presentation of data, care was taken not to leave readers to draw their own conclusion. To prevent the risk of readers misinterpreting things as well as trivializing the results I made the necessary connections which only I as the researcher could have made.

The next level of analysis was the construction of categories or themes deemed to capture some recurring pattern that cuts across the preponderance of data. In this case the exercise was both intuitive and systematic. It was largely informed by my orientation and experience, and meanings made explicit by the learners themselves, as well as by the current study's purpose (Merriam 2001).

The category schemes used in this particular study therefore have been derived from the data themselves (Merriam 2001). There being no formulae or recipes for the best way to analyze the short stories elicited and collected (at least according to Atkins as cited in the latter volume), sociological and sociolinguistic models of narrative analysis, together with the psychological approach, were among approaches employed in analysis. It should also be clear to the reader that the categories used in this and in the following chapters

(i.e. Chapters 4 and 5) are mere ‘abstractions’ as suggested by the data, rather than the data themselves. Patton (cited in Merriam) considers it a ‘fundamental purpose’ of language, to tell people what is important by giving it a name. By so doing language separates the one thing from other things with names. While these categories have the effect of describing the data, to some extent they also serve to interpret it (Merriam 2001). Where case studies are concerned Merriam warns about the difficulty on the part of the analyst, to communicate understanding. According to this the tremendous amount of data and the range of data sources may present disparate, incompatible and even contradictory information. If proper attention had not been given to the management of data, according to this, chances are that the analyst will be seriously challenged in trying to make sense of the data (Merriam 2001).

To determine the efficacy of the categories developed care has been taken to ensure that these categories are both ‘sensitizing’ (i.e. being sensitive to the data) and ‘reflective’ of the purpose of the research (i.e. answering to the research questions at hand). In that some units of data fit into other categories (refer to par. 4.9. in the preceding chapter) the analysis may be said ‘not’ to be mutually exclusive as Merriam suggests it should be. Effort has however been made to meet ‘the most difficult criterion’ of all in the given guidelines. This is the need for categories to be ‘conceptually congruent’. By this is meant that the same level of abstraction characterizes all categories at the same level (Merriam 2001). The findings of the current do not just fit in well together, but they also answer the research question as to which aspects of the respondents’ language usage hint at a potential for or tendency toward self-empowerment or disempowerment.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992: 132) argue that the process of data analysis implies making connections among stories. In terms of this the analysts ask themselves what is being illuminated, how the stories connect, and what themes and patterns give shape to their data. The data having spoken for itself in this instance, information was then transformed into a form that communicates the promise of this study’s findings. Miles and Huberman’s (cited in Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 137) risky one-directional ‘cause and effect’ arrows model was further used to link the one code or category to the next. Motivational issues were perceived to be the first link in a ‘causal’ arrangement of factors in the respondents’ storied lives. In line with this an analysis of the concept seemed like the best reference point from which one could spearhead the discussion. The ‘cognitive maps’ (to quote Werner and Schoepfle as cited in Merriam 2001) about to be presented here are an attempt to come up with hypotheses and/or explanations.

3.7 The study

This single case study of ZWHS in Nyanga township near Cape Town (CT) uses a comparative approach to examine, compare and contrast two 2004 Grade 11 classes in this school. Using the essay ‘Where I see myself in ten years’ time’ as a frame the study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to determine if the sense of tipped scales as suggested by the two streams is in any way registered in the two sets of learners’ discourses (see par 1.3.4 above for a background into this comparative study). The essay in question is one of three life histories that these learners had written. In writing the

essay learners were instructed to cover their career choices, the kinds of families they wanted for themselves, the lifestyles they envisaged, and also what they perceived to be potential obstacles. Through the use of these categories the study was able to diagnose instances of disempowerment or empowerment, and/ or disengagement or engagement in the kind of language that the learners use. Some aspects of the respondents' language could be linked to strong aspirations for success while others suggest a different approach to the notion of greatness (see par. 4.2.2 below).

The current thesis reports on a longitudinal case study of Zondelela Woyise High School (ZWHS) in Nyanga Township near Cape Town (CT), with the study having commenced in 2004. The qualitative ethnography employs grounded theory. Attention was given to only four out of seven grade 11 classes in this school. Data collection included participant observation in three English classes, two of which were taught by the same teacher, together with a Biology class. This was followed by an average of 111 biographies being written by learners in all four of these classes. Covered by these three written essays topics, i.e. the learners' current family lives, their educational experiences, and where they saw themselves in ten years' time. Altogether the time spent on this initial phase of the research spanned a period of two weeks. For the purposes of this particular study attention was given only to the topic on where learners saw themselves in ten years' time.

The second phase of the research commenced in 2005. This centred on thirty learners who were doing grade 12 at the time. These came from the pool of Grade 12 learners who had been doing Grade 11 in 2004. Using a bottleneck system the school is said to ensure that only deserving learners proceed to grade 12. This results in more or less only one third of all grade 11 learners filtering through to grade 12. The bulk of the 2004 Grade 11 class was left behind as a result of this, and was busy repeating Grade 11 while the essay writing phase was being carried out in 2005.

The thirty 2005 learner interviewees were selected on the basis of their parents having signed a consent form. By so doing the parents not only permitted their children to be interviewed, but agreed to also participate in the research. Landis *et al.* (2007) capture the form of consent reported upon here with the concept of 'informed consent'. Given the fact of illiteracy among most of the parents in the study the description of the study; assurance about the voluntary nature of participation, and that data collected would remain confidential were all explained to parents by word of mouth. I visited the homes of the learners first, and conducted interviews with their parents in surroundings familiar to the latter. The home visits and parent interviews were then followed by the learner interviews. For purposes of ensuring privacy these were conducted from my car which I parked on the ZWHS parking lot, with this happening after school hours.

As the learner interviews unfolded, snowball sampling was used to bring on board teachers whose names and/or subjects come up in interesting ways, e.g. the Afrikaans and History teachers. Despite the currency that Afrikaans enjoys in the Western Cape Province (WCP) at the moment, this subject remains unpopular among some learners because of its links to the apartheid regime. The mother tongue of the majority of respondents in the current study, i.e. isiXhosa, on the other hand, is generally considered

to be a dead end subject. On the basis of these many students study these languages only because they have to. Eleven out of the thirteen teachers interviewed were selected on the basis of learners citing them as having contributed to the latter's learning lives in some positive way or another. In terms of their professional status the teachers interviewed constituted three members from the senior management level (SMT), six HOD's; and four P1 teachers.

The documents analyzed include the May/ June and November/ December 2004 Grade 11 mark schedules; a breakdown of ZWHS Grade12 results starting from 1997 till 2007 as obtained from the WCED, newspaper clippings, etc. Other than these, information gathered via informal talks with certain members of the teaching staff also informed the current study.

3.7.1 The Essay Topic 'Where I see myself in ten years' time'

Using Whitty's study as a guideline the respondents wrote under three different topics (2002: 216). For the purposes of this specific study attention is given to essays written under the above-mentioned future-oriented topic alone. For purposes of triangulation I draw from writings on the other essay topics as well, where and when it is relevant for me to do so.

For all the learners in this study English is a second if not a third language (with Afrikaans making the latter option a very strong possibility). The majority of these learners have low proficiency levels in this language, which is not unheard of among township schools in general in this country. It is exactly this fact which had prompted the research I did for my Master's degree (Ntete 1998). In this study I sought to establish what it is that made a very select few township learners good ESL writers while the majority of learners found this almost impossible to achieve. To reduce the possibility of participants in the current study experiencing writers' block, care was taken to lessen the intimidating potential of the English language. So while it was important for Whitty to exclude from her instructions themes which her respondents could focus on, in this case structured tools in the form of 'lifelines' or 'props' were given.

One of the aims behind the specific essay topic was to explore the extent to which the new democratic dispensation was influencing the previously disadvantaged learners' outlook in life. In line with this it was deemed important to determine the extent to which the language that learners used could be said to betray the kind of self construction deemed to be likely to benefit both the individual and the country as a whole in the near future. The expectation was that from this body of data the researcher would be able to distinguish between learners that were still caught up in grip of the poverty-entrenching apartheid mentality (e.g. Baynham and De Fina's 'declaration of incapacity' 2005: 30), and those who were seizing the moment. Such discourses of empowerment and/ or disempowerment were considered to be a useful diagnostic tool from which South African educationalists could start plotting the way forward in terms of designing context-specific intervention strategies for the future. In line with this ideal the lifelines or props referred to above had a dual purpose attached to them. To guard against the

essay question being met with simplistic statements of ideals, one purpose of these lifelines was to aid in the construction and unfolding of the narratives. The second purpose was to facilitate systematic comparison across the sample (Thomson *et al.* 2002: 339).

The author gave the topic in full acknowledgment of the fact that some of the futures were more likely to transpire than others, as these were more of plans than just wild dreams for some of the learners concerned. The strong likelihood of some of the learners literally taking the dream-rooted nature of the topic was also entertained. According to Elkind's idea of the 'personal fable', adolescents are said to go through a stage where they develop heroic stories about themselves. It is not unheard of therefore, for this age group to present stories about a future that is too grandiose or ridiculous to be realistic. Indeed some respondents did not disappoint me on this score. This, however, is said not to mean these stories are not authentic. Whitty likens focusing on the real to excluding parts of the narrative (2002: 226). Learners were further asked to say what they perceived to be potential impediments to their future dreams. This aspect of the question enabled the researcher to determine the learners' degree of commitment to their goals.

3.7.1.1 Narrative Analysis

The narrative nature of the topic makes it possible for the writer, to approach it from different angles, depending on the degree of creativity of the teller. The analysis therefore took stock of how single words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, etc. both individually and holistically, contributed to the overall experience of the essay. Comparison also formed part of the analysis. From a linguistic point of view the overall impression formed had to answer the question as to how effectively the learners had used the language at their disposal or non-disposal (linguistic competence being a matter of degrees), to get the message across. At another level the study interrogated what the words, phrases, sentences, etc. employed betrayed about the kind of person who had selected to use them. The question being pondered was the extent to which the discourses that learners had used could be said to suggest or not suggest an inclination toward future success on their part. Each aspect of the essay writing process, non-verbal clues included (e.g. essay length, incoherence), were taken to communicate something about the writer or his/her circumstances. Par. 4.2 below provides a sample of an essay that was analyzed, and briefly highlights some aspects of the procedure followed in the analysis as a whole.

To provide a rich context (i.e. by either countering, supporting, and/or challenging, etc.) the points being presented by the individual writers, the study would then draw from the back up material (i.e. the participant observation, field notes, interviews, the two other essays, the home visits, etc). Information gathered during the data generation phase of the study has in this sense been used to provide a 'thick' description (Babbie and Mouton 2001). The relevant voices are woven into each aspect of the discussion, the idea being to get as plausible an argument as possible.

Owing to my personal closeness to the issues being analyzed in this dissertation, Peshkin's sobering paper (1988) served as a reminder about the need for researchers to be

aware of their own subjectivity (see 3.3.9). In terms of this, analysts would do well to strive for ‘enhanced awareness’ of the impact of their subjectivity on the data they handle. This state of affairs is said to result from a formal systematic monitoring of self. In terms of this, analysts need to speak ‘personally’ while meaning ‘generally’, among other things (Peshkin 1988: 20).

In recognition of this useful piece of advice, self-introspection has been effected from time to time throughout the length of the thesis, especially when issues that evoke strong positive or negative feelings in me are being discussed. By identifying my subjectivity through a constant ‘subjectivity audit’, I have attempted to monitor both myself and how I am feeling (Peshkin 1988: 18). Given the fact that situations breed different ‘subjective I’s’, Peshkin advocates the implementation of what he calls ‘situational’ analysis (1988).

3.8 The limitations of the Study

Fairly stringent measures were taken in this study, to thwart the ‘anything goes’ argument said to be harboured by traditionalists where discourse analysis is concerned (Burman 2007). Despite such attempts it is important to acknowledge the fact that like any other study this one also has its shortcomings, some real and others imagined. The discussion that follows covers the different phases of the research process. Attention is first given to my role as a participant observer, with this being followed by the data generation phase, methodological concerns, etc.

3.8.1 Problems with participant observation

At least three authors have sounded some concern around the accuracy of this technique as a data generation tool. These have to do with the observer, the observed, and the how of the observation as reflected in the reporting. Atkinson raises concerns over the observer’s subjectivity. According to this anthropologist or sociologists are not always necessarily objective in their interpretation of data. Their intellectual attitudes being said to be the product of the conventions of a particular culture and a discipline, these researchers are said to constantly interpret and translate the actuality of the fieldwork situations into these terms (Atkinson 1990:11).

As both Davies (1999: 71) and Pitt (1972: 49) warn, anthropologists cannot participate in and observe everything. Sometimes the events in the field which the anthropologist would have liked to see occur simultaneously. There are also many relevant events which are said to occur outside the restricted time-space framework of the fieldwork. Hatch and Wisniewski seem to speak to this very concern as they narrow the scope to that of the narrative analyst whose purpose it is to produce stories as the outcome of their research. Where narrative analysis is concerned they advise that researchers select a bounded system for study since the kind of data generated depends on the focus of the research. According to these co-authors narrative analysis begins with the question ‘How did this happen?’ or ‘How did this come about?’ Toward this they then search for pieces of information that contribute to the construction of a story. Such a story then is said to provide an explanatory answer to the question at hand (1995: 15). In their search for

answers anthropologists in general may then utilize the ideas and interpretations of other people, to help explain what is going on around them. According to this, more often than not the researchers have no knowledge of the subjectivity of those persons who provide the information.

Pitt (1972), on the other hand acknowledges the restrictive nature of language. In terms of this viewpoint there can only be a complete record of any given event in a limited sense. The semantic constraints in language itself do not allow the same kind of completeness in the documentary record, as that recorded in a photograph or movie. Even in the case of a photo shot the camera cannot be in all places at all times. In line with this Pitt argues that there is always a viewpoint and bias in reporting. The bias includes a priority in the order in which details are noted, selectivity in impressions recorded, the choice of words, the tone of the writing, etc.

‘Interpretational’ and ‘observer’ bias are two kinds of bias in analysis and interpretation which Pitt (1972: 51) foregrounds. He defines the former concept as the point at which the writer’s total interests spoil the objectivity of his analysis. The danger of the latter concept, on the other hand, is that because it is thoroughgoing it is likely to colour a major part of the reportage. He identifies ethnocentrism or ‘lack of cultural relativism’ as the most important factor contributing to both interpretational and observer bias.

Attention to the role of the researcher in the construction of research data is said to lead to a reflexive anthropology which emphasizes the inevitability of researchers constructing such dialogues in terms of their own subjective understandings of the interaction (Harvey 1992: 73). To lay open to analysis and deconstruction the interplay among facts, memory and experience the study now discusses issues of reflexivity.

3.8.2 The collection of data

The first limitation in this regard has to do with the fact of the study having metamorphosed a lot since the conception of the research topic. The study had started off as an inquiry into what it was that was making ZWHS the ‘successful’ township high school that it was thought to be. It however soon became very clear, as the analysis unfolded (refer to figs. 3.5.5.1 and 3.5.5.2 above where the final exam mark schedule for the 2004 grade 11 is analyzed), that all is not gold that glitters. As one member of this school’s management team had been modest enough to admit, it would take a long time before the school could compete on an equal level with its former Model-C counterparts.

When the study was first initiated critical discourse analysis as an approach had not been part of the plan. What this means is that my gaze as the researcher was focused on something other than what it landed up scrutinizing. Had I known from the onset, that this is the direction the research would finally take, this would most probably have impacted on the participant observation phase of the research in ways unknown. Because of this limitation, and in hind sight, I now wish I could have given the learners an opportunity to write the essays in the mother tongue (i.e. isiXhosa) as well, as this most likely would have enabled an even thicker description than has been achieved with the

current study. Another hard lesson I had to take relates to my not having provided learners with black pens. This error has resulted in many of the essays I would have liked to bring to the readers' attention being too faint to be made part of appendices, with lead pencils having been used in the writing of some of these.

The timing was another issue. The observation period, as well as the writing of the life-histories, was ill-timed, with the final exams just around the corner. The situation was further aggravated by unforeseen circumstances (i.e. teachers in Cape Town embarking on a wage strike). Concern about the possibility of a rolling mass action, coupled with the unpredictable nature of this kind of activity necessitated that I quickly squeeze in the essay-writing process. Olwig's criticism (1999: 29) finds fertile ground in the shortcoming just described. According to this author several anthropologists have argued that life-story interviews should be carried out with persons with whom the anthropologist has developed a relationship over an extended period of time. This was not possible for me to achieve, for reasons I am about to expose hereafter.

On critical days as referred to in the wage strike example referred to above (i.e. when there is potential of learners being exposed to danger) ZWHS is known to work according to a 'marathon' schedule (refer to par. 3.2.7 for more detail on this phenomenon. In light of the afore-mentioned the likelihood of the respondents not being in the correct frame of mind while writing the essays cannot be completely ruled out. Indeed there is every possibility that those who had missed some of the essays would not have done so, had things been normal. During the data analysis phase I began to regret not having captured the seating arrangements in the various classes. In my opinion knowing who sat next to who would have allowed me better insight into the writing process, among other things.

During the interview phase I was soon to learn, that using a tape-recorder did not always guarantee verbatim coverage of utterances. The fact of the school being situated near the taxi rank and bus terminus, among others, did not help things along either. The sound made by buses as they drove by for example saw to some snippets of the interviews being completely lost when transcription was about to happen. Asking the respondents to fill in the missing clues did not work either, as the teachers concerned could not remember their own utterances just one day after the interviews had been conducted. The commitment to making academic research accountable to the researched as proposed by Burman (2007) had not yet been met at the time of the writing of this thesis. In terms of this, the researcher is expected to share the interpretive process with the research respondents (Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 147). This is something I still hope to pursue within the next few years, with the tenth year (i.e. as suggested by the essay topic) falling on the year 2014. When this year finally arrives I foresee huge challenges in tracking down some of the respondents, one of them having already died. Two of the teachers who had been part of the research had already left the teaching profession at the time of the writing of the current thesis. Chances are that my informant will not be there when needed in the future. The kinds of homes (i.e. informal settlements) that many of the respondents lived in at the time of the data collection phase may not be around by the time 2014 comes around. If they are, chances are that the occupants will have new names and faces.

3.8.3 Analyzing the data

The second limitation had to do with the act of analyzing the data. According to Merriam, data analysis is perhaps 'the only facet' of doing qualitative study in which there is a wrong and a right way of doing things. One grave mistake that this kind of researcher could make is said to be that of behaving like a 'squirrel' (Glesne and Peshkin 1992). According to this analogy, a squirrel hoards acorns for the winter, with this being said to be something a qualitative researcher cannot afford to do. According to this reckoning it is definitely not wise for the researcher to keep on collecting data 'for devouring later', a point which Merriam (2001) reiterates. What these authors propose instead, is for the researcher to conduct data collection alongside data analysis, with this supposedly happening periodically. This is said to ensure that the acorns not only represent the variety or varieties desired, but that these are in fact meaty nuggets that are worthy of the analyst's effort. In terms of this researchers should allow themselves time to review the first set of data collected against the purpose of their studies.

This is a commandment that I had overlooked in conducting the current study. The extensive nature of the data collection phase made time a rare commodity indeed. The mere thought of the seventy-three interviews (i.e. a combination of thirty parents, thirty learners and thirteen teacher-interviews) which had to be conducted, the thirty different homes to be visited and the anxiety over locating some of these homes, all threw me into a state of panic. There was serious concern that the home visits in particular be over and done with long before winter could come on the scene, the Nyanga township not being the kind of environment a stranger would want to be loitering in after six o'clock. The torture of the shacks not having proper addresses aggravated the situation. The situation made me feel vulnerable to a point, especially when the parent in question had to be interviewed after work, as this meant I had to linger somewhere till very late in the evening. It was also important that the data collection phase be completed within the first half of 2005, as I was supposed to spend the second semester at the University of Massachusetts. The purpose of the trip had been to afford me time to further my research progress, using the data I had amassed.

According to Glesne and Peshkin 1992, before embarking on the second phase of data collection, one should have analyzed the first data set for reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas and things to pursue, as derived from the first set of data. In terms of this the second data generation phase should have been informed by things to follow up on from the first interview. After the second interview the researcher should compare the first data set with the second. In terms of this without ongoing analysis and constant reflection the data can become unfocussed, repetitious and overwhelming, just by the sheer volume of the material that needs to be processed. Although I cannot lay claim to having compared data sets and reflected, the semi-structured nature of the interview did allow for the inclusion of new interview questions.

3.8.4 The nature of the research at hand

Problems experienced in this regard were of a sampling nature. Ethical considerations with regard to issues around informed consent meant I had to work only with respondents who had expressed interest in the research, when I had hoped for a sample that would have been larger than that of thirty learners. Knowing township like I do, I can safely vouch that the fact of some of the consent forms never coming back did not necessarily mean parents were necessarily opposed to the idea, but I had to do things by the book. There were other complications that came with the supposedly longitudinal nature of the study. Upon reaching grade twelve the seven different grade eleven classes (of 2004) could be accommodated in only four Grade 12 classes in 2005. What this meant was that each grade twelve class would then have at least two different grade eleven streams collapsed into one class. Logistics then became a huge problem as the grade 12 timetable operating at the time allowed me access to some but not all the classes housing my 2004 grade 11 participants.

An even bigger challenge as far as I was concerned, was the fact of the resultant mismatch between phases one and two of the research. Only a few of the 2005 grade twelve learners who were interviewed in 2005, had been part of the essay writing process of 2004. The school's culling system had resulted in most of the phase one participants repeating grade eleven in 2005, thereby keeping these learners out of my reach. This fact alone testifies to the point about this school not being as successful as it is purported to be.

The small sample size, the fact of the focus being on a limited series of events, and the fact of the study being cross-sectional rather than longitudinal preclude establishing typicality in terms of making recommendations for classroom practice (Bradshaw and Wallace 1991). Despite all of these the results of the research do however have implications for further research and for teaching (Peterson & Calovini 2004).

3.8.5 Methodological Concerns

The concerns raised in this section of this study are two-fold. The one set has to do with the artisan (i.e. human limitation) while the other focuses on the tool of the trade (CDA).

3.8.5.1 Human Limitations

Pitt (1972) acknowledges the restrictive nature of language. In terms of this viewpoint there can only be a complete record of any given event in a limited sense. The semantic constraints in the language itself are said not to allow the same kind of completeness in the documentary record, as that recorded in a photograph or movie. Even in the case of a photo shot, according to this, the camera cannot be in all places at all times. In line with this Pitt argues that there is always a viewpoint and bias in reporting. The bias includes a priority in the order in which details are noted, selectivity in impressions recorded, the choice of words, the tone of the writing, etc.

'Interpretational' and 'observer' bias are two kinds of bias in analysis and interpretation which Pitt (1972: 51) foregrounds. He defines the former concept as the point at which the writer's total interests spoil the objectivity of his analysis. The danger of the latter concept, on the other hand, is that it being thoroughgoing, it is likely to colour a major part of the reportage. He identifies ethnocentrism or 'lack of cultural relativism' as the most important factor contributing to both interpretational and observer bias.

The learners' level of proficiency, which was very low in many cases, created a challenge out of the act of interpreting. It is true that those aspects of the essay writing whose sense completely eluded me were simply overlooked.

3.8.5.2 Limitations of CDA

Like any research tool CDA also has its fair share of criticism. The fact of this kind of study being mainly intuitive in nature is said to expose data to a lot of subjective interpretation. This in turn is said to bring into question issues around validity and reliability in interpretation. Because of the very detailed and therefore cumbersome nature of an analysis of this nature (e.g. from individual word, to phrase-, sentence-, paragraph-level, etc.) attention has been given mainly though not exclusively to a content analysis of the essays. In line with Haglund's (2005: 7) word of caution, that no description is ever complete in the transformation of thoughts into text, the summary given in this thesis reflects a selection of what the researcher considers to be the salient points about the study conducted.

The study entails reshaping particularly minors' subjectivities as well as repositioning them. As such, this kind of research 'can be abused' by other interest groups to achieve ends other than the author's original intention. From an ethical point of view Willig (1999: 148) argues that any intervention that attempts to teach another how 'to be' (as I attempt to do with my concerns with the notion of empowerment in par. 6.3.1 below) can only amount to 'manipulation' and 'domination'. Regardless of the nature of the desired end, such a move is said to constitute what Gillies (cited in Willig 1999: 148) calls an attempt to 'govern the soul'.

From a methodological point of view discourse analysts, according to Titscher *et al.* (2000: 11), are said to 'not only' proceed in different ways, but also to reject any binding methods. Further than this, a new analyst (like I am in this case) looking for a research tool might get confused by the variety of debates within the field, because of the proliferation of brands of discourse analysis, their multiple origins and the different emphases and/ or levels of analysis. According to this it is very difficult to speak of discourse as a single unitary entity as this would blur together approaches subscribing to specific and different philosophical frameworks (Burman and Parker 1993: 3).

The aspect of CDA that has been made the main focus of this research is content analysis. The thin line that exists between fiction and reality within the essay writing process made it impossible for me to determine how much of each of these elements had made its way into the essay writing process. It is possible that some of the learners may well have been

testing their creative genius, rather than telling stories about true life experiences (this is something I have done myself in the past as a learner). This kind of orientation would have the effect of hindering the dip (or 'deep'-depending on how one chooses to look at it) stick function of life-histories. Despite the shortcomings outlined above, the study is definitely worth much more than the paper it is written on. The following chapters on data analysis allow the data to speak for themselves.



Chapter 4
Results and Analysis I
Linguistic and Content Analysis
Grades 11A and Grade 11E

4.1 Introduction

This chapter has two major sections based on the data gathered from the respondents in the two streams (Grades 11A and 11E). The one section deals with the linguistic analysis of the data, while the other is devoted to particular aspects of the content analysis. The remaining aspects of the content analysis pertaining to ‘Envisioning the Future’ are presented in Chapter 5. In bringing the two kinds of analyses together, Chapter 4 combines an analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative analysis was done in line with Pennebaker *et al.*’s ‘word count’ (2003). In terms of this I took stock of the rate at which particular words were used in the essays, e.g. the stem of the verb ‘own’ and its variants, as these appeared to dominate particularly the Grade 11A data. The qualitative lens of the analysis, on the other hand, probed both the content of what was being said, how the message was being put across as well as the perceived impact of the message on the reader.

The content form of the analysis generated various discourse analytic categories and sub-categories. The thoughts and reactions to each category as presented by Grades 11A and 11E are compared and contrasted under the relevant thematic sub-category. Infused in the two forms of analyses and under each category, are the findings of the study on each of the relevant points. This is done to improve the cohesion and accessibility of chapters 4 and 5, as well as to enable the synthesis of conclusions and recommendations for the ensuing chapter (i.e. Chapter 6).

4.1.1 Approaches to the essay writing process

How the analysis of the essays was conducted has been discussed at great length in the methodology chapter (see par. 3.6.1 in this regard). This particular section attempts to describe the process from the respondents’ side of the fence. The main topic of the essays analyzed in this study had to do with how these grade eleven respondents saw themselves in the next ten years. This is in terms of career paths, family lives, and lifestyle choices. Respondents further had to say what they foresaw as possible obstacles to their future plans. I might also add that when it was deemed fitting to do so I have drawn from data collected under the other essay topics as well. Par. 4.3.2.2 below is one good example in this regard.

The respondents demonstrated their uniqueness both in deciding the content of their storied lives, as well as which angles to take in approaching the essay writing process. Not only did they approach the topic from different career vantage points (e.g. as future employers, employees, spouses, etc.) but they also chose which aspects of their lives to cover or leave out (depending on what they considered significant or not). They also decided on which tools (e.g. tones, voices, registers, etc.) to use in order to get the message across. Despite being different in many respects, the essays submitted have at least two things in common. They

are all written through the medium of English, with the occasional word in isiXhosa (the respondents' mother tongue) and Afrikaans (a majority language in the Western Cape Province) being used from time to time. Secondly, all the participants demonstrated signs of familiarity with essay writing conventions as practiced within the South African context (Blommaert 2007).

Because none of the respondents in this study speak English as a first language (indeed the possibility of English being a third language for some cannot be totally ruled out), the question of their degree of linguistic competence deserves some mention here. The Random House Webster's College Dictionary defines the concept of competence as 'the implicit internalized knowledge of a language that a speaker possesses and that enables the speaker to produce and understand the language'. Where the respondents in this study are concerned, English could well be 'the language of strangers' (Katan 1999: 254). This being the case spatial and temporal considerations render it impossible for me to comment in detail on the competence factor as displayed in each of the respondent's writing. That all the essays in this study exhibit one form of linguistic shortcoming or the other is an accurate observation. It is also true that the degree of coherence differs from one essay to the next (refer to Appendices G to I for a few essay samples in this regard). This should give the reader a rough sense of the huge linguistic challenge facing some English Second Language (ESL) learners within the South African context.

The extent of the seriousness of this linguistic challenge was such that in certain instances attempts at interpretation (i.e. on my part) were just in vain. Though my ESL background was largely helpful in the analysis of most of the essays, there were instances where, even with this advantage on my side, I would find it practically impossible to make sense of certain bits of essay information. In those instances the affected part of the essay concerned was simply overlooked. But in the majority of cases I was able to make sense of, and sometimes even enjoy the essays, despite the language errors being displayed. This happened mostly in cases where the narrator in question cleverly employed some engaging linguistic or narrative device or the other, in communicating their thoughts and feelings. The next section is devoted to the Linguistic Analysis.

4.2 Linguistic Analysis

Given SA's long history of educational inequality, it is to be expected that poor levels of literacy would feature more in the writing of some respondents in this country, than in that of others. The kinds of errors exhibited in the specific essays being analyzed cover a continuum of linguistic shortcomings. Included here are dyslexic, lexical, orthographic, syntactical and other concerns. While it might be argued that the above are mere conventions and that English, like any other language, is just a tool for communication, it is also true that the afore-mentioned are the very criteria by which respondents' level of competence is generally judged in SA. It is on the basis of an assessment of respondents' linguistic competence, particularly in English, that their future prospects are determined. The respondents' handling of the conventions of this language simply cannot be overlooked as a result.

To some extent one could argue that the flawed nature of the respondents' writing is understandable. The anti-education fabric of township life, itself a product of the *apartheid* era, finds its form in:

- the social (e.g. the uncondusive informal settlement kind of environment that most of these respondents are born into);
- political (e.g. the general lack of a reading culture which is partly a consequence of the *apartheid* regime);
- cultural (e.g. the oral tradition some have inherited as an African way of life),
- economic (e.g. poverty making it impossible for most to own even the most basic but relevant tools of the trade like dictionaries and books);
- familial (e.g.; working class parents who are illiterate and cannot help with homework, etc.);
- institutional (e.g. insufficient exposure to standard English due to teachers being incompetent in many instances, township schools generally being unable to cater for all of their learners, etc.);
- situational (e.g. the time constraints within which respondents had to compose, etc.); and
- the personal (e.g. the respondents' second language status, motivational issues, etc.); etc.

The points raised above do not necessarily make these respondents' competence or lack thereof the focal point of this analysis, nor of the discussion about to unfold. While every attempt has been made to keep respondents' utterances as original as possible, the need for clarity also demands that some of the errors (e.g. spelling mistakes) be improved upon, rather than corrected. This is done to effect grammatical appropriateness, as well as to promote reader understanding. Neither is the point of this exercise to absolve the respondents from blame, even in cases where this is due. Indeed I shall be the first one to admit that a little reading (in English) on the part of the respondents would have done these respondents a lot of linguistic good. Inadequate teaching by often under-qualified language teachers is definitely another contributing factor, leading to respondents gaining poor acculturation in the conventions of writing (Arnold and Doctoroff 2003: 526).

On the strength of the above Emihovich (1995: 42) cites two authors, Rose and Michaels, who register their disapproval toward those who insist on adherence to grammatical rules, particularly when analyzing the writing of marginalized respondents. Rose, a one-time director of the USA-based UCLA writing programme, is said to have likened the effect of such an act to 'literacy being severed from imagination'. Michaels on the other hand, is said to have compared this phenomenon to the 'dismantling of narrative abilities'.

These forgiving sentiments expressed above might be said to encourage more leniency towards ESL learners. The harsh reality of the competitive and cut-throat global village of which South Africa is a prominent player, however does not take kindly to this kind of shortcoming. Education for black South Africa is however still being plagued with the challenge of poor literacy (and numeracy) levels even today (Banda in press). This is a

and no suffering but still me in collage
 My family was so thanks God, Because of my
 standard of living Ln5

In ten year's of time was thinking at background
 and many year's ago and very very young
 They didnot know like Im year now because
 of my background. But knows God still Here Ln10
 and at the end of day was so smile and
 never and ever one person take my education
 and my job. Because of Im relative and
 love all people in South Africa.

I foresee as possible obstacles for my life style Ln15
 and my family very occupation because of me
 so know I foresee and love to be there
 my education was very very high because of
 my degree I say the people go to school
 if was not to understand go to your friend and tell Ln16
 your friend you don't understand this subject
 And the educational still waiting for you
 you don't have a burcury if you dont
 serious about aim and about your fucture Ln20
 The burcury was so very very good and help the
 person of serious with the Education

From the little that I could make of the writing in the insert the respondent was planning on getting a 'college' ('collage' in Line 4) education. This she thought would ultimately lead to her being an 'accountant' ('accounted' in Line. 3). As a future (rather than 'fucture' in Line 20) accountant she predicted 'no suffering' in her life. Rather she foresaw that at some point in the 'future' she would have something to 'smile' about. She captured this futuristic vision through the use of the phrase '[at] the end of the day' by which she meant in the final analysis or ultimate end.

Needless to say it would be impossible to do an exhaustive analysis of all the linguistic tools employed by the respondents in this study. Words being the meaningful marker and occasional mediator of natural, social and personality processes that Pennebaker *et al.* (2003) claim they are, attention is hereby being given to two specific aspects of the respondents' language usage. These are words they have used to depict both their future actions and their concerns about issues of ownership. Given the high degree of ambition displayed in these essays, it seemed pertinent to scrutinize the kinds of action words that were calculated to bring about these desired outcomes. The analysis conducted in the subsequent subsection came about in response to the numerous instances by which the stem 'own' and its variants appeared.

4.2.1 Action words

In line with the wording of the essay topic ('Where I "see" myself in ten years' time') almost the respondents saw themselves doing one type of job or another, or being some kind of person or the other, etc. There were however certain words that some of the respondents used out of their initiative, in describing their future occupational endeavours. Some of these could be said to give the reader some idea as to the calibre of future citizens that SA could look forward to. In this regard the action words used were deemed to be a useful diagnostic tool, in determining the extent to which the respondents aimed to contribute to the future South African economy.

For Grade 11A words used to indicate action ranged from 'studying' (e.g. I want to study), serving (e.g. the wish to become 'the best'), 'building' (e.g. the wish to build huge industry for one's family), 'creating' (as in 'creating the marketing process huge'), 'being' (e.g. a 'married woman' or 'self-made millionaire') to 'owning' (to have 'my own recording label'). The respondents expressed their intentions clearly, with a strong focus on the final outcome, i.e. success. As one respondent so boldly put it, 'all' of her family members were successful in life, she then posed the rhetorical question as to 'why' anybody should think she 'shouldn't'. With some end-point in mind respondents then expressed their wishes to become parents, spouses, and a long list of top-earners like accountants, architects, etc.

Grade 11E respondents on the other hand appeared to put a lot of emphasis on process, rather than the outcome. As they painstakingly negotiated their gradual ascent some acknowledged they would first have to 'learn', 'go ahead with', 'do', 'finish', 'go forward' either with matric or tertiary education. Post-matric or tertiary action words used by these respondents included a state of being (as in wanting to be[come] a business man, a good lawyer or social worker, etc.), serving (e.g. as in working 'for the state' or at 'Eskom'), managing (e.g. as in wishing to be 'a manager' of a company or business), earning (as in 'earning so much money' as a naval officer, 'paying a good salary'), 'having' (e.g. a 'bus company', a 'big studio', a social worker 'having everything' in her office, etc.) 'building' (e.g. building my family and my home); 'founding' (as in founding a world class gold-mining company), etc.

The process-driven approach which Grade 11E respondents seem to have adopted in planning their future brings to mind the saying about some people going nowhere slowly. Because their future is not as clearly defined as appears to be the case with their Grade 11A counterparts, the former group would prefer to take things one step at a time. In the study as a whole Grade 11E respondents generally display an accommodative, roundabout and to a point passive approach to life. Depending on how one chooses to look at things, the fact of former President Mandela having been cited as one of the role models by a member of this class, linked to the twenty-seven years the latter had spent on Robben Island, could be seen as the hallmark of the virtue of 'patience'. The latter trait is something that the appreciative respondent in question had singled out as outstanding for him in this great leader. Somewhere deep within the concept of patience is suggested a sense of passive but also dogged resistance. In contrast to the more passive Grade 11E's, the Grade 11A's seemed much more uncompromising, assertive and impatient.

4.2.2 Words depicting ownership

The verb stem 'own' was presented by the respondents in its various forms (i.e. as a noun- 'owner', verb- 'owning', etc). The concept of ownership came through much more strongly from the Grade 11A respondents. Where this class was concerned it was not uncommon for me to come across statements like 'I want to be the owner of my own company', or 'I want 100 percent' ownership of a would-be family business. According to the respondent in the latter statement, he planned to operate according to a 'principle' that allowed 'only members of the family' into the business. 'No outsiders' were to own shares in this respondent's business, 'under any circumstances'. An aspirant 'managing director' of his 'own' company and businessman of sorts saw himself having his 'own employees' who would 'listen' to what he said and 'follow' his orders. He further wanted to have his 'own people', who would regard him as 'their lord'. Needless to say, the possessive pronoun 'my' was just as prominent as its twin word 'own', though they were not necessarily always used side by side.

While the analysis of the Grade 11A essays showed the concept of ownership as a recurrent theme, this was not the case with the Grade 11E class. Save for two distinct instances of this word's usage, these respondents made no further reference to the concept of ownership. In one of the two scenarios suggested above the concept of ownership was used with reference to 'office' space rather than the narrator in question running her 'own' business or taking ownership of some company. I have to add here that for some of the respondents in this study, an office is seen as some kind of status symbol (this combined with a computer, a brief case, a secretary, etc. were all seen as completing the successful business-person image by some respondents). Wishing to qualify as a social worker, the narrator in the example being analyzed aimed to have '[her] own office', from which she would be helping 'people who are suffering' in their family lives, as well as 'homeless children' This was so that these people could make 'something' of their lives one day. Implied by her words is a sense that being a social worker would amount to reaching the ceiling for her.

One Grade 11E respondent wished to study law 'in England', 'for as many years as possible'. Another wanted to 'found' a 'world-class gold-mining company'.

Were it not for these respondents' ensuing words, which have the effect of nullifying the mental picture thus formed, one would be justified in regarding these two respondents as being the most ambitious in this class. As 'the best' future lawyer 'ever', this aspiring lawyer one would expect the respondent to think in terms of running his own law company. All that he could think of instead was getting paid a lot of money.

The idea of 'founding' combined with the concept of 'world class' standards in the mining example suggest someone who dreams big. This grand vision is however crushed by the reality of the respondent's situation. 'Without money or experience' he realized that all that this was was just a pipe dream. Recognizing this as a fact the respondent owned up to having decided at the early age of 'fifteen', that it would be best to turn to more realistic and achievable dreams. This explains why he had decided to settle for a law degree instead.

Another example is that of a respondent who, like his sister before him was doing, wished he could for a South African energy-supplying company called 'Eskom' one day. The two major influences on this wish were the 'cars' that this sister was said to drive, combined with her 'standard of living'. In terms of this these were seen as evidence of a 'good pay', one that would see one having 'everything' one needed in life, as far as this respondent was concerned.

Taken at face value, the sentiments expressed here could be seen to suggest that Grade 11E respondents speak from a position of insurmountable constraints and limitations, with they envisaging a future as employees rather than employers. This is not to suggest Grade 11E respondents have no inclination toward greatness. Rather, greatness being the relative term that it is, what is great for one respondent may not necessarily be viewed in the same light by another.

In expressing his thirst for recognition as what he called a 'great guy', one male respondent in this class appeared to be holding out two models of greatness for the reader's scrutiny. The first is that of himself chatting with and advising teenagers on matters of importance. The other model is that of an icon whom he refers to as 'Mr President Nelson Mandela' who had been retired as president approximately four years at the time of the respondent writing this essay. That the respondent overlooks this fact suggests a mindset that says a title earned is a title kept. Mr Mandela's selfless and altruistic love for his country seems to have whetted some of these respondents' appetite for greatness. The forms of address (i.e. 'Mr' and 'President') which this respondent uses side by side in referring to this great man, betray the awe, respect and admiration with which the respondent still regards the latter.

Mr Mandela having been the 'patient' servant of 'the state', the respondent did not wish to veer too far from the gentle steps of this great leader when the latter's turn came about. If following in Mr Mandela's steps therefore meant becoming a 'member of the ANC', then the respondent's choice of affiliation had already been made for him. As one of the key people to have changed the SA history for the better, that the former president be seen as a custodian of the country's history is understandable. Those familiar with the story of this icon will also know he had been a lawyer as well in his time. As a self-appointed custodian of that same history, one supposedly taking over from where Mr Mandela will have left off, the respondent was preparing to serve as a 'lawyer of the state' as well.

Linked to the notion of rights as suggested in the concept of becoming a lawyer, is the related concern about the people's right to know. This area of interest, i.e. to become a 'journalist' one day, was expressed by a female respondent in this class. Her concern was that 'the people's story' be told. The concept of the people's story as brought up by this respondent brings to mind snippets of the interview I had had with these respondents' history teacher (see par. 1.3.5 for another snippet of this interview). One of his concerns with teaching History within the SA context at the time of the study, was the need to strike a balance between what he called the 'people's history' and the history of the text book. The latter history as implied by this teacher, had been doctored to present a skewed version of the events of the past. Encompassed in the notion of the people's story therefore is the sense of

giving voice to the concerns of the people ‘on the ground’ as those fighting for human rights within the SA context are wont to call them.

At the other end of the scale measuring respondents’ endeavours to achieve greatness is a respondent who considered the inevitability of his future employment a bitter pill he will have to swallow. Having equated employment with the ‘white’ race, the respondent took consolation from knowing that employment in his case would be just an interim measure. By fair means or foul, this aspiring ‘successful’ businessman intended to do everything in his power to tip the employment scale in his favour. ‘Legally’, this included different job profiles (e.g. merchandising, ‘bar owner’, ‘butcher’, and ‘shop owner’). These business fronts, as suggested by the notion of these being used to ‘blind’ the authorities, were to be ‘big’ in stature. The phrase he uses, i.e. ‘of course’ in concluding the latter remark, clinches the idea about the Trojan horse kind of business premises being made to look nothing but convincing to the curious onlooker. The latter point is important, because it is this respondent’s wish that people do ‘not bug/interfere’ with his business. Echoed by the last statement is the ‘see no evil, hear no evil’ (as the title of one movie goes) attitude that prevails in township life. In terms of this kind of thinking, people are to mind their own business and leave him to his devices.

4.2.3 Aphorisms capturing the value of education

Though demonstrating below average competence in English, one respondent registered at least one good point, about what it is about education that makes it invaluable among those with nothing else to hold on to. The crux of the respondent’s message -‘never ever one person take my education and my job’ is clear and emphatic enough for all to understand. The sense of timelessness as captured in the two words ‘never ever’ illustrates the strength of the respondent’s belief in the reliability of having education on one’s side. A second respondent did ‘not’ think there could be ‘someone or something’ that would make him ‘not reach’ his goals (presumably once he had acquired his education). To ensure this the second respondent seemingly planned to cover all of his bases, to the extent that neither man (‘someone’) nor inanimate objects (‘something’) would threaten his educational peace of mind.

In terms of this what the latter had ‘in [his] mind’ (i.e. the education he will have worked hard to acquire) his education could ‘not be taken [away] by anyone’ else other than ‘God’. Both strong sentiments as expressed by the two respondents above echo the kinds of aphorisms that many black illiterate working class parents within the SA context particularly, have been known to drum into the heads of their children since time immemorial. In the face of many destructive forces constantly bombarding the lives of these children, utterances of this kind have always been attempts at keeping children’s eyes focused on the role of education in enabling a successful future. The study now focuses on those aspects of the essays’ content which could be said to support the ideal of future success.

4.3 Content Analysis

Roemer's (1995: 3) sentiments as expressed in par. 2.5.1 above appear to set the stage for the discussion and analysis of the life-stories about to unfold. It is this author's opinion that every story is over before it begins. In terms of this kind of thinking the novel lies bound in people's hands before it is read, actors are said to know their lines before the curtain rises, while the finished film has already been threaded onto the projector when the lights dim. In terms of this, stories appear to move into an open, uncertain future which the figures try to influence, but in fact report a completed past they cannot alter. The journey into the future to which people gladly lend themselves, is supposedly an illusion, as 'no story begins at the beginning'. According to Roemer (1995: 5) there is always a given, something that the characters did not make. The situation exists before the characters appear in it. This is in line with Roemer's idea, that 'we were the land's before the land was ours'.

In light of the sentiments expressed by Roemer above, it makes sense to first draw the readers' attention to those aspects of the respondents' lives which, according to the data generated by this study, precede even the narrators themselves. These aspects revolve around respondents' sense of motivation. From these motivational issues emanate principles that guide or inform the respondents' thought processes, govern the choices they make as well as influence the actions they embark upon.

In terms of the findings of this study the circumstances of the respondents' past lives appear to have robbed the former of some of the opportunities to make choices about how to live their lives. The essays reveal that motivation of both the extrinsic and intrinsic kinds plays a huge role in the respondents' lives. In some instances the respondents' actions appear to be governed more by the needs and aspirations of others, rather than those of the respondents themselves. The three points highlighted below as suggested by the data, have been used to frame the next section of the study. These are factors which inform the choices of the respondents in this specific section of the study:

- The respondents find themselves having to deal with the aftermath of past actions, firstly those (actions) that had been carried out by certain individuals before them (see par 4.3.1 below);
- Secondly, as they try to situate themselves within the prevailing circumstances, they find themselves also having to deal with the consequences of their own past actions;
- Thirdly, the legacy of indebtedness they have inherited compels them to pay back their dues. This notion is captured by respondents' concerns with the needs of others.

Infused in almost all of the three categories given above, is the sense of the particularly new black South African government having failed, and still continuing to fail these respondents in more ways than one. This system continues to disable and cripple respondents through its perpetuation of the destructive forces of the past, the fact of it condoning preferential treatment of respondents as implied by the unequal supply of resources in schools, among

many others. Whether or not these respondents are able to take all of debilitating factors in their stride is the topic of the next discussion.

4.3.1 Dealing with the aftermath of others' past actions

Glesne and Peshkin (1992: 132) argue that the process of data analysis implies making connections among stories. In terms of this the analysts ask themselves what is being illuminated, how the stories connect, and what themes and patterns give shape to their data. The data having spoken for themselves in this instance, information was then transformed into a form that communicates the promise of this study's findings. Miles and Huberman's (cited in Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 137) risky one-directional 'cause and effect' arrows model is used here to link the one code or category to the next. For this to happen the study looks into those aspects of the respondents' past life, which seem to influence their lives and outlook today (Roemer 1995). We begin the content analysis of these essays by first considering the past of other people in the respondents' lives. Special attention is given particularly to those aspects that need rectifying in as far as the respondents are concerned.

4.3.1.1 Rectifying the ills of the past - the past of others

One Grade 11E respondent gave 'thanks to God', for 'looking after' her. That this sigh of relief is uttered at a point in the respondent's life (i.e. Grade 11) where, in my opinion, she is still not out of the woods yet, suggests the respondent has seen worse scenarios in the past. The same respondent talks about a 'very' asthmatic aunt who had been 'very clever' in her school days. Due to her incapacitating illness the aunt is described as 'never' having had time to study. The aunt appears to have compelled the respondent to strive for success via a 'promise' which the former had elicited from the latter. In terms of this promise which the respondent swore 'never' to forget, the respondent was 'not' to quit school 'under any circumstances'. Because the respondent, 'unlike' her aunt, had good health on her side, she regarded herself as possessing what she called the 'power to make [her] future wild'. Conveyed by the concept of 'wildness' is the sense of a strong force (i.e. the respondent in this case), which plans to take the world by storm in the near future. This is something the short-breathed aunt had been incapable of doing in her time. To take advantage of her healthy state, the latter then intended to carry out action of 'any kind or sort', the aim being to make her future 'bright'.

4.3.1.2 Parents' failure to model good behaviour

Some respondents complained about fathers being 'too strict' and 'talking too much'. Another blamed her mother for having too many children. The affected respondent in the latter case definitely did 'not want to be like [her] mom' whose 'childrens' were 'five'; too many in the former's opinion. Using both the double plural (as in 'childrens' rather than children) and again double negation as in the strong assertion 'no I don't want more childrens' the former drives the point about her aversion home. To use the words of another respondent in Grade 11E, two children were seemingly more than 'enough'. Informing this kind of thinking was the opinion that children were the very cause of parental 'stress', something which the respondent in question was adamant she did 'not' wish upon herself.

According to Reimer's (1995:129) concept of the 'life world', this is a horizon towards which one as a social being creates meaning in everyday life. In terms of this, background knowledge which is based on previous experiences is used as a source in dealing with different everyday situations. These experiences which are created in daily intercourse with other social beings, are said to be also produced in different arenas both private and public, with these including the home. The further into a modernization phase people are, according to this, the more relevant it is to think in terms of contradictory, socially created subjects (Reimer 1995: 129). The example about to be analyzed illustrates Reimer's point, about people being contradictory creatures within whom there is a constant struggle between different identities. The respondent in question could be said to embody Reimer's example of an individual whose different segments of the horizon are relevant on different occasions.

The case is that of a respondent, who wants to enjoy the benefits of marriage, but without the commitment. Despite 'two loving parents' having seemingly encouraged the respondent in question's strong anti-marriage sentiments (which is a contradiction in terms), the latter nonetheless acknowledged that 'family', is 'important'. She described the concept of a family as something she had 'never had' with her parents. This respondent's sarcastic tone resonates with the paradox registered in this utterance. One question that comes to mind is how it came about, that someone exposed to what she herself describes as a 'loving' family environment, could land up speaking so ill of the institution of marriage. Further than this, her words capture a mindset that says there is more to the concept of a good marriage than just the bringing together of a husband and wife.

In the given scenario it would seem as if the 'loving' may have been directed more towards the respondent herself than it being shared between her two parents in her life. The latter viewpoint would explain the respondent claim to having absolutely no conception of herself 'end[ing] up sweeping somebody [else]'s home'. Neither could she picture herself 'dragging [her] thin body' in what she called a 'big long *sishweshwe* dress'¹. The footnote which appears below provides a brief background into the aspect of the Xhosa tradition which the respondent in question makes reference to here.

In line with the description given in this footnote, the dress being said to be 'big' (or rather loose-fitting) and 'long' would make it an appropriate dress code, at least as far as custom demands. This would be in line with the new daughter-in-law having to show respect toward the elders and predecessors of the new household. The two adjectives as used in this particular context however appear to do more than simply describe the dress. Embedded in them is a sense of distaste on the wearer's part.

The reed-'thin' image of an emaciated body being dragged along as it sweeps the floor, suggests ill-health, malnourishment and perhaps even abuse. In a nutshell the picture painted spells discontent of the extreme kind. One possible reason why young women particularly

¹ Traditionally, in terms of the African culture, newly-wedded women were expected to spend some time at the home of their new in-laws. It was part of the culture that these be expected to perform certain tasks and/ or household chores, like cleaning and cooking. The *isishweshwe* dress is a traditional feminine outfit, designed to be a symbol or physical manifestation of the new way of life that the young woman is embarking upon. Along with a new name and some teachings, among other things, the outfit forms part of a new identity being given to the new bride.

would be opposed to this particular aspect of African marital life (see also par. 5.3.3.2a(iii) and 5.3.3.2a(iv) for similar sentiments) could be the perceived oppressive nature associated with the kind of practice in question². It is not clear what the parents' exact contribution had been to the respondent's negative attitude towards marriage, but the respondent's words suggest there had been something unsavoury in her parents' marital relationship. Whatever this was, she was definitely not going to entertain it when it came to her own life.

One can infer from sentiments expressed by the respondents in the study as a whole, that these are mainly products of their observations of older people in their immediate surroundings (see also pars. 5.3.3.2a(iii) and 5.3.3.2a(iv) below). These examples illustrate Reimer's point, about subjects not being only socially produced but also acquiring significance socially. In terms of this, such significance is said to shift according to the social context. It is important to note that the significance in the given example is interpreted in terms of what the factors mean for the respondent in the 'here and now'.

4.3.2 The respondents' own past

One Grade 11A respondent's criminal past had been instrumental in turning his life around. According to this respondent 'drugs', 'robberies' and 'housebreak[ings]' had been just up his alley at some point in his life. He did 'not think' that he was 'doing wrong', and was 'in' and 'out' of jail as a result. It was his mother turning to the Xhosa customary practice of '*ulwaluko*' (i.e. circumcision) which had supposedly led to the new 'changed' person. In terms of this 'old men' (valued and revered for their acquired wisdom and wealth of experience within the African culture) are said to have 'told' him to 'forget' about thinking like a 'young' man (i.e. a state of being generally associated with being irrational, impulsive, erratic, etc.) and to acknowledge that he was now a 'big' man (i.e. one who is mature in his reasoning, thinks ahead before he acts, etc.) who needed 'to face the future'.

In line with these teachings the respondent claimed to have changed his 'whole life' around, and was in fact already 'making plans' for his own future. The complete turnaround in the respondent's outlook as described in this example appears to have been more a product of his interpretation and/or internalization of the custom, rather than the act of circumcision itself. The biblical echo of the elders' utterances suggests teachings that are grounded in religion (i.e. Christianity in this case). The thought process displayed by the respondent in the given example on the other hand appears to be in line with Wagner's (1980) own findings. In terms of this black writers are said to employ a wide range of linguistic tools. Besides the sermonizing tone used in this particular case these writers are said to also use a moralistic tone, references to the Bible, quotations, and aphorisms (see par. 4.2.3 above).

This example provides the reader with a measure of the respondent's belief system as to who he believes himself to be. The kind of transformation that he appears to have undergone should have taken more than mere words and the process of circumcision itself to effect.

²The period, normally captured with the concept of '*ukuhota*' (meaning 'to serve') within the Xhosa context. In this sense the image of the ill-fitting outfit is apt, as it is not unheard of for some families to treat the '*makoti*' (i.e. young bride) more like a slave or an object of ridicule, rather than a welcome addition to the family and a symbol of two conjoined households.

Certainly some young men have undergone the same procedure in the past, but have emerged with a different set of results. In the given example a few words from ‘old men’ are said to have transformed an errant ‘young man’ into a ‘big man’ who knew where he wanted to go with his future. To use the definition of a great man once used on a 3Talk presentation which went by the title of ‘New Beginnings’ (Maholwana-Sangqu 2008), this mental shift would have been described as someone ‘allowing the inner man to catch up with the outer man’. What the whole incident suggests is a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging on the part of the young man in question. That he saw the intervention in the serious light he chose to see it suggests someone who identifies with the notion of an African man.

As suggested by one Grade 11E respondent’s implied association with the ‘Omega’- (‘The End’) view of God, Christian beliefs appeared to be more of the insinuated kind in many of the cases in this class. It is probably the political undertone of the History subject (as one of their learning areas), which tends to induce atheistic tendencies among those whose view of the world is mediated through the lens of this subject. One finds evidence of this kind of thinking among many African politicians in SA. This country has had a highly volatile past which, had it not been for former President Mandela’s reconciliatory approach, could easily have resulted in a bloodbath after his release from prison. This history has nonetheless left scars of different forms, sizes and depths among some individuals in this country, some (i.e. scars) of which appear to be indelible.

In line with these some politicians are known to have questioned and to be questioning till today, the ‘supposedly’ merciful God’s failure to intervene on behalf of the oppressed. History and politics apparently being cut from the same cloth, it is possible that these respondents are struggling to come to terms with the whole notion of a supposedly fair Christian belief-system, especially in view of a country that is still being crippled by inequality despite its claim to being a democracy.

The one respondent who makes a direct reference to the Christian religion in this class, mentions ‘God’s name as he talks about possible obstacles which might impede his future progress. As an unapologetic believer this male respondent’s personal ‘motto’ has led him to believe that ‘where there is love there is God’ and that ‘where there is God there is everything’. The respondent in question seemed to harbour a belief in God’s ability to turn things around. In line with this it was his belief, that if he put God before him ‘night and day’, then he knew (my emphasis) that ‘everything’ would be ‘A-Okay’. That the respondent expresses this sentiment at the curtain drawing phase of his essay writing is telling in itself. This could be seen as him somehow also acknowledging God’s unshakable hand in deciding one’s destiny (see also par. 5.6.3 below in this regard).

4.3.2.1 Religion and Education

Religion appeared to be a strong anchor in Grade 11A respondents’ lives. One respondent predicted that in ten years’ time, when she looked back (presumably from a point of achievement) into her past (which she referred to here as her ‘background’), people would

find it ‘difficult’ to believe how far she had come to be where she would be at this futuristic time. ‘God still’ being there with her at the time, she knew her ‘end’ would be a favourable one, one which would leave her smiling. The ‘smile’ in question would come from knowing that ‘never and ever’ could any one person ‘take [her] education’ or her job away from her. With education on one’s side one can afford to be smug, as this respondent seems to be implying.

While education appears to be this respondent’s source of strength, a Grade 11E respondent found her anchor in her mother’s presence. As long as the respondent had her mother, she was determined to allow ‘nothing’ to stop her from becoming what she wanted in life. The respondent in question saw nothing standing in her way, while another was determined to ‘push up’ her education. The fact of some mothers being unemployed and therefore unable to provide well for their children’s education was not necessarily seen as justifying the loss of what one of these respondents called ‘spiritual morality’ either (see sentiment expressed by Wagner in par. 4.3.2 above).

From the examples cited in this section of the current study it would appear as if the caption of the ‘lost generation’ as South African youth have been labeled in the past (e.g. Preston 1994, Seekings 1996), is a mould that these respondents are bent on breaking free from. Below one respondent tells of some of the loopholes he had had to jump through, before he could find the inner man in him as referred to by Maholwana-Sangqu (2008) above.

4.3.2.2 Education and School Ethos

The essay example I am about to analyze under this category was written under the topic ‘*My educational experiences*’ (i.e. the good and the bad) by one of the Grade 11E respondents being analyzed in the current study. Because of this fact it falls somewhat outside the scope of analysis for the current thesis. I however brought the analysis into this discussion, because it shows the impact of some of these respondents’ past experiences, on the kinds of people they have become today. In the interest of triangulation, this interesting aspect of this respondent’s educational experience can only add to the richness of the data and therefore the thickness of my description. Although the role played by the school comes through loud and clear in the example about to be discussed here, the role played by the respondent’s elder brother appears to have been even more effective in bringing him to his senses.

The opening line to the essay in question (see Appendix H for a copy of this essay) is just a short dramatic sentence with an exclamation mark at the end. It reads: ‘It was a nightmare!’ The suggestive concept of a ‘nightmare’ as used in this context describes an incident which had taken place when the respondent was still in Grade 4. This had led to the respondent ‘hating’ the teacher concerned ‘even now’. The teacher’s name stands out from the rest of the essay. It is written in big letters in an essay that is otherwise written in very small handwriting. This is probably calculated to give the reader a sense of the kind of impact that the mere mention of the name still has on the narrator, years after the incident had taken place. This teacher is accused of having ‘embarrassed’ the respondent ‘in front’ of his classmates.

The bone of contention had been the respondent's 'afro' hairstyle which the teacher had wanted to see shaved off. Believing it was '[his] right' to do what '[he] liked' with '[his] hair', the respondent had refused to comply. The disapproving teacher had then used a pair of 'scissors' to 'cut' off the respondent's hair. It is this act which appears to have brought about a lot of resentment on the part of this respondent, toward the teacher in question. From the former's use of strongly emphatic words the reader can detect the anger that still simmers beneath the surface even today.

As if this was not enough, the teacher is said to have gone on to add insult to the respondent's injury. When the respondent turned up with a 'dirty' shirt on the next day, she had had him 'take it off' and wash it 'in class'. This was done with the respondent's elder brother watching, this Grade 7 brother having been called in to witness the incident. The 'same person' (i.e. the teacher in question) had been instrumental in causing the respondent further humiliation, with the short two worded phrase (i.e. 'Sym person!' to cite the respondent's exact words) supposedly carrying much more than is apparent to the naked eye. The phrase is again followed by another exclamation mark, for a more dramatic effect. This phrase, with its underlying tone which borders on disbelief that the respondent could be suffering at the hands of one and the same individual who had caused him unspeakable pain just the previous day, speaks volumes about the respondent's frame of mind at the time.

The episode discussed above was not to be the last between the two arch-enemies. Following this, the teacher had beaten the respondent 'to death', after the latter had 'stabbed' a boy and also 'burned' the victim's sister's hair 'with matches'. Feeling that this (the seemingly unjust meting out of punishment) was all too much for him to take, the respondent had spent 'a whole three weeks' away from school. The period is how long it had taken the respondent, to work through his feelings. Though he claimed to have spent the period 'at home', it is clear that this phrase is not meant in the strictest sense. The respondent also admitted he would 'of course escape' from his home in the morning. The 'of course' part of the statement implies this was the natural route open to those faced with predicaments of this nature. The matter of fact manner in which it is said, as an afterthought, suggests he did not have to mention the fact. This is something the reader should have known about, or anticipated.

The respondent had then spent three weeks (most probably train-surfing) between 'Cape Town' and 'Kaptein's Klip' stations. It is at this point that he admitted to having 'got out of hand', and become what seems to be a spelling of the word 'reward'. Assuming that this illegible word is indeed 'reward' the respondent would be associating himself with 'wanted' criminal offenders on whose head a 'reward' would have been placed. That he regarded himself as a criminal is confirmed by his reference to the notion of 'escaping' in the morning. Though he probably does not have a lot of vocabulary at his fingertips to pick and choose from; that the respondent made this particular choice again hints at his rebellious frame of mind at the time. The register used here sounds almost like that which one normally hears being used in 'Western' movies.

This powerful comparison is pregnant with meaning. In the Western movie world a 'bandit' (as the respondent appears to have regarded himself) like this would be hunted down like a dog. More often than not a considerable 'bounty' would be placed on his head. The outlaw's

photo would be posted all over town, turning him into an endangered species. As the tendency is to consider a man of this calibre ‘deadly’, the instructions to those gunning for him would be to shoot ‘at first sight’, or to bring him in, either ‘dead or alive’.

As if sensing the grave danger that his younger brother was dabbling in; the respondent’s elder brother who was a teacher at the time, is said to have sat him down. The former is said to have advised the respondent to be a ‘normal kid’ which the latter readily admits he had ‘not’ been. Wanting to keep the errant boy under close check the brother had pleaded with the former to join the latter’s school. This brother is further said to have reasoned with the respondent, telling him that what he was doing was actually nothing new. In terms of this the brother ‘too’ was said to have pulled similar stunts in his time, according to this essay. As someone speaking from personal experience, he is said to have assured the respondent that the latter ‘would not pass it’. From one (ex-) delinquent to another, the message was for the latter to ‘quit’ while he was ‘ahead’ and ‘still [could]’.

The fact of the reader reading this essay today, is the result of a scam on the part of this respondent, which had unexpectedly backfired, much to the respondents’ relief at the time of the writing of the essay. According to the respondent people who knew him ‘from outside’ (at the time) were said to have expressed their shocked ‘surprise’, to learn that he was in fact a Grade 11 learner. This is clearly due to the kind of mischief he must have got up to in the community. He admits to having been just as surprised over this as they were.

As the story goes the act of going to school had started off as a ruse that was calculated to pull wool over the teaching brother’s eyes, so that the respondent could get ‘everything’ he wanted. However the welcoming ethos at ZWHS had him hooked before he could figure out what had hit him. The next thing he knew he had developed a love ‘so’ strong for his school that he no longer wished to be out any more.

What this captivating story, combined with the others told before it suggest, is a sense that this generation is not as completely lost as the media would have us believe. For those who are indeed lost, it is clear that there are mechanisms that could be put in place to salvage them. The example just given shows just the kind of role the SA school can play in this regard. Experience being described as the best teacher in some circles, Chapter 5 (whose theme is ‘envisioning the future’) shows the kinds of lengths these respondents will go to in an attempt to turn their negative past experiences around. For the time being we attend to matters pertaining to the respondents’ past and present, in this case the issue of poverty.

4.3.2.3 The gate-keeping role of poverty

In a different scenario poverty is depicted as having been a gatekeeper which had prevented respondents from getting a ‘white’ education. Concerned that the same fate should not befall her future children, one of the respondents expressed a felt ‘need’ for her children to attend this kind of school. Since she personally had ‘not’ had ‘the chance’ to get a white education, she would have loved her children to go either to a ‘girls’ high or ‘boys’ high school. In this respondent’s eyes these schools were ‘so right’ (i.e. very good). Similar sentiments about the ‘higher’ level of education in white schools came from yet another respondent. For this

respondent the ability to speak English ‘completely’ was seen as an important yardstick for future success. Her own level of competence in the language not being what she would consider acceptable, she was determined that her children ‘not’ turn out like her. According to this respondent she too had wanted to study in white schools. Her parents unfortunately could ‘not afford’ to take her there. Using Pennebaker *et al.*’s (2003) word count strategy the word ‘white’ appears three times in the first respondent’s two lined sentence or utterance. This suggests the degree to which the respondents in question wished they could have turned their back on the limitations normally associated with township education.

In line with Peshkin’s advice, that analysts need to acknowledge their subjectivity throughout the study being undertaken the present is perhaps one such time where it would be appropriate for me to do just this. Just reading the respondents’ thoughts about white-ness invokes what, to use Peshkin’s words, would be one of my ‘cool’ spots. The ‘subjective I’ brought to life by these utterances, which I consider to be ‘negative’, could perhaps be described as being of a political nature. It stems from my concern that if nothing is done to quickly bring township schools on par with their former Model-C counterparts, the situation can only serve to further entrench the deeply rooted sense of inferiority already being displayed by some of the respondents in the current study. This concern speaks to ideas expressed in par 1.6 above where traces of this coconut mentality are seen to be fast gaining ground.

As far as one Grade 11E respondent was concerned the concept of a detour is suggested by the manner in which he planned to circumvent the restrictive legacy of the country’s *apartheid* past. His parents at the time of the writing of the essay being said to be ‘not employed’, he predicted that getting money to go to university would ‘not be easy’. As soon as he finished matric, this respondent planned ‘to work’, and to ‘keep’ the proceeds so that he may access university education some time in the future. The only ‘problem’, as far as this respondent could see, was that the years lost in this manner would ‘never come [back] again’. His younger brother ‘also’ being said to need ‘money for school’, their unemployed parents were said to be looking up to the respondent to ‘finish [his] matric’, and to ‘get work’. Clearly, former President Mandela’s (the respondent’s historian role-model) twenty seven year jail sentence at Robben Island was not long enough to erase some of the negative aspects of black South African history. It is this kind of ‘disadvantage’ that this respondent saw as letting him down where his ‘dreams’ were concerned.

As far as a female respondent in the same class was concerned (i.e. with regards to the impact of poverty on her educational aspirations), ‘unemployment’ coupled with or resulting from the challenge of the mother ‘not’ having the money to put the respondent through high[er] education, was not necessarily equated with the end of the road. If anything, this respondent together with a few others like her, felt they had every reason to feel grateful to be alive.

4.3.2.4 A sense of gratitude

That the respondents are able to tell the stories we are reading here today, despite the kinds of struggles and challenges they have been confronted with as detailed in the preceding sections, suggests a pulling force that has to have been stronger than that pushing respondents out into the cold of complete illiteracy. The respondent who, adamant that 'in all things' she 'not' forget those who had not only given her a sense of 'ambition' but also brought her to the 'stage' of 'achieving [her] goals' in life, captures the general essence of this section of the study. The gist of this paragraph is about respondents not wanting to forget all those responsible for who they had become at the time of the study, and also who they had the potential to become in the future. On the list of those deserving 'thanks' as far as the respondents were concerned were mothers, family members, ancestors and teachers. In terms of the accolades given here mothers' contributions to respondents' lives by far outweighed all the others. The next section illustrates why SA as a whole bothers with annual celebrations like the '*Woman of the year*' ceremony which was recently held in Cape Town.

4.3.2.4a Mother

Words and phrases used by the respondents in this study to describe their mothers ranged from 'the best', 'my best friend', and 'the most important person in my life', etc. The latter were also described in terms of the positive things they had done, and what respondents hoped and planned to do to 'return' the favour.

Motherly 'support' of different kinds was highlighted. While one form of support appears to have been related to formal education, one comment about the informal type of education associated the mother in question with having taught the respondent 'everything' the latter supposedly knew. In terms of the quality of family life in another scenario, a respondent claimed she enjoyed a luxurious life because of her mother's support. 'Luxury' in this context being the product of careful financial management, this respondent expressed a sense of wonder and admiration which bordered on the magical, in terms of which her mother was seen to be managing the meagre family 'budget'. The phrase 'you can't say' when describing the mother's ability in this regard, as used by this respondent, registers just this sense. She used the concept of 'power' to capture this mother's ability to create bread out of stones (if I may borrow the biblical expression). This was done in such a way that the budget would accommodate 'all' members of the respondent's 'big family'.

This respondent is the second to use the concept of power in this kind of context. The first reference to this appears in par.4.3.1 above. In both cases the word implies a sense of limitless capability to achieve something out of nothing. In this sense it says a lot about those associated with it (i.e. the respondent and the mother in the earlier and latter reference). A comparison of the two scenarios suggests a go-getting attitude on the part of the respondent who uses the concept to define her ability to change her life for the better, while a sense of admiration appears to inform the second example. That the respondent in the current paragraph defines her family life as luxurious when it is clear that the mother manages by splitting hairs, provides evidence of the positive outlook adopted by many of the respondents in the current study. This links up with the concluding remark I had made in par. 4.3.2.3 above, about these respondents' reluctance to play victims.

Intentions to reward the mothers included respondents generally wanting to make the former 'happy', by making '[their] dreams' come true in one example. It also included emulating the mother in question's kind deeds in another (e.g. the adopted respondent who thought he would do the same for another child). In terms of this the respondent appeared to see his role as basically doing the kind of good that had been done unto him. Sentiments expressed in this regard included 'first of all' giving the mother the 'first' wage, buying her 'everything' (e.g. 'a big house'), etc. Prioritizing the mother's needs over their own meant respondents buying themselves houses only 'if' they could still afford them, with they anticipating how they will have already bought houses for their mothers. One respondent prayed that 'God' could keep her mother long 'enough' for the former to grow old enough to do something for her. Sticking with family when the respondents could be living on their own and out of sight, was one of many ways in which respondents aimed to show their gratitude. Some chose to remain in the neighbourhood or in the family home, so that they would be able to 'look [after]' the mother in question, predicting that by then the latter would be too 'old' to fend for herself.

As far as the larger family was concerned respondents grateful for the 'blessings' and 'support' received preferred 'not' to live far away from their families. It was the concerned respondents' view that their families would take such an act to mean the former had forgotten or abandoned them. 'Ancestors' also having smoothed the road for another respondent, and having saved him 'all the time' since the respondent was 'young', the latter felt it proper that he told the former 'thank you' one day in the future. Outside the family some teacher's role in enabling the respondent in question to 'teach others' younger than she was, while also helping to relieve the boredom of school life in the process, was acknowledged with gratitude.

As has already been hinted at above, the respondents felt the most overwhelming sense of gratitude toward their mothers than anyone else. It stands to reason therefore, that this sense of gratitude should correspond with a sense of duty toward the same persons.

4.3.2.5 A sense of obligation

Having received kindness of some kind or the other some respondents felt duty-bound to act in particular ways, e.g. rendering some form of service or the other as in the male respondent who hoped to adopt; and/or achieving certain goals (e.g. to ease the pain of suffering for others) and/or to enable specific outcomes (e.g. the general well-being of all those in their surroundings, etc). This sense of obligation appears to have prompted the respondents to want to respond to the needs (both implicit and explicit) of the larger community or towards members of their families.

The other kind of obligation which is not of a personal nature in this study comes with the demands of the jobs envisaged. A good example in this regard is the future 'business man' whose idea it was that the way he would handle his future business would have to be such that 'everyone' would be kept 'happy'. A Grade 11E respondent who could not see even his own way forward on the other hand, due to his parents being unemployed, voiced his concern

about a younger brother who, like him, ‘also’ needed an education. According to this respondent his parents were looking up to him, to finish school and to provide for his family.

In line with the English expression ‘charity begins at home’ implied here, the study now interrogates respondents’ sense of duty towards family members. Needless to say the key persons in this regard would be mothers. As one Grade 11A respondent in the previous chapter had so morally pointed out in her allusion to the bible, it would appear as if it is indeed in giving that people shall receive. In view of mother’s sacrificial nature, below we explore the extent to which the respondents aim to make their mothers, and other deserving individuals the beneficiaries of some hard-earned and well-deserved good.

4.3.2.5a Obligations toward the mother and other family members

One respondent who thought her ‘old’ mother lacked both the physical and financial ‘power’ to unveil a tombstone for the former’s late sister thought she would take things a step further, if this meant relieving her mom of some of the responsibility. She also planned to take in this deceased sister’s child, and ‘to stay [with]’ her for a little while. She also felt obliged to take into the house she planned to buy her mother, her own ‘small’ (i.e. younger) brothers and sisters. She saw a symbiotic potential in the arrangement just described. In terms of this the siblings would in turn ‘look [after]’ her mother while she was ‘at work’.

It would seem as if the African way of the passing on of the baton of humanity is not such a bad thing after all, as suggested by this study. What the reader sees here is just a thin slice of the very essence of the concept of *ubuntu* which has always been regarded as being right at the heart of the concept of being African. See par. 5.3.4.2d for traces that this phenomenon still lives among some black people, despite the challenges of the day. This kind of mindset (i.e. *ubuntu*) equates to a belief system that basically believes in the saying that ‘I am because we are’ among those who practise it. Mothers being the main custodians of this belief system, they have been known to operate from a mindset that says ‘another (i.e. African) woman’s child is also my child’, among others. Although one sees traces of this phenomenon here and there within the African culture today, Westernization and poverty (among others) have sadly interfered with the way things used to be in the past.

This particular paragraph provides some evidence of the informal education that mothers tend to excel in, among a whole lot of other job descriptions. According to one respondent it appears as if her mother may have planted a seed of responsibility in the former’s mind. This mother, according to the respondent, is said to have ‘loved’ pointing out to the respondent, the tendency among ‘most’ girls, to want to ‘change’ (i.e. transform) their homes. This, according to the mother in question, was said to happen just as soon as girl children had secured jobs for themselves. If the respondent in question could as yet ‘not’ make her home as beautiful as she wanted it to be in the future, the mother is said to have expressed her confidence that this would happen at some ‘stage’ in the future. Since the mother had spent so ‘much money’ on her while she was very ‘small’, the respondent interpreted the future as it being her turn to do ‘all the things’ her deserving mother was asking of her.

Over and above these examples respondents wanted to buy their ‘best friend’ and ‘role model’ mothers without whom one claimed she was ‘nothing’, houses. In terms of the material tokens of gratitude intended, ‘houses’ were the one gift that the great majority of respondents wished they could present their mothers with. This point seems to speak to failure on the part of Cape Town, a city known in affectionate terms as the ‘Mother City’ by those living in South Africa, to indiscriminately provide resources of any kinds for all of its children. For the illegitimate and adopted children (e.g. mainly black Cape Townians and their immigrants relatives and friends as referred to in Chapter 1 above, respectively) of this city, the concept of a ‘home’ amounts to wood and timber clumsily knocked together amidst foul-smelling, flea-infested gutters and bucket-system toilets, among other health threatening hazards. That is not all that separates this mother’s children apart from one another. As suggested in this study these differences manifest themselves in linguistic (i.e. with English and Afrikaans being experienced by those speaking IsiXhosa as being ‘more equal’ than the latter language, despite claims to all three being official languages within this province), educational, geographic, economic, and others terms. Having come to this part of SA post-*apartheid* myself, I am still struck by the degree to which some non-African members in this town appear to celebrate African-ness. Quite a few African people I know, particularly those coming from outside CT, have registered their sense of disbelief and rage over the kind of treatment they have been subjected to since their arrival in CT.

‘Sea-view’ and ‘mountain-view’ (i.e. that of the scenic Table Mountain) and the fresh sea breeze that comes with these being the privilege only of those considered to be the apple of this mother’s eye (i.e. whites) according to Myeni (presenting host of the SABC programme ‘Breaking New Ground’: 2008), this city’s disowned children are sardined in the tins just described, stacked out of sight and forgotten. Some of these have been living in this city as ‘tenants’ for their entire lives, in dark corners and backyards belonging to others (see one of the essays reflected in Appendix G). In this city, like everywhere else in the country (though the differences are more pronounced in certain areas more than others), fortune comes in degrees. Compared to those who have learnt to become one with the harsh elements, some of whom sleep under bridges or out in the open, most shack dwellers like the ones constituting a huge part of this study consider themselves blessed indeed. It is in recognition of these degrees that people have learnt to count their blessings. In gratitude most acknowledge that things could have been worse (as reported upon by Mannas on the SABC’s news and actuality programme, ‘Morning Live’, on February 04, 2008).

Along with the lack of proper housing come issues around safety and security, both of which amount to myths for those living in Nyanga. When discussing the issue of possible obstacles that respondents thought could hinder their access to future success, one respondent vowed to ‘make sure’, by doing ‘whatever’ it took, to ensure that her children were ‘safe’ and ‘secure’. The reader is urged to consider in this regard, the points raised by ZWHS respondents in par. 3.2.7 above. In terms of these not even the fortified appearance of this school manages to keep away criminal elements. In actual fact one of the interviews I had with the parents covered a chilling story about how a certain teacher had found sitting in her class amidst traumatized learners, three men who were supposedly dressed ‘all in black’ (see par. 6.3b(1) below for more detail into this incident. Seeing beyond all of these and recognizing education as a good means to many positive ends, one respondent depicted education as the

‘main thing’ he wished he could give his ‘brothers and sisters’. The idea was to ensure that they would become what they wanted to be in life.

Quite a few of the respondents in the current study were of the opinion that it is only ‘white’ education and native-like competence in English that could have opened or could still open doors for themselves and their children, respectively (see par.4.3.2.3 above). Against this backdrop is at least one respondent, who appeared to be challenging this way of thinking. The latter respondent counted herself very fortunate indeed, for the ‘opportunity’ of a bright future that her township education was about to present her with. In terms of this reckoning the respondent’s less fortunate siblings were regarded as ‘not’ being blessed as she was. The respondent in question was fortunate to have been taken under the warm wing of a financially stable and Cape Town-based ‘aunt’ who had given her a home and an education to boot. The siblings that the latter was concerned about were said to be back home in the rural Eastern Cape (i.e. in the former homeland formerly known as the ‘Transkei’) at the time of the study.

What this respondent’s sense of gratitude implies is a sense that all is not necessarily white that glitters. This, perhaps, is a lesson that many self-pitying working class youth in SA would do well to heed. It will be a long time before both rural and township schools can match the former Model-C standards, if this will ever happen at all. I am not necessarily arguing that this be accepted as an irrevocable fact of life because it is not, but I also think allowing this reality to cripple children’s chances even further is not going to benefit anyone in the long run. When all is said and done, millions of township-schooled youth have achieved and made something of their lives in this country. This fact alone suggests that motivation knows no divisive railway lines, geographical constraints nor linguistic limitations. In the same way that the township is said to live in the heart of some of the Grade 11E respondents, regardless of their plans to live in the suburbs in the future (see pars. 5.5.9b (i) and 5.5.9b(ii) below), so should the ambition to succeed. As one respondent quoted below (see par. 5.4.1 below) so aptly put it, if she could ‘dream’ it, then ‘live’ it she could do as well.

Suggested by this orientation is a mindset that sees success as a state of mind. It is after all exposure to a good and balanced education rather than English alone (which for most ex-Model C schools is a powerful combination these schools can lay claim to) as implied by some respondents in this study, which can emancipate the black community from poverty of the mental, physical, cultural, economic, etc. kinds.

4.3.3 The needs of the collective

As a cultural group Africans are generally raised to believe the needs of the larger community supersede those of the individual (see par. 4.3.2.5a on the concept of *ubuntu* above). The distinction drawn in this entire section, between these two categories (i.e. obligations to members of one’s family and the needs of the community) is in many respects artificial. As a result the lines tend to blur sometimes. To contextualize things for the reader the words of one respondent from ZWHS provides a rough frame for most of the utterances to be analyzed here. According to this respondent God not only made people ‘to be one’ but

also to ‘have humility and unity in others’. God is further claimed to have said ‘the one who gives is the one who [will] have more blessings’. The driving force behind this kind of concern on the part of the respondent concerned seemed to be an altruistic need to benefit others, by rendering good service. The respondent who, as early as ‘fifteen years’ of age, had decided one of his first goals was to be ‘a good lawyer’ gave no hint in his essay, about money being the motivating factor behind his choice of career. The fact that he talked about being a ‘good’ lawyer suggests that the choice was more about rendering a service, rather than personal gain or glory. Another lawyer-to-be in this class wanted ‘to know the needs of the people’ so that his work could be ‘good’ from his side.

The same argument about service delivery goes for a would-be ‘doctor’. How she proposed to become a doctor in future given the fact of her being registered in the general stream, is still a mystery to me. The role she hoped to play being clear cut in her mind though, it was her aim to ‘make sure’ that she would be there to ‘look after’ her patients ‘all the time’. This was to happen till such a time that she was convinced the patients were feeling ‘better’ than they had been doing ‘before’. Being the rare kind of doctor who would genuinely ‘care’ for and about her patients, she was to do only what she considered ‘important’ for her patients.

A close analysis of the content of these respondents’ essays suggests people struggling to reconcile the needs of two spheres of existence, one immediate (i.e. the home) and the other secondary (the environment). Instinctively recognizing both as important and mutually inclusive, the respondents seem to be trying to balance the needs of the one against those of the other. Their insightful plans for a better future illustrate the futility of attending to the one at the expense of the other. Onyeani (2004) the capitalist acknowledges the soundness in one taking care of oneself, before one can start thinking of helping others. In support of this kind of thinking, he asks how anyone could be expected to save a drowning man when one does not even know how to swim.

4.3.3.1 Motivation and employment opportunities

The high unemployment rate in SA is just one of the biggest challenges facing the country today, with big cities like CT shouldering more than their fair share of the strain. Addressing this as one of the root causes of discomfort and strife in her community, one Grade 11E respondent balanced her personal need to be ‘successful’ as either as a ‘boss’ or the ‘manager’ of a business, with the needs of her community. As far as she was concerned, her service to the community would be ‘to employ’ the unemployed, and to help children who did ‘not have parents to look after them’. A classmate to this respondent also wanted things of ‘[her] own’, and to realize ‘all the dreams’ she had been dreaming since her youth. Her use of the phrase ‘first of all’ however suggests she had prioritized her needs over those of others. In the same vein another respondent claimed to first want to ‘reach the goals’ she had set for herself as a future performing ‘poet’, and an author of an anthology of poems. Following this was a need to ‘set a good example’ for the ‘next future generations’. This thought process is similar to that shared by the aspiring business woman whose contribution to society was to come in the form of a ‘book’. As a successful woman herself at the time

when her plan unfolded in the near future this respondent thought the fact of her writing this book would help motivate aspiring and under-achieving people.

Through the content of the book in question people were to get to know that she had ‘not just’ become an overnight success story, but rather that she had had a ‘background’. In spelling the word background the respondent in question interestingly breaks the word into two as in ‘back’ and ‘ground’. The message she seemed to be wanting to communicate was that in the same way that the people would be suffering at the time when she would be motivating them, she would have suffered at more or less the same level ‘back’ in her past life. Her use of the word ‘just’ in the phrase ‘didn’t just’ as referred to above drums home a perception on the part of the respondent. This amounts to the principle that working one’s way up the ladder rather than taking short cuts will always be the best way to go.

4.3.3.2 Improvement of literacy levels

The respondent just discussed is one of two respondents whose future contribution to society will supposedly take the form of the written word. The other one is the would-be performing poet whose intention it was to put together a compilation of ‘poems’. The literary vision being presented here addresses a concern which certain black South Africans (e.g. talk-show host, Ms Maholwana-Sangqu of 3Talk and other radio presenters like ‘Glenzito’ of Radio Metro) are up in arms trying to dispel. The ‘myth’ (or maybe fact, depending on who is talking) which is presently doing rounds in this country, is about black South Africa being book-shy. According to this stereotypical belief, as some choose to call it, if one had something they wished to hide from this sector of the SA population, a book would be the best place in which to do this.

The beginning of 2008 saw talk-show host Maholwana-Sangqu featuring author upon author for at least three shows in a row. Those who watch this show will be familiar with her concept of a ‘book club’. From the plans that the respondents in this study have for the future of black SA, it looks like the saying that ‘blacks do not read’ is about to be confirmed as nothing else but a myth in the future. Banda’s (in press) most recent findings relating to the competence levels of some black university students painting a rather bleak picture for the future, we now consider views expressed by this study’s respondents, on issues pertaining to education.

4.3.3.3 Education and perseverance

By its very nature education demands a lot of reading. It being almost the only positive and reliable tool available for the achievement of success for most working class people, one respondent intended to make her educational level ‘very very high’ indeed (see the essay sample provided in par. 4.2 above for the source of this analysis). Providing the scaffolding which was to propel this respondent up to these dizzying heights of success would be a ‘degree’ which she planned to acquire. With this vision in mind this respondent planned to motivate people to ‘go to school’. In the event of them ‘not’ understanding the ‘subject’ matter it was the respondent’s advice that such people confide the fact in their ‘friend[s]’. The gist of the message that this respondent appeared to wish to have communicated was the

fact about education always ‘waiting’. In terms of this those who were ‘not serious’ enough about their aims and the future, were ‘not’ to expect bursaries. As far as this respondent was concerned the bursary was seen as ‘very good’ in that it helped people who knew what they wanted in life. In a nutshell the viewpoint being communicated here is that education is the key to success, and that perseverance succeeds. Perseverance being an important element of intrinsic motivation or vice versa, the reader’s attention is now being drawn to this concept.

4.3.3.4 Sustainable Development

Some of the respondents in the current study appear to consider education a key ingredient for sustainable development in this country. This mindset appeared to be registered in some of the utterances. Concern that all the good plans they were hatching for the future should not fizzle out and die was conveyed via preoccupations with future ‘generations’. This concept came up twice in the essays. In one scenario, a ‘self-made millionaire’ in the making aimed to build a ‘huge industry’ for his family, so that his ‘generation’ of the ‘*Gqiba*’ family could ‘have assets’, among other things. The personal endorsement used here says a lot about the kind of vision that this respondent had. Riding on it is a sense of immense pride that seems bent on putting the family name on the map, as a name that future generations will have to reckon with.

The R80 000 a month would-be earner, on the other hand, wanted to ‘support growing business’, by giving ‘charity to young stars’. It is perhaps the entrepreneurial spirit like that demonstrated above and elsewhere in this study, which could turn things around for the better for communities like Nyanga. According to Schmitt-Rodermund and Vondracek (2002) adolescence is a time when entrepreneurial aspirations take place. They suggest ‘two factors’ representing the starting point of such a process. In the next section this study explores the extent to which an entrepreneurial spirit is a feature in the respondents’ orientation.

4.3.3.5 An entrepreneurial orientation

In terms of factors mentioned by Schmitt-Rodermund and Vondracek above (2002) potential entrepreneurs are said to have convinced themselves that they want to become self employed later in life. For evidence of this business-oriented kind of thinking among the respondents in the current study the reader is referred to par 4.2.2 above, among others, where the concept of ownership is depicted as dominating some respondents’ vocabulary. The second factor which these authors consider a ‘relevant’ starting point is ‘the right type of occupational training’. This point again mainly speaks more, though not necessarily exclusively so, to the respondents in Grade 11A, as these appear to be more cognizant of the enabling nature of their choice of stream.

Of even greater interest with regard to the topic under discussion are the parallels that the reader could draw between the two factors mentioned by the authors just referred to above, and sentiments shared by the respondent analysed in par. 4.2 above. Even though this is not exactly spelt out in so many words, what these authors are echoing are views already being held by the respondent in question. The latter suggests there should be compatibility between

‘the beginning’ (in her case this being the ‘very very high’ education she intended to attain) and ‘the end’ (e.g. the ‘smile’ that the respondent appears to associate with the acquisition of the intended ‘degree’) of all entrepreneurial endeavours.

God being the alpha and the omega in the biblical sense, the religious grounding suggested by one respondent, about God having made all of his children ‘to be one’, and for each one of them to ‘have humility or unity in others’, captures the spirit of giving that dominates utterances made by Grade 11A in the section now being concluded, and those by Grade 11E respondents as about to be explored in the paragraphs which follow below. As suggested above Grade 11A and Grade 11E approached the question of societal needs from different angles. Because these different lenses allow the reader a glimpse into the soul of those wearing them, it has been deemed important to keep the different viewpoints separate. In the following section Grade 11E reveals the varied kinds of social ills perceived to be plaguing their community.

4.3.3.6 Social Services

Two broad categories which are not necessarily distinct from each other suggested themselves under this category among those in Grade 11E. These were the respondents’ concerns with providing service to the community, and the choice of specific career paths which they deemed necessary if they were to address their specific societal needs. Within the second category of choices the reader will pick up two strands. One of these somehow traces broader societal issues back to problems confronted by people in their individual capacities. Here respondents address problems to do with gender, murder, assault, etc. most of which tend to start with individuals. The second strand, on the other hand considers issues of a wider social reach (e.g. unemployment, homelessness, disease, systemic shortcomings like police negligence and human exploitation). This distinction is considered particularly superficial in that it is based on a matter of the degree of the occurrence of the phenomena in question.

Of the specific career choices that the respondents saw as a possible remedy for the ailing Nyanga township, the main thrust seemed to be veering toward poverty alleviation, and/or concerns about relieving people from pain and suffering. One ‘successful businessman’ hopeful for example thought he could be ‘the door’ which he deemed his community to need. This was seen as possible if he could ‘stand [his] ground’. The imagery suggested by one having to stand one’s ground, is very suggestive. It hints at a society which has had to fight for everything that it has accumulated. This would be a group of people for which nothing comes easily. In line with this the respondent wished he could mobilize ‘all’ the people into working together toward ‘one mission’. This mission he referred to as the mysterious ‘misery’ which took the form of ‘HIV & AIDS, CRIMINOLOGY & POVERTY ALLEVIATION’. The size of the letters clearly indicates what it is that the respondent in question considered to be the biggest evils or threats to his community’s well-being.

The respondent’s words further register his sense of bafflement over a group of people (as suggested by ‘all’) being held captive (and therefore made miserable) by phenomena he considers alien, as can be inferred from his use of the word ‘mysterious’ (or ‘mystery’ to use

his exact words) which he uses to describe the challenges enumerated above. His sentiments suggest the respondent may subscribe to one of the belief systems that had been more prevalent in the days of the struggle against *apartheid* than it seems to be today. This captured the mindset which ran thus '*United we stand, divided we fall*'. In terms of this saying mass-mobilization (as implied by the use of the phrase 'one mission') was seen as one of many productive ways for annihilating social evils.

To the unemployed the message was that being unemployed did 'not' mean 'the end of the road' or that one should lose one's sense of 'spiritual morality'. Having come to the conclusion that unemployment was one of his community's biggest enemies, the respondent in question expressed a wish to build a 'large factory shop' in which he would be selling 'clothing', 'shoes', 'etc.'. This, again, was 'not' to happen far from the community as tends to be the case with most places of employment in SA today. So determined was this respondent to cleanse his community of poverty, that an 'R80000' wage per month per future employee seemed like a small price for him to pay his team of future factory workers. Coincidentally the amount in question is exactly the kind of salary that another respondent had envisaged for himself in one of the preceding sections. The respondent who thought he would be on the handing over side of this exchange argued, verily so, that in the streets 'no-one' would be prepared to give away 'that [kind of] money', and particularly not 'for free' as he would seemingly be willing to do in his case.

This respondent's generous, altruistic and patriotic spirit is further demonstrated through his wish that he could be a 'positive person', 'somebody special to [his] nation of birth', which is exactly what his role model Mr Mandela had done and was still doing at the time of the current study, for many people in SA. The respondent wished 'to give all tears to misery' as all that he touched would 'turn to gold'. Suggested in the imagery employed here, is someone who wishes he could wave a magic wand and wipe the slate so clean that people would no longer have to grapple HIV/AIDS, poverty, unemployment, etc. These concerns are some of many plaguing SA, whose resilience still keeps this retired father of the South African nation (i.e. former President Mandela) busy to this day.

The specific job types referred to by the respondents (for which the reader has been prepared above), as included in their second category of career choices, included opening businesses, rendering medical and legal assistance, and social work. Service of the social kind was by far the most popular career preference of all the careers mentioned in this chapter. This, interestingly, is in keeping with my own observations within my UWC teaching experience for the academic period spanning between 2006 and 2007. Of the two Social Work groups of students I have taught so far, not one student was white. A huge concentration of white students in this Community Health Sciences (CHS) Department of which the two courses are a part within this university, appeared to be more interested in Physiotherapy (i.e. in 2006) rather than social work. The latter class on the other was populated by both black and coloured students. What these two scenarios (i.e. the findings of this specific study and my personal observations) suggest, is that one's circumstances and/or the environment one grows up do somehow dictate or inform one's actions, among other things. Social workers' designation in life, as far as the respondents in this study were concerned, was seen as

‘helping’ people who are ‘suffering’ in their families, and homeless children. This was so that these could become ‘something’ or be ‘successful’ in life, among other concerns.

4.3.3.6.1 The needs of children

The one area that the respondents seemed to think deserved the greatest amount of attention was the needs of children, specifically those without parents or living on the streets. The latter’s problems were identified as including crying out for shelter, either in the form of hospices (for people infected with HIV/AIDS); or places of residence (as implied by the phrases ‘a place to stay’ and or cooking the food and washing their clothes, the concept of ‘homeless’-ness and the intention by another, to ‘buy [them] a house’); ‘money’; ‘clothes’; ‘blankets’; ‘food’; ‘advice’ (as suggested by the phrase ‘people to guide them’,); a listening ear (as suggested by the phrase and ‘everything’ else that street kids generally ‘need’ or ‘want’). In the event of one respondent winning a ‘lottery’ she hoped to give street kids money so that they would buy themselves some things.

4.3.3.6.2 The needs of the elderly

Older community members in places other than the Nyanga township (e.g. those ‘in the country’), especially those who were ‘poor’ to boot, were seen as crying out for the ‘support’, time and attention of these would-be service providers. As an aspiring social worker himself, one respondent saw himself ‘consulting people’ with regard to their problems as he generally did ‘not’ wish to see other people suffering.

As the question of rendering help in settings like this one could be likened to one blind person leading another (depending on who was helping who, of course), respondents were quick to point out their need for ‘office’ space in one the case, and a company ‘car’ in another. Though both are basic tools for the kind of work at hand, there is also no denying the personal benefits to those seen to be making use of them. In a society which upholds materialism and emphasizes external appearances the kind of combination (i.e. of a car and an office) proposed here could be construed, by some township onlookers, as an index of what it means to be a successful professional. Those coming to this kind of conclusion would not be far off the mark either, if one considers the fact that one of these respondents was already engaged in ‘a lot of projects’ like the ‘SANCA’ and ‘Amy Biehl’ projects which happen to be community-based. According to the Grade 11E respondent in question the projects were already providing him with hands-on experience in fields aligned with what he wanted to do one day.

4.3.3.6.3 Legal Services

The Nyanga community’s perceived needs as far as the law is concerned, were deemed to range from ‘advice’ on how to deal with problems of ‘assault’, murder (‘killing’), rape (raping) and road ‘accidents’. ‘Disabled’ victims of car accidents were seen by one respondent as deserving of special attention, so that these could be helped to gain access to money from what the respondent referred to as the ‘Arrive Alive’ facility. By this she probably meant the ‘Road Accident Fund’.

What appeared to motivate this kind of career choice on the part of the respondent concerned was a perception on her part, that the police (as part of the system), were ‘not’ taking people’s cases seriously enough. This again speaks to notion of preferential treatment that is such a huge concern for the poor. The general perception among township dwellers is that emergency services (in the form of police response and ambulance facilities among others), are not as prompt and efficient as is the case for people living in the formerly-white residential areas. People have been known to die in townships while waiting for these forms of services to be availed. Feeble excuses given for the failure would include there not being sufficient manpower or relevant vehicles to attend to the call in question. As a future ‘lawyer of the state’ the respondent saw it as her calling to take such matters into ‘[her own] hands’.

The fact of this respondent’s concern with problems mainly associated with being female is perhaps no accident. Most victims of assault, rape and murder in South Africa are women. As a young woman herself the respondent appears to be drawn toward specializing in services aimed at helping what was once known as the weaker sex. This is clearly someone who identifies with the plight of the underdog.

4.3.3.6.4 Gender issues

From a sporting point of view an aspirant ‘netball coach’ hoped to officially make netball what she would have liked to call ‘a sport [for the] ladies’ which is not necessarily the case in certain geographical areas in this country. With this in mind she hoped to replace ‘bad influence[s]’ (in the form of ‘smoking’ and ‘alcohol’) among women, with sport. In her view ‘all’ of these influences were ‘wrong for ladies’, hence her fervent wish to encourage them to ‘think about sport’ instead.

This is not the first time concern has been registered, about the manner in which township women appear to be handling themselves. The concept of lady-like behaviour has come up a few times in this study. This point also addresses the respondents’ concerns about transforming some aspects of other people’s past lives, as discussed in par. 4.3.1 above. This same issue (i.e. lady-like behaviour) is addressed at greater length in the section on what constitutes ‘wife material’ as it appears in par. 5.3.2.1(b) below. Other than concerns mainly addressing the needs of the one gender over those of the other, respondents pondered how they could be of general assistance to others.

4.4 Charting the way forward

As has been pointed out in the introductory section to this chapter, the findings and analysis of the current thesis are covered by both Chapters 4 and 5, with the latter chapter (i.e. Chapter 5) flowing seamlessly from the one preceding it (i.e. Chapter 4). Within the content analysis domain (with this being preceded by a discussion of linguistic concerns) of the analysis as laid out in Chapter 4, three broad categories have been covered. These address issues to do with the past of others (captured here under the concept of ‘the other- oriented’),

the respondents' own past (i.e. 'the self-oriented') and the needs of the collective (i.e. here referred to as 'the socially prescribed').

The scope of the next chapter (i.e. Chapter 5) continues from where I have left off in par. 4.3.3.6.4 above. In line with Miles and Huberman's (cited in Glesne and Peshkin 1992: 137) 'arrow model' of 'cause and effect' as described in par. 4.2.1 above, I now turn my attention to a discussion of the remaining of three sub-categories within sphere of content analysis. This remaining section deals with concerns about familial concerns (i.e. the make up and general well-being), 'career plans', 'lifestyle choices', and the respondents' concerns regarding their envisaged 'obstacles'. All of the issues just mentioned here relate to the notion of 'envisioning the future'.



Chapter 5

Findings and Analysis II: Grade 11A and Grade 11E Envisioning the future

5.1 Introduction

Speaking in support of the 1953 Bantu Education (BE) Act (see par. 1.2.3 for a brief background into the concept of Bantu Education) Dr. H. F. Verwoed, the then Minister of Bantu Affairs in South Africa is said to have spelt out exactly why it was that black people (referred to in this case as the 'Bantu') were to get an education separate from that of whites (or 'Europeans'). In terms of this, the minister saw it as being 'of no avail' for Blacks to receive training which would mislead them by showing them 'the green pastures of Europeans', while the former were 'not allowed to graze there'. In line with this absolutely 'no' provision was to be made for the black race above certain forms of labour. As far as Verwoed was concerned all that a good education could do for Blacks was frustrate them, as there would be no employment acceptable to them. In terms of this BE was seen as the answer to the African dream, its roots being seen to be entirely in the 'native areas', the 'native environment' and native community. It is highly unlikely that anyone who had read this statement would be unclear about any aspect of Dr Verwoed's message; the man in question clearly was not one to beat about the bush.

Today, in post-*apartheid* SA, where education is neither separate nor equal (Hoogeveen and Ozler 2005), the recently delivered parliamentary speech of the current Minister of Education in this country (Pandor 2006), perhaps explains why it is that we have continued to live out the Verwoed legacy till today (see Figs. 1.3 and 3.3.5.1 for statistical evidence of this). According to the politically correct Pandor, 'we are still not where we want to be'. While she remains vague about who it is, where it is that this 'we' is supposed to be, and also how 'we' are going to get there, the unequivocal Verwoed had been very explicit in his message.

The respondents in the current study were not even ideas in their parents' minds when these fateful words cited above were uttered approximately fifty-five years ago. Indeed, for most of them chances are that even their parents themselves had not yet been born at the time. Yet, judging by the degree of concern they show when it comes to issues pertaining to their future, they could well have been flies on the wall when this pronouncement was being made. Upon reading about these concerns as referred to in the current study, one would also think the respondents had read Cock's and Ginsburg's (1988) and (2001) volumes, respectively. The said authors' observations and consequent assessment of the South African domestic service scene has led them to the conclusion about this kind of service 'not' being practised for merely economic reasons. Rather, they see this kind of service as an important social status marker that has been normalized in South Africa, to keep black people 'in their place'. This is something which most South Africans should be familiar with, as it is akin to the pattern of poor educational attainment which has been entrenched into a way of life for children of the black race. The perception of particularly African people as being condemned to domestic service is so huge that today, despite all the talk about a burgeoning black middle class in this country, some

Cape Townians still seem to experience a lot of trouble seeing black people in any other role. I cannot get over the number of people who continue to ask either for ‘the madam’ or ‘the lady of the house’ whenever I open my front door. One interesting example was that of a white woman who was seeking employment. Her tone and facial expression while asking for the madam suggested she was convinced the madam would choose her over me, if she were to come to the door. Needless to say, mine is not the only black face to have experienced incidents like these.

Contrary to a commonly-held belief which suggests that those born poor tend to take poverty as normal (they being said not to know any differently), the current study suggests some working class youth know better. What was once a calculated strategy (poor educational attainment that was supposed to result in black people becoming labourers) to keep the black working class in bondage and servitude as far as the proponents of *apartheid* were concerned, appears to be having quite the opposite effect on the respondents in the current study. Domestic service appears to have exposed the respondents to the flashy lifestyles of their mothers’ rich employers, in the process changing the former’s outlook in life for the better. This turnout is somewhat reminiscent of the Cinderella fairytale. Not only has domestic service shown the respondents the green pastures they were never meant to see let alone trespass into, but the exposure appears to have whetted their appetite and strengthened their thirst for the finer things in life. Some of the things they talk about when discussing their future lifestyles, are things which many members of the so-called black middle class do not even dream about, with these being way out of this class’s league.

That the SA education system is still undecided where it is that it wants to take the respondents in this study perhaps does not matter any more, because they know precisely what it is they do not wish to see happening in their lives. Among their list of no go areas is the manual labour service route.

5.1.1 Black SA learners’ plans for their future

‘[Un]like’ many black South African mothers who, as far as one respondent was concerned, are condemned to ‘domestic’ service all of their hard working lives, a ‘computer course’ was seen as having the potential of placing the concerned respondent at a far ‘better position’ in the employment hierarchy. In terms of this she would ‘at least’ earn ‘a better salary or wage’ at the end of the month. Her salary, according to this, would definitely be ‘more and better’ than that of what she called ‘our domestic worker parents’. The use of the possessive pronoun ‘our’ in this utterance, I might add, has nothing to do with the respondent demonstrating her flair for the English language (i.e. a possible employment of the royal plural in the given scenario). What it suggests rather, is that the respondent is addressing a concern that is much bigger than herself as an individual (or her individual family situation), and one that is rather more of national proportions.

One finds evidence of world-wide concern over the issue of domestic service in South Africa in Parson’s bibliography of *‘Domestic workers in the Republic of South Africa and Surrounding Countries’: An Annotated Bibliography* (2004), among other relevant sources. Concerns about living wages (Bothma and Campher 2003, Burger *et al.* 2004), and the working conditions particularly of the poor South Africans have been topical issues in this country since time immemorial (Cock 1988; Cock 1989; Cole, 1992; Department of Labour 2001, Fish 2003, etc.).

Judging by the international interest that this phenomenon has attracted to itself as suggested by the vast literature as referred to above, Verwoed's words were not just empty words, neither was this idle talk. Some of those who have looked into the South African domestic service situation, (e.g. Parsons 2004, and Fish 2003) have come to the conclusion that SA still has a long way to go before it realizes its promise of being a democracy. They confirm my concerns as expressed elsewhere in this thesis, about old shapes being covered in new rags. The question now is how the situation manifests itself in terms of the day-to-day lives and how it influences future plans of those once called the '*Bantu*'. Whether or not the Bantu dare to dream is the subject of the next paragraph.

5.1.2 To dream or not to dream?

Obviously cash-strapped, the same respondent referred to above voiced her concern about the perceived impact this fact was about to have on her future academic plans. Caught up between not wanting to let go of her dream (about 'university' access), and the need to face up to the reality of her financial situation she decided that 'if' all her attempts 'dropped down', then a computer course would at least cushion her fall. As she talks about her future plans falling flat on their face, she conjures an image of herself standing transfixed and watching helplessly, as the 'ceramic plate' that is supposed to be her future, slips through her numb fingers. Her sense of utter helplessness is brought to life by the mental picture of this plate crashing into small irretrievable splinters as it meets the unsympathetic floor. All of these somehow correspond with the visual image of this respondent's attempts going 'down' the drain. The analogy of ceramic tiles as used in this analysis has been retrieved from the stored data not forming part of this specific study. According to the respondent in question, some teacher had taught the class in question to think of their lives in ceramic plate terms. Implied by this analogy was a sense that the learners were to handle their lives with kid gloves. Failure to do so, as suggested by this rich imagery, would otherwise result in irreparable damage.

It is probably tightened purse strings combined perhaps with a bit of internalized oppression on the part of one single mother in the current study, which saw the affected male respondent stamping his foot down and vowing 'not' to live in the township ever in his future life. This respondent's fairly young mother (who was thirty-six at the time of the interview) had revealed she was giving up on her previously demanding but relatively rewarding job as a restaurant worker, and devoting her future to serving the Lord instead. This came from someone who, together with her almost grown up teenage son, shared a one bed-roomed shack with two mature siblings of her own (each one of whom should have been living on their own to start with), and a nephew to boot. How this mixed sex family of four adult people and children negotiated their space in view of non-existent toilet facilities, among other necessary amenities, is anybody's guess. With backgrounds like these the reader can understand the 'sick and tired' attitude displayed by many respondents in this study. The respondent presently being analyzed wished he would live 'somewhere' and does not say exactly where. All that mattered was that this be away from where he was at the time of the writing of the essay, and that this new world be a 'wealthy' one.

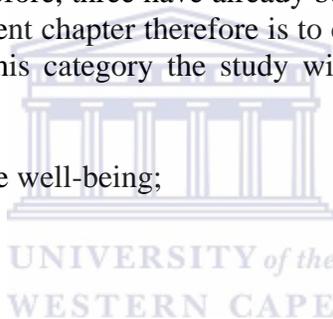
It is against this kind of background that this section of the current thesis attempts to expose the struggles against and efforts employed by the respondents. It is in their individual capacity as

well as in groups that they swerve to avoid potholes, challenge and tackle head on individuals or practices which they perceive not to be in their best interest. Poverty, as the study seems to be saying, is definitely not something these respondents are prepared to entertain in their future lives.

5.2 Laying the ground

As has already been explained in the preceding chapter, the analysis of the Grade 11A and Grade 11E life-histories has been spread over two chapters, i.e. Chapters 4 and 5. The data reflected in these chapters has further been subsumed under four broad categories, i.e. the past of others, the respondents' own past, the needs of the collective (all of these being featured in Chapter 4), and envisioning the future (the subject of the present chapter). In line with the breakdown given in par. 2.4.1 above, the four broad categories just referred to here were then subsumed under Flett's (1991) three categories (the 'self-oriented'; the 'other-oriented' and the 'socially prescribed') of analysis, in an attempt to facilitate ease of interpretation. As has already been suggested above, of the four categories mentioned before, three have already been covered in the previous chapter, i.e. Chapter 4. The task of the present chapter therefore is to cover issues around the respondents envisioning their future. Within this category the study will deal with respondents' concerns around their envisaged:

- Familial make-up and future well-being;
- Career choices;
- Lifestyle choices; and
- Future obstacles



Given the fact that all four of the sub-categories listed above pertain to the individual learner (rather than the others and/or the collective), the analysis of issues around envisioning the future which is about to be undertaken here has to be interpreted within the frame of Flett's concept of the self-oriented (2001).

The sentiment by the Grade 11E respondent referred to above in the second paragraph of par 5.1.2 above, coupled with that of another who saw her future as lying 'in [her] own hands' aptly captures the general agentic tone shared by most respondents in this specific category. Respondents not only did 'not want to play with [their] future' but also aimed to try their 'best' to achieve their dreams, and to succeed. As another respondent so succinctly put it, she had 'trust' and 'confidence' in her ability to make her dream a reality. In terms of this statement of conviction, when the respondent said something, it was because she really meant it. Using block letters to register the point in no uncertain terms, what THAT MEANT [in essence], [was that] [SHE] could BECOME WHAT [-ever] [SHE] WANTED TO BECOME in life, and that she could 'have all the things [she] need[-ed]'.

The energetic spirit captured in these words was found to permeate most aspects of the respondents' present and future lives. I now begin the analysis with a focus on respondents' envisaged family lives.

5.3 Concerns about family

Respondents wrote at great length about the kinds of family units they envisaged, as well as the kinds of family lives they wanted for themselves. They voiced their feelings about what they thought of the institution of marriage (with this including views about potential spouses), sexual relations (be these within or without the institution of marriage) in general, as well the question of children (with these being borne within or out of wedlock). Their detailed thoughts on the kinds of family units they looked forward to, particularly on the issue of children, suggest that the youth may not be as absent-minded and ‘come what may’ as many adult people think they are. On the contrary, this study suggests that the youth, particularly the ones under the spotlight at the moment, do take their future very seriously, and that they take pains in plotting their way forward. They being children themselves at the time of the essay writing, one gets the sense that they are using their thorny past and present experiences to build nests for their future children. The tendency therefore is for some to veer toward their own roles as future parents.

5.3.1 Thoughts about family life

Thoughts around the idea of family elicited a continuum of responses. Attitudes toward family ranged from those who were undecided on the matter, to others who were totally opposed to the idea. There was also great concern with practical issues like the size and make-up of families. The majority of the respondents expressed positive sentiments toward the concept of marriage, a fact confirmed by other recent studies (e.g. Martin *et al.* 2003; Qu and Soriano 2004), albeit these (studies) having been conducted in contexts other than SA. The voices of those who were opposed to the institution of marriage, though outnumbered by pro-marriage sentiments, came across very strongly as well. Some respondents were interested in spousal families, while others defined families in terms which completely obliterated sexual partners from the picture. Seemingly based on some negative experiences while growing up, for some of these respondents children and/ or full-time partnerships (i.e. those with two sexual partners sharing the same roof), were also considered optional.

Of the more general comments concerning marriage which were made, were concerns with ‘being’ and/or ‘having’ a ‘big’ or ‘small’ family, or just being ‘married’. The kinds of families envisaged also varied from the nuclear to the extended kind. Alternatively, respondents, particularly the female ones, defined themselves in marital terms (e.g. as ‘married’ women or ladies). Only one (Grade 11A) respondent did not think marriage worth her immediate her attention. The learner in question had decided she would think about this as time went by. McDonald (1984) as cited in Qu and Soriano (2004: 44) blames this kind of mindset on what he calls the effects of ‘macro-economic changes’. In terms of this, prevailing circumstances are seen to place increasing pressure on the youth to prioritize tertiary education, and to focus considerable energy on becoming ‘established’ in their careers. This, according to this author, had to happen before the youth could be ‘ready’ to consider personal relationships.

5.3.2 Pro-family sentiments

In sharp contrast to the negative outlook discussed above two Grade 11A respondents displayed a strong instinct for family life. One respondent vowed to make her family her biggest responsibility until 'in peace' she slept in her 'grave'. The other seemed to consider the concept of family in a holistic fashion. As the 'final' point in her proposed list of future 'life categories', she saw herself playing a juggling act among a variety of roles. These encompassed being a 'caring child', a potential 'wife' and 'mother'. As someone who had had a very rough childhood herself, the respondent viewed the latter role in the most serious light. 'Not' wanting a repetition of her own childhood, she wanted her own children to grow up in a 'good and healthy environment'. This concern about the future well-being of children is echoed by many of these potential parents, as par. 5.3.4 below, among others, illustrates. Attention is now given to those respondents for whom marriage continues to be an important goal and a symbol of commitment to partners and children.

5.3.2.1 Spousal families

As far as future spousal families in general are concerned, this study points to changing times having led to the extinction of the romantic concept of unconditional love. This fact appears to be registered more in the life-histories submitted by Grade 11A respondents than it is in those written by their more or less socialist counterparts (i.e. Grade 11E). The respondents appear to have based their decisions on which partner to marry on a set of criteria that their would-be spouses would have to meet. The actual fine details of each familial situation being set aside, what all the respondents seemed to be pursuing in their relationships, married or otherwise, was 'happiness'. The specifics they negotiate below are just a vehicle that is supposed to get them as close to this destination as possible, the concept of happiness being relative in nature. What determines good husband and wife material apparently differs from person to person, as exposed by the study. In line with this the next section has been divided into two main sub-areas, i.e. the young men and women's idea of perfect spouses.

5.3.2.1(a) Husband material

A once popular song with the lyrics and title '*No romance without finance*' appears to inform some of the thinking on this point. Money and not so much love, it would seem, could most likely become an invaluable ingredient for some future marriages, if what is suggested by this study is anything to go by. It is important to note the tone in which most of these utterances are being made, because the mindset does not appear to be influenced by gold-digging tendencies. The situation appears to be rather a question of individuals just looking out for themselves. Some of the utterances appear to suggest inseparability between the concepts of love and money.

One respondent for example expressed a wish that her future husband be someone she would 'love'. According to this, he would also have to have money 'of his own' (my emphasis). This, as far as the respondent was concerned, was to ensure that 'no one' would 'eat' the other's money. This was to be 'especially' the case 'when' rather than 'if' the would-be husband had 'dumped' the respondent. This sad eventuality being almost guaranteed in the respondent's mind,

she wanted to be in a position to 'carry on' with her life, as she 'not' would have been dependent on the man in the first place.

Convenience appears to be also part of the game. Depending on how the reader chooses to look at the sentiment expressed by the respondent about to be analyzed next, there are at least two possible interpretations. The respondent in question expressed a wish that her future husband could earn 'more money' than she would be doing. Over and above the money which the potential suitor was expected to have, he was also required to own 'a car'. One way to interpret this would be to see this viewpoint as challenging the 'woman equals man' tone of the foregoing utterances. Such an interpretation would however be out of sync with the overall picture of the potential wife being painted here. For a more plausible explanation one would need to contextualize this within the backdrop of young women determined to safeguard their interests at all costs. In terms of this, a part of this strategy appears to include keeping business and pleasure separate. Female respondents saw themselves as being generally independent and equal partners in terms of providing for their future families. The strong emphasis on money by most of the female respondents suggests a strong demand for brains rather than brawn on the spouses of the future.

Concerns of a personal nature, as divorced from monetary considerations included behavioural considerations, physical appearances, and the affective. In terms of these, the would-be husband would have to be a 'respectful' and 'loving' man. He would have to 'be there' for his family when it needed him the 'most'. Being 'open' with one's future husband, was also perceived as necessary for a healthy relationship by another respondent. This was seen as having the potential to enable the couple to 'share in love and all'. Whatever 'problem' came their way, they were to 'face' and 'solve' jointly.

At an aesthetic level another female respondent wanted a 'good-looking guy' who would be a 'very supportive husband'. The adjectives used in the case just mentioned are worth one or two lines here. Both are used basically to describe the same person, but at different stages in his life (i.e. first as boyfriend and then as husband). Whereas the happy-go-lucky image of the 'guy' is matched with mere looks (i.e. 'good-looking'), as husband material the same man was being associated with more sober concerns, as in giving support. It was also expected of the husband, that he be 'church'-going.

The last respondent in this category insisted on marrying a 'rich' man. She did not sound in the least apologetic over her deep-seated concern about her would-be man 'not' being poor. Her state of 'happiness' would be further enhanced, if the man were 'not' to be as 'strict' as her own father had been. According to the respondent in question her father used to 'talk all the time'. This complaint could be interpreted in two ways, both of which make sense. One explanation would be that the father in question tended to shout or nag all the time. Alternatively he could be the type who allowed no mistake to go unnoticed. Either way, a nagging husband was to have absolutely no place in this respondent's future life.

While the Grade 11A female respondents seem to be adopting a no-nonsense 'take it or leave it' and rigid kind of stance toward their potential husbands, the Grade 11E future wives seemed to have adopted an accommodative attitude to the whole idea of marriage. The idea of becoming

married women seemed to carry some kind of status for some of the young women in this class, as suggested by the tone of some of the utterances about to be analyzed here. The latter's (Grade 11E's) tone suggests a sense of being honoured at being considered wife material. It is not only this, but there is also another sense that were this to be the case, the female respondents in question would do nothing but aim to please the men in their future lives. The two relevant examples in this regard would be the respondents who described themselves as a 'marriage woman' and a 'marriage lady' (by which they obviously mean a 'married' woman and lady, respectively). This was phrased in such a way as to suggest they would define themselves by their hoped for marriages. The sense of pride captured by the underlying tone in the words just uttered seems to suggest individuals who see marriage as exalting them to a status level supposedly higher than that of being as single women. This is implied in the respondents' reference to the concept of a 'lady' in the one scenario.

Encapsulated in this concept, from a feministic point of view at least, is the imposition (by men) of a particular kind of mindset which is calculated to regulate feminine conduct. This imposition is being put in place by expressions to the effect that a lady is never heard but rather seen, among others. For ESL respondents who are not conversant with the nuances of the English language (as is probably the case with the respondents in the current study) the concept of being a lady would be equated with behaviour that is above reproach (i.e. lady-like behaviour). This point talks specifically to the notion of being an exemplary member of society that this term is thought to encompass by many. Concerns with lady-like behaviour as suggested in the current study are probably informed by the downright irresponsible kind of behavior displayed by some township women (e.g. women who are seen weaving the streets due to excessive alcohol consumption, behave promiscuously with this sometimes resulting in children with unknown paternity, women who neglect wifely and motherly responsibilities, use vulgar language, etc.) which is made more visible by neighbourhoods like Nyanga than others. It being the trend among many of the respondents in this study, to want to improve upon all that they see going wrong both in their homes and in the neighbourhoods at large (refer to par 4.3.1.1 above), this rectifying kind of attitude is understandable.

Though not as hard core in their approach as their Grade 11A counterparts, Grade 11E respondents were not about to sell themselves short in the husband-shopping spree either. Not only was the husband-to-be in one case 'not' supposed to be 'just any husband', but he also had to be 'decent'. He being in a position 'to work' was not enough either, but he would have to be a member of 'parliament' at that. Another respondent who apparently subscribed to the idea of the devil one knows being better than one that one does not know, actually expressed a wish that her currently 'nice boyfriend' could become her husband one day. The future wives being analyzed here were not to be the only ones to benefit from the marriages so carefully planned, as suggested by the essays. Rather, there was to be something in it for the husbands-to-be as well. One young woman pledged she would 'make sure' that she did 'everything' that her husband needed her to do. Herein lies one of the main differences between the female respondents from the two streams being analyzed here. All except for the one respondent who saw herself in many life categories, all that the majority of Grade 11A respondents ever planned to do appeared to be the need to take and take without giving back much. With the Grade 11E learners on the other hand one can pick up on a bargaining tone, or a bartering kind of mentality.

The specifications given by the young women in the two classes in as far as their ideas on future spouses and wishes for children could be described as being almost entertaining in one respect. Where child-bearing is concerned, parents as we presently know them do not have much of a say as to how their future children are going to look, let alone decide their behaviour. Compared to their Grade 11E counterparts the Grade 11A respondents take the cake in terms of their being more prescriptive in this regard. After reading the specifics they had in mind when putting together their wish lists (for their future husbands) one gets a strong sense of an emerging snow man 'put-him-together' kind of mentality from some of these essays. I can speculate as to the root of this kind of thinking, given the fact of SA being a global player these days.

Today black South African women are in a position to pick and choose among several faces or appearances. They get to choose which look to wear on the different days of the week, as they have been afforded opportunities to recreate themselves in whatever way appeals to them at any given moment. With the wide range of hair extensions and wigs (i.e. with different hairstyles, shades, textures, length, volume, etc.); the false eyelashes, lenses and nails, etc. to choose from, some black women are beginning to lose their African look. These accessories, coupled with the women's ability to choose what shape of eyebrows and lip-size one wants, have led to some black women approximating a darker version of their white counterparts. Michael Jackson and his sister Janet among many others, with their small sharpened cosmetic noses, have demonstrated there is no limit to what one can achieve in the looks department. Indeed several strokes of the eyebrow pencil and a carefully applied lip-liner (to give the appearance of thin lips) have been known to help in making transformation almost complete and near-convincing.

It is possibly the kind of background just given, which informs some of the respondents' view of husbands. They seem to think of husbands in terms of commodities one orders according to certain specifications, to pay for over the counter. What this seems to be preparing the reader for in practical terms, is a future in which young suitors will be expected to submit a curriculum vitae of sorts if they wanted to secure the affection of the women in their future lives. How high the young men in this study aim to raise their expectations bar in their turn (i.e. as far as their choice of future wives is concerned), is the subject of the next paragraph.

5.3.2.1(b) Wife-material

Seemingly echoing the African belief that '*induku entle igawulwa ezizweni*' (i.e. men have to travel far and wide to find suitable wives in the given context), one Grade 11A respondent appeared to have taken this piece of wisdom a little too far. Perhaps it is just as well that the *lobola* custom (i.e. a custom that is somewhat akin to the reversal of the notion of a dowry in the Indian culture), has evolved like it has done over the years. Were it not for this the respondent in question would have had to think of innovative ways of getting this bride price (which took the form of live cattle and horses in the past) across the seas, to his 'USA'-based future in-laws. Besides its strong financial muscle and worldliness this continent, as implied by the respondent concerned, also breeds its women in such a way that they become not only 'lady'-like, but also 'more' mature and successful than their third world counterparts.

Contrary to this another respondent seemed to think of the home-brewed as the best. According to the latter's viewpoint being 'beautiful' was all that was needed in a wife. This, incidentally

was the only case where a wife-to be was defined in terms of looks alone. Geographical and aesthetic concerns set aside, other Grade 11A male respondents had more practical concerns they wanted met by their future wives. The women generally would have to work, be 'matured', earn salaries falling within a particular wage bracket, etc. What this implies is a sense that the days of the decorative doll housewife are about to draw to an end.

Echoing the implied sentiment (i.e. as expressed by one of his Grade 11E female classmate as suggested in par. 5.3.3.1a above, about there being no point in changing a winning horse as one member of the SMT at ZWHS would say), one respondent planned to one day marry his 'loving girlfriend'. The taste of the pudding being in the eating as far as the English are concerned, one reason given for this preference was that 'living with her as a family' was predicted to turn out 'good' in the future. One gets a sense that this has been the case in the past (i.e. life with the young woman has indeed been good). This was because the young woman in question was perceived to be both 'caring' and 'good'. This male respondent apparently also owed his pro-family orientation to his own childhood family experiences. Having seen at his home how they 'take care of' and 'love' one another, the respondent claimed having always 'loved' the idea of having a family one day. Both of these positive experiences saw him wishing that 'some day', together with his family, they would all be 'driving' a good life. The mindset displayed by this respondent is consistent with the findings of studies conducted by Forehand and McCombs (1988: 624), and Summers *et al.*'s (1998: 327). In terms of these authors certain family process variables like inter-parental conflict or lack thereof, parent- adolescent relationships, etc. were found to be linked to young adult psychosocial adjustment.

The respondent who was still fumbling in the dark in his search for the right woman on the other hand, wished that the latter would be both 'special' and 'great' when he did finally meet her. Marriage 'not [being] a small thing' for this respondent, and 'forever and ever' being a very long time indeed as far as he was concerned, he appeared to take the vow 'till death do us apart' very seriously. In line with this the respondent self-corrected himself, emphatically replacing the verb 'want' with 'need' as he expressed his quest for 'the best and [most] perfect family' ever. From some of the essays there was also a sense that having a family was considered as partly defining one's degree of 'success'. This was 'definitely' the case for the male respondent who mentioned both concepts in one breath. This idea speaks to traditional societal discourses which consider incomplete and to some extent dysfunctional all households run by single parents. So other than just wanting 'to get married', there was also a sense that having a woman in one's life (as far as one respondent was concerned) would mean the filling of a void, thereby making the wishful young man in question feel complete. In terms of this the wife would have to look 'deep inside' her future husband's heart, and know how he felt. The 'wonderful woman' in question would also have to 'take care' of her husband, their children as well as their family.

Before I move on to analyze the single-by-choice or homosexually inclined type of adolescent, a brief summary of the trends just exposed here-above is in order. A comparison of the utterances about the choice of future spouses as made by the male and female respondents in the preceding paragraphs generally places the young women at the fussier, more vocal and cautious end of the mating scale. In this regard Grade 11A female respondents have been found to be more aggressive in their approach, in comparison to their Grade 11E counterparts. The former group of respondents seems to be more concerned with ways in which their future relationships may fit in

with their own personal needs, rather than the other way around as was the case with the Grade 11E young women. This finding hints at a group of women (Grade 11A's) who have a high sense of self-esteem, and who consider themselves assets to any potential relationship.

Also, considering the traditional outlook of which men have always been considered to be the hunters, their not so delineated profiling of the women they wish to have in their lives one day just does not appear to be clear cut enough to make it into a useful sifting tool. It does not appear as if there will be that many damsels in distress for the young men to rescue in the near future either. The image of the African woman who is ready to jump through hoops in order to please a potential suitor, as depicted in Eddie Murphy's movie '*Coming to America*', it appears, will soon be a thing of the past. Where the young female respondents are concerned on the other hand, the detailed manual-type of profiling just developed does promise to separate the wolves from the hounds.

5.3.3 Somewhat anti-family sentiments

Of the doubtful type of respondent one Grade 11A respondent did 'not think' she would be having neither boyfriend nor children. This was despite having been observed by some as having the gene necessary for the production of 'good' mother material. The observation had apparently been made on the basis of the respondent being perceived as adoring where children are concerned. The suggestion which comes with this insightful observation on the part of those making the remark who, incidentally, are most likely to be youths themselves; is that parenting goes beyond the mere ability to produce children. As far as the question of a future boyfriend was concerned, the respondent being analyzed was not about to let this species get close enough to sponge on her either. Her general attitude suggests boyfriends are generally wont to do just this. Considering herself fore-warned, the respondent put plans in place, to ensure that this would not happen to her (for information on this see par. 5.3.3.2a(iii) below).

5.3.3.1 Doing 'the right thing'?

The essays also revealed another trend in the mating game, i.e. the fact that despite some people not being exactly keen on the idea of marriage, some do go ahead and commit themselves regardless. Though claiming to 'hate family' one respondent was not about to allow his anti-family sentiments rob him of the opportunity to put together a family of his own. All that this respondent had to say about his future wife, was that she be interested in having children and a family. The almost impartial 'couldn't care less' attitude displayed here suggests this would be a marriage of convenience, with the specific aim (as far as the husband is concerned) being simply to procreate and perhaps keep the family name going. For all that this respondent cares, his would-be wife could be faceless. This example also says something about the lengths some people will go in order to meet what they perhaps consider to be their obligation to society. Quite a number of black gay men have married and fathered children in this country, in fear that of what would happen if they were to come clean and own up to their true identities.

On the issue of hetero-sexual marriages it is exactly luke-warm attitudes like the one expressed above which have generated serious public concern in Qu and Soriano's nick of the woods (2004: 43). Martin *et al.* (2003) support the former co-authors' sentiment, about there being

today 'less of a stigma' associated with young people's decisions 'not' to marry. This decline in the level of partnering and marriage in particular, among adolescents and young adults of the day, as picked upon by these authors, sets the stage for yet another type of respondent, the kind who appears to be totally opposed to the notion of heterosexual relations in general.

5.3.3.2 The happily-single

The study now turns the reader's attention to the new section of the future African population for which 'being the odd one out' is a matter of personal choice and preference rather than a socially-imposed construct. According to Qu and Soriano's study, it is said to have been common in the past, to think of unmarried women as 'frustrated spinsters' who had been 'left on the shelf' (2004: 43). The new breed of mainly young women about to be analyzed, it appears, could not be bothered with such labels. The analysis about to unfold brings to mind the furor which recently (February 2008) hit the SA media world. The noise was in reaction to a statement made by a well-known African sports official in the country, who had accused some journalist of thinking like a '*kaffir*'. This 'pejorative term', used during the *apartheid* era in this country to demean black South Africans (Hirsch 2005) could be equated with the concept of a 'negro' within the American context (Onyeani 2004). The public use of the label in supposedly post-*apartheid* SA appeared to have evoked in the minds of many South Africans, both black and white, all sorts of negative memories associated with this era. For this gross mistake the sports official concerned was not about to get away easily, if the media had anything to do with it.

Judging by the attitude displayed by the female respondents in this study, on the other hand, they do not seem to be vexed by any possibility of name-calling that their actions may be opening them up to. Derogatory terms that could apply in their case (as unmarried members of the female Xhosa community) would include the concepts of '*inkazana*' (for a woman for whom marriage is considered to be 'long overdue', or a 'spinster' in simple terms); that of '*umgqakhwe*' (for a child born out of marriage, but whose mother remains single, i.e. a 'bastard' in the English sense), or that of '*isiza-nanina*' (which basically means 'the one who came with the mother' in the event of the mother in question bringing her illegitimate child along with her when getting married). Rather, the respondents in the study seemed to be saying it is not what people call one that matters, but more how one views oneself (i.e. the self concept).

Also, contrary to Qu and Soriano's findings, which suggest a higher proportion of men not expecting to marry, this study suggests differently. Just as men in this kind of position were considered to be 'playing the field' in the past, the female respondents in the current study appear to have no intentions of 'getting hooked' ever (2004).

5.3.3.2a Anti-marriage/partner sentiments

Despite considerable evidence (Martin *et al.* 2003, Qu and Soriano 2004: 43) suggesting escalating degrees of happiness from singleness, cohabitation through to marriage, some of the respondents in this study seem to be challenging these findings, by opting to stick with supposedly the least happy status in this continuum, (i.e. singleness) in the future. Quite a few of these anti-marriage sentiments came from the Grade 11A respondents, with respondents on both

sides of the gender line in this class expressing their craving for the benefits of marital life without the attendant sense of commitment that supposedly comes with the terrain. The utilitarian approach to the concept of a relationship, as adopted by the respondents in this section, appears to be the product of a perception on the part of those subscribing to it, that this could benefit them in one of two ways. From a male perspective sex appears to be one of the envisaged benefits, while the prospect of having children appears to be the driving force behind the female respondents' choice.

5.3.3.2a(i) From the point of view of 'eligible bachelors'

One good example in the scenario provided above is that of the male respondent who not only did not wish 'to become married', but rather expressed a wish 'to be alone'. He stated categorically, that he did 'not like to live with women' in his house. All that he had ever wanted was 'only one girlfriend', whose role would be 'only to sleep' (my emphasis) in his house. What this case suggests is a mindset that restricts the role of women to that of mere sex objects and nothing more, i.e. in the said respondent's case. This is suggested by the young man associating women with sleep, rather than companionship, material or affective concerns. This individualistic as well as utilitarian (in the context of the current study) orientation just displayed is not a new concept, as far as Qu and Soriano are concerned. According to these authors changing social values are said to emphasize the pursuit of individual rights, personal growth, and a search for immediate gratification, with all of these coming at the expense of commitment to intimate relationships. In terms of this, young adults are said to show reluctance when it comes to committing to one pathway. This was said to happen until they had explored all of their options (2004: 44). Qu and Soriano's study looks at the issue of individualism among the youth from within the context of a marriage setting, an act which somehow downplays the long-term effects of the phenomenon. At societal level, however, the tendency toward individualism could perhaps be one of the most detrimental shortcomings of empowered mindsets. For evidence of this consider par. 2.9 above where the notion of empowerment is suggested as one among a number of possible solutions to the problem of poverty facing SA which this study proposes it be explored. Individualism as an off-shoot of empowered mindsets, according to Riger (1993: 279), has been identified as potentially leading to unmitigated competition among those who are empowered, among other concerns. Already one can see more traces of self-centredness among Grade 11A respondents, than there are in their Grade 11E counterparts.

The second anti-partner example to be explored here is that of yet another male respondent, whose wish it was to remain a 'single parent'. This apparently stemmed from this male respondent's grave concern about the unpredictability of the institution of marriage. In terms of this marriage was seen as a 'big problem' where one is 'happy' with one's family on the one day, and 'divorced' the next. This roller-coaster ride appears to be something that these respondents could not be bothered with, money-making seemingly occupying the top of their agenda.

5.3.3.2a(ii) From the perspective of those supposedly 'left on the shelves'

Although 'not' inclined toward marriage, a female respondent owned up to hoping for 'three children' one day. Other than the fact that she would need a man to father the children she

envisaged for herself, she claimed ‘not’ to see anything wonderful in having a man in her life. The sentiments expressed by the respondents in this section are again in keeping with Qu and Soriano’s own research findings. According to this study marriage is said to be no longer the only way to form a couple relationship. While cohabitation has gained social acceptance (Martin *et al.* 2003), with this being seen as a ‘prelude’ if not ‘an alternative’ to marriage, young adults are said to be more likely today than in the past, to live without a partner (Qu and Soriano 2004: 43).

That being said, it is still one thing to be opposed to the idea of marriage, and quite another when this sense of opposition seems to border on distaste or taking an extremely dim view of the concept. One such example came in the shape of a female Grade 11A respondent who launched a rather scathing attack at the institution of marriage in her essay. The thrust of the attack in question appeared to be directed at one aspect of the African tradition, and those practising it. This attack came from a respondent who appeared to prefer the concept of friendship in defining the important people in her life. Family being very ‘important’ to this aspiring doctor, she saw herself buying her ‘best friend’ (i.e. her mother) and her siblings a house. The fact of her having grown up with ‘two loving parents’ (with the father seemingly being excluded from the house referred to above) was however ‘not’ to be seen to mean (note the emphatic tone) the respondent was about to follow in her mother’s footsteps in a blind fashion. This was as far as the question of marriage was concerned.

One other interesting fact about this respondent, is how she appeared to have stripped the concept of ‘parents’ of its plural form, in the process casting it into a strictly feminine mould. In line with this, at no point does this respondent’s stroke of the pen even hint at the concept of a father figure as an equally important part in her construction of the concept of ‘parents’. Neither does she acknowledge her father as a physical presence in her life at any point in her short two-paragraphed essay. This, indeed, is a telling clue on its own, albeit an initially confusing one. In the paragraphs which follow below I attempt to unravel this phenomenon.

Communicated by this and the other respondents as analyzed in the following paragraphs, is a sense of a future world that will be purged of the male species. These respondents’ reactions to the prospect of having men in their lives come in degrees. These range from those who do not wish to accommodate men in any form possible, to those who appear to set terms and conditions under which this could happen. Below I explore this idea in depth, using respondents’ utterances for direction and guidance.

5.3.3.2a(iii) A ‘men-free world’ where men are physically absent

If the idea of having a man in one’s life is not risky enough, then the very thought of children was totally out of the question. This was as far as one of the respondents in the current study was concerned. The respondent in question did ‘not think’ having ‘any’ children or boyfriend for that matter, would do her any good. Boyfriends, in her view, had the potential to cause one to falter and ‘fall’ (in its noun form this concept is coincidentally used by some Xhosa people to refer to a child born out of wedlock). The tendency to fall was seen as especially being the case for women who had money of their ‘own’, as was apparently the respondent’s future intention where her own life was concerned. The respondent did not wish to be the root of any misconceptions when

it came to issues to do with men and money. She was concerned that potential boyfriends ‘might think’ she was the one wanting ‘to own’ them, rather than the other way around. It is in view of this acquired cautionary piece of wisdom, that the respondent had come to the decision ‘not’ to lean ‘on anyone’s shoulders’ but her own. In this respondent’s mind boyfriends and money were like oil and water, the two being simply unable to mix. This apparently is someone who intends to take the celibate route. Though harsh to some degree in intonation, the other examples that follow below are a little less extreme (i.e. in terms of creating space for men in their lives) than this one.

One Grade 11A respondent equated marriage with an ‘end’ which she apparently would not wish even upon her worst enemy, least of all herself. She painted an image of this end with her ‘thin body’, clad in what she referred to as a ‘big long *sishweshwe* dress’, ‘sweeping somebody’s home’. At the risk of being redundant the reader is referred to par. 4.3.1.2 above where the point about the oppressive tendency among some marital settings is addressed in more detail. Rather than get married, the respondent in question preferred a ‘loving friend’ with whom she would share ‘three beautiful kids’, seemingly with no strings attached.

Of these outbursts the most subtle comes from another respondent in the same class (i.e. Grade 11A) who seems to be skirting even the mere mention of the topic of men in general. Her attitude to the issue of men seems to be one which says she did not also have to stick her hand in the fire, for her to feel the scorching heat. Qu and Soriano’s study (2004: 46) suggests it is not uncommon for individuals who have not personally experienced a relationship breakup, to express caution in their search for partners. In terms of these findings failed past relationships among friends, siblings and parents were factored in as encouraging respondents to be cautious in determining the viability of any new potential relationship. It is with a similar mindset that the respondent being analyzed appeared to have learnt from her own mother’s hurt and pain.

‘Like [her] mother’, whom she called the ‘most important’ person in her life, the respondent intended ‘educating [her] child’ about the ‘ups and downs of life’. Embedded in the concept of an ‘education’ as used in this context, is the idea of acquired wisdom being handed down from generation to generation. The respondent’s mother seemingly having been through a very rough patch in her own marriage, it was the respondent’s intention to dry the former’s tears, by making her ‘happy’. In the respondent’s future ‘big house’ therefore, she visualized herself living with just her mother, her ‘one child’, and a ‘dog’.

These respondents’ aversion to sexual relations seemingly coming in degrees, the next paragraph explores a world-view in which even the very talk about men appears to have been unconsciously processed as taboo.

5.3.3.2a(iv) A ‘bowdlerized’ life

Two of the respondents, both of them female, were made conspicuous by their lack of reference to sexual relations of any kind as being part of their future lives, be it at husband, boyfriend or even same sex level. The situation just described brought to my mind the concept of ‘bowdlerization’. This originates from a story about a newspaper editor who went by the name of ‘Bowdler’. Word has it that this man would cut out any word referring to sex in his newspaper.

A casual glance at the life-histories analysed in this section of the thesis would give the reader the impression that the absence of talk about men is an innocent incidence of omission on the part of the narrators. The unconscious being believed to assert itself through language, and language also being said to be ‘contextual’, Pennebaker *et al.*'s (2003) advice, that the investigator attend to the meaning of utterances (or lack thereof as turned out to be the case in this particular instance) in their context, sounded a warning bell in my mind. For readers to do justice to the analysis of this aspect (bowdlerized lives) as addressed in the two essays about to be analysed in this section, readers have to consider the overall tone of the essays as a whole, rather than the specific snippets thereof. Viewed in this light the lack of reference to male figures in the said respondents' future lives could be seen to hint at the subconscious speaking on their behalf. In terms of this the silence displayed here appears to speak volumes about the two writers' mental state.

According to one of the essays, the respondent in question (see also par. 5.3.3.2a(iii) on the concept of a ‘men-free world’ as discussed above) is depicted as wishing to have a child. At the risk of sounding redundant, I now take the respondent's expressed sentiments one step further. In terms of the preceding paragraph this respondent predicted ‘a good lifestyle’ for herself where she would be living in a big house with her sister, mother, a dog and her ‘one child’ (my emphasis).

It is common knowledge that children do not just fall from the sky. Advances in science and technology having come to the rescue of people like these, *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) could make this young woman's wish a reality. Though probable, it is unlikely that this respondent knows about this very expensive procedure. By making no reference to the male person who is supposed to father her child therefore the respondent in question hints at at least one possible explanation for this. In my mind is conjured an image of someone who has schooled herself into thinking in terms of a world in which men do not exist. She dares not mention this particular forbidden ‘m-word’. In this world of hers world men are conspicuous by their very absence. If they visit at all it is probably for a short while, their purpose being merely to contribute toward procreation. Once the job is done they are dismissed from the respondent's vocabulary, and totally banished from her world as well. It does not look like men will be missed either, in that she defined this men-free existence in terms of a lifestyle that she qualifies as ‘good’ enough for her. This comes from a respondent whose aim it was to drill into her children's mind ‘the ups and downs of life’, ‘like’ her own mother had done in her case. Were it up to this respondent to decide, judging by the seemingly mutually exclusive tone of this essay, she probably would want both the child and her dog to be female too.

The second respondent, for whom the topic of sexual relationships also appears to be taboo, considered her late ‘sister's child’ and the respondent's ‘mom’ as constituting all the ‘family’ she ever wanted. This is the family she claimed to ‘love very much’. Though men appear to have been outlawed in both respondents' lives, the essay analyzed before this one suggests a mindset which sees no reason why the respondent cannot eat her cake and have it at the same time. This kind of thinking obviously means the children in question cannot be anything but illegitimate in today's legal terms. We now turn our attention to the concept of illegitimate children.

5.3.3.2a(v) Illegitimate children

In the not so distant past (i.e. in the African culture), the idea of illegitimate children was condemned in the strongest possible terms. As was found to be the case in Olwig's (1999) study, becoming pregnant 'out of wedlock' was considered one of the most blatant failures to live up to within the tenet of respectability. The suggestive concept of a 'fall' (see also par. 5.3.3.2a(iii) above) is still being used by generations preceding the one being analyzed in the current study, to register the fate of those apologetic mothers and their unfortunate first borne children, who had suffered this stroke of misfortune. In many cases (i.e. within the Xhosa culture as practised within SA) illegitimate children would grow up unaware that the people they had been calling their parents all their lives, were in actual fact grandparents. The tendency back in the day was for grandparents to dismiss the real mother, while taking over the parenting role themselves. The biblical connotation of the concept of 'the fall' (i.e. from grace) captured the plight of those unfortunate enough to be born under such circumstances. More often than not the children succeeding the mother's 'fall' would be legitimate, the repentant mother being very conscious the second time around, not to bring more shame upon her family.

The picture about to be rolled out in the ensuing paragraphs captures a totally new generation whose members intend to live life according to their own terms. They make the rules in such a way as to suit themselves, rather than allow the rules to dictate how they should live their lives. By willfully and deliberately seeking out the single parenting route as demonstrated above, the respondents in this study portray a non-conformist attitude. Though writing from a different context Evans (2007: 90) explains this phenomenon as a generation finding itself suddenly having to invent scripts and routines for themselves. This is said to happen after they have had to evaluate themselves in relation to global norms and expectations, with all of these happening as a result of political changes in the country in question.

For my argument in the given case I draw from the example of the single respondent who wished to have what she tagged 'three beautiful kids'. In the past within the Xhosa culture this would have been seen as three falls too many. This would have been reason enough for the apologetic culprit to feel tainted and ashamed. Back then the phenomenon just described would be captured through the suggestive metaphor of a 'broken [maiden's] breast' which people used to describe the affected mother. The respondents in the current study seem to be putting a different spin on things. The fact of the children being about to be conceived in shame and born out of wedlock (as African tradition and custom would have called it in the past), does not make the children any less 'beautiful' in the eyes of today's mother. Her plan to live with her 'loving friend' and their children in a 'big warm house' suggests a mindset that says one can have it all without necessarily signing any piece of paper. In this way she challenges the male respondent analyzed above, who probably thought doing the right thing was worth the sacrifice (see par. 5.3.3.1c).

Also worth noting here is the usage of the concept of a 'friend' by at least two female respondents in this study, when referring to their future male partners. What this de-gendered term suggests is an almost plutonic relationship where the demand on the said partner would be no more than that placed on any other female friend, as would otherwise have been implied by the concept of a 'boyfriend'. Contrary to common belief which has always portrayed women as clinging and demanding commitment of the men in their lives, there seems to be no inclination

on the part of these female respondents, to tie themselves down. There seems to be a general loosening of strings among some of the women of the new generation.

On the issue of children some of the would-be mothers in the current study appeared to handle the circumstances around the conception and birth of their future children in ways that would have been considered reckless by traditional standards. This, as far as the mothers of the future seem to be suggesting, would be a matter of opinion. There is indeed nothing reckless about the way in which these aspiring parents go about planning the future of their children. If any criticism has to be leveled at these parents, one would have to accuse them of generally being overly-cautious. Some of the respondents themselves probably having happened upon their unsuspecting parents by some stroke of luck or misfortune, they are not about to leave this important aspect of their future lives to chance when their own turn came. In actual fact, if their words are anything to go by, future generations of black South Africa should resemble something straight out of a manual.

5.3.4 Parental concerns regarding children

In terms of this it would appear as if the years that the entire universe has been investing in research into ongoing debates about how the earth, its inhabitants and the concept of evolution among others had come about, have all been a waste of time and effort. In terms of sentiments expressed here, the concept of procreation could be explained by an equation as simple as the $1+1=2$ formula. Implied by the respondents' attitude is a sense that the mere expression of a wish on the part of a would-be parent was all that was needed to bring about the desired features in children.

The respondents' bodies being the machines whereby the former were to supposedly churn out their masterpieces, the respondents seemed to interpret this to mean it was in their power to work out and decide upon all the fine details pertaining to their children. Over and above number and gender the would-be parents ordered their children, just as some had done with their future life-partners, in line with certain specifications. Among hopes and fears these potential parents expressed concern over the general well-being of their children. These concerns are addressed in detail in the paragraphs which follow below.

5.3.4.1 Number and gender

In almost all the cases where parenthood was expressed as a goal, the envisaged number and the gender of the children were mentioned in almost one breath. As far as gender was concerned almost all the respondents wished to have both sexes represented in their families, with an almost guaranteed wish for balance in representation where the overall number of envisaged children was even. In terms of numbers, the children envisaged ranged from two upwards, with most respondents not wanting to go beyond the ideal nuclear family of four. In most cases practical considerations informed the choice. Concerns with the number of children seemed to be the product of a combination of the envisaged quality of life and issues around what the would-be parents perceived as affordable.

From a comparative point of view not all Grade 11A respondents gave the specific number of children they were wishing for. Among those who did the numbers of children hoped for ranged between 'two' and 'five'. The respondent who actually spelt out his need for a 'big' family (of 'four') was an exception to the general rule. In certain cases respondents defined their procreative endeavours in terms of what they did 'not' want, with that being either 'a lot' or 'many' children. While 'two' was the ideal figure given by most, the number 'five' came up twice in the essays. Child-rearing being by its very nature a maternal calling and responsibility, one would-be mother registered her objections to what she considered to be an excessive situation. In line with this she associated 'five' children with 'stress'. A future basketball player-father on the other hand, had different views on the matter. In terms of this five players were needed to man a basketball team.

Other than the one instance where one Grade 11E respondent could not say whether or not children would be part of his future life, the number of children wished for in this class ranged from 'two' to 'six'. 'If' the former respondent referred to here was to have children at all, he too aimed to join the larger pool of respondents for whom the number 'two' was considered by far the most suitable. Comments given in support of the nuclear family of four included wanting the two children to study in 'white', 'boarding' or the former 'Model-C' schools. What all of these comments boil down to is parents wanting to give their children all that they could not have when they were growing up. One other point highlighted by the essays on the point of family size was the whole notion of the relativity of this concept. As one respondent so aptly put it, for him 'three children' constituting 'two boys and a girl' would 'make [his] boat float'. Another also claimed 'not' to want a big family, all he ever wanted being 'only' 'two boys and two girls'. The female respondent who thought the number 'five' was as good as any where children were concerned, was of the opinion that she could provide for 'all' of her children's needs. The idea expressed here deserves some attention.

Many Africans still have not figured out that children do not grow on love alone. If one were to interview further the respondent referred to above, to find out more about this choice, chances are that one would find out that the respondent in question was motivated by love rather than practical considerations (i.e. the children's quality of life). The Grade 11E class specifically appears to subscribe to the ideal traditional African family setting as suggested by this study. In terms of this thinking, 'the more' children there are in a given family unit, 'the merrier'. Concern about quality not being an issue for many of these families, what is uppermost in the minds of those concerned is that the children do not go to bed on empty stomachs. The nutritional value of the food in those stomachs is almost always beside the point. When it comes to issues around provision for the education of children, the first borne in this kind of family almost always has to bear the cross for being born first. They would have to put the educational needs of their siblings and the larger family before their own. More often than not the first borne child would have to drop out of school, in order to help maintain the household. The situation would sometimes be complicated by younger sisters bearing other fatherless children of their own.

The Grade 11A respondents on the other hand seem to be more westernized (i.e. governed by a mindset that says 'the smaller the family size, the better') and liberated (with quite a few of them

willfully pursuing single female-headed households) in their approach to family life. This is yet another indication of the latter class' fresh and uninhibited outlook in life.

5.3.4.2 Envisaged quality of life for the children

The envisaged goals for children differed from parent to parent. Children either had to become 'something' that the mother wished for them, or get the level of educational exposure that the mother considered 'enough'. From this paragraph it appears as if some would-be mothers have every intention of tightening the apron strings around their children. One was so afraid of the leaves (i.e. her children) falling too far from the tree (i.e. herself) that she held herself up as the perfect image which her children were to strive for. This was both in terms of their appearance, as well as their level of educational attainment. In terms of this, 'like [her] their mother' the children were to be both 'beautiful' and 'white' (i.e. light-skinned).

Some of the specifications that went into defining these children (at least in the parents' minds) included the quality of life (e.g. the kind of school to be attended, level of education to be attained, children getting 'everything' they wanted, homes being filled with children's 'needs and wants', etc.), the activities they were to engage in (e.g. going to school and church), professions to be followed, children's contribution to society, the kinds of values to be imparted to them (e.g. that they should grow up in the Kingdom of God, go to school, etc.), their physical appearance (e.g. the children's skin tone being 'white' and they also being 'beautiful'), etc. Other than getting 'a lot' of the academic kind of exposure, the 'church' was to see to the children's spiritual growth.

5.3.4.2a Educational aspirations for children

As far as education was concerned the children of the above-mentioned respondent were, 'just like' their mother, to get 'enough education'. The idea expressed by this respondent in question interestingly coincides with findings from the literature. In terms of these findings, forward-looking working class parents are said to be adamant that their children not grow into anything even remotely resembling them. Their middle class counterparts, on the other hand, were said to hold themselves up as role-models for their children. From the example just analyzed it would appear as if some of the respondents have instinctively adopted the middle-class consciousness. The cloning intention suggested by this respondent is evidence of a respondent who has projected herself into a future in which she will have progressed in such a way that her children would have no reason to look elsewhere for a role-model to emulate.

Children were to further attend the 'right' schools, and share classroom space with 'white' classmates. Exclusivity being an important determinant of quality, single sex schools as in 'girls' and 'boys' high schools were considered particularly appealing by one female respondent from Grade 11A.

5.3.4.2b Future careers for children

This paragraph should be read in conjunction with par 4.6.2 above where the study looks into the general fibre of the quality of life that these respondents envisaged for their children. As has

been pointed out in this paragraph, Grade 11E's specific views on the issue of children were not as clear cut as those expressed by their Grade 11A counterparts.

The all-encompassing ideal was that children should attain 'good' positions in their future lives. On the wish-list of envisaged professions were medicine (i.e. 'doctor') education (i.e. 'teachers') and social services (i.e. social workers), etc. While it was important for some parents, that their children should emulate them (e.g. the mother who wanted to be a social worker when she could no longer act envisaging the same career path for her child as well), one respondent was not particularly happy with the teaching profession that she was wishing upon one of her children. In the respondent's opinion teachers were generally stressed, and 'a lot' at that. Given the fact of education being the mother of all professions, it appears as if the respondent was prepared to make a sacrifice of her one child. This mother's 'doctor'-to-be child, on the other hand, was to 'help others' when they fell sick.

The 117 life-histories on the specific topic under discussion in this thesis, as submitted by all the four classes participating in this research, have all been compiled into one document. Their organization is by both class (i.e. From Grade 11A to Grade 11G) and the alphabet. Of these essays twenty-two were written by Grade 11E respondents. Of the respondent in this class only one had a specific career map in mind for her future children. Before I could get to this respondent's essay I first had to go through twelve other Grade 11E essays in my search for data answering to this specific category (i.e. proposed future careers for children). The Grade 11A essays, on the other hand, had been the ones to bring this category to life in the first place. Of the twenty-eight essays submitted by respondents in the latter class, the first two (a female and male respondent) flung the words 'doctors' and 'teachers', and 'basket-ball' team-players at me almost immediately. The third 11A respondent was very clear about where she stood on the matter of children and their potential carriers (i.e. boyfriends). Neither of the two was going to feature in the respondent's life. The odd respondent in Grade 11E, on the other hand, was a law-inclined mother who claimed to be 'suffering' 'so' much with her own education at the time of her writing the essay, that she did 'not want the same [degree of] suffering' to affect her children. She wanted them to 'study hard' in order to attain a 'better' education that would see them qualify as a 'doctor' and a 'social worker'.

This mother-to-be made it almost crystal clear, that it was the children's future that she was mainly thinking of in her choice of careers for them, as implied by her wish that they not suffer like she did. There is however no denying that any other career choice could have helped just as much, toward the achievement of this goal. The choice expressed could therefore also be viewed through a status-coloured lens. From this vantage point there would be no running away from the fact that were this dream to become a reality the respondent, as potential mother, would be able to hold her head up high in the community. The envisaged professions these parents had in mind were of the social service kind. From these the community would also stand to benefit.

A male Grade 11E respondent who had a rough sketch in his mind as to where it was he wished his children could go, was himself misdirected in terms of the profession of his choice. As an aspiring doctor the general subjects (i.e. history, geography, etc.) he was registered for until matric level cannot be said to be laying a good foundation for his planned future career. Chances of this respondent taking the necessary turn sometime in the near future are also highly unlikely.

The respondent's own future plan being fuzzy at the time of the writing of the essay, he seemed to be extending this blurred vision to his own children's future. All he could say about his wishes for them was that they be 'something in life' as he seemed to think he also would become at some point in his uncertain future.

From the myriad concerns expressed in this study around the future well-being of children, it is clear that the parents will have to invest their time, effort and resources in making their dreams a reality in the future. For their efforts, some parents did not wish to go unrewarded. Against the background of parents' future plans that readers have heard being tabled before them so far, one other example of a parent also deserves some attention. While most aspiring parents in this study are busy trying to figure out how best they could provide a better life for their children, this 'millionaire' hopeful also claimed she would see to it that her child did 'not' suffer in future. In her case this could only be guaranteed 'if' the former won 'a lottery'. Chances of this happening themselves being about one in a million, the gambling mentality suggested here cannot simply be overlooked. This example serves to remind the reader that social workers are going to be in great demand for a while in SA.

5.3.4.2c Material Possessions for children

For the Grade 11A class wishes for children were largely defined in terms of material possessions that were to be made available to the children, the children's quality of education, and exposure to moral values. In terms of material possessions the mother who wished to buy a 'big house' wished to see this filled to capacity (as suggested by her use of the word 'full') with her children's 'needs and wants'. That she uses the two concepts side by side suggests the respondent knows the difference between the two. What this suggests is a life where children will want for nothing.

5.3.4.2d Belief in, and the visualization of a better future for children

One respondent saw the new democracy he was living in as being 'surrounded by beautiful developments'. In terms of this children (affectionately captured here through the collective concept of 'our kids') 'don't see colour any more'. This, according to this respondent was what made South Africa 'so beautiful and unique'. In a tone that is both presidential as well as reminiscent of Dr Martin Luther King's heart-rending 'I have a dream' speech, the respondent claimed to 'also have a dream'. In sharp contrast to the dream Verwoed had had for them in the past, this respondent's dream was that South African children, both 'black and white' would 'join hands and believe with confidence in South Africa as their country of the future'. This point again underlines the accommodative and tolerant attitude displayed by learners doing history, which in many ways links up with former President Mandela's vision for SA.

The Grade 11E respondent who wrote this particular essay said nothing about the hopes he had for his own biological children. This fact, coupled with his use of the phrase 'our kids', both paint him as a selfless visionary. His dream of non-racialism, as suggested by the idea of black and white children 'not' seeing colour, but rather joining hands, is in keeping with the reconciliatory tone of our democracy. All of these put together suggest a strong commitment to the ideal of reconciliation on the part of this respondent. Children being the future of the country,

it seems appropriate that attention now be given to the would-be parents' perceived role in protecting their children.

5.3.4.2e Providing protection for children

The future parents in this study considered themselves obligated to smoothing things over for their children, in one way or the other. Depending on the class concerned two ways of going about this were identified, with both involving a measure of control. For the Grade 11A's this meant keeping unfavourable elements of the past under control. One example here would be the respondent whose role as a future 'dad' was seen to presuppose fighting for his children till the day he died. Some Grade 11E respondents on the other hand planned to control children's future behaviour in ways that would benefit the latter in the long run.

This included setting parameters within which children were to handle themselves. This aspect the respondents approached from different angles. One of these had to do with strengthening the fibre of familial ties. In line with this one respondent expressed a need for his four children to 'love' one another. His concern was that as soon as parents died children tended to do 'bad' things to one another. As a father he apparently believed in closely knit families. Having had a bad time growing up herself, a Grade 11A respondent was concerned that a 'repetition' of her own childhood should 'not' happen where her own children were concerned.

Another seemed to adopt a practical and preventative approach to the concept of parenting. In terms of this 'one child' was enough, by extrapolation, just to keep the family name going. 'Like' her mother (who had apparently done the same with her) the respondent in question saw herself 'educating' her child about 'the upset downs' (by which she appears to mean 'the ups and downs') of life. Unlike their parents (i.e. the respondents in the current study), the future children were to further grow in 'good' and 'healthy' environments, and to attain 'higher' education levels than their parents had done. In terms of their education, children were to be sent to 'whites schools' so that they may 'know English completely'. The respondent who could not learn in white schools because her parents could 'not afford' to take her there clearly had different plans for the third generation in her lineage. She could 'not' afford for this generation to be 'like [her]'.

Respondents who had had an unsavoury past to draw from as those referred to above, seemed to use their personal experiences to steer their children away from futures they deemed to be unsuitable for their children. Depending on the nature of the respondent's experience, the tendency was to either expect children to mimic the parents' exemplary behaviour, or to run as far away from circumstances resembling the parent's negative experiences as possible. One respondent wished her children could grow up 'in the same way' she had done. She wanted to fulfill their needs, so that they could one day do everything which would enable them to be what or whoever they wanted to be. The respondent who owned up to having 'suffered' with her education on the other hand, wanted her children to study hard. She clearly did not wish them to suffer in the same way she had suffered. This idea is similar to a wish expressed by another male respondent whose wish it was that his children could 'follow' the rules set by their parents. This is something he appeared to have overlooked at some point in his past life as a young person.

Setting himself up as a good example in a different scenario another future parent wished his children could ‘learn’ from him what life is all about. This was in order for them to be ‘something in life’. Indeed all that most respondents wanted was a ‘better education’ for their children. The ultimate goal, it seemed, was for children to attain financial independence which would see them own things like ‘cars’, some businesses while also having ‘wives’. These, as the next paragraph exposes, were to be made possible via carefully selected career choices, as in the children becoming doctors and/or social workers, among other choices.

5.3.4.2f Other attempts intended to improve children’s quality of life

As would-be financially capable mothers two respondents capitalized on the services of their would-be domestic help (captured by the one respondent by the Xhosa concept of *‘isiqeshwa’* which means ‘servant’) who would not only ‘look after’ the one’s children, but ‘clean’ her house as well. Implied by these is a future life in which the children in question would be exempted from household chores. Given the fact that some African parents consider it their children’s responsibility to extend this kind of obligation into the parents’ old age (i.e. by supporting them in every way possible), it would appear as if the iron parental grip on some African children is about to relax a bit. This, combined with smaller families, more educated parents, etc. should significantly improve life chances of future generations.

‘Love’ being the basis on which most mothers are known to build ‘strong family’ bonds, it took one potential father from Grade 11E, to highlight the importance of this building block where family life is concerned. In terms of this the respondent in question planned to teach his children to ‘love one another’ in both ‘bad times and good’. Thus armed, his children were to ‘overcome whatever’ got in their way. ‘No matter’ how ‘high’ the mountain or how ‘deep’ the ocean, the children in question were to ‘climb to the top’, or ‘swim as hard as they can [in order] to appear above’, respectively. This obviously comes from someone who knows what it takes to survive against odds.

Other than the one respondent referred to above, and a male one at that, the tendency among most respondents in the Grade 11E class was not to give a distinct identity to their future children, or to think in terms of children’s specific needs. Rather, some of these would use the collective term of ‘family’ in discussing the quality of life they were envisaging.

Of those described above one respondent planned to see to it that his family would have a ‘business’ to run. With this in mind he predicted a ‘happy’, ‘nice’ and ‘smart’ family life for all. This respondent in question was also adamant about things he did ‘not’ wish upon his family. These included ‘someone making [them] suffer’ and/or ‘letting them down’. The other respondent for whom the concept of family meant fusing into one different faces, personalities and needs, also put the onus of his family’s future ‘success’ upon himself, like a man would be expected to do in the traditional sense. According to this reckoning the respondent aimed to make his family’s life ‘nice[r]’ than it had been before, by offering them his ‘support’. This, according to the respondent, was something he was only too ‘proud’ to do. Other than the individual familial obligations highlighted above respondents expressed their concerns for the larger community of children. See par. 4.3.3 above where the respondents’ concerns about their communities are addressed at length. In the following section, however, the study explores the

wide range of crops that the different parents hoped to harvest, after the seeds they hoped to plant some time in the future will have germinated.

5.3.4.3 Parents' expectations of their children

Parents seemed to hold different expectations of their children. The very idea of being a parent seemed to fill some of the would-be bearers of this seemingly prestigious title with a sense of wonder that they, too, could be entrusted with a responsibility of this magnitude one day. When this happened it appeared to be the respondents' wish that their future children could affirm them as either a 'dad', 'role-model', provider and/or protector. Not only were these parents prepared to 'fight' until they died for their children, but they also wanted to be afforded the chance to protect them from 'drugs and alcohol', among other things. One respondent was passionate about 'never' ever letting his family down. He wanted to just 'love them' in the hope that they would love him in return. It was his wish that he be able to give them whatever they wanted of him. Seemingly the 'good dreams' he had for his family excluded it ever going without.

A utilitarian approach to the whole notion of child-bearing meant one Grade 11A parent being drawn more toward what he thought he could get out of parenthood, rather than what parents normally assume to be their obligation (i.e. the future well-being of their children). Unlike this respondent's classmate's mother, who was being accused of inviting 'stress' upon herself by having 'five childrens', the basketball player saw the same number of children as a meal-ticket to his family's financial freedom. This future international basketball player wished to marry and have 'five [male] children'. The game generally being played by 'five' players and substitutes, according to the respondent in question; he saw himself starting his own 'family' team of players. The mindset exhibited by this respondent is just the breath of fresh air that Onyeani (2000:13) has been dying to see coming particularly from 'black young men' in the future (see par. 1.3.1 for a brief background into the relevance of this source for the purposes of this research).

According to Onyeani in the sports and music industries blacks (presumably within the American context) have always been regarded as 'experts'. At the time of his writing 'more' than 88% of the thirty six basketball teams in the National Basketball Association (NBA) were said to be black. In line with this he agonizes over why it is that these blacks have been denying themselves what he calls 'the sweet smell of success' for so long. Success in this sphere of existence, as far as Onyeani is concerned, would come about if there could be sports teams 'owned by blacks', 'coached by blacks' and 'winning' championship games. As far as basketball is concerned it is Onyeani's opinion that blacks 'control' the hoops, the driving through the lanes to the basket, the chest-bumpings, the raised fingers and the unique scoring dances. Because of this fact he fails to understand why it is that the present day black players are 'no better than their forbears' (2000: 13). Blaming the situation on blacks preferring the 'comfort of guaranteed jobs', to the adventure of deciding their own future; he accuses this race of being what he calls 'economic slaves', among others. In terms of this blacks are said to perpetuate a 'victim mentality'. In terms of the current study it would seem as if the respondent being analyzed has the make-up of a natural 'capitalist'. With a little nudge in the right direction the respondent could be well on his way to success.

If the phase of the analysis just completed is anything to go by, it would be safe to assume that future black generations will have a good number of positive things to look forward to (e.g. parents who look out for and carefully plan for the future of their children, parents who are themselves highly educated [see par. 5.4 below for more information on this topic] and value education, good quality education and lives, etc.). It would however be very misleading to suggest that life for these children will be nothing but a bed of roses. It being a commonly held belief within the SA context, that there is ‘nothing for *mahala*’ (i.e. there can be no gain without pain), the study draws the reader’s attention to some of the pitfalls which appear to go hand in hand with being born to high-flying parents.

5.3.4.4 The price some children will have to pay

The respondent in question, a potentially single mother of three, gives a different interpretation to the concept of family and motherhood. Despite the subheading ‘family life’ which the respondents had given to this sub-section of her essay, her concept of ‘family’ does not appear to meet the conventional meaning of the word as many members from previous generations know it. In the traditional sense the word connotes a sense of togetherness, the sharing of the good and the bad, the sense of belonging that results from a combination of these, etc. When people generally talk about family, the mother is usually at the heart of the concept. The respondent about to be analyzed appears to see things differently.

This aspiring mother aimed to take her three children on ‘Saturday’ visits either to their aunt or their presently estranged future grandfather. The visit to the grandfather was to depend on whether or not things will have turned out ‘fine’ between this mother and her father at the time of these future visits. Either way the main purpose behind these planned visits was to afford the mother ‘time alone’ in her house, rather than attempts to strengthen family ties. The plan of action just outlined was deemed appropriate by this hardworking mother, given the fact that she had decided, well in advance, that she would ‘not’ have time for fun in the future, ‘like others’ of her age. When she had had her fill of rest, the mother would then bring her children home. The latter, however, was not to happen, till ‘late’ in the day.

In discussing her future lifestyle the same respondent referred to above envisaged spending her ‘off’ days together with her sister, and ‘maybe her husband’, as well as ‘their children’. One would expect that the respondent’s children would also be part of this huge family gathering, but the mother of these ‘beautiful’ children curiously makes no reference to them. This mother’s attitude to children seems to echo the sentiment expressed by two other female respondents in this study, about children being a source of ‘stress’. In line with these the notion of ‘quality time’ (for the object of this specific discussion, that is) meant spending time only with ‘friends’. Neither were her trips to church ‘on Sundays’ to include these children. It was to be after thanking God for all that He will have done for her ‘all these past years’, that this mother would ‘go home to [her] children’. Clearly the children in question will have an absent mother to look forward to. Not only would this mother be working hard during the week, but when the weekend came along she planned to be wherever it is that her children would not be.

5.4. Phase two of the analysis

The discussion just rounded up marks the end of the first phase of the analysis (i.e. that which covered issues to do with the respondent's familial make-up and attempts at well-being. Having read about the high hopes that these potential parents have for their children, what they intend to make of their own personal lives is the subject of the following discussion. In an attempt to answer this and other relevant questions this chapter will cover three distinct areas. The first one answers to the question of respondents' envisaged occupations. I then link this with the kind of lifestyle that the respondents see as being enabled by this. Lastly I shall analyze the kinds of obstacles that these respondents anticipate, to determine their degree of commitment to the realizations of the lofty dreams they have, as well as the extent of their resilience. As a point of departure the study now analyzes the respondents' proposed vocational plans.

5.4.1 Respondents' career plans

In Frederiksen's view (1999: 49), when a young man in a Nairobi slum (where his study was apparently conducted) says he sees himself somewhere 'in the US' or somewhere 'like Michigan State', the young person in question is said to be 'aware' that this is 'just a big dream'. In terms of this, chances of spatial and social mobility for someone like this are 'few'. This, according to this reckoning is after all someone who has lived in the intense community of a densely populated urban slum, and happens to have 'life long' responsibilities towards brothers and sisters (refer to sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.5 above for a little glimpse into some of the responsibilities and challenges facing the respondents in the current study). According to this belief-system, in urban situations where media and information flows proliferate, good chances of mobility can only be 'of the mind'.

As the Nairobi setting described above appears to have something in common with Nyanga, this study now allows the reader a peek at the latter environment, using a career oriented lens this time around. In line with Frederiksen's claim, about global popular culture flows being said to transgress boundaries, it is to be expected that at some point the global and local will intertwine, and that these be appropriated selectively by groups of people (1999: 53). The children from Nyanga being exposed to both the local and global content, it is to be expected that local soaps like the once popular Johannesburg-based *Yizo Yizo* should attract a lot of the youth's attention. SA youth are said to identify a lot with some of the scenes depicted in soaps like this one (as suggested by the concept of a 'cult status' used to describe this soap), as well as the characters bringing the specific scenes to life. One such character for the respondents in this study came in the shape of a character named 'Zakes'. Because *Zakes* plays the impressive character of a 'rich man', the respondent in question wished he could possess the 'same' degree of wealth as this character. Par. 5.4 below exposes the reader to a 'by hook or crook' or 'the end justifies the means' attitude to the accumulation of wealth, displayed by at least two respondents in this study. At the heart of this mindset is the nagging fear of the respondents' impoverished past casting its spell on future generations.

The words of the Grade 11A respondent who claimed to see herself 'in many life categories' in the future, aptly capture the industrious tone of the section of the study about to unfold. As someone who loved to 'read and write', and a 'poet' to boot, it was this respondent's wish to show young people that 'with dreams' one could 'live' and that 'without' dreams one was as good as being 'half dead'. Her ultimate goal being the publication of an anthology of poems, she

saw a need to break her future plans into ‘short’ and ‘long’ term goals. In between the two goal posts she intended, as a ‘performing poet’, to ‘convey the messages’ she had trapped inside of her.

5.4.1.1 Range of career choices

This multiplicity of goals demonstrated by the young woman just referred to above appears to be a luxury enjoyed mainly by respondents in Grade 11A. Over and above plans to ‘travel further’ (than SA, presumably) while singing ‘opera music’, another respondent in this class added being a business lady, the hostess of a television programme, to a host of other future plans. The examples cited here are to give the reader just a rough sense of the assortment of plans, choices, dreams, etc. which inform this section of this study. The kinds of jobs as envisaged by the respondents in this study may be grouped into two. There are those in which the respondents’ role leans more toward they being employed (e.g. teaching, social work, etc.) and those that position them as employers (e.g. as owners of businesses or companies). I might add here that this distinction is by no means as clear-cut as it sounds. This is just one of a few grey areas (i.e. when it comes to distinguishing between some concepts) in the study. Doctors, to give a relevant example, could be employed (as when working in state hospitals), or could they be employers (as in when they independently run their own surgeries). Indeed some have been known to run both kinds of services simultaneously. The same applies to other career choices suggested by the respondents in the current study.

The problem of career grouping is further complicated by these respondents’ possible lack of access to the relevant terminology they need to express some of their wishes. When some express a wish to be managers for example, there could be at least two motivating reasons for this choice. This would be particularly true of someone whose family has never had a manager of any kind in its midst before. This kind of position is associated by some, with placing one at the top rungs in the employment ladder. Secondly it gives the so-labeled a measure of authority and control over those below (i.e. those being managed by him or her). The latter is something which apparently appeals to many respondents in this study. Because of these facts, there is every likelihood that this kind of position is taken to mean much more (i.e. ownership of the business being managed) than it actually does (e.g. the manager being just a high ranking employee) in certain scenarios. Simply put, that a person with the job title of manager could also be an employee may not be all that clear to some of these respondents.

Also, the high value many of the respondents seem to be attaching to the ‘office’ image suggests they may be over-glorifying some things in their imaginative minds. The situation could be likened to the example of some young boys who cannot wait to become truck drivers when grown up. It is with the kind of difficulty just described in mind, that I urge readers to try and make sense of the discussion that follows. To avoid redundancy the reader is referred to par. 5.4.1.4 below for information on the kinds of jobs envisaged by the respondents in the science stream. For now I attend to Grade 11E’s concerns with their careers.

5.4.1.2 Career choices for Grade 11E respondents

In the role of potential employer a Grade 11E respondent saw himself working as a ‘motor mechanics engineer’; a ‘businessman’ who would be managing (my point of emphasis) the *Intercape Bus* service, ‘some few shops’ and a ‘car company’. The last concept in the list of careers just given testifies to some of the ambiguities in some of the data. A ‘car’ company could be anything from a car rental facility to a car dealership and a whole range of other businesses in-between. The sense of pride in the same respondent’s utterance is unmistakable though. He was proud to announce that he would be managing all of the activities referred to above from ‘[his] office’ (my emphasis). In line with this he implies his dreams could only ‘come true’ when he actually saw himself ‘sitting in an office’. A future ‘DJ’ on the other hand had plans for ‘a big studio’ where he would play ‘nice house music’ for the people. The winning recipe as far as this people’s person was concerned, included ‘respect’ for the people, so that they in turn could do the same with him. This, in his view could only result in his future ‘success’.

Job choices seeming to straddle the lanes between self-employment and employment on the other hand included ‘horticulture’; ‘home economics’; being a ‘tourist [guide]’, thereafter to become a ‘financial business man’ selling Africa-themed clothes. The motivation for the latter-mentioned respondent was also to ‘strengthen our rand in the JSE’. The sentiment expressed by this respondent echoes Lord and Hutchison’s (1993: 20) own findings, that personal empowerment can only occur in the context of the community. This respondent’s concern with what he calls ‘our rand’ illustrates his grasp of the futility of separating the one from the other. Even more impressive is his demonstrated awareness about issues concerning the economy, given the fact of numbers not being part of the general curriculum.

Within the employed masses of the future one can see a progression in terms of the careers being envisaged by these respondents. Although it is difficult to arrange these in a specific order of importance, there is no denying that some careers stand to give the bearer more clout than others. In terms of these choices respondents wished to work as social workers, naval officers, journalists, lawyers, doctors, magistrates, education ministers, etc. Reasons given for the choices included wishing to listen to people’s problems; the prospect of earning what one respondent called ‘too much money’, ‘most’ people being exposed to ‘assault’, ‘killings’ and ‘rape’, opportunities for world wide travel, among others. In the following section I analyze the criteria that respondents intended to use in the selection of their future careers.

5.4.1.3 Criteria for selection

For purposes of analysis the careers chosen by the respondents have been ranked in terms of several criteria. Among these are:

- short versus long-term goals,
- the link between subjects being done and the career being coveted;
- the kinds of companies to be worked for;
- goals associated with the job itself (i.e. whether it is the individual, e.g. prestige; or the collective, e.g. social work which stands to benefit);
- the perceived benefits to self (i.e. sense of self-worth/status and recognition as in being ‘the best’, and ‘the only’ one offering a particular quality of work); remuneration (e.g. the monthly salary range of R80 000-R100 000 one respondent expressed a wish for); job

satisfaction; glamour (e.g. the respondent who saw himself moving ‘around the world’ doing ‘big bashes’, with ‘all eyes’ on him as he walked on the ‘red carpet’ ‘singing [his] song’); etc.

5.4.1.3a Long-term versus short term goals

Goals associated with jobs were determined along what respondents perceived to be feasible in terms of their individual circumstances, the benefits to the self (e.g. money), and temporal considerations (i.e. short to long term goals), etc. The respondents were aware of the fact that some jobs more than others, had temporal dimensions (e.g. acting as far as the respondents in this study are concerned) attached to them. There were jobs which could be achieved in the long term, while others could be used as some kind of scaffolding bringing aspirants closer to their ultimate goals. In instances like these the reader would pick up on discourses that imply a ‘Plan-B’ kind of thinking.

A Grade 11A example which captures the latter scenario is that of the respondent who saw herself on television, ‘acting’ in soaps like *Generations*. She predicted she might ‘lose’ her acting ability one day, in which case she planned to work on as a social worker. Another respondent thought of acting in non-negotiable ‘part-time’ terms, the actual phrase used being ‘no matter what’. The full-time dream in this case was to become a ‘doctor’. Not all the choices in the entertainment industry were about being in front of the camera or under the spotlight though. It would appear that some respondents were interested in getting behind the scenes as well, as in ‘directing’ the movies in question.

As an ‘old[er] woman’ a Grade 11E respondent on the other hand thought she would make her mark as a ‘social worker’; helping ‘people who [would be] in trouble’ at the time. A male respondent in the same class thought ‘firstly’ joining the ‘army’ would be a good start to his working career. He thereafter intended to go to ‘varsity’, to begin crafting his future as a ‘magistrate’. One respondent’s long term ambition to ‘found’ a ‘world-class gold-mining company in the future would have to be put on hold for some time. The respondent in question foresaw that even in the next ten years’ to come he would still lack both the requisite ‘money’ and ‘experience’ necessary for the kind of venture at hand. The business venture being envisaged, and correctly so at that, was perceived as ‘not’ being an easy task to achieve. In line with this the respondent’s planned detour was to go via the lawyers’ roll in the meantime.

Some Grade 11A respondents went as far as to carry out contingency planning. According to this ‘if’ one respondent did ‘not succeed’ as a managing director, he wanted to become an ‘economist’. Another, concerned that she might ‘not get a bursary’ or the amount necessary for study at the ‘University of the Western Cape’, decided she would do a ‘computer’ course as a second choice. Those seemingly believing in the adage ‘time is money’, saw ‘part-time’ work as another workable option. From these plans the reader can see that these respondents simply are not prepared to ‘flirt with disaster’, as Osborne (2000: 1) would so aptly put it. In actual fact, many authors whose contributions are featured on the internet seem to view the concept of ‘contingency planning’ in terms that are synonymous with good leadership and management practices.

The concerns with contingency planning as expressed by these respondents would be very illuminating, if they were to be taken to predict future trends. Of the two biggest cities in SA (i.e. Johannesburg and CT); CT (which happens to be the smaller of the two), has been described by some people coming from the fast and furious Johannesburg in terms of it being 'laid back'. In the latter city, which is the more cosmopolitan of the two, some people have been known to hold on to at least two jobs at any given moment. This criticism leveled against Cape Town appears to be one of the many aspects of the past which these respondents are working hard to erase. This idea also links up with the industrious atmosphere that is suggested elsewhere in this study.

5.4.1.3b Link between the subjects and the career of choice

More often than not the careers that Grade 11A respondents expressed preference for (e.g. Economics, auditing, architecture, medicine, accounting, teaching, etc.) related to the subjects they were doing (i.e. Mathematics, Physical Science, Accounting, and Business Economics) Envisaged professions which were not necessarily linked to the subjects being done included law (e.g. lawyer, magistrate), sport (e.g. basketball), music (e.g. opera singing), the film industry (e.g. acting and directing), etc. As far as the latter field was concerned, the influence of local television came to the fore. The names of two locally-produced programmes suggested were a current soap called *Generations*, as well as a youth drama series once entitled *Yizo Yizo*. The latter mentioned township-based series, described on the internet as a 'controversial', 'gritty' and 'uncompromising' television drama series is said to have achieved 'record-breaking' audiences and 'cult status' amongst South African youth. Issues addressed in the series are said to include 'abuse', 'rape', 'prostitution', 'HIV' AIDS' and 'murder'; all of which are prevalent in a township like Nyanga.

Working class youth culture generally being considered 'deviant' or 'criminal' by its very nature, the mass media's contribution toward the creation of what Boethius coins 'moral panics' deserves some attention here (1995: 41). In terms of this not only is youth generally known for its avant-garde of consumption or it generally being considered more sensitive and malleable than other age groups, but it is also said to be open to all sorts of influences (Boethius 1995: 48). It is in light of this that a culture of exploitation (i.e. by the media) is said to begin asserting itself. Indignation and excitement, according to this author are then said to be used to advance an ideological gain. On the strength of the above concern that the youths in this study and in fact youth in general, may end up believing that the measures taken (i.e. gangsterism in the Tupac scenario) have yielded the desired results (i.e. fame and fortune) appear to be legitimate enough. Concerns about a national identity being at risk are understandable as well, especially if one considers Boethius' earlier work (as cited in the 1995 volume) in which he defines youth as the rock upon which the church of the future will be built.

5.4.1.3c Career choices not necessarily linked to subjects

Not all the career preferences expressed here appeared to be aligned to the subjects the respondents were doing at the time of the study. Of these, one Grade 11A respondent showed an interest in sport. Other respondents in this category (i.e. on subject plans perceived to be less predictive of the careers being envisaged) showed preference for careers that encouraged artistic expression. The tendency among Grade 11A respondents in particular, to select jobs falling

somewhat outside the scope of their subject range, tells a story of its own. It suggests people who are spoilt for choice, and who know no boundaries as a result of this. Not only did these respondents seem to expect, by virtue of the subjects they will have done, to have access to the most lucrative jobs, but they also did not necessarily feel constrained by their qualifications. The respondents in this class know they can play around, because their subjects present them with a world of choices at their fingertips.

Of all the career choices made by Grade 11E respondents on the other hand at least one, that of being a 'doctor', did not appear to be aligned with the history that the respondent was doing. Since the chances of the respondent switching to the relevant stream at a later date are almost non-existent (given the restrictive nature of the tracking system and the cost in terms of finances and time that would come with such a roundabout turn), it is safe to label this kind of career choice as misdirected. As far as the demands of the various careers preferred however, none of the respondents appeared to be misguided in their choices, i.e. among those who bothered to talk about this sort of detail. The two who had set their sights on becoming lawyers for example, were aware of the demands, entailed in both the process leading to as well as that of being in the legal profession. One knew, for example, that the process entailed 'seven years' of 'hard' study at a 'tertiary' institution. The other thought studying 'in England for as many years as possible' was in line with being 'the best lawyer' there is, a combination which would lead to him being 'paid' a lot of money. Salaries being a huge part of the respondents' choices, I now consider the kinds of companies which the respondents saw as worth their loyalty and service.

5.4.1.3d Companies to work for

If employment companies were under the impression that the test for suitability could only go in one direction, with that being from the would-be employer to the would-be employee as is generally the case in SA today, this study suggests the roles may have to be reversed in the near future. Companies may have to sell themselves when it comes to securing the services of certain individuals. It would seem as if future employees would do well to expect job-hopping tendencies among the highly selective job-shopping eagles forming part of this study.

As a future architect or chartered accountant one respondent's ambition was to work for 'the most highly powerful' or 'private' companies. This was to happen 'overseas in the United States'. 'Even' if the respondent were to work 'in South Africa', the private company concerned would have to pay him '15 to 20 thousand per month'. Both the tone (as riding on the use of the conditional clause 'even') and the sequencing of the two countries (i.e. he foregrounds America and mentions SA as a second choice) convey a sense that the respondent in question thinks of working within his own country in terms of settling for less. This is nothing new to those who follow employment trends within SA. Indeed the country has been hard hit by the phenomenon of the 'brain drain' in the recent past. Unless motivated by money, which, as suggested by the tone of the respondent in question, implies SA would not be able to afford, it does not look like this respondent would give SA the time of the day.

Companies to be worked for, it seems, were to be chosen in terms of their specialization (e.g. 'accounting' or 'architectur[al] firms, banks, etc.), financial muscle (e.g. respondent who wanted a salary that would be 'more' and 'better' than that of domestic workers, envisaged salaries

ranging from R15-R100 000 per month), size (e.g. ‘big’, ‘major’, ‘the biggest’, etc.), status (e.g. ‘the most highly powerful’; ‘overseas in the United States’, etc.), location (e.g. ‘overseas’, ‘nationally’, ‘in South Africa’, ‘in the USA’, ‘internationally’, etc.), and exclusivity (e.g. ‘private’). Role models (e.g. the respondent who ‘would love’ to teach at ‘ZWHS’ because ‘most’ teachers at her school had also studied there), were also shown to influence selection. A sister’s lifestyle (as determined by the ‘everything’ she was said to own) was seen as being motivation for one Grade 11E respondent, to set his sights on the energy-supplying company called ‘Eskom’. Another example coming from this class was that of the respondent whose admiration for former President Mandela saw him wanting to work for the ‘state’ as a combination of a lawyer and historian.

Other than the example given above other Grade 11E respondents were motivated by the nature of the business in question (i.e. transportation by bus, tourism industry) prestige (e.g. as in respondent becoming the ‘manager’ and ‘office’ owner of a company presently known as ‘Intercape’ intercity passenger transport services, etc.), status (as in ‘world- class’ gold mining company), size (as in owning a ‘big’ studio, and other big businesses), the perceived demand of the job on the individual (e.g. as in wanting to study hard enough to become a millionaire so that the respondent would ‘not’ have to do ‘heavy’ work), etc.

On the whole, over and above the kinds of preoccupations expressed above, for the Grade 11E respondents the focus did not appear to be so much on the companies themselves, rather than the kind service to be rendered, and the outcomes envisaged (combine this with sentiments expressed in par. 4.2.2 for a fuller picture of the calibre of citizens these respondents promise to be). Concerns with service included showing people ‘respect’ so that one may ‘succeed’ in time, joining the social service so as to help people become ‘successful’ in life; one respondent becoming a lawyer so as to tackle those cases that the police were seen not to be taking seriously, etc. In par. 5.3.3.2a(i) above I cited Riger as associating empowered mindsets (i.e. Grade 11A in the context of the current research) with individualism. From the paragraph just analyzed it would appear that SA could benefit just as much from the seemingly less empowered (i.e. Grade 11E) respondents. The altruistic efforts by the latter type of respondent appear to be the very substance needed to produce empowered individuals. This I think is a lesson for a country like SA which appears to adopt an either/or kind of stance, i.e. the kind of tone that says learners may either follow the academic stream or face the consequences of not doing so.

5.4.1.3e Perks associated with the career choices

Over and above the sense of fulfillment that Grade 11A respondents envisaged from their jobs as detailed above, there were other perks that they seemed to associate with their career choices. These included the jobs enabling respondents to independently run their own businesses, whether this was to happen immediately or in the long run (with this being facilitated by the relevant kind of exposure they will have had). There was also the ability to pick and choose between job opportunities; popularity or fame; the opportunity to enjoy the finer things in life like ‘red carpet’ treatment; world wide travel; being seen as a ‘role model’ by the younger generation, etc.

As far as the Grade 11E respondents were concerned on the other hand, there was a sense that the activities that they were to engage with would have to promote their sense of self worth, by

helping them achieve certain things (as in giving them a certain image within the community). To complete the white collar image respondents wanted leadership and or managerial positions, where they would assume roles either as ‘business’ people or ‘company’ bosses.

The idea of ‘owning’ offices would be part of the envisaged image as some appeared to associate this with being educated and/or successful. One example in this regard is the respondent who saw herself as a ‘social worker’ having ‘everything’ such as her ‘own office’. She wanted a ‘perfect life’ as ‘advisor’ to and ‘role model’ for her community, her family and people who were close to her. It was also her wish, that the individuals she had assisted would one day come back ‘to thank’ her for what she will have ‘done for them’. Recognition in the given case would be a positive spin-off which the respondent concerned appeared to value.

5.4.1.3f Benefits to the self

Benefits to the self included respondents focusing on those aspects of the job which they perceived to be worth their while to pursue them. Among those aspects appears to be the need for self-actualization. Heylighen defines this as a growth need, a space for respondents to emancipate themselves from whatever they perceive to be holding them back, etc. Refer to par. 5.4.1.3f(ii) below for an in-depth discussion of this concept. Remuneration and job-satisfaction (i.e. those doing the job just for the love of it), were also other significant factors. Since the overriding theme of the essays written here revolves around issues of survival, data supporting the ideal of self-emancipation (among other relevant themes) form the greater part of this analysis. In view of this fact I shall restrict my analysis to just a few examples which I think stand out on this topic, with reference to the two classes being compared.

5.4.1.3f(i) Jobs as a means to an end

The Grade 11E respondent who appeared to be echoing Ryan’s (1971) point, about poverty being the absence of money sets the tone of this section of the study. According to this respondent, one needs ‘money’ in order to build a house or anything for that matter. Having admitted to ‘not’ liking ‘heavy jobs’ she had come to the conclusion that it would only be as a ‘millionaire’, that she could access some of the finer things she wanted in life. It would certainly be as something closely resembling one (i.e. a millionaire), in the ten years to come, that she would be able realize her dream ‘to see the world cup’. Education being the means to that specific end for her, as it generally is for others, the respondent decided she would have to ‘study very hard’. This example is however not the last to communicate ‘the end justifies the means’ kind of tone of this whole section.

Once the ultimate ‘business man’ with quite a few different business titles under his belt (i.e. ‘merchandiser’, ‘bar owner’, ‘butcher’ and ‘shop owner’) a male respondent did ‘not’ see himself ‘working or doing anything for nobody’. The double negation used in this utterance is not just for decorative purposes, as it turns out. Because he had a strong aversion to working ‘for white people’, he was determined to make his future success as a ‘big’ business man come to fruition, be this ‘legally and [or] illegally’. The legal route, according to this respondent, would be ‘just to blind people’. ‘Cops’, in particular, were ‘not’ to ‘bug or interfere with’ the respondent’s future business plans. With the carefully adorned front of a successful business man

in place, people were not expected to question ‘where’ it is that this respondent would be getting his money from. Clearly the respondent being described here is not prepared to leave any stone unturned in his attempt to make a success of his life. Were it not for the shady nature of the business life he is meditating upon here, this respondent’s personality profile would fit perfectly with Schmitt-Rodermund and Vondracek’s (2002: 67) description of a ‘successful entrepreneur’. Components of this profile are said to include achievement orientation, conscientious and low agreeableness, low levels of harm avoidance, and risk-taking. Such individuals are further said to possess an internal locus of control, as well as higher levels of self-efficacy. Compared to others, such individuals are thought to be more creative, and to exercise higher levels of autonomy. It is exactly mindsets like the one displayed by this respondent, that I think CDA could enable teachers to tap into. If the kind of talent displayed by learners like this one is not harnessed the learners could land up using it for all the wrong reasons, to the detriment of all concerned.

Grade 11A respondents were found to be just as eager as their 11E counterparts, to be ‘moneyed’, as the Grade 11A respondent about to be analyzed so aptly put it. In terms of the attitude displayed by the respondent in question, he appeared to personify the age old adage, capturing those who count their chickens before they are hatched. Going the extra mile toward realizing his dreams for this respondent meant planning his family in such a way as to put together his ‘own basketball team’ of players. It is probably just as well that the sport in question is basketball, which according to him requires a minimum of five players ‘and substitutes’. The situation could have been worse for the respondent’s poor future wife, had the former’s interest been in rugby rather than basketball. Had rugby been in the cards the poor wife would have been expected to carry and nurse to good health a whole squad of fifteen players, and probably some reserves as well. As things stand at the moment, the woman in question would not only be expected to conceive on an annual basis (if she wanted to avoid huge age gaps between these would-be team-mates); but also to bring forth one male child on top of the other.

Of the three cars that this basketball player envisaged owning in the future, ‘two’ were to belong to him (probably as the ‘head of the family’), while the would-be wife got ‘the other’ car. If the calibre of young women being analyzed in the current study is representative of future generations of young women, it is highly improbable that this respondent could get the kind of wife he wants among anyone of these. The number of children he has in mind would present him with the first obstacle. Another possible challenge he would probably have to face up to is the possibility of these young women not taking kindly to his ‘other’-ing tone of voice. This is suggested by the respondent’s use of the phrase ‘the other’ when referring to the third car.

In sharp contrast to the movers and shakers referred to above as well as those about to be discussed below we find one shaky Grade 11E voice whose route into the future is ridden with ‘if’s’ rather than ‘when’s’. According to this respondent, it would be only ‘if’ his dreams came true, and ‘if’ he got to follow a ‘good’ and ‘successful’ career that his life could improve.

5.4.1.3f(ii) The need for Self-actualization (SAC)

After spending a considerable amount of time studying the respondents in this study (i.e. their resilient nature and how their attitude to life seems to transcend all kinds of limitations, among other things) the concept of self-actualization (SAC) seemed like one of the most appropriate

terms I could use to describe them. The concept is a broad one (see pars. 2.6.4 above 6.4 below and for a more detailed definition of the concept), so I shall restrict myself to aspects of its definition which I think aptly concretize the points I wish to register where these respondents are concerned. Simply put, Heylighen (1992) defines this growth need as one's need to develop capacities 'more and more'. This was a sense I got after reading and analyzing sections of this study leading to this point in my discussion. Sentiments expressed by these respondents in the paragraphs that follow immediately below this one, as well as the concluding summary (as provided in par. 6.4) both seem to support the viewpoint about these respondents indeed being self-actualizers who, in their quest for perfection (which they define in terms suitable to themselves), will always keep on pushing frontiers of limitation.

The occupational choices made by the respondents in Grade 11A, for example, varied from high profile jobs (e.g. the wish to become the 'CEO' of one of the biggest company in the world, 'chartered accountants', auditors, architects, etc.) to an inclination toward self-employment. This is something Schmitt-Rodermund and Vondracek (2002: 65) refer to as 'entrepreneurial prospects' (by which they mean ownership of companies, businesses, etc.). According to a study conducted by these co-authors within the US context (as reported upon in the said volume), 80% of all new jobs in this country were said to be products of entrepreneurial ventures. In terms of this, it is through 'start-up' jobs like the ones suggested in the current study, that any country could hope to 'reduce unemployment'. This mentality which seems to be geared toward cash generation is exactly what SA needs at the moment. Besides concerns with the wider SA community, the positions which these respondents envisaged for themselves generally place them at the helm in their respective work environments (e.g. as the 'managing director' of a company, having 'own employees' who would 'follow' orders and 'listen' to what was being said, etc.).

Respondents appeared to realize the kinds of jobs they had in mind would not come cheap. For them to wield the kind of authority they seem to value so much, they would have to bring in certain qualities as well. These were expressed in terms of expertise resulting from high educational levels which were to be obtained from institutions of higher learning.

5.4.1.3g Envisaged educational levels

While most of the learners were busy forging a path into a future in the sun, seemingly without either educational concerns, fears, anxieties or uncertainties; one learner's view of his future was completely obscured. Denying this learner the license to dream was the reality of his situation. He confided that he would have liked to 'be educated', and to get what he called 'a high certificate'. He unfortunately did 'not know' what he could do to get past both 'Grade 11 and Grade 12'. He further captured this tone of despair through the use of the word 'if' rather than 'when' when talking about the conditionality of his future plans. In terms of this, he thought 'if' he could pass Grade 12 he would one day be the manager of some undefined work environment, doing his 'own thing' or working on his 'own job'. Clearly every aspect of this respondent's future is clouded in vagueness. Given the fact that he could hardly see his way through the Grade 11 hurdle, that he cannot see his future job and work environment is understandable. This respondent's challenge speaks directly to the gate-keeping role associated with the Grade 11 class as registered by this study in par. 1.3.3 above.

On the other side of this coin was a learner who saw herself living in the lap of ‘luxury’. In her opinion this would be ‘created’ (or enabled) by ‘all’ the ‘hard’ work she would have ploughed into her ‘education’. All the optimistic learners in this section (all of them coming from Grade 11A) spoke in terms of tertiary qualifications, with themselves as either ‘college’ or ‘university’ graduates boasting ‘certificates’, ‘diplomas’ and ‘degrees’. In terms of the range of qualifications these could be arranged on a scale from what one respondent tagged ‘enough’ education, to a ‘Masters’ degree’. The latter qualification which was to be musically-inclined, was also mentioned in the same breath as a ‘diploma’, suggesting a mindset that recognizes that education is hardly ever ‘enough’ as suggested by the former learner.

With the Grade 11E class qualifications were implied in the choices of careers respondents wished for, rather than specified. The closest that the respondents got to with regard to the issue of qualifications was via the mention of ‘tertiary’ education or the concept of a ‘varsity’.

5.4.1.3h Expertise and service

In line with the line of thought picked upon above Grade 11E respondents did not seem to think there was that much they would bring to the workplace. In a somewhat watered- down tone some talked about their plans to ‘work hard’. They did not seem to have the ambitious edge displayed by their Grade 11A counterparts, one example here being that of the aspirant social worker who seemed to equate this point in her career with having ‘everything’. The tendency was to define their contributions in terms of benefits to others rather than what the kind of job would do for them. The misplaced doctor for example wished to ‘make sure’ that he looked after his patients ‘all the time’, and that the latter could feel ‘better’ than they had been feeling before they came to him.

Grade 11A respondents on the other hand gave the impression of people forcefully shoving their way all the way up from the extreme end of the queue, to the front. They spoke in term of being ‘the best’ both locally, and ‘in the world’. From a musical point of view being ‘in the top ten in the globe’ was to place the affected respondent’s life ‘in the stars’. According to this ‘everybody’ ‘around the world’ was to want to see him. Such would be the level of numerical expertise and ‘hard work’ which one learner hoped to have, that he saw himself as being the ‘only’ one who would be able to do ‘anything’ to do with money matters within ‘SA’. With a mindset that seems to be saying ‘what you give is what you get’, below the respondents detail what they would expect in return for their cutting edge services.

5.4.1.3i Remuneration

With the kind of educational standards hoped for above it is perhaps fair to expect that respondents would expect salaries which would be commensurate with the status of moguls, tycoons, magnates and barons which Onyeani would have like the black youth to aspire after (2000: 17). As far as one Grade 11A respondent was concerned, he planned to allow his ‘qualifications’ to speak for themselves. In terms of this these were to ‘state’ or spell his worth to whoever needed to know. In line with this, this aspiring ‘architect’ or ‘chartered accountant’ (he still had not decided which), as the case may be at some point in the future, expected between

'15 to 20 thousand' rand per month. Besides this case, other salaries mentioned ranged between 'R15 000' to a 'R100 000' per month.

A Grade 11E lawyer to be who will have studied in England for 'as many years as possible' so that he would be paid as 'much' as possible did not specify how much 'much' would be. The one depending on a lottery for the million he was to use to set himself up could not possibly say much on a topic of this nature.

All Grade 11E respondents (except the taxi-owner about to be discussed just now), appeared to be reluctant to put a price tag on themselves. In what appeared to be motivation to make extra cash on the side, over and above an interest in 'horticulture' and 'home economics', the man already hinted at above appeared to have also set his sights on taking passengers on long distance trips to different places on Fridays. He seemed to relish the idea of fondling the cash in his hands, as suggested by the image he painted of himself, calculating sums approximating R3000 'on Mondays'. If one considers the time frame given here, starting from the onset of the trip (i.e. on Friday) to the payout day (i.e. Monday) which is basically a weekend, what this echoes is a mindset that shouts 'quick cash and little or no effort' (this one apparently being an exception to this rule) that has become so endemic of young township life today.

For many this ATM mentality is probably being fuelled and doused at the same time by a confusing system of government. On the one hand this system seems to encourage a social grant-induced mode of dependency on the part of the affected SA citizens. On the other it appears to be pushing for a '*Vuk' Uzenzele-an*' (i.e. get up and do something for yourself) attitude. By this I refer to the fact of the government granting financial assistance indiscriminately (i.e. regardless of the number of children conceived) to the unemployed mothers, while in the process exposing these mothers to HIV/ AIDS as some go out of their way to access more of these grants.

Other brazen money related statements from the respondents generally included wanting 'the money', wanting to make 'some real money', etc. The capitalist attitude displayed by these respondents here is nothing to be ashamed of, as far as Onyeani is concerned. All of this is supposedly in line with the necessary production of intelligent and educated consumers, a brand which Onyeani (2000: 17) refers to as 'economic warriors'. Warriors of this kind are said to 'love money' as much as they love themselves and their families. In terms of this reckoning they 'understand what money can do' (i.e. that it can help them care for their families, the unfortunate members of the community; that it can help them create employment for the people; give them respect and enable them to lead better and joyous lives, etc.).

One respondent, who did not appear to be afraid of hard work, seemed to gravitate towards self-employment. He appeared to be informed by the Indian familial way of running his future business. In the respondent's mind an 'extended house', the purchase of three 'telephone containers', coupled with 'some supermarkets' were seen as having the potential of enabling him to employ his 'cousins', and no one 'out[side] of [his] family' circle.

5.4.1.3j For the love of the job

Some of the respondents did not appear to have any specific career paths in mind. Their attitude seemed to suggest a mindset that says it's not what one does but more what one gets out of it that matters the most. For respondents like these money (e.g. an R80 000 monthly salary) and success rather were identified as some of what was hoped for. The one respondent who, by the sound of things, chose to be 'in it' (i.e. music), as the saying goes, purely for the love of the game, had some passionate comments to make about his future work. Music being 'almost everything' in his opinion, this respondent pledged to sing till the day he died.

5.4.1.3k Glamour, prestige and power

For many of the respondents image meant everything. There is ample evidence in the current study, to support what American talk-show host Tyra Banks would call a '*bling-bling*' kind of orientation among some of these respondents. When some of the respondents described the kinds of houses that they wanted for themselves for example, it was mostly in terms of the kind of financial statement that such a house would communicate to onlookers, rather than how the specific features of the house in question would benefit the would-be buyer. In line with this the executive job kind of thinking encouraged the kind of visualization that saw respondents in their 'own offices', sitting behind desks and working on 'computers'. Preference for companies perceived to be cutting the grade in terms of meeting this image, for example 'Eskom' and the 'Intercape' transportation services was shown. It is perhaps worth mentioning here, that none of the respondents mentioned the kinds of jobs where one stands to get dirty, like mechanical work or agriculture. Regardless of the kind of money that one could make as a motor mechanic for example (I am not suggesting there is more money to be made in this kind of profession than in any of the other jobs), but with the tattered appearance that comes with the job one would hardly earn the envy of one's neighbours. Onyeani describes this tendency among blacks as this race wearing its wealth on its 'outward nothingness' (2000: 168)

Projecting a good image and or the need to show off appeared to play a huge part in this construction. One's lifestyle being a big part of one's image or vice versa, the study now interrogates the respondents' thoughts on the concept of lifestyle. Following this section will be a closing discussion around the issue of obstacles.

5.5 The concept of Lifestyle

Given the modernity orientation of this study (see par. 2.1.1above), Reimer (1995) emphasizes the need for researchers to consider choices of lifestyles within the context of young people's 'total life situations'. In terms of this it is imperative that researchers consider the preconditions and possibilities that young people possess as they choose how to live. Using the concept of 'individualization' Roemer (1995), on the other hand explains how it has come to be for traditional ties and family to be viewed as less important in today's world. As young people take responsibility for their individual lives, they are said to no longer follow in their parents' footsteps, but rather to choose independently how they want to live. Using the concept of 'conspicuous consumption' Veblen (cited in Reimer 1995) explains the need among individuals to create envy while also expressing a social position. So, while lifestyles are said to be 'unique' in one sense (i.e. not identical to anyone else's), they could also be defined as 'social' in another. In terms of the latter people are said to choose lifestyles in relation to other people. In the process

they demonstrate great similarities with others, while also setting themselves apart from those who may have similar tastes (Reimer 1995: 125).

About the young respondents in this study the data collected suggests a generation whose future lifestyles may be shaped by a need to strike a careful balance between their personal needs and those of others around them. In their pursuit of personal gratification (i.e. personal well-being and happiness) the respondents factor in the importance of leading a meaningful existence. They approach these goals from different angles, with these including concerns with the general quality of their lives (as determined by material possessions, their engagement with specific activities, etc.). In terms of material possessions housing and cars by far outweigh all the other needs. From a day to day point of view respondents express interest in issues around certain types of jobs, means of entertainment, the kind of company they intend to keep, benefits to themselves as well as others, etc. Issues of morality and/or value systems also form the last piece of the respondent's lifestyle puzzle.

5.5.1 Quality of Life

Money being the very essence of today's existence, this section depicts it as enabling a comfortable life. It affords its owner the kinds of services that are designed to make comfort possible, among other advantages. In terms of the first example, a Grade 11E respondent visualized himself in the shoes of one of the characters (i.e. 'Zakes') in a local soapie called '*Yizo Yizo*'. As has already been indicated above, this is because the soapie depicts Zakes as a 'rich man'. Being white within the SA context still being associated by some with being custodians of all that is desirable (e.g. upward mobility as enabled by a good quality education, a strong financial muscle, etc.), it is not surprising that some respondents would associate being of white skin with getting 'everything' that one wanted.

The kinds of qualifiers and phrases used to describe the respondents' proposed 'standard of living', as one respondent so aptly put it, include 'good', 'beautiful', 'higher' than anyone could ever imagine, 'luxury', a life that is going to be 'in the stars', etc. Before some respondents could conclude that 'all' of the dreams they had had since they were 'young' had 'come true', respondents would first have to be exposed to 'no suffering', be able to have and buy 'everything' they needed, lead 'better' lives, have their 'own things', etc. The kinds of possessions envisaged are those captured in the relevant paragraphs appearing below. Other than the concrete benefits envisaged we now consider those of an intangible nature, but whose positive impact nonetheless goes a long way in making one's life more manageable and rewarding.

5.5.2 Ability to buy services, mobility and time

The notion of having everything one wanted included being able to afford services designed to make one's life easier, like having a servant looking after one's family and house while one went off to work. The idea of being able to pay such persons 'at the end of the month' appeared to leave a particularly sweet taste in the said respondent's mouth. As one would expect, this '*Madam and Eve*' (a cartoon strip depicting the day to day activities in the life of a white

employer i.e. the ‘Madam’, and her black domestic servant, i.e. ‘Eve’) kind of remark can be expected more of a female respondent.

The image presented here (i.e. the cleaning and the pay) captures the essence of the job-description of those doing domestic work within the SA context (Bothma 2003; Cole 1992, Grossman 1996, etc.), with the respondent in question (this being of the black female species) clearly challenging what Francis would call the normalization of the institution of domestic work in this country (1999). By placing herself at the receiving end of the service rather than the other way round the respondent is consciously ‘turning the tables’ in her favour, for want of a better phrase. What the reader sees here are indications that respondents are tinkering with the ‘caucasian master, black servitude’ norm which Onyeani refers to in his book (2000: 112).

Although there are a few black people who have white workers on the former’s payroll presently in SA, I have yet to come across evidence of this happening within the domestic domain. The reversal of the Madam and Eve visualization as suggested above therefore, is indicative of a self-empowering mentality on the part of the respondent concerned. Having an Eve at one’s beck and call also means more freedom and time to get around, mingle and pursue personal hobbies. With the gods apparently smiling at most aspects of this respondent’s life, that she would wish to go to church ‘every Sunday’, in order to ‘thank God’ for all that He will have done for her is to be expected.

5.5.3 Choice as a determinant of a good lifestyle

The ability to choose whether or not to ‘have fun like others’ and also who one was going to spend one’s weekend with and how, for example, come across as other measures of comfortable lifestyles. This seemingly insignificant aspect of a person’s life is in actual fact something that is enjoyed only by a select few, money being its very core. In terms of this, when ‘off [duty]’ (i.e. during the weekends) one respondent planned to choose between spending the day visiting her sister’s family, and going out for ‘quality time with friends’. She envisaged herself being able to choose whether to visit her sister and the latter’s family, or her presently estranged father. While all of these were happening she would have the pleasure of knowing everything at home was going ahead like clockwork. The decisions to work ‘all the time’ rather than ‘have fun like [the] others’ satisfies Schmitt-Rodermund and Vondracek’s personality characteristic of successful business start-ups (2002: 67). According to this the willingness to expend considerable effort tells a lot about the potential of a business-inclined individual.

5.5.4 Membership in the inner circle

Respondents did not however restrict themselves only to considerations expressed above, in exercising their freedom to choose. Seemingly informed by the English expression ‘birds of a feather flock together’, respondents decided in advance, that there would be a point at which they would have to close their net of friendship. In ten years to come Grade 11E respondents predicted they would be one of those considered ‘important’. In line with this they expected to lead very ‘comfortable’ and ‘correct’ lives. ‘Safety’ being an issue for those with property and

possessions to safe-guard (a group one respondent captured with the concept of a 'higher society'), this was also seen as an important factor in the scheme of things.

Being ones to keep business and pleasure separate, concerns about the kind of company they intended to keep covered both friends and visitors. Given the fact that visitors come and go, the only condition placed upon them was that they be 'important' enough to justify their presence among this elitist group. In turn, the visitors were to be taken good 'care' of. Interactions with friends being of a more frequent nature, on the other hand, the list of conditions was a bit longer where these are concerned. Not only did these have to be 'true', 'fine people' who would be 'educated', but they also had to be of the same 'standard' and 'level'. Once the admission requirements had been met, the respondents would not be bothered about being seen in public with this type of friend as they all went 'out' for a 'nice time'. The interesting thing about these specifications is that they all come from respondents in Grade 11E, a class which up until this moment, has been displaying socialist and accommodative tendencies.

The exclusive pitch of the analysis just completed brings to mind a message that I have seen occasionally inscribed above the door of some business premises in the city of Cape Town. The inscription reads 'Right of admission is reserved'. Other premises in this city do not have to bother with the cumbersome job of putting together such an inscription. Indeed the look on the faces of those inside these premises has been known to communicate the gist of this message well enough, if not better than the cold brass plate.

The gloomy picture painted above hopefully being one of the feeble kicks of a dying horse (i.e. *apartheid*), and definitely not the subject of this study, the reader's attention is now drawn to a lighter topic, that being the respondents' definition of the concept of 'entertainment'.

5.5.5 Entertainment

In terms of a study conducted by Reimer (1995), outside of the realm of the fixed parts of the day youth (the Swedish in particular) generally want to have 'fun'. They are said to show more interest in pleasure than in the more serious activities. Fun, according to this author, encompasses youth 'amusing' themselves as well as 'meeting friends'. From a cultural perspective the working class youth specifically, is said to be less culturally active than its middle class counterparts. Bearing in mind the fact that the youth under scrutiny at the moment, though working class by birth, it however has no intention of dying as such. In line with this I try to determine the extent to which Roemer's (1995) and other sentiments expressed by the literature could be said to apply to the group in question.

God being depicted by Christians as a just God who loves all of His children equally, one respondent who appears to see himself as having just as much right as his middle class counterparts referred to above, spoke in terms of exploring God's 'wonderful creations' and getting to know 'different cultures', among others. Embedded in the notion of God's wonderful creations is a sense that all these material things that people are busy quarreling over, are not even theirs to start with, given the fact that material things remain behind when people die. In terms of this the respondent could be saying that God created everything on this earth for enjoyment by all irrespective of race, class, creed, place of birth, etc. This is something the whole world (and SA in particular) would do well to remember. This is in light of xenophobic

tendencies which continue to plague this country despite public outcry and international condemnation (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks: 2008).

For some of the respondents entertainment was expressed in terminology that hints at the notion of 'escape'. One arm of the double-pronged form of existence encompassed night life which seemed to go hand in hand with living on the fast lane. The other arm included excursions. Words and phrases that respondents associated with the former included what one referred to as 'freecks' (which implies going out for fun as suggested in the concept of a 'bash'), going to 'night clubs' with friends, attending bashes 'every weekend', and 'living [a] fast life'.

Plans to go on excursions ranged from outings found within the immediate radius, to destinations across the seas. The temporal dimension attached to these covered short to long term durations. Locally families could spend 'weekends' at hotels or on 'boats'. An improvement on this meant one family going on a holiday trip 'out of Cape Town', and also 'out of South Africa'. International travel was to cover 'beautiful places' like 'Australia', 'China' and 'London'. Part of the thrill included 'delicious' dinners that one could 'not' forget 'ever'. Globe-trotting, and the ability to wine and dine all being some of the perks enjoyed by only the rich and famous, the study explores how its respondents intend to make these dreams a reality.

5.5.6 Fame and fortune

Over and above the chauffer-driven Tupac-kind of fame and lifestyle which was seen to encompass 'big bashes', the 'red carpet', 'screaming' fans, 'world'-wide tours, etc., being 'one of the richest persons in South Africa', the notion of living 'like other millionaires', etc.; respondents also expressed their dreams using two very strong images. One image was that of a 'royal family', which was supposed to have its 'own label' (if such a phenomenon exists). The other image was that of 'Cinderella when she was married to the king'. The fairytale existence captured here was not all that the respondents hoped to enjoy. During December the families were to spend their holidays in some 'hotel' which would cost them 'R4000' per person (presumably per night). Over and above the five-star treatment suggested here, as the 'richest person in the world' one respondent offered to 'support' both the government and growing businesses, and to give 'charity' to young stars.

Being of the 'self-made' kind millionaire who will have worked his way up the ladder of success one respondent demonstrated a full grasp of the 'make or break' dichotomy which characterizes success. He demonstrated well in advance, that given a choice between the two he would go with the first option. In line with this he chose 'not' to lead a fancy life, but rather 'to create the marketing process huge'.

In sharp contrast to these sentiments were those of the opera musician whose aim it was to lead a 'very undefined style' 'just being a musician'. Suggested by the latter utterance is an outlook that derives pleasure from the simple things in life. The down to earth tone of the last two utterances hinting at someone with a palate for moderation, we now consider other value systems which the respondents considered important.

5.5.7 Value systems

It is possible that the quest for morals that some of the Grade 11E respondents were hoping to see both in their lives and those of their children's future was a question of the former projecting their own needs as youth into an environment that is devoid of good examples. For a generation seemingly fumbling in the dark looking for 'success', and 'not' knowing what they were doing, 'role models' and 'great guys' were some of the roles respondents saw themselves playing in the near future. As a 'great guy' one respondent expressed a wish that he could sit with teenagers, ask them 'about life' and what they wanted in life.

Issues of morality, as far as 11A respondents were concerned, started with getting one's house in order. Suggested by one of the respondents with regard to the issue at hand is a sense that the concept of morality is non-negotiable. What this respondent appears to be saying is that one is either highly moral or downright immoral. In terms of this the respondent in question intended to become 'the most respectable' and famous person she knew. The Microsoft giant Mr 'Bill Gates' was held up as the epitome of respectability, a value that yet another respondent was aspiring after. In a world where good things are said to come to those who wait, the patriotic Mandela was seen as the embodiment of the virtue of 'patience'.

Walking the walk of respectability amidst a world with lots of freedoms and rights also meant that another respondent could only think about having children when she was 'married'. The husband being of the 'respectful', 'loving' and reliable kind (who would have to 'be there for his family when they needed him the most'), was also expected to take his future wife and children to 'church'. A Grade 11E respondent who thought he could get away with just talking the talk wanted to be a 'well-respected' member of his community. When people saw him walking by he wished they would admit (to themselves as implied by his words) to seeing a 'man'. He, of course, would not be just any man but rather one with 'a big name'. Being recognized as a force however did not mean this respondent aimed to take people for granted. Rather, it was his vow never to 'forget' where he had come from. Neither did being a big name translate into the respondent in question leaving the place he affectionately called '*EKASI*' (which is local slang for 'at the location').

It seems to be a pattern with the respondent just referred to here, to capture issues that are close to his heart through the use of capital letters. He did the same in par. 4.3.2.2 of the previous chapter when addressing the issue of his primary school teacher (reflected here under the pseudonym of '*MEM DANA*') who appeared to have made school life miserable for the respondent at some point in the latter's young life. In this current essay being analyzed the word *EKASI* is the only one sucking the reader in, the respondent's handwriting easily identifiable as being one of the smallest of all the data collected. The point about this respondent's sense of roots is explored further in par. 4.3.2.2 above. For the moment it is worth noting that despite the crooked lifestyle the respondent planned to lead in the future, he did not seem to expect people to hold this against him. Rather, he wanted recognition, acceptance and even admiration from the very people his illegal dealings are most likely to affect. It is not clear from any of his essays what kind of mischievous deed he intended to hatch in the future.

Although the respondents generally demonstrated a lot of hunger for some form of recognition (be this as 'successful' men, standing their ground in the community, etc.) or the other, the urge

to transfuse greatness with humility appears to be just as strong. Despite clamouring for mutual 'respect' on the one hand, those displaying this kind of consciousness were also adamant that they 'not' to look down upon people. Clearly, arrogance has no part in the bigger picture. Rather the issue of mutual respect is very high on the list of important attributes for these young people. These points somehow correspond with some of the respondents' concerns with lady-like behaviour as discussed elsewhere in this chapter. All put together, they approximate the definition of the concept of *ubuntu* as discussed above. In terms of this, one is human in relation to other human beings, hence the tendency to always consider the needs of others (i.e. both the nuclear and the extended families, the larger community, and South Africa as a whole) as demonstrated in the current study. From a familial point of view family life was tasked with invoking 'good' feelings and happiness, both of which were products of feelings of 'love' for one another, as well as 'peace' within the family.

5.5.8 Personal needs

At a personal level the respondents visualized themselves 'driving' good lives, as one Grade 11E chose to call it. Part of this was to include dressing in 'expensive clothes' or in whatever outfit one preferred, doing what one 'loved' and having a 'nice boyfriend' for some. One of the main attractions where expensive clothes were concerned, was the fact of their durability. In terms of this, the clothes were seen to 'last for a long time'. What this suggests is it is not just for the label or the need to impress others that these clothes are to be bought, at least not as far as this Grade 11E respondent was concerned.

For the Grade 11A class on the other hand a 'label' and personal 'designer' of one's 'own' were seen as the hallmarks of success. One respondent's prized possession in the form of his 'own aeroplane' was to have the owner's name emblazoned on it. On this point one again sees one of the major differences between the two streams. While Grade 11A is being unapologetic in flaunting what they plan to have, Grade 11E respondents tend to show a little modesty in their approach. In the next section which deals with material possessions I put this theory to the test.

5.5.9 Material possessions

This section has been divided into three distinct parts. The respondents generally expressed interest in cars, houses and assets of different kinds. The main criterion determining the choice seems to be an orientation that says 'the more expensive, the better'. Some of these respondents' dreams (particularly those from Grade 11A) border on the ridiculous. They capture a sense of the respondents in question having literally interpreted the concept of a 'dream', in the fashion implied by Frederickson (1999) above.

5.5.9a Cars

On the issue of choice of cars some Grade 11E respondents demonstrated a more down to earth and utilitarian approach. There was a tendency for some in this class not to give specifics as to the cars of their desire, other than the implied function behind the proposed purchase. In line with this respondents talked about 'family' cars, and/or cars for 'parents' or 'siblings'). Clearly neither looks nor the cost were considered important in scenarios like the one just described.

Those for whom the car was given some kind of a 'toy' image (mainly males) as suggested by the commonly used concept about cars being 'boys' toys', adjectives used to describe these included 'expensive', 'nice', 'new design', 'fancy' and 'dream' as in 'dream car', etc. The models that were bandied about included the 'Polo Playa', 'GTi', 'Caravelle', and a 'BMW X5'. At the other extreme end was one respondent who was afraid she would not be able to afford the 'new design' car of her dreams, let alone her being able to prevent her future child from suffering, unless she were to win a 'lottery'.

For Grade 11A discussions around cars were informed by a range of various considerations. These included the thrill of ownership (e.g. 'my own car', it being the 'first thing' one respondent hoped she would own), patriarchal tendencies to do with the idea of the man being the head of the house and therefore deserving of the lion's share in everything (e.g. as in the man owning two out of 'three' family cars), convenience (e.g. 'both of us' having cars, to 'have a car [for myself] and a family car'), aesthetics (e.g. 'fancy', 'new', 'beautiful'), and status (e.g. the car/s being 'expensive', those which 'no one had ever seen before', a car that would 'suit' its owner, 'the best' car 'of the day', 'the Magnificent Maybach 61 which costs about 3.5million', one respondent's cars being the 'Maybach' and 'Tucson's', and he having 'a driver' taking him 'wherever' he went', 'an expensive car like the Maybach from the United States').

Comments associated with the Maybach confirm it as a car distinct from all, and in a league of its own. Now that I have been afforded the privilege of feasting my eyes on this exceptionally beautiful piece of steel (through SABC TV's 'Car Torque' programme), I concur with the chauffeur-driven (described here as a 'driver') image suggested by one of the respondents. Descriptive words like 'wonderful', do not do justice to this exquisite and breath-taking car. Respondents further describe it in terms of the huge gap it supposedly leaves in the bank's vault (i.e. R3.5million). The car's origin being the USA further confirms its status as an imported car. To complete the image there is the 'red carpet' which will supposedly stretch out into infinity. Clearly, this is a car fit for a king. Incidentally all three of the respondents expressing interest in this specific car were males. Toys generally being perceived as boys' best friends, indications are that the game about to be played in the near future is a very serious one indeed, one in which only big boys or 'big names' (as suggested in pars. 5.5.7 and/or 5.5.9b(ii) above) can participate. The sentiments expressed here capture Onyeani's (2000) concept of the 'black illusion of success'. The concept, according to this author, is measured by the kind of car one drives, with cars being considered an index of how important one is. According to this school of thought Africans are said to be a race that lives for today. This author provides a list of names of 'luxury models' that Africans tend to buy. Among these he identifies the BMW and Mercedes-Benz. According to this author, three out of every five cars driven in his country (i.e. Nigeria), is a Mercedes-Benz. This sense of 'loyalty to brands', as far as Onyeani is concerned, is known to be one of many factors influencing the high imprisonment rate among blacks everywhere.

One does not have to use binoculars to look for evidence of the effects of this rampant brand fever among some black people in South Africa. This country ushered the new year (i.e. 2008) amidst shocking and scandalous revelations involving two prominent public figures. One was a high ranking police official and therefore a custodian of the law, while the other was a leading politician. The two figures' social standing hints at them being some of the highest earners in this

country today. Yet the two leaders were embroiled in corruption charges involving money, with both allegedly having been recipients of ‘designer shoes’, among other gifts of bribery. The shoes were just one of many perks supposedly linking these men to unscrupulous business dealings, with this suggesting these individuals needed more than their salaries could afford them, to maintain their excessively expensive lifestyles. This obsession with ‘the best’ or the ‘top of the product lines’ is something that Onyeani criticizes vehemently. Rather than being at the consumer’s end in the car or even the clothing business for that matter, Onyeani would rather have liked to see more ‘black dealerships’ and acclaimed designers. He registers a deep concern over a race obsessed with material things which he claims have no value in the long run (2000). As far as the respondents in the current study are concerned, to some extent I can understand where they are coming from with the kind of mentality they have displayed here. It goes back to the question of there not being sufficient people to model good or appropriate behaviour. The tendency among some black people in CT, is to prioritize cars over houses. It is not uncommon to see parked in some shady neighbourhood in this city’s townships and informal settlements, quite a few of the most expensive cars one can think of within the SA context. For many black people the notion of investment still remains a foreign concept.

Other cars mentioned in the essays included the ‘G7’ and the expensive ‘Z3’, with the prospective owner still taking his time in deciding between the two kilo-guzzlers. To reduce time on the road even further the winged type of car was also suggested. With the owner’s ‘name’ emblazoned on the bodice of the ‘aeroplane’ in question, the feathery type of bird is to entertain no illusions as to who the boss of the airwaves will be in the near future. This idea of the name is probably informed by the customized car registration system presently being implemented in South Africa. Those with cash to spare and not afraid to show it get to choose how they wish to be identified.

Not all Grade 11A respondents were as carefree as suggested by the tone used above. Indeed there is a small minority in this class whose outlook in life is not mediated through rose-coloured glasses. The one respondent who could not care less about the frills which seemed to matter so much to many of his classmates, seemingly had far more pressing concerns to think about. About 99% of this respondent’s essay space is dominated by family-related issues. With a late sister’s tombstone to unveil, the responsibility of a nephew or niece to think of, a currently incapacitated mother’s breadwinning role to assume and a family home to buy, the respondent could not be bothered with frivolous concerns about what type of car to buy. All that she was prepared to say on the matter was that it be a car she would ‘love’. The purpose behind the purchase of a car being merely to transport one ‘from point ‘A’ to ‘Z’ as some are apt to call it, this is an attitude that Onyeani (2004) would probably have liked to see drilled into the minds of many black people. I now address the respondents’ views around one of South Africa’s most contentious issues, that of housing accommodation.

5.5.9b Houses

Quite a few respondents in this study expressed a wish to live in the suburbs in future. Specifics to do with the structure, shape, size, cost, location, contents, affordability, prestige (as in the name of the area hoped for) informed the choices of homes that the respondents hoped they would have to secure, both for themselves and their families, approximately around the year

2014. Houses were also defined in terms of where they were 'not' to be (e.g. the township). Descriptive words or phrases used in this section of the study include 'luxurious places', 'near the sea', 'somewhere wealthy', 'not in the township', etc. From the data gathered here it sounds like the townships may be getting some breathing space in the near future after all. It is 'de-concentration efforts' like these, which according to Fauth (2004), could reduce what she calls the 'deleterious impact of poverty' in areas like Nyanga.

The preference for suburban bliss expressed by many respondents in the current study is not necessarily without reservations. In some instances there seemed to exist among certain individuals some degree of tension between the call for one to be upwardly mobile, and the concern that this very act might be interpreted negatively (e.g. as abandonment) by others. This example again illustrates the tendency among respondents, to always balance their needs against those of others. The issue of location is explored some more in the next section, it being seen to go hand in hand with issues around the question of identity.

5.5.9b(i) Area and identity

One Grade 11A respondent predicted that moving 'far away' from her family would be taken to mean she had forgotten about them. This, for her would apparently be a bad thing indeed, as she believed it was through her family's 'blessing' and 'support' that she would have achieved her new position in life. In order to be able to take advantage of both worlds, another explored the possibility of a compromise. He decided he would buy his house 'in the township', as he would not like to be far from the people he grew up with. With the perceived needs of others having been met, the house's appearance would have to 'tell' that he had 'worked hard for it'.

The two scenarios just cited bear evidence to respondents negotiating the space around their sense of belonging and identity. While the move to the suburb satisfies the need to be seen to be upwardly mobile, achieving and successful, the very same move has the effect of threatening to 'unhome' (according to Bhabha as cited in Bangeni and Kapp 2005) the respondents in question. Onyeani uses the concept of a 'flight' to capture the black middle class's exodus to white neighbourhoods. According to this author this is something some tend to wear like a 'badge of honour', to show they 'have arrived' (2000: 122). The latter remark is a jibe at those Blacks who take immense pride in having been 'the first' blacks to move into a white neighbourhood, especially if this is accompanied by lamentations about how things could have remained good, had the white evacuees still been living there. What this implies is a thinking on the part of this middle class (as suggested by Onyeani), that considers things to have changed for the worst from the moment other blacks came on the scene. This and other related concerns I have addressed in par. 3.3.9 above where I discuss the notion of 'reflexivity'.

Fear of name-calling and/or labeling not being an issue among some of the respondents in this study (with this being particularly true of respondents from Grade 11A), those respondents who were not necessarily concerned about being accused of being either ingrates, sellouts or coconuts (as the case may be when it comes to the choice of residential areas) were definitive about their plans for the future. These respondents would give specific names of areas which they thought fitted the up-market kind of image they wished for. They were either going to stay in 'urban areas like Cape Town or Constantia', 'in a new house in Summer Greens', in a 'suburb' or any

‘beautiful city’ for that matter, etc. In addition to the residential areas identified by Grade 11A thus far, *Devil’s Peak*, *Hout Bay*, etc., were just some of the examples of wealthy neighbourhoods singled out by Grade 11E and the other respondents falling outside the parameters of the current thesis. In one case the latter suburb was coupled with another house in the ‘Eastern Cape’, with two geographical areas and/or different provinces being targeted in the process. While the Western Cape Province (WCP) where Hout Bay is situated falls more on the urban side of things, the Eastern Cape could be said to be largely rural. What this kind of combination suggests is a lifestyle that enables one an opportunity to get away from it all at will. This kind of luxury is enjoyed by only the very rich at the moment in SA.

Within the Grade 11A class alone there were utterances which were more emphatic than others, with regard to the question of location. These could be said to link up with sentiments to do with respondents wanting to turn their back on the past (see pars. 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.2 above among others). ‘Me I’m stay in a suburbs’ is an example of those respondents who were not about to apologize for their hard-earned achievements, and their resultant choices. Another stated categorically that he wished to live ‘in a suburb [and] not [in] a location’. ‘A place like Wyneberg [and] not Nyanga’ was seen as very desirable in another scenario. Even the generally socialistic Grade 11E’s were drawn to high walled suburban life. Crime being ‘very high’ in the townships, it was ‘when’ rather than ‘if’ her dreams came true, that one female respondent in this class expressed her wish to move on. With the implied accusing finger (as suggested by her use of the word ‘this’) presumably pointing at Nyanga, the respondent was adamant she would ‘not’ stay in the area any longer than she had to.

5.5.9b(ii) Identity issues versus upward mobility

Two voices in particular came across very strongly on the issue of the possibility of respondents having to turn their backs on township life. Needless to say, these came from Grade 11E. Despite ‘not’ wanting to live in the township but rather ‘somewhere wealthy’ one of them acknowledged that ‘getting out of the township’ did not automatically translate into the township getting ‘out of [him]’. His strong sense of roots told him that township life would continue to live ‘within’ him wherever he went, it not being subject to geographical restrictions or limitation. The second respondent would have liked to be acknowledged as the man with ‘a big name’, and for this fact to culminate in him being ‘respected’ in his future. He was however determined ‘not’ to let this get to his head enough to cause him to ‘forget where [he had come] from’. Just so that his message would be clear he went on to follow the latter utterance with an emphatic ‘no’, a scenario which, through its use of double negation, becomes reminiscent of Black English within the American context (Labov 1998: 186).

According to the respondent in question he did ‘not plan on moving from (*EKASI*)’. To make his intention loud and clear he wrote the Xhosa-slanged version of the word ‘location’ in capital letters, in such a way that it stands out and boldly dominates the whole page of otherwise very small and almost shy hand-writing. Coincidentally, over and above the issues of identity with which the reader may associate this term, it also happens to be an affectionate and youthful rendition of the formal ‘*elokishini*’ (meaning ‘in the location’) which senior community members are most likely to use in similar circumstances. Having been born and grown up in the location the respondent maintained he would ‘always live there’. He was determined to not to be like

‘some people’ who, in his opinion, the minute they became ‘big shots’, immediately chose to forget where they had come from. According to the respondent these implied traitors tend to flee to the suburbs, ‘instead of improving or building [or ‘making’] a better place’ of the township. With each word that the respondent’s pen drags across the page with this particular utterance, drips a trail of sarcasm in its wake. As a result no one reading his essay could claim fuzziness about the respondent’s thoughts and feelings regarding the question of the suburbanization of the African mind.

The argument presented in the two paragraphs above presents the reader with a hint of the kind of tension that probably exists for some black upwardly mobile individuals. According to Bangeni and Kapp (2005), and Noguera (2003) these sometimes find themselves having to negotiate their identities in the face of strong opposing forces pulling them in different directions. One’s pocket being the biggest determinant of residential area in SA at the moment, below we explore the role played by cost in influencing respondents’ choices.

5.5.9b(iii) Area and cost

A respondent in Grade 11A dreamt of a home ‘somewhere wealthy and [definitely] not in the township’. The sentiments expressed here echo one of the guiding principles of the ANC as a political movement, about South Africa belonging to ‘all who live in it’. By appropriating spaces formerly denied the African race, these respondents satisfy the last part of this principle, in that the respondents’ actions could be said to be working ‘to abolish *apartheid*’ (“*Apartheid*”: 2007). In the not so distant past inscriptions like ‘*Geen blankes nie*’ (which is Afrikaans for ‘Europeans Only’), and others were common sightings in this country (McClennen 1990) in compliance with wishes expressed by the likes of Verwoerd (see par. 5.1). Other than these localized considerations, homes far away from home were to include residence ‘out of Cape Town’, ‘in Europe’, in the ‘USA’, etc. ‘Cost’ also being part of the suburban image, the self-made millionaire-to-be estimated that of his future ‘*Summer Greens*’-based home at ‘R5 000 000’. The houses described in the section seem to satisfy the concept of ‘a dream house’ which one respondent claimed would have to ‘suit’ the owners’ pocket.

5.5.9b(iv) The concept of a ‘home’

Two Grade 11A respondents seemed to be drawing a line between the concepts of a ‘house’ and a ‘home’. While both seemed to prefer ‘big’ houses, they also defined the latter in terms of a set of totally different criteria. Their future houses had to be ‘full’ of ‘children’s needs and wants’, and also ‘warm’. Embedded in the phrase about satisfying the children’s ‘needs and wants’ is the idea of individuals living to their heart’s desire, and their wanting for nothing. The concept of warmth, on the other hand, suggests a need of a higher order. In terms of this an individual could have all the material possessions in the world, but still lack warmth. True warmth can only come from meaningful relationships which one builds with the people that one surrounds oneself with, among others.

Over and above the descriptive words and phrases used above, some Grade 11A respondents, being more finicky about detail as they usually are, described their future houses in physical terms (i.e. shape or structure and size) as well.

5.5.9b(v) Structure and size of houses

In deciding what constituted suitable housing the respondents thought in terms of the shape, size, structure and future occupants. Of these only one respondent bothered to discuss the shape of his dream house. It is perhaps in line with the respondent's envisaged dream to emulate the late Tupac (see par. 5.5.6) one day in the future, that the shape of his 'family house' came about. In terms of this, the house was to assume the shape of a 'trophy'. Within the music industry of which Tupac was a legend, this kind of shape could be associated with that of some awards. It is possible that this is what motivated this kind of detail.

The size of the houses was by far the biggest concern for most, with the adjective 'big' and its comparative form (i.e. the 'biggest') being the operative words in many cases. For those who cared to give the specifics, the number of envisaged rooms ranged between 'seven' and 'sixty-eight'. Other structural specifications demanded that the house in question have 'three toilets', a 'computer room' (by which the would-be owner probably meant a 'study') with 'four computers'. Externally one house was to have a 'beautiful nice garden' at the back. It is perhaps with this vision in mind that one respondent used the concept of a mansion to refer to his future home.

To quote his exact words of the said respondent he saw himself 'living in a mensionable house' which seemingly only he as an 'international' basketball player would be able to 'afford on [his] salary'. The use of the word 'mensionable', whether the spelling thereof is deliberate or not, could be a play on words. As a pun the word would suggest both the size of the house (i.e. a sixty-eight roomed 'mansion'), and the impact it is expected to have on both passersby and onlookers (i.e. keeping their tongues wagging as in the one person 'mentioning' this incredible and newsworthy fact to the next person). This concept of a mensionable house calls to mind another concocted but relevant word, which according to the famous novelist Jackie Collins (as interviewed on 3Talk, SABC 2008), had been used by some critics to describe her own lack of proficiency in the English language. The word in question is 'unputdownable', a concept which seems to capture the spirit demonstrated by the respondent just cited above, and many others in this study. It is both this 'belief in himself' and the 'unflinching desire to succeed', which Onyeani identifies as the very essence of the 'capitalist nigger' he would like to see among black youth in the future (2000: 18).

5.5.9b(vi) Houses and their occupants

There were instances where house size was mentioned alongside the number of envisaged occupants. Those to be housed were mothers, children, younger 'brothers and sisters', nephews or nieces, spouses and dogs. The concerns about house size as expressed in this section of the current study relates to the issue of the influx of immigrants to this city (par. 1.3.2), and the fact of Cape Town buckling under this strain. In dealing with the huge challenge of accommodation, all that some Grade 11E respondents had to say on the matter of size was to express their aim to 'extend' the family home. Other than this a respondent in this class wanted her home 'big'.

5.5.10 Other material possessions or assets

The concept of an asset being by its nature a specialized kind of discourse, it did not appear to have found its way into the repertoire of the Grade 11E class. These respondents did not appear to be aware about other means of income generation outside houses, despite some of them apparently having internalized some aspects of the white homes where some of their parents were working or had worked. This fact demonstrates one of the disadvantages that come with being in the general stream. For those in the economic stream ‘assets’, like the plural form in which the words has been used, were to take different forms, shape, and sizes. One respondent thought she would buy ‘shares’, which she associated with the lucrative South African Airways (SAA) airline business. For two respondents nothing but the goose that lays the golden egg would do. These wanted assets in the ‘White House’ probably because of a commonly-held view of this as the power-house or engine of the American economy. Other ambitious plans included owning ‘a private Jet’, an ‘aeroplane’, ‘an island’ and ‘people’.

With stakes as high as has been demonstrated above, the challenges that the respondents will have to put up with can be expected to be just as steep. The study of successful adaptation being said to be integral to an understanding of the etiology, prevention and treatment of problems in development (Mastens *et al.* 1999: 143), I now focus on the kinds of obstacles which the respondents expect to find strewn on their path to success. More importantly for the concerns of this study, it is important that SA be helped to identify and understand some of the processes that avert or ameliorate psychopathology and foster desirable outcomes among children whose development is threatened (Mampane and Bouwers 2006: 445). The study now turns to the last section of the chapter, i.e. an exploration of the kinds of obstacles which the respondents anticipated, and how they planned to negotiate their way around these.

5.6 Respondents’ perceived obstacles

Schoon and Parsons (2002: 260) enumerate three broad sets of variables which, though operating as protective factors, they claim may impede or halt the impact of adverse experiences, while enabling individuals to fully develop their resources. These are:

- Attributes of the children themselves,
- Characteristics of their families, and
- Aspects of the wider social context.

From the respondents’ point of view three different kinds of possible obstacles were identified. Though phrased differently from findings from the Schoon and Parson’s study as referred to above (2002: 260), the two studies seem to be speaking basically the same language. For the purposes of the current study factors identified by the respondents were the internal (i.e. the self), the external (e.g. others) and the inevitable (e.g. changes in their circumstances, injury, death, etc.).

5.6.1 The Self

The respondents in this study generally do not appear to be in the habit of playing victim. Quite a few of them admitted, objectively and insightfully so, that certain actions or failure to act in conducive ways on their part, could help realize their worst 'fears'. A Grade 11E respondent identified 'not concentrating' on what one was doing as having the potential to confine one to 'wannabe' status. What this self-destructing practice was seen to result in was one not actually realizing their goals (i.e. becoming 'something' or 'someone' in life) in life. Not studying well for matric, concentrating on life 'outside', 'not' rising to their dream or standing up for their rights were all seen as having the effect of preventing respondents from achieving in the future.

Strong images were also associated with 'drugs' and 'alcohol' abuse, this deadly combination being seen as having the potential to 'take [respondents] down'. The point about the possible effects of drugs and alcohol was reiterated by another respondent. According to the latter respondent these were said to have the effect of making their victims 'slip', 'fall', and finally to 'miss the call'. In terms of this reckoning the resultant 'DrugAholc mind' was seen as denying its owner the ability to 'explore', as there would eventually be 'nothing out there' for the individual in question.

From a Grade 11A point of view, one equated 'not' working hard enough with 'not' living up to his dream. Aware of the high stakes associated with 'international' standards, the aspiring basketball player who wished to play for the 'USA' acknowledged he would have to be the cream of the crop if he was to get this kind of recognition. He was modest enough to acknowledge, that even within 'South Africa' he was definitely 'not the only one' playing the sport, let alone 'the best of them all'. The objective, sober and mature tone reflected above in my opinion marks the essence of good sportsmanship, i.e. that the respondent will know when he is beaten and accept defeat with grace. Nothing about this attitude suggests a lesser degree of resilience or defeatist attitude. In my opinion this frees up the respondent in question, so that he may start exploring other worthwhile avenues.

5.6.2 External factors

External factors considered to be just as detrimental included concerns to do with money and what seems to be the impact of malevolent others. In this sub-category money was by far the biggest obstacle anticipated for the future. Lack thereof being a fact of the respondents' current lives, respondents did not have to stretch their imagination in order to factor this in. For related sentiments the reader is referred to par. 1.3.5 above where I explore the issue of the gate-keeping role of poverty. For the moment let us explore the issue of finance in greater depth.

5.6.2a Finance

If the reader subscribes to the idea of there being no fate worse than death let them consider the situation of one Grade 11A respondent in this study who, though physically alive, could be considered very dead in other respects. 'Once in grade 12' this respondent intended to apply 'for a bursary'. 'If' she did not get the bursary she captured the would-be situation as in her future dropping 'down' (see also par. 5.1.2 above in this regard). She reiterated this idea of her plans going down twice in a single sentence. By so doing she brings to my mind, a male respondent

from my pilot project (Ntete 2007), who had been faced with the same predicament, and using similar words to describe his situation.

According to the respondent in question, 'this guy Poverty' had the effect of seeing to his dreams going 'down the drain'. The impression given is that of someone being pulled down the stream into the drain himself, and not being able to resist this overwhelmingly strong current. The respondent in question actually dedicated about 40% of his essay space to talk about the negative impact that poverty had had in his life. That he even personifies the concept is telling in itself. The female respondent in the current study does not appear to be as defeatist as the male counterpart referred to here. She nonetheless based her future on a shaky foundation of 'ifs' rather than 'whens'. In terms of this 'if' she did 'not' get money for university she planned to do a 'computer' course. With this she would 'at least' earn a salary or wages that she anticipated would be 'better' and definitely 'more' than that of 'domestic' working women in general. That this respondent was entertaining the idea of this computer course suggests someone who is not ready to give up entirely on her dream to lead a life better than the less savoury one she grew up in as provided for by her domestic servant mother. The situation captured here seems to capture Evans' idea of 'frustrated agency' (2007). This is something akin to Landis *et al.*'s concept of 'active coping' (2007). Both notions appear to capture a way of thinking about a problem, or a behavioural attempt to deal directly with problems one encounters. Had the respondent in question explicitly expressed thoughts about the computer course in terms of a short detour that would ultimately somersault her back to her original track (i.e. attaining a university education), this would have cast her in an even more agentic mode.

Lack of 'money' as described by one Grade 11E respondent is something which has the potential to 'destroy' one's life, 'stop' one from achieving one's goal (with this point being repeated twice) and to 'let [one] down' in terms of achieving one's dreams. The general sentiment around money's incapacitating effect was that one could 'not' go to university, study further, finish studies, 'achieve dreams', nor solve one's problems. Neither could one's dreams succeed 'without' it. One respondent whose parents were unemployed was particularly concerned about a younger brother who was said to 'also' need money for school. According to this respondent his parents were looking up to him to 'finish matric and get work'. He captured his predicament with a phrase about his 'dream [being] let down' by 'this disadvantage'. On this point the reader is referred to par. 5.3.4.1 where the plight of some first borne children is discussed.

The kinds of problems and their anticipated impact as discussed above appear to be in line with Winfield's findings with regard to the concept of resilience (1994). In terms of this a student may be resilient at certain critical moments but 'not' at others. The latter was seen as being a function of the circumstances surrounding the event or moment in question. Neither are the sentiments expressed by these respondents unique to them within the SA context. In terms of a recent study reported upon by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), 'lack of finances' was held accountable for a 'shocking 60%' dropout rate at universities in this country (Naidoo 2008: 13).

Poverty having always had the final word in most of the homes in the study, only one respondent in the Grade 11E class dared to talk back to this phenomenon. Perhaps this kind of reaction is to be expected. This unique respondent contemplated the prospect of a scholarship as a way around this specific hurdle. In the economically inclined new South Africa which is presently grappling

with the challenge of a brain drain and skills shortage, most bursary offers are geared more to helping those specializing in numbers (e.g. actuarial sciences, economics, mathematics, etc.). An education trust just recently set up by the highest authority in this land (i.e. President Mbeki), which operates under the title of the 'Thabo Mbeki Education Trust', is said to have been created with an aim to provide for tertiary students in the fields of 'science', 'technology', and 'economics' (Mbeki 2007). This again leaves those doing history out in the cold.

5.6.2b The malevolent others

President Mbeki's voice as cited above is evidently one of many spurring Grade 11A respondents on from behind. Because of this these respondents dismissed the idea of malevolent others with only one sentence. The ill-wishing ones who take up a lot of essay space among some of the Grade 11E essays, were simply described in this case as those 'not' encouraging or wanting the respondents in question to be what they wanted to be. They were further described as also using what one respondent referred to as 'witch medicines' in the process.

Like their History teacher whose opinion it was that the government wanted to stifle the historical consciousness and voice while using Mathematics to create robots, Grade 11E respondents also had a mouthful to say on the issue of malevolent others. This is probably with good reason too, if one considers the strong tide they are wading against. For this group of respondents the theme of 'jealousy' came up quite a number of times with regard to this aspect of the study. There was general concern over those who were perceived as 'not' wanting to see others succeed or achieve their goals. It was anticipated that the culprits would generally not be happy with the progress that the victims will have made or would still be making in ten years' time. Actions expected of the culprits in their attempts to enforce negative results were seen as including the use of 'witch-craft' or consulting '*sangomas*' (i.e. witch-doctors), to ensure that their would-be victims would not achieve.

Depending on the nature of the achievement envisaged or activity being carried out on the part of the would-be victim, the culprits were captured as wearing different masks. Some were 'evil mothers' also defined in the essay in question through the de-gendered concept of '*abathakathi*' i.e. those practising witch-craft. Despite the inclusivity that this concept encompasses as used in this particular context, the practice of witchcraft in the African culture is generally associated with the feminine gender. In terms of this people are more likely to be suspicious of women than they are of men, especially when it comes to challenges or illnesses of the indeterminate kind.

Other enemies were seen as coming in the form of 'thugs' and the 'cops'. The latter group of people were seen as an 'obvious' obstacle by the respondent who had decided well in advance, that he would fall on 'the other side of the law'. In his defense he was quick to point out that he was 'not' necessarily encouraging gangs, other than to register the fact that he hated cops and the law. In his opinion the two gave 'bad people more rights' than they did the 'good'. Having established this gap in the country's legal system, this self-proclaimed outlaw appeared to be using it to his personal advantage. Determined to 'overcome', 'not' 'even' the cops were to stand a chance against him. Given the high nature of the stakes (as suggested by the cop-fighter's reference to his envisaged 'big wonderful success' which he hoped he would have accumulated by then), the phrase 'not even' (used separately as individual words in the essay being cited

above), suggests that this individual respondent might actually be prepared to fight fire with fire if and when the need for him to do so were to arise.

In a much calmer tone of voice, some parents' unemployed status was also identified as 'not' making it easy for the respondent in question, to get the money to go to university. The tone captured here in no way implies giving up on the part of the respondent concerned. Rather the plan was to take a detour. As soon as the respondent finished his matric, he planned on 'going to work' for a period of a 'year'. With the money accumulated in this way the respondent hoped to go to university. It is perhaps the respondent's implied recognition of the English expression 'time wasted never returns' which causes him to miscalculate. In his words his 'problem' with the planned detour was the fact that the year he would have spent working could 'never' be retrieved. Concerns about wasted time aside, within the South African context, it would surely take far more than a year's worth of a matric dropout's savings (especially one who has other responsibilities like a younger brother to put through school, probably among many others), to put a student through tertiary education. Unless fate were to intervene in the respondent's favour, his plan could be said to be a half-baked one.

5.6.3 Fate

The Random House Webster's College dictionary defines the concept of fate as 'the universal principle or ultimate agency by which the order of things is presumably prescribed'. This definition aptly captures these respondents' sentiments around the unpredictability of life, particularly the life of those living in Nyanga. According to one Grade 11E respondent whose utterance, 'You don't know that you are going to finish school' I dare not break up. In terms of this 'something bad' could happen either to the individual respondent, or their parents. One less threatening example cited in support of concerns with the latter, was that of parents possibly 'losing their jobs'. This was seen as having the potential to force one 'to drop school', in favour of working for one's 'family'.

In line with the concern about the unforeseeable affecting the self, the Grade 11A future basketball player acknowledged the fact about life being by its very nature what he defined as 'obstacled'. (This, co-incidentally is the same respondent who had coined the word 'mensionable' as referred to in par. 5.5.9b(v) above). Being a vulnerable member of the human species himself, he did not think he would be an exception to this rule of nature. In line with this he anticipated possible 'injuries' which could affect his 'knee'. Depending on the seriousness of the injury, he foresaw the doctor telling him to 'stop playing'. In terms of this the worst case scenario could see to him being 'forced to cut' off his leg.

In the event of even more serious circumstances, as in the event of parents 'dying', one respondent felt he would be 'nothing without them', as everything was said to cost 'too much money'. In terms of this there would be 'no one' to look after him, resulting in him 'just' having 'to drop everything' and having to find 'any job' that would sustain him. Desperate times generally being said to call for desperate measures, in the kinds of circumstances described above, 'any kind of money' would do for the respondent concerned. The prospect of a mother's 'death' or that of yet another respondent, was seen as having the potential to render the respondent's situation 'impossible'. In an almost resigned tone that sounded like the respondent had made peace with this fact of life, the respondent who had initially seen 'no' other possible

obstacles that could ‘stop [him] other than death itself’, grudgingly admitted there was ‘no running away’ from death.

Seemingly acknowledging death as a fact of life ‘affecting all of us’ at some point in our lives (as Africans are known to reiterate when consoling the bereaved), another respondent pictured himself ‘maybe’ dying, and ‘very soon’ at that. This was to be from a ‘heart attack’. The remark made by this respondent here would be funny if it did not have this sad ring to it. Here is a teenage respondent who, of the wide range of possible mass-killers to have been recorded in the SA history of crime statistics as a whole (e.g. familial kidnappings, senseless murders, botched hi-jackings, armed robberies, crippling cash in transit heists, the rampant HIV/AIDS pandemic, etc.) predicted his death would somehow come about as a result of a heart attack. This, I think is a small indication of just the invisible scars that these respondents bear inside. Most of these children’s problems, as suggested in this study are hidden from the naked eye, as suggested by the concept of the ‘heart’.

Save for the incident where respondents talked about his teacher actually beating him up (par. 4.3.2.2) above, ‘assault’ and ‘rape’ (par. 4.3.5.7) and also vague references to suffering as scattered here and there in this study, none of the respondents talk about abuse of the physical kind (at least not openly so). This, however does not mean we should rule out the possibility of this happening. What all of these testify to are the main concerns of this study as addressed in par 2.2.1 above. This paragraph explains the critical relevance of CDA skills for teachers working in neighbourhoods like Nyanga.

The graphic or rather blunt fashion in which these respondents confront issues in this specific section of the study; is another interesting dimension. African people generally (at least as the ones I have seen in my life-time which was double the age of most the respondents at the time of this study) are not the sort to talk so freely about topics of this kind (i.e. grave). In some households talk about death, to cite an example, would be found extremely disturbing if not ‘inviting trouble’, unless the fact of someone already being on the deathbed was thought to be warranting this. The matter of fact approach adopted here (though it still bears traces of superstitious beliefs) points to a fearless generation which is not afraid to confront issues head-on. Whether or not this is a function of de-sensitizing environments or something else is not clear at the moment. Further research into this matter could help explain this phenomenon. It does however seem to be a trend among some of the respondents in the current study, to take from their surroundings only what they consider useful, while discarding the rest.

One example in support of this would be the respondent who focused on the fact of her asthmatic aunt having been ‘clever’ rather than the fact of the latter having suffered from asthma. The same respondent again finds motivation in the fact about her father residing in a ‘suburb’, and she overlooks the fact of the man’s absence in her life (par. 4.3.1.1). In this fashion she uses the positive attributes from these examples to shape her own future. It is on the basis of these admirable qualities that these respondents could be argued to be resisting even the laws of nature in some instances. Consider as another example in this regard the snowman mentality discussed in par. 5.3.3.1a above. It is a fact that people have no choice in deciding which families they are born into. By prescribing how the respondents’ future family members should look and behave, the latter seem to be suggesting that one does have the ability to choose which hereditary genes to give in to, and which ones to suppress and/or ignore.

While the concept of ‘self efficacy’ as proposed by Schmitt-Rodermund and Vondracek (2002: 70) captures some of these respondents’ ‘whatever happens I’m sure I will find a way to cope with the situation’ attitude, they also seemed to acknowledge the unshakable hand of God in deciding their destiny. There also seemed to be an immense sense of belief in His ability to turn things around for them. As an example one respondent cited his personal motto as saying ‘where the[re] is love the[re] is God, where the[re] is God there is everything’. In line with this he ‘put God before [himself] every night and day’, and claimed to live his life positively in the knowledge that ‘everything will be A-Okay’.



Chapter 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

In contrast to other comparative case studies which tend to be cross-national, cross-cultural, longitudinal, etc.; the kind of study carried out here is undeniably limited to one set of a political, economic, cultural, historical and geographical context. As Bradshaw and Wallace argue, without detailed single-country studies like this one, developing countries in particular, of which South Africa is an example, would have no option other than to advance first-world (i.e. largely Anglo-American) theoretical arguments that are sometimes inappropriate, outdated or totally irrelevant to their own specific regions. Having been formulated in advanced Western societies, many of the theories in question are said to sometimes reflect an often unintended ethnocentric bias against less studied regions (1991: 155).

The preliminary findings suggested by this study, despite their not being generalizable across contexts, do however present researchers working within the South African context with a special and unique set of circumstances which warrants intensive study. If it is not a theory of empowerment or enablement that we can get out of this study, then the hypotheses generated here should generate new beginnings toward the development of such a theory, or at least new branches of existing theory (e.g. the theory of resilience). In light of the above an exploratory study of this nature could then be used alongside many relevant others, to spearhead township-based research in future. It is in their ability to inform generality while explaining uniqueness (Bradshaw and Wallace 1991: 154), that case studies like this one make their contribution to research.

In the preceding chapters of this thesis I raised my concern over the avaricious so-called poverty 'cycle' (Banda in press) or 'trap' (Carter and May 2001) which, as suggested by these two concepts, is presented as an inescapable reality which continues to ensnare many a working class black South African, both old and young. The phenomenon appears to be a product of a combination of various factors, among these the fact of this country's education system perpetuating an unequal labour system, the counter-productive reality of township life in general, particularly for those attempting to make something of their lives; the resultant poor educational performance, etc. Attention has also been directed to a mental form of poverty, a phenomenon I liken to Keiffer's notion of 'social impotence' (1984: 16). The phenomenon in question is the poverty of the mind. Depending on the nature of the individual in question, the latter appears to assume different forms and proportions. At its worst this condition has robbed many township learners of a sense of mission and vision, as well as the will to succeed in life, among others. In other instances the situation appears to have led to some respondents developing a sense of helplessness (or perhaps a coping mechanism), which has culminated in them identifying more with what they perceive to be the more successful race (i.e. the white race). Writing from within an American context Parham (1999: 795)

describes the latter phenomenon as a dilemma black people are confronted with. This race is said to be trying to maintain a sense of cultural identity, in a world which neither supports nor affirms their humanity as people. In terms of this reckoning black people have been socialized and conditioned to seek approval and validation from their white counterparts, with this being seen by some black people as necessitating the adoption of specific modes of thinking, feeling, behaviours and language usage that conform to a Eurocentric standard.

Having implemented CDA, which is generally perceived to be an effective research tool for studies dealing with issues of empowerment and/or disempowerment, this study concludes by suggesting that things could be different for the supposedly under-achieving township schools and all the relevant stakeholders within the South African context. By deconstructing the categories suggested by its data, the current study also illustrates how customary ways of categorizing and ordering phenomena are reified and interest-driven, rather than simple reflections of what is generally thought of as being reality. By virtue of the study revealing the constructed nature of psychological phenomena, it has created a space for making available alternatives to what has been considered psychological common sense by some (Willig 1999).

The main thrust of this chapter is to suggest ways and means by which the learners referred to above, together with all the other relevant stakeholders (particularly those constituting the working class), could be empowered to tackle the challenge of poor educational attainment, arming themselves against poverty. On the basis of the findings of a study that was carried out by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) the WCP was declared the best place 'if' one had money, but 'rough' on those who do not (Boyle May 4, 2008: 8). This study, ranked the nine provinces in SA using categories relating to the economy, education, health, living conditions and crime. The respondents in the current study falling under the rough end of the scale, the idea is to dislodge at least one of the chains of the so-called poverty cycle, which has the black masses in an unflinching and tight grip.

Following the introductory note just concluded therefore this chapter will next cover three distinct and broad sections, each with its own relevant subcategories. These three main categories are the conclusions, recommendations and the implementation process. The conclusions section tightens up the salient points brought up by the current study with the aim of plotting what it is that needs to happen in order to take the study to the next level (i.e. the recommendations). The chapter then finally ends with decisive steps which could be modified to fit the specific context within the implementation process.

6.2 Conclusions

While psychologists are said to conceive of the notion of identity as a natural feature of human development, sociologists on the other hand appear to have long recognized that identities, like social roles, can be imposed on individuals through various socialization processes (Noguera 2002, Parham 1999). That the individual can resist, subvert and react against the cultural and structural forces which shape social identity, as suggested by the

respondents in this study, compels us to recognize that individual choice or agency plays a role in the way identities are constructed.

The current study has attempted to show how particular discourses might have an impact on the kind of identity that a learner might succumb to or revolt against. The following are some examples of how these ideologies are subtly communicated or acted out in the context under study:

- Within the low SES home environment (e.g. through innocent naming practices, e.g. some children being labeled ‘aloof’ because they prefer reading to playing with others; young girls in particular in some instances being told the home of woman is in the kitchen, and that education will get them nowhere; older siblings or brighter children from the neighbourhood always being held up as some measure of perfection that the younger learners must rise up to or emulate, etc.);
- the school setting (e.g. through streaming practices, labeling, what Kozol (2005) calls the ‘soft bigotry of low expectation’ as practiced by some teachers, the attention and preferential treatment given to some classes and not others, etc.);
- peer pressure (e.g. the conflict and sense of guilt experienced by some of the respondents in this study over their need for upward mobility, and the sense that this may be viewed as selling out; the tendency among some school going children to isolate and make life difficult for those who do well in class, etc.);
- the community (e.g. ‘folk theories’ which mainly instill a sense of inferiority among members of the black community, while mostly presenting the white community as superior);
- the media (e.g. the forever poor matriculation results which portray both township teachers and learners as incompetent while overlooking the faults within the system itself; the uncomplimentary acting roles given to black figures as either all brawn and no brains and therefore incapable of serious thought and action, or alternatively portraying black people as criminals, outlaws, comedians, etc.);
- the system (e.g. derogatory labeling like the notion of a ‘*kaffir*’ that was used in *apartheid* times, literature which advances the idea that black people are genetically inferior when compared to their white counterparts, distortions and inaccuracies in the content of history courses which tend to portray African heroes as barbarian among others, projects like the Thabo Mbeki Trust which, though well-intended however serve to elevate certain courses above others, among others), etc.

Malhotra *et al.*’s cautionary message, about legal statuses sometimes having no significant influence on practice rings true of the SA situation (2002: 8). In this black governed country resources (political, social, economic), which are considered critical to the process of empowerment in other countries, have not worked to promote the cause of

the needy. The current study confirms the SA situation as one which demands of the working class youths not only that they should develop thick skulls, but also to see beyond the confines of their presently limiting environments, if they are to survive. This is exactly why SA needs strategies to develop both resilient and empowered citizens.

6.2.1 Explanations for disempowerment

Beyond individual discourses, the study concludes that various other socio-economic factors form a backdrop to an individual's discourses of disempowerment or empowerment. The current study has helped establish the following pointers with regard to these:

- Regardless of whether one chooses to approach the question of under-achievement from a structuralist or culturalist orientation, poverty means the absence of money. As such the phenomenon does have a debilitating and disempowering impact on its victims (Keiffer 1984, Lord and Hutchison 1993, Ryan 1971, etc.);
- The primary effect of poverty, race and family background is not on the children, but rather on the teacher who has been led to expect poorer performance from black and poor children. As far as Ryan is concerned, it is the expectations of the teacher that are a major determinant of children's performances (1971: 53);
- Contrary to theories which somehow link the disabilities experienced by under-achieving township learners with this being the product of skin colour or some biological disorder (Mishlove n.d., Labov 1972, Noguera 2002); it is environmental factors, rather than any genetic deficit, which is said to explain the poor educational performance of lower SES children (Labov 1972, Olim 1970).
- Economically depressed areas and negative environmental factors are said to greatly increase the multiplier effect on risk variables (Mampane and Bouwers 2006, Olim 1970), while also outweighing the damage inflicted by exposure to drugs, respectively (Noguera 2002);
- Despite the ability to generally perform better than their more 'vulnerable' counterparts, resilient learners from socially disadvantaged backgrounds nonetheless do 'not' achieve to the same levels as the socially advantaged children (Schoon and Parsons 2004);
- Unless something is done to level the playing field from an early age, as suggested by the preceding point, socially disadvantaged learners have already 'lost out' in comparison to their more privileged peers (Schoon and Parsons 2002: 267).

- Otherwise, given better educational opportunity and a more supportive environment which eliminates some of the psychological drawbacks, any child can do very well (Mishlove n.d.).

The points elucidated above are not an attempt to deny the reality of under-performance among township or rural schools for that matter. Indeed what they do is provide a contextual frame which is never alluded to when poor matriculation results are bandied about at the end of each academic year in SA. It is within the frame of the challenges raised in this study, that poor educational attainment has to be viewed within the SA context. The points have also provided an insightful overview of some of the steps countries like SA could learn from if they are to effectively tackle the challenge of educational attainment. These are however general observations, with most of the authors referred to here having written from a context different in a number of ways from the SA one.

I found this to be indeed the case in 2005, when I was taken on a tour to some supposedly 'poor' high schools in and around the Hartford area (MA, USA) in 2005. In my eyes one of the schools in particular looked more like a university than a high school, let alone a supposedly 'poor' one. For the current study to meet the promise it has made the reader in par. 6.1 above therefore, i.e. to inform generality while explaining uniqueness, teachers from ZWHS are given an opportunity to present an insider's perspective on some of the challenges facing them, the steps they take to circumvent these, and to say what it is they wish could happen to improve the township teaching situation.

6.2.2 Informing generality while explaining uniqueness

It being one of the main preoccupations of CDA, to give voice to the silenced, the following concerns expressed by ZWHS teachers take us through some of the challenges involved in the teaching of some but not all of the matric subjects being done in this school (i.e. isiXhosa, Afrikaans, English, Biology, Physical Science, and Mathematics). This exercise allows us a glimpse into some of the possible causes of poor educational attainment, in the process providing insights which policy makers would do well to take into account as they go about their work of formulating policy. The other benefit that comes from this exercise is that it illustrates how different things could be if teachers and learners were to be consulted on issues affecting not only their daily lives, but also the future of the latter as well. These are after all the only people with first hand experience of what it means to teach and learn within the SA township environment. For a fuller exposition of some of these challenges the reader is referred to Appendix C. What the following paragraphs will do is briefly touch upon some of the salient points as raised by the discussion.

Among the lessons gleaned from this discussion, for example, is the interconnectedness between and among subjects. Who would have thought Mathematics (a content subject considered by many as typically white) could give learners better access to Xhosa (a language that is perceived to be strictly black), for example? According to the Biology teacher the same Mathematics was said to make the more demanding higher grade (HG)

version of this paper less threatening, in that the graphs that Mathematics learners do were said to help with the interpretation of data-based Biology examinations. From this point alone we become more aware of some of the advantages enjoyed by those in the science stream (Grade 11A in this case), as ‘everyday life’ is further said to require ‘basic skills of counting’. Learners in the general stream (i.e. Grade 11E) on the other hand, it would appear, are being left out in the cold. What the situation seems to suggest is that regardless of which stream learners follow, they all need to have access to some form of Mathematics or the other, otherwise they are doomed. That these supposedly incompetent township teachers are able to make these kinds of connections shows the degree to which policy-makers are missing out on opportunities for what could have been a collaborative and mutually beneficial endeavour.

Brought together like this, teachers could even come up with useful tips on how to deal with negative attitudes toward certain subjects (which do not make things any easier for the learners concerned in any case), with advice from teachers like the Afrikaans teacher paving the way to the exploration of what is possible. All the things these teachers had to say about their respective subjects could be communicated to learners such that it is clear to learners how they could manipulate the system to their own benefit in the end. What the Afrikaans teaching example also illustrates is the fact that contrary to the departmental perception that order always translates into productivity, this is not always the case. In line with this teaching sometimes does need be unconventional. The latter is a phenomenon that the History teacher in the current study qualified as ‘pedagogic noise’, and which he described as ‘fruitful’. The study conducted by Prinsloo and Stein 2004 (as referred to from time to time in the current study) speaks to the remark made by these high school teachers. This study shows the counter-productive potential of teachers who think in strict, rigid and disciplinary terms.

The examples given in this section provide a good illustration of what the concept of context-specificity (see par. 3.7.1 above) would mean within the SA township scenario. The isiXhosa teacher (see Appendix C below) actually cites what she calls learners’ ‘urban upbringing’ and ‘different home backgrounds’ as making it difficult for her to penetrate her learners. In terms of the few examples given above one can see some of the reasons why the SA curriculum may be one size bigger or two sizes smaller for some teaching contexts in this country. The good thing is ZWHS teachers demonstrate how other township schools could also fine-tune their teaching to suit their unique teaching circumstances.

One finds traces of the concept of context-specificity at work as ZWHS teachers talk about how they link up sections deemed to belong together in their otherwise scattered syllabi (e.g. in isiXhosa and Biology). Some own up to having overlooked departmental prescription, and tapped into those aspects of the Bantu Education deemed to have been helpful to them during their own childhood, etc. When recommendations are made in the section which flows from this one therefore, these will take stock of contributions from the literature, infusing these with some of the points raised by the respondents in the current study.

For engagement with some of the issues confronting township schools in SA the reader is referred to Appendices A, B and C where parents, learners and teachers respectively all lift the lid on certain aspects of their lives, with those aspects inadvertently spilling over to cripple the former's life-chances. I have to make it clear at this point that the challenges exposed in this section of the thesis are just a tip of the iceberg.

To sum up on challenges affecting teachers as discussed in Appendix C, the following are some of the challenges teachers associate with their respective subjects:

- attitudes to the subject (i.e. fear, hatred, perceived benefit or lack thereof as associated with subject in question, etc.);
- the subject (i.e. the language of instruction, content, the teaching thereof, etc.);
- the conditions under which they teach (i.e. lack of facilities, large numbers, etc.);
- their own challenges as teachers (e.g. aspects that they are not comfortable with, irresponsible teachers who take advantage of the fact that they are not under the matriculation spotlight, etc.);
- learner-related challenges (e.g. those who do not read, prioritize some subjects over others, etc.);
- policy and/or syllabus issues (e.g. restrictions which rob teachers of autonomy to do what they know is best for their circumstances);
- homes (i.e. those which do not seem to realize they have a part to play in the education of their children); etc.

In its conclusion this study problematizes the concept of 'under-achievement' by bringing to the reader's attention to some very important points.

6.2.3 The concept of 'under-achievement' problematized

Before SA can start pointing fingers the following points put things in perspective:

- Children are said not to start out as bad readers but rather as non-readers (Mishlove: n. d.). In terms of this schools are accused of planting and reinforcing the idea that children cannot read in their mind, by for example moving children to special groups with labels like 'the turtles' or the '*Sivuyile*' class in the context of the current study, with this being reinforced and redeveloped every year (Labov 1972, Noguera 2002). A study conducted by Prinsloo and Stein (2004) within the SA contexts suggests some of our pre-school teachers may be guilty of making the literacy acquisition environment an intolerable one;
- Theories around 'verbal deficit' have been described as nothing more than attempts to account for differential educational attainment. It has been suggested that children who pass through an educational system have always reached very different levels of attainment, as measured by the criteria in general use at the specific point in time (Gordon 1981: 16);

- The effect of poverty, race and family background can be observed to a small extent in the minds of the children but to a large extent in classroom interactions, which ultimately produce a falling off of academic performance (William 1970);
- The achievement gap between the haves and have not's is therefore nothing else but a reflection of the socio-economic gap, the health gap and the gap in opportunity.
- Even more important is the assertion, that with the appropriate disposition children succeed despite their circumstances (Noguera 2003b);
- While the concept of under-achievement has come to be used synonymously with black high schools within the South African context, elsewhere this concept has been used within the parameters of privilege, to distinguish between two groups of advantaged learners. In terms of this the one group, despite conducive exposure, was found to display above average competence when compared to the other. It is within this context of exposure that the groups got to be labeled as 'multiple advantaged' and 'under-achievers' (Schoon and Parsons 2002: 264) respectively;
- Rather than speak of 'under-achievement' when referring to the performance levels of disadvantaged learners within the South African context, this study suggests we would much rather be talking about their 'mis-education' (Ryan 1971: 4). Also, given the wanting kind of exposure that many township learners are fed on beginning with their preschool education (Prinsloo and Stein 2004), South Africans should be talking more about children who have been mis-served and under-exposed instead of blaming the victims of under-achievement (Ryan 1971), etc.

Now that the parameters have been set, and some degree of clarity established with regard to the pertinent issues in the SA education system, the study can now move on to the next level, that of making recommendations. Given the point registered by Pilisuk and Parks (2002: 137) above (i.e. par. 6.2), and Keiffer (1984: 16) elsewhere in this study, about the futility of recommendations which attend to the individual while ignoring the family, or those which foreground the family while overlooking the community, this study acknowledges the various roles that all the relevant stakeholders could play in bringing about positive change.

6.3 Recommendations

By now it has been established beyond any reasonable doubt that poverty is by far the biggest enemy where the black working class in South Africa is concerned. The hard evidence provided by the teachers above testifies to the fact of this phenomenon being institutionalized in the very education system which is supposed to ward it off in this country. Heeding Christie's (2007) call to avoid the euphemism of a country in 'transition', ours as SA citizens is to face up to the reality of poverty as a factor that we

are going to live with for some time as suggested by Carter (2001), Taylor, (2007), etc. The question now becomes ‘what are we doing about the situation’?

6.3.1 The notion of ‘empowerment’

Keiffer (1984: 28) suggests there is not always much one can do to substantially alleviate the most pervasive and painful of social inequities. He suggests one could however work to help others develop the capacities and resources needed for them to act more efficaciously on their own. In terms of this reckoning, we must not seek to do for others what they must do for themselves. Literature around the notion of empowerment (e.g. Keiffer 1984, Lord and Hutchison 1993, Rappaport 1995, etc.) suggests this is a goal South Africa could be working to realize; one which according to Keiffer is a necessary long term process of learning, development and a continuing construction of a multi-dimensional participatory competence. In terms of this, the process encompasses both cognitive and behavioural change (1984: 9).

In line with one of the objectives of this study, i.e. educational reform in South Africa Winfield proposes four major areas of intervention that should be targeted by those wishing to bring about positive change in the kinds of circumstances described in this study (1991: 13). These are the:

- community,
- school,
- policy, and
- the classroom.



Having seen from the calibre of the respondents in this study the potential to succeed despite limitations, it would be a gross mistake on my part, to downplay the significance of personal agency in the given circumstances. As has already been indicated in par. 6.2 above, the home environment is also where children experience the basics of education, hence the need to add two areas of intervention to the ones proposed by Winfield (1991: 13) above. These have to do with:

- individual learners themselves, and
- the family.

6.3.1.a The role of the family

In line with the discussion provided in par. 2.10 above, which details some aspects regarding the upbringing and socialization of some African children, the current study now takes a close-up shot of the typical black working class home, to suggest ways in which things could be improved for the better than they presently are for this sector of the South African population.

To effect positive change:

- ‘Poor’ parents could use the money spent on frivolous things (e.g. the beautiful and expensive Christmas clothes) on more worthwhile purchases (like school uniform, books, school fees, educational tours and toys, etc.). Instead of unnecessary birthday gifts in the form of cell-phones and others, which some parents tend to buy for all the wrong reasons (e.g. mimicking those who can afford the luxury, to ‘show’ an unsupportive father that the mother can manage without his financial assistance, etc.) a gift of a book could be more beneficial to children in the long run;
- Some employers would be glad to help out if they knew how. Over and above educational toys and games parents, particularly those who provide domestic help (because they have direct contact with their employers), for example, could ask their employers for reading material which the former no longer has use for. This could be in the form of children’s books, magazines, newspapers; etc. To someone who has not read about a certain event (i.e. in the case of newspaper articles), the event in question will always be news. One of the English teachers at ZWHS is reaping the fruits of having been made into a laughing stock in her childhood. This was because her mother and her employer had opted to buy her books instead of clothes on her birthdays.
- Some working class parents have generally been found to be excessively strict when it comes to their children (Shumow *et al.* 1998). Carefully monitoring children’s activity may have adverse effects on the few children who spend valuable time reading when they should be out there playing with other children, as far as most parents are concerned.
- In some homes book contents are generally viewed with suspicion and/or hostility, books generally being associated with laziness as well as anti-social behaviour. Although the idea is not to encourage the reading of pornographic material, when it comes to the choice of reading material, parents need to be made aware of the crucial role of ‘interest’ in reading, if this valuable exercise is to be made into an enjoyable experience and a lifelong activity.
- It is this culture of reading which, by improving literacy levels, inevitably demystifies the language of academic books later in the children’s lives, thereby improving their life chances in the process. This role is something the English teacher (i.e. par.6.2.2c above) would have loved the home to be made aware of. According to the teacher in question the home has ‘just as much responsibility’ as the school in the education of the child;
- Shumow *et al.*’s study on parenting styles among low income families found greater parental harshness to be associated with lower family income, less parental education, single parenthood, maternal unemployment, etc. These authors suggest it is firm-responsive rather than authoritative homes whose children achieve academically. (Consider as an example the young male learner whose parents would refuse to buy him school uniform, up until the point where one of

his teachers would intervene). Parents who were warm, monitored their children's time use and set clear standards for academic achievement, on the other hand were associated with academically achieving children (1988: 485);

- Working class parents need to be made aware of the need to invest in the education of their children from an early age. They have to be made aware of the difference between a child-minding facility and a properly functioning preschool facility. In line with this parents need to be as demanding as their middle class counterparts where the educational standards of their children are being compromised (Noguera 2003a);
- For this to happen under-educated parents, mothers in particular would do well to enroll in adult education classes. In terms of this mothers' educational level has been found to be the strongest predictor of how children will do at school as the former tend to be their children's primary educators. Not only would this benefit them in their individual capacity but it would also make it possible for them to help their children with schoolwork (Noguera 2003b). Most parents in the current study had expressed regret at not having been able to pursue an education when they were younger (see Appendix D below);
- In big cities like CT which are faced with the challenge of bumper to bumper afternoon traffic, adult education facilities could be provided in the proximity of the workplace, to counteract fatigue being cited as a legitimate reason why working parents cannot attend late evening classes. To this end employers could be persuaded to sacrifice at least a few hours of work (if the lunch hour is not sufficient for this), so that their employees may attend these classes, with this being done in the spirit of nation-building, etc.

Even with all of the above conditions being met Winfield (1994) warns that children may be resilient at certain critical moments but not at others. In the face of gang warfare; physical, verbal, sexual, drug and alcohol abuse; low teacher expectations, dysfunctional schools, etc., it was seen as imperative that protective factors be reinforced constantly.

6.3.1b The role of the school

Oakes provides a checklist of seven indicators which are said to point to a set of conditions that students in educationally disadvantaged communities require for learning and successful college preparation. In terms of this, these conditions form the basis for a comprehensive, research-based framework for understanding the barriers to equity in achievement and college going. According to this positive and forward-looking paper, which sees tertiary education as a basic right and must for all learners, middle-class students are said to routinely enjoy the following conditions both in their schools and communities (Oakes 1989: 1):

- Safe and adequate school facilities
- A college-going school culture

- Rigorous academic curriculum
- Qualified teachers
- Intensive academic and social support structures
- Opportunities to develop a multi-cultural college-going identity
- Family-neighbourhood-school connections

Using Oakes' (1989) paper as a guide, the current study tries to determine how these guidelines could be applied to the SA township teaching context. First we begin with the notion of safe and adequate school facilities.

6.3.b(i) Safe and adequate school facilities

In terms of this it is seen as important that schools be freed of overcrowding, violence, unsafe and unsanitary conditions and other features of school climates that diminish achievement and access to college. There was a time when children at ZWHS had gone without water for a while. That, however is not the worst thing to have happened to these children. Other than the taxi wars (par. 3.2.1) and the stabbing (Kassiem November 16, 2006; Kassiem and Nzaphenza November 15, 2006) that this school has witnessed I was told about a day when one teacher's attention got drawn to a learner who sat quietly with tears running down her face while also wetting herself in the process. When the teachers' eyes started searching the class for clues she was to discover three men dressed in black, sitting among the children. Fearing for her life the teacher in question is said to have fled from the scene. That incidents like these happen even to schools like ZWHS, whose security system Fiske and Ladd (2004) have likened to Pollsmoor prison (see both par. 3.2.2 and also Appendix K) should give the reader a rough sense of some of the conditions township learners have been and still are subjected to in this country. Incidents like these do not go unreported either, indeed the police were said to be in the habit of dropping by unannounced at this school, to conduct spot checks and to keep wayward learners on their toes. Oakes (1989) associated any form of danger that is left unattended with the following:

- staff quitting at alarming rates or attending school less than they should be doing,
- students' social values of integrity, discipline, and civic-mindedness being threatened; enthusiasm for life-long learning being thwarted,
- students achieving less, children's ability to pay attention being reduced; and
- increasing incidences of violence (see par. 3.2.2 for some information on this point).

Students in environments like this were further said to suffer interrupted and lost instructional time (par. 3.1.7 above details how teaching and learning is disrupted by the fact of one Grade 12 class having three streams all fused into one class), limited access to advanced courses and specialized programs, ill-timed breaks (see par. 3.2.7 where the notion of 'marathon' days is discussed) and correspondingly limited access to extracurricular activities and enrichment programmes, all of which finally lead to poor academic performance.

Benefits that are associated with having the challenges raised above eliminated are said to include teachers and learners being enabled to devote their attention and energy to learning and teaching. One recommendation in this regard is that overcrowding could be addressed by putting students on year-round multi-track schedules with fewer days of school.

6.3.1b(ii) A college-going school culture

According to Oakes's (1989) concept of a college-going school culture the school operates according to an ethos where administrators, parents, and teachers have all the experiences they need for high achievement and college preparation. The adults in learners' lives are to encourage children to exert the necessary effort and persistence throughout their entire educational career, while working diligently to eliminate school-sanctioned alternatives to hard work and high expectations. The high expectations coupled with specific interventions are said to emphasize to students that college preparation is a normal part of their childhood and youth. In terms of this norm, learning is said to be strongly tied to the expectations of those around learners, and the quality of their opportunities to learn. Working class children are moreover said to be more likely than their middle class peers to perform badly, if they perceived their teachers not to believe in them.

Besides the fact of poverty blocking SA township learner's view of tertiary education, statistical evidence provided in figs. 1.3 and 3.3.5.2 illustrate how forces beyond learners' power conspire against them in SA. In fact, now that the veil has been lifted on how schools either hold learners back through the culling system, or register them with no prospects of endorsement, I wonder about the purpose behind afternoon classes and the industrious atmosphere that dominates some of these schools, when they know in advance that the learners have been set up for failure. The point here is not so much about the culling system being abolished from township education as such. With the appropriate educational foundation there would be no need for the culling system in township schools to start with.

6.3.1b(iii) A rigorous academic curriculum

In terms of her recommendations to do with curricular considerations Oakes interestingly makes no reference whatsoever to the general stream; 'academic' being the operative word (1989: 3) in this category of analysis. She also talks about the latter stream in 'advanced' terms. In terms of this, advanced courses, particularly in science and mathematics, were seen to have positive effects on student achievement (1989: 3). In her opinion an academic curriculum should groom middle and high school students for algebra. Oakes argues that the more academic courses learners take, the more positive their schooling outcomes. She unfortunately does not suggest what steps could be taken to ensure learners pass these demanding subjects.

The huge differences between the respondents in the academic stream (e.g. the Grade 11A) and their Grade 11E peers in the current study tell an interesting story. This is in

terms of the possible impact that streaming may have upon learners. Not only did Grade 11A learners display a higher self-esteem (i.e. confidence, a positive and go-getting attitude, agency, a sense of being free to choose, etc.) but there was also a sense entitlement in their attitude. They seemed to view themselves as deserving nothing but the best things in life. Despite this I would not necessarily recommend that SA go as far as to totally remove history, or any of the other subjects for that matter. Having read the sentiments expressed by the History teacher, about the subject covering social, economic and political issues, I am inclined to think black learners could benefit from this subject. In that it combines the spheres of existence referred to above, it sounds like it would help black learners understand better why things are the way they are in this country. As such it would address the issue of low self-esteem which appears to plague many black SA's.

Preparing for challenging high school classes is according to Oakes said to demand a rigorous middle grades curriculum. According to this, this should be undifferentiated by ability groups or tracks (Oakes 1989: 3). Many of the teachers at ZWHS would probably agree with both recommendations. The second point about streaming however speaks directly to concerns raised by the Physical Science teacher at this school. In the teacher's opinion, science is supposedly all around us. In terms of this there are various simple experiments that parents could perform within the home environment, which would not only generate an interest in science among children, demystify the subject, but also 'take science out of pages 7 and 50', and 'away from the year mark'.

One example of a simple experiment which parents could use, if they themselves had had adequate exposure to science, was for them to demonstrate the fact that oxygen is necessary for burning (i.e. combustion). This it was said parents could do using apparatus (a burning candle, a saucer, and water) which is readily available even to those living in informal settlements. All that this parent would have to do, according to this teacher, is pour water into a saucer with a burning candle, and place a glass on top afterwards. The fact of the candle dying down after a short while would then explain the concept of oxygen being depleted. This would then lead learners back to the underlying principle that 'without oxygen, there can be no fire'.

According to this teacher the 'rainbow' and water are always there to invoke the question 'why?' among learners. A study conducted by Nomlomo (2007) on Grade 5 township learners in CT, appears to verify this point. Not only did the science learners participating in this experiment demonstrate a healthy dose of curiosity among these township learners, but those who had been taught science in isiXhosa further demonstrated a better grasp of scientific concepts. It is simple experiments like the ones mentioned in the current study, which were said to spark arguments which finally lead to research questions. According to this teacher science is to be presented as an 'every day phenomenon' and a way of life. Even with the naked eye, it is said to be 'fairly easy to see' that a grain of salt is indeed a six-sided shape (i.e. a 'cube'). Viewed under the magnifying glass, these could be used to spark interest and prick the imagination.

These simple demonstrations, the teacher argued, would not be possible, if the parents in question had themselves never been exposed to the subject, due to they themselves also

having been subjected to straight-jacketed by streaming practices at an early age. The general feeling was that students could benefit more from a curriculum which exposed learners to a wide range of subjects, for them to find themselves, before teachers condemned them to a stream which may sink them in jeopardy in the end. To those schools which, because they value their image more than the children in their care (i.e. those who believe that students in the general stream are not smart enough or are lazy, Oakes' message is that most students learn more in high-level classes (or ability groups) than do those with comparable prior achievement who take lower level classes (1989: 3).

With streaming resulting in learners being cut off from every other subject which falls outside their chosen stream this teacher suggested a reduction in the number of languages being done. In his opinion languages were 'mere communicating tools', learners did not have to have 'three' of these when there are so many other things they could be doing. On the question of which language to discard the teacher could not say, given the fact of the undeniable relevance of English, the 'economic viability' of Afrikaans (as the Afrikaans teacher would put it) in a province where the language could be a useful tool; and where learners' mother tongue (i.e. isiXhosa), was nothing more than that (i.e. the mother's tongue and nobody else's).

While making isiXhosa a medium of instruction could help address some of many of the problems in SA, where streaming is concerned the message amounts to an appeal to the Ministry of Education Ministry in SA, to give every learner a 'fair crack of the whip', as some would call it.

6.3.1b(iv) Intensive academic and social support systems

In terms of this category learners are said to require support and assistance which come from outside the classroom or school. This, needless to say would be particularly true of schools like ZWHS. In this regard teachers and counselors are said to play a pivotal role in informing and preparing students for tertiary education. Because low SES families are said to lack the social capital and knowledge about college life, both of which are available to their MC counterpart, interventions that would help them negotiate the academic pipeline need to be put in place. Teachers and counselors being the primary sources on higher education-related issues, they are said to serve as cultural brokers for learners seeking information on how to succeed.

These kinds of support systems should have the effect of boosting children's achievement in elementary school, their success in college preparatory classes as well as their likelihood of admissions to and success in tertiary education (Oakes 1989: 4).

6.2.1b(v) Opportunities to develop a multi-cultural college going identity

In Oakes' (1989) part of the world race and culture rather than class (i.e. within the current SA context) are said to play an important role in shaping students' college going identities. In terms of this, Californian (presumably) university students see college as integral to their identities since they have both the confidence and skills necessary to

negotiate higher education. In this context this is said to happen without students having to sacrifice their own identities and connections with their home communities. Within the SA education system, CT being a case in point, the opposite has been found to be true in as far as black university students are concerned, with language issues (Banda in press) and/or class (Bangeni and Kapp 2001) being right at the core of these challenges.

6.2.1b(iv) Connections among families, neighbourhoods, and schools around college-going

Despite the social status of the school setting in question, ongoing respectful and substantive communications between schools and families are said to be essential. In terms of this connections between schools and families have been found to build on parents' strengths, and to consider parents a valuable resource for students. Taking the issue of community empowerment to another level Oakes suggest that school go beyond the usual teacher-parent-student tripartite or School Governing Body (SGB) with which most South Africans are familiar.

Rather, in Oakes' view:

- urban schools could engage parents in seminars, workshops, and other outreach initiatives, in efforts to empower parents on a wide range of education-related issues. With this kind of exercise Oakes sees parents being turned into effective advocates for their children;
- To this end topics covered in these interactions could cover norms and standards, streaming, the sharing of information sources, the internet, etc.

If it were not for the fact that some teachers could do with the very skills Oakes expects to be imparted to parents, the ideas proposed above would go a long way in addressing some of the social ills in this country. In Oakes' view too often parents are overlooked as resources when in actual fact they could be used to promote a love of literacy through literacy practices in their own language. To this end local churches, community organizations, boys' and girls' clubs could be used to tap into community resources, as well as communicate to parents the importance of providing their children with a challenging curriculum, while also supporting parents who want to see positive changes implemented.

6.3.1b(vii) Qualified teachers

In Oakes' opinion it is knowledgeable, experienced and fully certified teachers who provide instruction that engages students in work of high intellectual quality. More importantly for diverse communities, high quality teaching is said to make valued knowledge accessible to students from diverse backgrounds. This idea resonates with Noguera's (2003a) argument for equity, in which he bemoans the idea of low SES children being provided for the least. As far as Oakes is concerned one of the most powerful factors in students' academic success is teachers who are well-prepared, a

finding which SA is all too familiar with as suggested by the matriculation results. Teacher quality including teacher certification status, degree in field, participation in high-quality professional development are all said to have a significant impact on achievement outcomes.

Within the SA high school context (i.e. in the townships) one tends to get teachers whose teaching credentials occupy a continuum. The matric class being perceived as the face of the school and as also being reflective of the country's potential, the tendency is to place the best teachers at this end-point in the education system. The point made by Ball about good houses needing strong foundations perhaps explains the problem SA is sitting with today when it comes to matriculation results. We have failed as a country to invest in a solid foundation.

Some of the advantages associated with qualified teachers include providing a wide range of strategies like asking questions which make students think and answer fully, making the subject matter accessible to diverse groups of students, and making rigorous learning satisfying and fun. Qualified MT teachers would be an added advantage within the township scenario, because these are said to bridge students' home culture and language with knowledge and skills that matter at school. In this sense they are said to demonstrate a valuing of all cultures in the academic curriculum. Like the examples in Prinsloo and Stein's study (2004), poorly qualified teachers spend more time on rote learning and practice, and tend to exploit their authority to mask their inadequacies.

One other recommendation made by teachers at ZWHS was that schools work according to a rotation system. This was perceived to have the potential to address gaps in learners' knowledge base. As long as some teachers lack the necessary qualifications, they are unlikely to want to teach the senior classes.

6.3.1b(vii)a The concept of a good teacher

With regard to their commitment to their learners SA teachers would do well to consider the following:

- Brubaker's definition of the role of the best teachers as being those who plant seeds they may never see bloom agrees with the notion of fostering resilience among township learners. In terms of this, digging the seeds every couple of hours to check if they are growing would amount to the teacher in question killing the seeds (1994). On this point I foresee at least one possible problem with the result-driven kind of mold that SA teachers are being groomed into at the moment. The concept of resilience runs counter to the quick-fix, before and after result-oriented orientation of the present South African curriculum;
- This study has made us more aware how critical it is that teachers be able to identify factors that may be protective for low-income adolescent youth. To this end teachers could aid with the process of fostering resilience. In this way they could help provide information that would help administrators and policymakers

design more effective school environments and intervention models (Landis *et al.* 2007, Mampane and Bouwers 2006: 444, and Winfield 1991: 5);

- Being able to identify resilience is said to also mean maintaining hopefulness in a population of youngsters faced with staggering challenges (Winfield 1991: 5). This is something that should also keep the teacher going as well;
- Numeracy and literacy being the contested areas in this country's township education scene, Labov warns against teachers viewing every utterance of the child as evidence of their perceived mental inferiority (1972);
- The former's tendency for labeling, especially that of a denigrating nature (e.g. the label of the '*Sivuyile*' class in the context of the current study), is further associated with the widening distance between children and school;
- In line with this Labov identifies two potentially damaging consequences associated with teachers who subscribe to the theory of verbal deprivation. Such teachers not only tend to have low expectations where certain learners are concerned, but the attendant consequences thereof are said to involve theoretical bias and the consequence of failure. In terms of this teachers' attitudes are seen as a large determinant of success or failure among school children (1972).

Keiffer's point as registered above, about the importance of not doing for people what they can do for themselves highlights the need for agency in turning things around. Par. 6.2 above also touches upon this point. As we turn attention to the potential role which learners could play, Heylighen (1992) suggests these will have to be self-actualizing individuals.

6.3.1b(vii)b The role of the teacher

South African teachers, particularly those working within the townships, are faced with many challenges. These range from constantly shifting curricular innovations and the concomitant demands which are not only imposed from the top but also come without the necessary training being provided; to teachers being expected to perform at their peak despite many debilitating circumstances. That there is this huge cloud of under-performance looming over their heads does not improve township teachers' situation either. For a more detailed exposition of some of the challenges that SA teachers have to contend with; Harber (2001) and Mampane and Bouwers (2006) are two examples of sources that one could consult in this regard. One of the challenges highlighted by Harber in his volume is the confusing meaning (where some teachers are concerned) which has come to be attached to the concept of 'competence' as defined by the new democratic South Africa. Teachers whose training had taught them children were clean slates on which they were to leave an imprint are suddenly being expected to make the learning experience child-centered, while stepping back in the process, among many others. Implied by these sources is the undeniable fact of stress as being a huge part of these teachers' lives (see also par. 6.2.2c above).

In Chapter 1 of this thesis I present a case about teachers largely being made scapegoats for everything that is not going well in the SA education scene. The literature, however, does suggest the former may have a hand in the challenge of poor educational attainment which is currently facing SA today. In tackling this issue I shall cover two aspects of teacher's lives, i.e. staff development initiatives, as well as teaching practices. Starting with the latter I make the following points:

- Mampane and Boucher (2006: 455) express their dismay at the fact of some South African township teachers not being able to tell apart the non-resilient and resilient learners in their classes. This fact, as far as these co-authors are concerned, raises serious concerns regarding the training of educators. This concern also links up with one of the recommendations of the current study, about the need for township teachers to use a combination of discourse analytic skills and life-histories, as one among other diagnostic tools in their classes (Rappaport 1995, Whitty 2002, Willig 1999, Wodak, 1996, etc.)
- Teachers in black schools are still said to be under-qualified relative to those in white schools (Taylor 2007: 15). Staff development being critical to the education process, teachers need to take it upon themselves to stay abreast of new developments in their different fields of expertise, and to get into the habit of reading (even if this is just for the sheer fun of it) and life-long learning (LLL). The latter is not exactly high on the agenda of many township teachers at the moment, with this having started the day the Ministry of Education stopped acknowledging teachers' attempts at self-empowerment for some of these teachers. Contrary to the salary adjustments teachers used to look forward to upon the acquisition of new educational qualifications in the past, all that today's ministry is prepared to do is offer teachers meagre once off bonuses. This has not gone down well with most teachers, particularly those who saw further education as a means toward a better salary as well. I remember the kinds of remarks I had thrown at me when I finished my Masters degree as a high school teacher back in 1998. The only benefit some teachers thought this would bring me was an impressive 'obituary'. This is actually an important point in that it provides a clear picture of what it is that is going on in the minds of some township teachers at the moment. Simply put, teachers were asking themselves what good the degree was going to do me (considering the stress I had gone through in acquiring it), if all that I would get out of it is people only hearing about my impressive qualifications, upon my death (where my obituary would be read as part of the funeral service).
- SA teachers are one of the least paid professionals in this country, hence the reactions registered by the teachers in the preceding paragraph. With the hope that something is going to be done about the problem in the future, I would recommend that teachers be encouraged to get into the habit of traveling as well. By this I do not necessarily mean world-wide travel (although this would be good if it could be arranged). It is my opinion that short trips within SA could help broaden teachers' scope. To use myself as an example, it was not till I had taken a

few car-driven trips between the Eastern Cape (EC) and the Western Cape (WP) provinces that I began to make real sense of the concepts of ‘east’ and ‘west’ as suggested in the names of the two provinces. This is something I had taken for granted till that moment. Even though the distance between the two points is the same, regardless of which of the two my destination is to be, my departure time is however governed by my destination (and in particular the fact that I am more comfortable driving in broad daylight). In summer when driving from the EC to the WP Cape I do not have to leave as early as I have to do when traveling in the opposite direction. This, I have since figured out, is because driving toward the WP involves having the sun keeping me company for longer as it is moving toward its resting place, i.e. the ‘west’. Teachers who have never been outside their places of birth (at least one of the teachers in the current study admitted to this, and there are quite a few of these all over the country) miss out on these and many other opportunities to compare and contrast, and to provide a richer context to their teaching; etc.

6.3.1b(vii)c What a combination of CDA and life-histories can do for SA teachers?

Armed with the necessary skills and expertise teachers would be enabled to perform this kind of an analysis on learners’ life-histories in at least four important ways. The combination makes possible:

- **Explanations as to why learners behave in particular ways** (e.g. late-coming and absenteeism, sleeping or absent-mindedness in class, etc.). Prinsloo and Stein’s study (2004: 68), which was conducted within the SA context, demonstrates the huge potential of the proposed approach. The study in question outlines the possibilities associated with teachers having a better understanding of learners’ personal circumstances. Where the township teacher in the said study actually had to visit the children’s individual homes for her to be able understand her class’s behaviour (e.g. poor attendance, sleeping in class, etc.), which she would have otherwise qualified as errant, life-histories could have actually brought all the different homes to the teacher’s doorstep;
- **the identification of appropriate intervention mechanisms-** because the teacher referred to above now knew what factors were influencing the children’s behaviour (e.g. poverty, AIDS, etc. she was able to come up with measures and interventions (e.g. the vegetable garden) which served both the interests of the school (parents who were within easy reach), those of the learners (access to healthy food) and their families and/or community at large (she was in a position to do something about illiteracy among parents), etc. Although this is not necessarily an isolated case, the most common demands for interventions usually include referral to social, correctional and/or medical services, among others.
- **The design of context specific material** rather than the one-size-fits-all approach of the current ‘mainstreaming’ and ‘middle class’ SA curriculum (Blommaert 2007: 22). The teacher could for example look for reading material with which

learners could identify, and in the process make the learning content not only accessible, but also provide opportunities for learners to open up more, participate more, and learn better, etc.).

- All of the above culminate in teaching which, because is tailor-made, blends in smoothly with the demands of the learning situation (see par. 6.2.2a; 6.2.2c).

The question SA should be asking at this point is how far our learners are from approximating the points made above? Self-actualization being by its very nature what Heylighen calls a 'growth need' or a developmental process 'without an end' rather than a fixed state, the findings of the current study suggest that with the appropriate kind of stimulus, the respondents in the current study could have been headed in this direction. Of the exhaustive list of personal attributes associated with this state of being, as suggested in Heylighen's study (1992) I highlight a few of those which I think aptly describe the self-actualizers in this study.

6.4 The concept of self-actualization

With regard to the criterion of perceptions and experiences, the respondents in this study were found to be:

- Open to experience and eager for new experiences, ideas, skills and to try out new things (consider as an example par. 5.5.5 where the respondents talk about their exotic hobbies which included boating experiences, etc.);
- attracted to the unknown, rather than afraid of it like most people are (e.g. the matter of fact way in which they talk about potential future injuries and the prospect of death, see par. 5.6.2);
- uninhibited in thoughts, feelings and actions (e.g. par. 5.3.3.2a(v)) for proof of their total disregard for societal norms, etc.);
- neither unafraid nor concerned about opinions of others, etc. (e.g. their plans to have children outside marriage, as exposed in par.5.3.3.2a(v)), etc.

Where problems and challenges were concerned, some of the respondents showed a disposition for:

- Maintaining serenity in situations of deprivation, failure and disaster (e.g. their generally positive attitude to life given their negative individual, familial, school and community circumstances);
- Not assuming that the conventional way is the best way (e.g. the idea to generate huge sums of money by either legal or illegal means, see par 5.4.1.3d);

- Postponing decisions, if this meant the risk of making premature ones (e.g. par. 5.3.1 where the female respondents had not made up her mind regarding the idea of marriage, something she decided to shelve for a later date); etc.

As far as social interactions were concerned, the self-actualizing respondents in this study appeared to:

- Be 'autonomous' (i.e. able to decide on their own) (see par. 5.3.3.1b for proof of their assertiveness, etc.);
- adopt a worldview which is independent of a particular culture or society (e.g. par 5.3.3.2.1(v) on their views on sexual partnerships and marriage, etc.);
- be highly selective in terms of who they relate to (e.g. par. 5.5.4 on the tough selection criteria that respondents proposed to use in sifting through friends and spouses, of which the notion of 'decency' was one, etc.);
- prefer relationships which are characterized by extreme sincerity, self-disclosure and intimacy, by the dropping of all defense mechanisms (e.g. par. 5.3.3.1a where the respondents are forthright with regard to the financial aspect in their future relationships, with this being something most couples are uncomfortable bringing to light, etc.), etc.

If the reader was wondering why all of the above are relevant to SA at this point in time, this study maintains all of us as SA need to take a long and hard look at all that is happening in our country at the moment.

6.5 Taking a hard look at present day SA

In case South Africans had not noticed, these following are some of the challenges that we are faced with as a country, which will never go unless something drastic is done to seriously combat poverty:

- Criminals who have been described as 'arrogant' in one instance, because they had had the 'audacity' to break into and successfully steal from a premier's house a 'computer', 'a DVD set' and 'some items of clothing' while the house in question had been under heavy police guard 'all the time' (SAPA 2008);
- Shack dwellings which continue to catch fire on a regular basis and in large numbers in SA townships, with tax-payers in return having to continuously inject huge sums of money in order to give those affected a fresh start;
- Desperate young people who continue to deliberately get themselves infected with the HI-virus, in an attempt to secure more government grants; or those who are

forced to sleep around in exchange for cash so that they may put food on the table as has been recently captured in a *Siyanoqoba* (a television programme dedicated to issues related to HIV/AIDS issues) snippet. Contrary to the suggestive name given to this television programme which means 'we are beating the odds', AIDS seems to be gaining more ground with each passing day among African communities in this country;

- Youth continuing to give birth after birth in attempts to secure more child grants, in the process exposing themselves more to the HI-virus. This is sadly seen by some as some kind of a 'bonus' because they get to qualify for both the AIDS and child grants;
- Some tuberculosis patients elsewhere in this country selling their infected sputa to relatively healthy individuals, so that the latter may provide this as 'proof' to health officials, that they indeed have TB. Through these corrupt means many get to qualify for state grants; etc.

Needless to say as people grow more and more dependent on a government that cannot meet their needs, violence and anarchy are bound to gain more ground. The words of the History teacher as cited in par. 1.3.5 of the current thesis, which may have sounded rather alarmist in the beginning, could actually be predictive of the SA future. The recent outbreak of xenophobic attacks which saw to the unnecessary shooting, burning, rape, assault of foreigners (Evans 2008) and ultimate loss of lives in this country (Rank *et al.* 2008) last recorded at 62 deaths by an e-tv news bulletin, all prove just this point. In their article Rank *et al.* describe these xenophobic attacks as being 'just the tip of a xenophobic iceberg'. As things spiral more and more out of control, nobody will be safe in SA. Landis *et al.*'s claim, about the need for public policy efforts to prevent income disparities and segregation cannot be overemphasized in this regard. In terms of this the fewer the number of adolescents forced to live with chronic uncontrollable stressors that urban poverty brings about, the better for the entire SA community (2007).

6.5.1 The role of the government

The recommendations that this study proposes as far as the government is concerned will be mainly two-fold, they will deal with the challenges of poverty as well as that of poor educational attainment.

As a democracy SA is duty-bound to provide equal access to education for all of its citizens. To help policymakers and educators monitor progress towards reducing disparities in achievement and college access, Oakes (1989: 1) recommends annual reporting on the key education indicators (i.e. what she calls 'status', and 'leading' indicators. In terms of this:

- Status indicators report on educational outcomes that are needed to understand school success and the equity of school achievement. These outcomes are said to

include measures such as the size of the achievement gaps among various groups of students, among other considerations.

- Leading indicators, on the other hand, are said to monitor whether the state is furthering its capacity to reduce disparities in learning resources and opportunities.

6.5.1.1 Tackling the challenge of poor educational attainment

Noguera (2003c) believes educational outcomes could be improved. According to this, under the right circumstances and with all the essential ingredients (e.g. adequate learning materials and facilities, competent teachers, parent engagement, etc.) in place, something could be done about the problem. Large numbers of poor children are said to languish in schools that do not provide them with adequate intellectual stimulation, which also fail to promote educational skills and healthy social development. Noguera also echoes sentiments expressed by some within the SA context, about education being complicit in the reproduction of poverty across generations (2003c). In response to this challenge of differential educational provision the following have been suggested:

- Because the poor are said to trust in the government to do right by them, educational officials are urged to hold themselves accountable even when parents cannot hold them so (Noguera 2003c). This point brings to mind a Grade 11E male respondent who was born 'seventh' in a family of 'nine' children. This 'uneducated' family, which is said to have been struggling for 'many years' trying to educate the respondents' siblings, has unfortunately been unable to do so with his siblings due to 'financial problems'. One of the respondent's school dropout sister was said to be chipping in so as to give the learner in question something the older siblings had never had in their time, with that being 'education'. The learner traces the lack of education in his family back to his 'great grand fathers and mothers', recording the fact of his being 'the first one to do grade 11' in his entire family as being a source of immense pride and joy. 'Trying their best' to help him get an education has meant this family leaving the respondent in question to do his school work, while they take care of 'the uniform and school fees' (see Appendix G);
- With regard to the notion of equity as suggested by Fiske and Ladd (2004) and Noguera (2003b), the government is expected to acknowledge that children have different needs, and that treating them all the same would not be fair and also would not help. Simply put, if the government did the same thing for everyone it would not succeed in educating all children as children come with different levels of preparation and different levels of support at home. As Tough suggests, an equal education can never be enough for low SES children. Given the township learners' need to catch up in their education, Tough's notion of a 'better' education sounds more like what is needed in the SA township scenario today (2006);

- In terms of the above, equitable practices focus not just on equality of opportunity, which is basically what SA is trying to achieve at the moment, but on equality of outcomes as well. What this point does is reinforce the point made above, about the need for SA government not to continue giving those with less the same;
- Getting serious about improving public education is said to require that politicians acknowledge that controversial educational issues have always been linked to the ways in which inequality shapes and limits educational opportunities (Noguera 2003c). This piece of advice is very important for education within the SA context where politicians are trying to project a good image of the parties they stand for, where the purpose of reconciliation appears to be an attempt to cloud real issues which demand the country's immediate and undivided attention.

Noguera further predicts that parents of affluent children are most likely to object to the kinds of recommendations made above, fearing that doing more for poor children will come at the expense of their own. These parents may be afraid that greater equity will lower academic standards, or diminish the competitive edge their children previously enjoyed. Noguera's preemptive approach where the affluent are concerned is justified; especially when applied within the SA context where great care has been taken to maintain an appearance of calm when there is in actual fact a lot of turmoil festering underneath. These points registered above happen to resonate with or complement Fauth's recommendation, that pockets of poverty be de-concentrated, if the impact of the poverty is to be reduced (2004). The latter idea has been briefly hinted at by Deputy Minister Mlambo-Ngcuka on SA television in the recent past, to the greatest horror among some enjoying elite and middle class status, who have valuable properties, assets, investments and vested interests to safeguard.

For this sect of the community to adequately enjoy its affluence, as suggested by the reaction registered above, this has to happen at the expense of the poor. The irony of the whole situation is that the middle class and the elite are the hardest hit when it comes to taxation as well as being victims of crime. What the country is seeing at the moment are criminals who seem to have become so brazen and dare-devilish in their actions, that even the most technologically advanced safety precautions do not appear to faze them. These attempts again provide proof of many moves in this country that are short-sightedly calculated to address only symptoms rather the core of the poverty challenge.

6.6 The implementation of the empowerment process

As a first step to the empowerment process this particular research is concerned that its findings be conveyed to those who may benefit from them (and for whom the study was intended in the first place), i.e. township teachers; working class parents; grandparents; teenage parents; child-parents as in child-headed homes (i.e. in the case of AIDS

orphans); preschool care-givers; university students who are brothers, sisters and neighbours; enlightened members of the church; etc. Since chances of the majority of the people mentioned above reading this academic thesis are almost non-existent (it being in the nature of information of this nature to avoid the public eye by hiding behind university walls, academic jargon, computer screens, etc.), I recommend that the information be brought to the communities' doorstep.

Below are some of the ways in which this could be achieved:

- **Education:** Given the high teenage pregnancy and dropout rates in SA, alongside civic education and other relevant teaching content (presently not forming part of the SA curriculum), parenting skills could be made part of the life-skills programme in schools. This would target potential parents who are forced to drop out of school for one reason or another; given the tendency for this kind of subject content to be reserved for specialist classes (e.g. classes which provide training for future educators, social workers, psychologists or counselors) which most low SES parents never get the opportunity to attend. In this way dropout parents would be in a position where they have some rough idea what it is they could do to break the cycle of poverty when it comes to their own children, siblings and fellow-community members. To this end the points raised in par. 6.3.1.1 above, and elsewhere in the current study could be used to guide the content of such lessons.
- **The role of the church:** In terms of Maton's (2002: 205), and Maton and Rappaport's (1984: 37) studies, the church has been used as an effective resource in the past. Church and community groups are said to be well-placed to provide training and facilitate contact between parents and schools (Noguera 2003a). Fortunately for the purposes of the current study, when it comes to issues of worship, the majority of the black middle class tends to seek out the township church for the former's spiritual fulfillment, white churches generally being accused of being cold and flat in as far as the singing is concerned. This fact makes the African church within the SA context the one place where all the different sectors of the community (both the middle and working class, politicians, education officials, parents, guardians, university students, teachers, care-givers, school children, preschoolers, professionals in general, etc.), which this study wishes to target, converge on a regular basis. In line with this churches need to be made aware their duty goes beyond the mere preaching of the gospel.
- **Tertiary students:** In the interest of social responsibility and community building efforts like those being currently carried out by institutions like UWC, in the form of the '*Brawam*' and '*Siswam*' (meaning 'my brother' and 'my sister', respectively) mentoring strategies, could also lead to a remarkable reduction with regard to the numeracy and literacy challenge facing SA currently. University-school partnerships like these have been found to provide essential scaffolding for school success (Oakes 1989: 6).

- **Retired Teachers' Association:** In terms of a speech delivered by the MEC for Education in the Western Cape (WC), Mr Dugmore, plans to harness the excellent services of retired senior citizens were already in the pipeline for this province. The plan, according to this, was to reinforce this emerging initiative with what this official called an 'expanded Family Literacy Programme' and 'National Mass Literacy Campaign'. President Mbeki was said to be in the process of launching the latter. Efforts like these whose aims it is to 'redouble' support to schools (Dugmore 2007) should not be restricted to affluent provinces like the WC or Gauteng alone, as happens most of the time in this country. It is high time that our so called 'rainbow nation' truly promoted the interests of nationhood.
- **Community:** The city of Chicago (USA) makes use of structures they call the LCS (i.e. local site councils) which comprise parents and community representatives, who are then said to 'monitor principals' performances'. This body sounds like the SGB (School Governing Body) model which is presently in use in SA, though the concept of 'monitoring' in the former case suggests the purpose behind these bodies may not exactly be the same as that of many township scenarios in SA today. The parent component of the SGB in the SA context usually draws from dedicated parents who have a vested interest in the school in question. Though there is necessarily nothing wrong with this picture, for the model to better serve the interests of the working class communities I think the parent component of the tripartite could look beyond the confines of the immediate township environment, into the larger middle class community as well. These would be members of communities with something worthwhile to contribute (e.g. education, networks, information, etc), with this hopefully being done without necessarily imposing on people or the opportunity being used to sell political ideologies. This point is important as people need to be regularly informed about their rights and responsibilities (see also Oakes' suggestions in par. 6.2.3f above). In terms of these, empowerment efforts are to be combined with technical assistance, translation services, child care, etc. (Noguera 2003a). To this end retired principals and other knowledgeable and available community members could be used to the benefit of the township communities.
- **Promotion of literacy practices:** At an individual level SA would do well to copy from what feels like an anti-social culture (to an African person like myself) as practiced by countries like Sweden (the city of Stockholm in particular). Over and above the ear-phones cutting some members of this community off from everyone else around them, is the reading material that is made freely available, on a daily basis and to everyone at subway stations in this city. I have observed with great interest how the 'Metro' newsletter keeps the subway passengers in this city absorbed as they journey to work, comparing this with warm chatter and spirit of camaraderie of the black South African bus back home. The latter, unfortunately does not seem to be putting food on many African tables at the moment.

I must put it on record here that there are some key defining traits of the African culture which I would be heart-sore to let go of. These in my opinion define who we are as a people. A reality check of our present state of affairs however suggests the present is no time to be sentimental about things.

6.7 Conclusion

There is a lot more that could be done to tackle the challenge of poverty in SA. I hope the issues raised in this thesis will serve to start people thinking and doing more research into what it is that needs to be done, and that the SA government will take heed of some if not all the voices raised in the current study.

As my last word on the issue of empowerment I use Wodak's (cited in Willig 1999: 17) Discourse Analysis guide as a checklist to determine the extent to which the current study has met its obligations. In line with this Wodak recommends three steps:

- The first one involves making transparent, inequality and domination (see par. 6.2.3 in this regard);
- This should supposedly be followed by a proposal of possibilities for change (these concerns are addressed in the current paragraph, i.e. par. 6.4.1);
- Lastly it might be useful to identify the limits of possible emancipation through new patterns of discourse (see par. 6.4.2 above in this regard).

A follow-up on the current study is due within the next six years to come (i.e. by the year 2014). In line with the methodological concerns raised in par. 3.8.2 above, I may not be in a position to determine the degree of consistency of the findings of the current study as I would have liked to do. Partial findings from a small-scale study that I have conducted in the interim (i.e. Ntete 2007) have however been found to be consistent with the findings of this thesis. In terms of this pilot study, of the two respondents analyzed the more 'resilient' was found to be already making strides in her career in the real world, compared to her more vulnerable male classmate.

With regard to the challenge of poverty confronting members of the working class I would like to cite an African expression. The Xhosa saying '*indlala ligwala*' compares hunger to a coward. In terms of this understanding all that it takes to drive hunger away sometimes is a mere glimpse of food, and it scuttles away almost immediately. In the same vein I wish to conclude by saying poverty and under-achievement do not have to be our curse. Let us all work together to break the spell. Poverty can be beaten.

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APPENDIX A Parent Interviews

Family Life

1. How big is your family?
2. Who are the members?
3. Of these how many are working?
4. How many school children do you have in the family?
5. Are there children of school-going age who do not attend school in your family?
6. Would you say why they are not attending school?
7. How do you feel about them not attending school?
8. Is there something you did/ still do to try and get them to go to school?
9. If they do not attend school, what do they do with their lives?
10. Were you born and bred in CT?
11. If not, how long have you been in CT?
12. Where did you come from?
13. Why did you come to CT?
14. In your opinion, would you say CT life is any different from the one you had before you came here?
15. What do you think of school life in CT?
16. If you are happy you came, how has CT life been rewarding to you?
17. If not, what is it about CT life that has made you unhappy?
18. What would make you happy with your life in CT?

Personal details of guardian or parent

19. What is your level of education?
20. What do you do for a living?
21. Would you share with me how much you make?
22. What responsibilities do you have?
23. Is there anyone helping you with your responsibilities?
24. If yes, how does this person help?
25. If no, what do you do to make ends meet?
26. Would you say you are coping on your present income?
27. If you were to rate your responsibilities in order of importance, what would your three most important responsibilities be?
28. Why?
29. What would you identify as your three least important responsibilities?
30. Why?

Views about education

31. Are you happy about the level you reached?
32. Had you been given a chance at education, what would you have become?
33. Why do you choose this particular career?

34. How do you think your present life might have been with a little more education?
35. What would you say if I said 'education is a waste of time and money'?
36. In your opinion, who should be responsible for the education of children?
37. What role do you think parents should play in the education of their children?

The learner

38. Did you ever think your son/daughter might come this far with his/her education?
39. How could you tell?
40. What can you tell me about his/her life as a learner:
 - before ZWHS?
 - at ZWHS?
41. Tell me about the highlights in your son/daughter's educational life?
42. What did this mean to you?
43. Have there been any low moments that you can think of?
44. What do you think brought these on?
45. What did s/he do to overcome those challenges?
46. What role did you play in helping him/her achieve this?
47. If there was something you could do/change with regard to your child's education, what would it be?
48. How did your daughter/son land up at ZWHS?
49. How do you feel about ZWHS?
50. If you are happy about her/him being at ZWHS, tell me why?
51. If you are unhappy about it, would you give reason/s why?
52. Your son/daughter is now doing grade 12 at ZWHS, how do you feel about that?
53. How do you think your daughter/son will fare in the end of the year exam?
54. Would you justify your answer?
55. What wish do you have regarding his/her future education or career?
56. What informs your wish?

Thank you for taking time to answer my questions, and for sharing with me.

APPENDIX B

Learner Interview Questions

The Grade 12 class

1. Congratulations on making it to grade 12! What does being in grade 12 mean to you?
2. Have you always known that you have what it takes to reach grade 12?
3. How so?
4. What did you do to ensure your access into grade 12?
5. What have the first four months in the grade 12 class been like so far?
6. What do you foresee as your biggest challenge/s in terms of coping with this class?
7. How do you propose to handle those challenges?
8. Of the learning areas you are doing, which one/s do you feel most comfortable with?
9. Why, do you suppose, is this the case?
10. Is there any particular reason why you chose your particular stream?
11. In your point of view just how important are the subjects that a learner does?
12. Quite a big number of your 2004 classmates have been left behind, what would you say is/ was responsible for this?
13. Drawing from your own experiences, what advice would you give these learners?

The School

14. What brought you to ZWHS for your high school education?
15. How would you describe your learning experiences at ZWHS?
16. Do you consider ZWHS a 'good' school? Why/not?
17. Which, in your opinion, is 'the most' attractive aspect of your educational life here?
18. Which aspect is 'the least' attractive in your eyes?
19. In your opinion what makes a school 'good'?
20. You are aware of the good reputation that ZWHS enjoys, what do you think is responsible for this?
21. What role do you think you as a ZWHS learner could play in ensuring that the school holds on to its good reputation?

The teachers

22. If I were to say one of the school's strength is its high level of discipline, would you agree with this statement?
23. Which areas of ZWHS school life would you say the discipline is most prominent in?
24. Which teacher/s would you associate the most with discipline in this school?
25. How do they enforce this?
26. Tell me about your experiences as a grade 8 newcomer in this school.
27. Which differences do you think exist in terms of learner needs and/or expectations where teachers are concerned, between learners in primary and those in high school?
28. If you were to advise ZWHS teachers on the needs of today's learner, what would you tell them?
29. In your essay you mention Teacher X as your favourite teacher, what is it about this teacher that makes you like him/her so much?
30. What in your opinion makes a teacher 'good'?

The learner

31. How would you characterize a 'good' learner?
32. What role do you think parents should play in the education of their children?
33. How would you then define a 'good' parent?
34. Tell me about yourself. What motivates/drives you as a learner?
35. What do you think lies ahead of you now, i.e. beyond the grade 12 class?
36. This question to be based on issues that the learner raises in the essay.
37. The question to be based on what the parent/s said while being interviewed.



APPENDIX C

Interview questions for teachers across the board

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. How long have you been at ZWHS?
3. Did you study at ZWHS as a student?
4. What sort of implication/s do you think this has for a teacher in this position?
5. What are your thoughts on the idea of teachers teaching in the same neighbourhood that they had grown up in?
6. Do you support the idea of teachers teaching in one school for the rest of their lives?
7. What of those teaching the same subject to the same grade for a period of about ten years and above?
8. Tell me about the challenges you have had teaching your Grade 11/12 subject/s.
9. Are there specific sections in your subject which teachers generally experience problems with in their teaching?
10. How do learners perform in your subject and how would you explain this?
11. Are there any specific areas that learners experience as problematic in your subject?
12. What would you advise your learners to do to in order to prevent/deal with/circumvent the problem?
13. How best could a teacher make the subject more accessible to the learners?
14. What do you think learners need in order to do well in your subject?
15. How would you describe their attitude toward the subject?
16. If there was something you could do to improve your teaching, what do you think that would be?
17. Were you to 'sell' your subject to learners, what would you tell them?
18. What sort of challenges do you think await the ZWHS learners at the tertiary level of education? What mechanisms have you put in place in order to deal with these?
19. In your opinion, what makes a learner 'good'?
20. To what would you attribute the good reputation that ZWHS enjoys?
23. What role do you think you could play to ensure your school's reputation is protected?
24. Judging by the grade 12 results over the past few years ZWHS seems to be growing from strength to strength. How would you explain this?
25. What advice would you give to the under-performing high schools in your neighbourhood?
26. What do you understand to be the meaning of the concept of a 'good' school?
27. Would you call ZWHS a 'good' school?
28. Which aspect of ZWHS life do you think learners are most likely to be unhappy with?
29. ZWHS learners complain about the lack of discipline among themselves. What is your sense of the situation?
30. If you had your way, what is it about ZWHS that you would change?

31. Thinking back to your school days, in which sense would you say today's learner differs from the learner you once were?
32. How best do you think teachers could equip themselves for the emerging scenario?
33. What would make a teacher 'good' in this day?
34. Why, in your opinion, would learners identify you as one of their favourite teachers?
35. How would you describe a 'good parent'?
36. What role could/should parents play in the education of their children?
37. What would you like to see happen at ZWHS five years down the line?
38. Given the angle of my research topic, what, in your opinion, makes you a relevant interview candidate?

Questions for the Life Orientation Teacher (LOT)/Life Support Officer (LSO)

1. What kind of training you have undergone in order to be able to do your kind of work?
2. Tell me about your job as a Life Orientation Teacher (LOT)/Life Support Officer (LSO).
3. In which sphere of ZWHS life do you see the biggest need for your kind of work?
4. What sort of demand does the job make on you as a person?
5. What do you think learners expect of their LOT/LSO?
6. How then would you define a 'good' LOT/LSO?
7. Which have been the most rewarding moments in your life as a LOT/LSO?
8. How are you able to measure the success of your work?
9. In your view, why would learners identify you as one of their 'best' teachers?
10. What could the school do to help LOT/LSO's perform at their peak?
11. What would you identify as the source/origin of most problems experienced by learners today?
12. If you were to share the most important of your learner-oriented insights as a LOT with ZWHS teachers, what would those be?
13. How best, in your opinion, could teachers serve the interest of their learners?
14. Given your understanding of what learners need, how would you define a 'good' teacher?
15. Which external factors would you say impact the most on the type of learner a learner turns out to be?
16. How, then, would you characterize a 'good' learner?
17. How would you describe the manner in which ZWHS deals with the needs of its learners in your area of expertise?
18. From a LOT/LSO's point of view, would you then qualify the school as 'good'?
19. Would you say the ZWHS learner is being adequately prepared to cope with the demands of tertiary education?
20. If you were to recommend changes to the ZWHS situation, what would these be?
21. What are your dreams as a LOT/LSO, for ZWHS?
22. Given the angle of my research topic, what is your opinion on why I would wish to speak with you personally?

APPENDIX D

Paraphrased Parent Interviews

QUESTION: Level of education and feelings about this

Day 1: Father3 is a 'Form 2' dropout. His level of education 'helps' in 'certain cases'; **Mother1** left the Eastern Cape (EC) with Standard (Std) 6, once in CT joined St Francis and took three years to complete Std 8 and a further three years to reach Std. 10. At this point dropped out because she could not cope with the idea of the more challenging Mathematics that was taking over Arithmetic, and the family was also demanding her. The husband started at Std 7 but could not reach Std 10 due to the demands of the workplace. **Mother2** claims back in her days one who had done Std 6 was considered a 'teacher'. She gave up schooling after Std 5. Felt 'right' about the class because the English she had acquired made it possible for her to get a job. She has absolutely no regrets about that because from her 'cleaning' job at Anglo American (AA) till her 1996 retrenchment she was able to build herself a house (is one of the few who live in face-brick houses). **Mother3** dropped out in Std5 and could not proceed because her guardian aunt had not registered her as a family member, so she did not qualify for the pass. She had had to go back to Cradock; is neither happy nor unhappy with her educational qualifications. She now has children she must attend to and cannot find a job because of ill health. Her husband is a Std 6 dropout, now getting an old age grant and doing piece jobs to supplement the grant. **Mother4** is a Std 9 dropout. After a while she took up with Intec College though she never got to Std 10. She is happy because she can 'communicate' as well as carry out the work that is expected of her. Admits the Std 9 qualification 'limits' her in certain circumstances.

Mother5 has Std 2. Her single mother died when she was still young. She is not happy with her level of education because it imposes limitations on her life. She has not been able to secure a good job. **Mother6** dropped out in std5. Fell pregnant out of wedlock. As someone who was born to 'red' (i.e. uneducated) parents, they saw no point in her continuing with her education as she would have loved to do. Her first born brother never went to school, but looked after the livestock. The siblings following this brother are all 'educated' because they had insisted on being educated. There was also no money for further education, so she was sent to her elder sister who worked in *Franschoek*, for the latter to help her find a job. Expressed deep regret at not having taken her brother up on his offer to ask the Roman Catholic church to help educate her further. In those days it was considered 'enough' if the child could read and write letters. Of all the children in her family it is she and another sister who are the least educated. **Sibling1** dropped out of school after grade 12 at a finishing school. Her mother was still alive. Even back then she had been the breadwinner in the family. She had taken part in a community project to do with 'screen printing' for which she holds a certificate. Claims she was not happy about leaving school at the time, but had to 'accept the situation' she found herself in, she now gets satisfaction out of seeing her younger siblings going to school.

Day 2: Father1 dropped out in Std 3. There was nobody else to work as a herd-boy so he had to drop out of school. She is 'heart-sore' that he never had an education. He feels the impact thereof in his inability to write as I am doing while taking down notes. He lives on his father's training, as a farmer. Has livestock both in the EC and CT. Slaughters for sale and sometimes to provide

meat for his children; **Father2** dropped out in Std 4. He had to look after the livestock. Has made peace with the fact because he can earn a living; **Mother7** dropped out in Std 5. Is heart-sore at her lack of education but is determined that her son should achieve better. **Mother8** dropped out in Std 3 because she was orphaned. He had to sell wood before she could go to school. Parents of the time were uneducated and expected the children to dress and behave in a manner that would attract prospective husbands. She would not cooperate with them because she wanted to be able to write her own letters; she swore to herself that she would educate her children and has done all in her power to achieve this so that they may not suffer the same fate. **Mother9** never went to school. Father flatly refused to send a female child to school and her uneducated mother had seen nothing wrong with the idea. She experiences a lot of pain especially when she has to 'sign' documents. Simply leaves a fingerprint and puts down an 'x'. Cannot afford to attend adult basic education classes because she needs the time to prepare the parcels she sells at the school gates for the following morning.

Day 3: Mother9 is a Std 5 dropout. Got married to a man from 'another village' whom she 'did not know' and had 'never met'. He had apparently approached her father, so a group of men had 'grabbed' her on her way to school. Still remembers the day when this happened as if it was yesterday, even though it happened twenty-one years ago. Escape was not an option at the time because there was nowhere to run to. Admits she lacked the wisdom to explore other possible alternatives. In time had grown to accept things and is happy now. She had been 'very heart-sore' at having to give up on her education, and her husband would hear nothing of it. Husband is a Std7 dropout. **Mother11** is a Std 8 dropout. Her single mother experienced financial constraints. She does 'not' feel good because jobs are scarce for the uneducated. **Gran1** arrived in CT with a Std 8 report but is now a Std 10 dropout. This she had achieved via adult education sought out while both married and working in CT. Ill health stood between her and her Std 10 certificate. She feels 'very happy' about the class because she can provide for herself. She claims people who have not achieved as much as she has 'struggle more'. She, on the other hand has been able to give all of her children a standard 10 certificate although they are too lazy to proceed further with their education. She could not persuade them otherwise because they are now adults with their own lives to lead. **Mother12** has Std 8 from Langa High School. She continued with adult basic education because she had an interest in education. Was unemployed and her not so educated husband was not supportive of education. Ill health was another challenge so she stopped and concentrated on educating her children instead. Now owes one course before she can qualify for a Std 10 certificate. Deceased husband was a Std 1 dropout.

Day 4: Mother13 is a Std 5 dropout. Was ill health, got medical help in CT in 1972 (a drunk neighbour bursts in at this point. People come and go. There's a delivery for the *spaza* shop. She sells drinks and chicken pieces). She feels 'good' about her class because she can send her children to school. **Mother14's** husband dropped out in Std 2. He was orphaned at an early age. Wife had left school in Std 1. She blames her fate on fact of her being uneducated, and the parents' obsession with livestock. Says even the teachers at the time were uneducated. **Mother7** dropped out in Sub-B. Her widowed mother was struggling so she could not continue, much against the mother's wishes. She is 'crying' for lost time because today's job market demands education or 'trade' (i.e. skills). **Mother15** is a Std 6 dropout. Her parents could not afford to educate her further because she comes from a family with six children. Was 'heart sore'. Now also has 6 children of her own. Claims she has tried to give her children a chance to be educated.

Day 5: Mother16 is a Std 5 dropout because was orphaned. She feels bad because she cannot get good jobs in the firms but can only work as a domestic servant. **Mother17** dropped out in 1999 while doing Std 9. Her widowed mother died. Feels 'bad' about the class, but had 'no choice' because the aunt who had taken over her late mother's responsibility also died. She would not hear of further study or adult education because this would interfere with her 7days a week devotion to the church. **Mother18** is a Std 7 dropout. Felt 'lazy' and stopped school. Now 'regrets' the move because she thinks she would not be working as a domestic servant. She has acquired no skills in her life. **Aunt1** is a Std 6 dropout due to lack of money. Was heart-sore at first; but transformed this into determination to do good by her children by ensuring a good future for her children. **Mother19** did Std 10 followed by a 'secretarial' training course for which she holds a certificate.

Day 6: Cousin1's husband is a Std 8 dropout who had done only his 'lower classes' in CT. He had financial problem. The wife has a matric certificate and has done one month long courses on 'nursing' and 'transport'. **Gran2** and Husband – the former was a Std 5 dropout. She was considered old enough to be 'an *intombi yabafana*' or 'maiden'. Explains how they took turns in attending school, with their time being divided between livestock and school. Because of this they used to fail a lot, and this also delayed her a bit with her education. Being separated from school had 'not' been a sore spot for her because she had her predecessors to look up to. Parents of the day took pleasure in 'weddings' and '*imibholoro*' (i.e. traditional dances) and prided themselves in their children gaining a reputation as great 'singers' and 'dancers'. Today she feels 'sad' because she realizes that she would have progressed a lot with an education. **Grandfather** dropped out in Sub A. Has 'no regrets' in life despite his illiterate state because he 'has lost nothing'. This the wife finds ridiculous because the old man had just lost 32years' worth of pension money due to illiteracy. She claims the old man had gone 'up and down' trying to trace his money, but all was in vain. **Sister2** is a Std 6 dropout. Her mother was sick and could not support her. Was once worried about this but has since come to accept her situation. No longer wishes to study because she now has responsibilities, her younger brother and her own son's education. **Aunt2** left school in Std 7. Was suffering from a severe headache and couldn't continue with her studies. She has learnt to live with her level of education. What is important for her now is the education of her children.

QUESTION: Favoured career and reason, imagined impact of would-be career on guardian's life:

Day 1: Father3: would have chosen 'farming'. Thinks life as a farmer would have been rosier. **Mother1** sees 'no end' to education and has no specific career in mind. Her interests lie in social welfare and health, moreso now with people being faced with so many diseases like HIV/AIDS etc. Education would have enabled her to render a better service to the community. She would have 'upgraded' her standard of living in terms of the 'area', car ownership and the kind of education that her children would have liked. **Mother2** would have been a 'nurse'. In the 'olden days' had a gift of looking after the sick. As a nurse she would have been able to afford 'everything'. She describes education as 'food for life' which would have helped her open an 'old age' care centre. She would also have been able to renovate her house- which she has been able to do despite lack of education. **Mother3** would have loved to be a nurse because she is a 'fast' worker. Thinks her life would have been 'better' with a profession and thinks she would

probably not be suffering from diabetes as she is doing now. **Mother4** once had her eyes set on the legal profession and thinks she would have made a contribution to it. Had she become one she thinks her life would have been 'better' in that her 'standard of living' would have been better than it is now. She would have been able to afford her first born son's tertiary education. **Mother5's** ambition had been the attainment of a standard 10 certificate. Thinks this would have qualified her for a better job because the 'demand' is for educated people. **Mother6** would have loved to be a nursing sister and knows her life would have been much 'better' had she studied to become one. Feels bad when she sees people she went to school with who are now nursing sisters at a local hospital. Would have loved to study despite her age but is 'incapable' of doing so because of the terrible experience she went through in 1995 when her first born son was stabbed to death (she cries sadly as she relives the memory). Since the incident she has not been able to retain any information and suffers from memory lapses. She forgets everything. **Sibling1** would have been a 'nurse'. She not only loves people but can also empathise with people. Could have been one on her standard 10 certificate but has always put her siblings' needs before hers. For her to become a nurse would have meant living in a nurses' home which she couldn't do because they needed her more at home. Thinks life as a nurse would have improved her life tremendously because then she would have been able to 'budget well' and 'afford more' than she can now.

Day 2: Father1 would have loved to be a 'policeman'. He likes the profession because the government continues to look after a policeman's children long after the latter's death. The government sees to the welfare of the children till they are grown up. Thinks with more education his life would have been 'longer' as learned people only carry their books around and work in safer environments. **Father2** cites 'important' careers of the time like 'nursing' and 'teaching'. Thinks he would probably have opted for work as a 'clerk', as this is less nerve-wrecking compared to the teaching profession. As a clerk his life would have been 'better' as educating children costs lots of money. **Mother7** would have been a 'nurse' because she loves helping people. Thinks her life would have been 'better' as this would have afforded her the comfort of knowing 'how much' to expect and 'when'. Her son would have been able to go as far as he wished with his studies. All of these things she cannot afford at the moment (she sobs quietly). **Mother8** would have done either Std 8 or 10 if she had had parents. This would have put food on her table. Her present life is 'not good'. She can't sleep at night trying to figure a way out of her predicament. **Mother9** would have loved to be a 'nurse' to help the sick. Her life would have been 'beautiful' in that anybody would have been able to tell at a glance that she 'has money' and 'no problems'. She would have been able to clothe her children. Thinks people look down on someone who does not work.

Day 3: Mother11 would have loved to be a 'nurse' because she loves the hospital environment and looking after the sick. Prefers nursing to teaching because she finds dealing with learners too much of a challenge. Her life as a nurse would not have been that different from what it is now. It has never been her ambition to stand out from the crowd, all she ever wanted was to be 'just like other people'. At least she would have been able to afford a 'bigger house' in a 'better area' like 'Montana'. **Mother9** would have loved to be a 'nurse' because she considers herself 'kind', 'patient', 'soft-spoken' and 'tolerant'. Her life would have been 'better'. She can do nothing for herself now and is dependent on her husband. With an education she would have been living in a 'good area' and working side by side with her husband. **Gran1** would have loved to be a 'social worker'. Thinks she would have been 'happier' working as one as she would have been dealing

with the people she loves. On a personal level she would have been 'more free'. **Mother12** thinks a 'nurse' has empathy for the sick and the elderly. She would have loved to make a 'small contribution'. Prefers nursing to social work because in her experience the latter responsibility is more demanding. Her soft heart would not have been able to stand the strain. As a nurse (her application for registration having been turned down) there would have been a great deal of 'improvement' in her life.

Day 4: Mother13 would have been a teacher. Is impressed by the things teachers are able to do as in 'renovating their homes'. With the profession she thinks she would have been 'far away', having her 'own' things. She uses the imagery of a pumpkin plant which spreads 'far and wide'. **Mother14's** husband would have been a 'teacher' or a 'clerk'. Those were the only professions at the time. Of the two she would have preferred teaching. Wife would have loved 'nursing', she loves the job. **Mother7-** would have loved to be a 'lawyer'. She loves the act of 'defending people'. She thinks the concept of 'right' and 'wrong' important. Judging by the progress made by people of her age she thinks she would have been 'far' by now. **Mother15** loves teaching because she loves children. Life would have been 'better'. Would perhaps not be living in CT but on her own and just sending her children money.

Day 5: Mother16 would have been a teacher. Thinks the profession was not too demanding in terms of fees, so her widowed mother parents could have afforded it. Her life would have been 'very good' because she would have been able to afford 'many things' like children's education. She would have known how much to expect in terms of her salary for each month, and budgeting would have been easier. **Mother17** loves secretarial work. Used to watch her high school secretary and thought hers was a 'good' job, because of the 'protected' nature of the job. She has perceived the teaching job as totally unsafe since the day she witnessed a teacher being stabbed by a learner over 'uniform' related issues. Life would have been 'good' as she would have been living alone with her son. **Mother18** would have become a nurse as this was considered a 'good' profession. She loves helping the sick. Thinks life would have been 'better' because her salary would have been 'better'. **Aunt1** would have been a 'social worker'. She loves attending to the needs of the child, family problems, and to offer advice to families and children. A 'better salary' would have enabled her to 'help more people' than she is able to do now. **Mother19** would have loved to be a 'nurse' because she 'feels' for the sick and loves helping them. She relives a moment where she was hospital and had to tend to another more seriously ill patient in her ward. Feels she could make a difference to the nursing profession.

Day 6: Cousin1 dropped out before he could think of a specific career. All he knew was he was to study. He has stopped dreaming, lives one day at a time because of the unpredictable nature of contract appointments. Thinks his situation could have been much better had he been a government employee. As an educated person he would have had 'no problems' but 'everything' he needed. Just like everyone is after 'money', that would have been his prime objective. He would not be earning the R1500 'small change' he is now getting as a security guard which according to the wife is 'less than what even domestic workers make'. **Gran2** would have been a 'nurse'. Says neighbours treat her home as an 'after care' facility as their children come to her after crèche. Those feeling cold join her in bed and she gets nothing for this. She has always looked after children within her own family. She would take children of the daughters-in-law in the family away from their parents, so as to free the mothers for school. Has 'always' loved and

'believed in' education which she considers a 'better' gift compared to a 'dress' because the latter can be 'taken back'. **Sister2** would have been a 'nurse' because they grew up without nurses. Even today she claims their village 'lacks' clinics and doctors. They have to travel to *Ngqamakwe* (in the former Transkei) to get medical help. She describes her area as 'very dry' to the extent that people have died on the way to hospital. The situation becomes worse on rainy days. Thinks life would have been better. **Aunt2** would have been a social worker or nurse. She 'feels' for children and would have loved to help them. As such her life would have been 'better' in that she would have been better placed to assist children.

QUESTION: Views on the traditional African belief that the 'place of all young women is in the kitchen'; who, between boys and girls, deserves education better than the other:

Day 1: Father3 thinks both sexes these days are 'equal' and argues that the determining factor is 'ability'. **Mother2** thinks things have changed, the viewpoint that 'only' male children can build good homes no longer applies. Female children also can achieve this. The female child deserves a chance for better education to empower herself because the male child can work even on the mines. **Mother3** refers to the idea of marriage as 'abusive' and could not be bothered if her child never got married. What is important is that her children should get an education. This she thinks will give her child the leverage to negotiate with her husband as she thinks the people most affected by HIV/AIDS come from the uneducated masses. She would rather send the female child to school because the first thing that the male child is likely to do is get married. The wife would then control his money and the other children would not be able to squeeze even 'one cent' out of him. For the female child her home will always be her home, regardless of whether she is 'married or not'. Girls 'never turn their backs' on their homes. **Mother4** does not agree with the viewpoint. Sees today's women as 'more independent', they can raise children single-handedly. She argues that marriage sometimes does not work out and is against the idea of women having to 'bow before' (gesture of begging) men. She further maintains that today's parents prefer female to male children as females are more supportive of their families. According to **Mother5** the saying applied only in the past. Today young girls have to get an education. She would send the girl because girls will always share the little they have. They have their parents' best interests at heart, and will never forget their parents. **Mother6** has problems with the idea of marriage. All she wants is for her child to find a good job and to live on her own. She would not encourage her to 'burden' herself with marriage. Claims the reason parents send children to school is so that they may rely on themselves. Even if the daughter were to be unfortunate enough to fall pregnant, she should be in a position to handle the situation on her own. **Sibling1** thinks many homes depend more on females than on males. Males sometimes land up in prison. Also, even if married, women still need an education because marriages do not always work out. She cites her divorce as a case in point. She thinks women more deserving of an education because once married the male can only think of his family, women on the other hand will always look back and remember their home and family.

Day 2: Father1 is in touch with the day's demand for education. He suggests that young women should couple education with marriage, but still holds on to the traditional idea that the rightful heir in any home situation is always male. This necessitates that separate provision be made for the female child. He cites the example of a household with ten children, and argues that according to the Xhosa culture there is only one child, and that is the first male child. **Father2**

thinks the thinking applied in the past and cannot be applied in this day and age. Today's young men refuse to pay *lobola* (bride price/dowry). Thinks it is important, in the modern way of life, that young women be educated as they land up being breadwinners even in their marriages. He would send the girl child to school before he does the boy child because girls seem more reliable (*'awangomatshitshi amantombi'*). **Mother7-** believes this is an outdated way of thinking and cites herself as an example of a single mother who could have done with some education. Thinks both genders deserve a chance at an education. **Mother8** does not agree with the saying because of the divorce rate. Believes young women's future lies in their education. In fact she thinks it better to invest in the education of the female child because in her opinion it is therein that the security of the parent rests. **Mother9** does not agree with the viewpoint, says women can 'stand on their own' and work as 'men'. Thinks marriage retards women's progress as this sometimes does not work out. With education on their side she thinks women can put on their 'pants' and go and work for their children. If it were for her, she would not mind if her children never got married. She maintains that these days single women 'look good' and drive 'very beautiful cars'. States that with education women can go to their family home in the rural areas and do exactly as men would do. Men would then be forced to acknowledge them. She would educate the female child because females are like 'orphans' because they have no claim to the family heritage like boys have. She complains that male children are different from their female counterparts. The latter do not have to be told what financial role to play around the house as seems to be the case most of the time with males.

Day 3: Mother11 thinks the days of housewives are over. These days women able to buy their own houses, sometimes earn more than men and can do jobs originally considered male territory. She would educate the female child because there are a few jobs that females can do whereas male could even 'sell newspapers'. Education would safeguard the future of the female. **Mother9** strongly disagrees. Thinks this may have been the case in the past, but describes life nowadays as 'bad'. The only thing that a parent can leave the child is an education. Marriages are unreliable, so education is the 'key'. She would educate the female child. **Gran1** thinks this is all in the past. She does not wish for her children to marry. Today's marriages are not the same as the one of the past's. Today's standard of living more money-oriented, and today's husbands 'sponge' off their wives. They do not like it when wives help their families out, and will not tolerate unemployed wives. She would educate the girl because female children have a strong bond with their parents and will die side by side with them. Males on the other hand tend to 'forget' once married. **Mother12** agrees with the viewpoint that women 'should marry'. She sets out to paint a picture of an unmarried woman who is made to feel uncomfortable by the brother's wife. She however adds that education would render the married woman independent of her husband. The single woman would also be able to manage on her own. Thinks the claims about high unemployment are just a myth. In her opinion jobs do become available to those who 'volunteer' their services and are prepared to undergo some form of training first. These in her opinion are steps today's youth is reluctant to take. These she thinks would provide the necessary 'experience' that is such an important requisite in the workplace. She would educate the male child because he would later be 'the head of the family' and is 'going nowhere'. He will also be the bearer of the customs and traditions of the home. The woman on the other hand will be 'swept off her feet' or may even fall pregnant which would retard her school progress. Males experience no such 'delays'. She finds female children 'ill-mannered' to the point of a physical

debacle. She expresses immense gratitude that she was 'blessed' with male children only. Claims 'liquor' can bring out the worst behaviour in women.

Day 4: Mother13: agrees with the idea that women should marry but does not encourage the idea that they should not be educated. Thinks women have a responsibility to help their parents. She would make means to educate both. Is convinced that all children love school, instead it is the parents who choose not to send children to school. The husband agrees with the marriage idea but adds it does not mean young women should not acquire 'empowerment' through education. He cites a common trend among young married couples whereby one would notice quite a lot of brides around Christmas time. By January they would be 'nowhere to be seen'. He believes that they should be equipped for the eventuality that the marriage will fizzle out. Husband blames the whole situation on young women whom he accuses of considering only external appearances when choosing husbands. According to him these women jump into marriage without carefully scrutinizing the men of their choice. The wife adds that the men of today are no longer men as she once knew them. All they want is 'money'. **Mother7** does not think this is God's intention. Thinks the thinking is motivated by greed for cattle and does not take into consideration the young woman's interests. Marriage does not guarantee happiness. Accuses men of 'dishonesty', with an education it is easy for the divorcee to find work. She would have loved to send both to school. **Mother15** thinks the saying should be revised to say the young woman's place is at her own birth home. She would educate the girl child.

Day 5: Mother16 agrees because she maintains women are not meant to have children out of wedlock. An unmarried woman does not get along with her sisters-in-law. She thinks they should marry and get an education because they may choose a bad husband or the husband may die as happened in her case. Young women need to know they can blow the dust off their certificates when this becomes necessary. Cannot choose who to send to school or not as both 'should' go to school. (Off the record) as a mother to 5 sons she would have loved a daughter to help out when she is sick (has chronic asthma), but she has trained her sons to help with her washing. **Mother17** laughs the idea away. Despite her Christian background she sees 'nothing wrong' with her late mother, 2 single aunts and herself all of whom had or have illegitimate children. Says according to the bible the sin lies with turning down suitors and there is nothing a woman can do if no man has asked for her hand in marriage. Thinks women should be allowed to study. She would educate the female child because regardless of her marital status she always remembers her mother. For **Mother18** marriage should be a question of 'choice'. Marriages go 'on and off'. With education the divorced woman can work for her living. She would 'make means' for both of her children as both are hers. **Aunt1** thinks the home of the young woman 'exists within her'. In her opinion a 'goal directed' young woman who achieves her aim in life and has a 'backbone' 'does not need marriage'. In this day and age she would not encourage marriage because some men marry out of 'jealousy', and will soon bring the child 'down' to the 'zero' level. They may 'frustrate' and 'abuse' the child and act as a 'stumbling block' in the young woman's life. She maintains that the days when parents ordered children around are over, instead parents need to respect their children's choices. Wishes to cater for both of her children but would start with the girl because girls grow up very quickly and have more 'needs' and 'expenses' than their male counterparts. If their needs are not met girls get 'sick'. **Mother19** talks about pressure that 'disowned' unmarried women used to have to endure at home. Says the 'best age' for a woman to marry in those days was between twelve and fifteen years of age.

Women who turned twenty before marriage suffered ‘name-calling’, ‘insults’ and ‘humiliation’, and were regarded in the same light as ‘grandmothers’. Elder brothers would constantly remind them they did not belong. As a result women usually left their birth-homes and took refuge with uncles. Similar treatment would befall women who got divorced from their husbands. They would not be allowed near their homes nor be assisted in any way. Instead such women would be reminded they were the other family’s property. She cites the case of her own mother who was married off at twelve years of age, ‘before’ her breasts could even start showing. Thinks it is ‘very important’ for women to ‘grab hold’ of any ‘chance’ of education. Even with tight purse strings she thinks parents should make means to send their girl children to school.

Day 6: Cousin1 thinks saying is true of the past when unmarried women were ‘called names’ like ‘ooNondindwa’ (‘spinsters’). The saying is ‘not applicable’ to the present. Back then’ it was considered a ‘disgrace’ if a woman reached a certain age still in her single status. The wife says experience has since taught people that it is those very spinsters who build better homes than even their fathers are capable of. If the spinster gets paid on the thirtieth of the month, around the twenty fifth and/or sixth she will get calls from members of the family ‘including brothers’ and the ‘father himself’, asking that they be included in her budget. Back then education had ‘no value’, all that was expected of the wife was that she should keep the house ‘clean’; ‘collect wood’, white wash the walls even if this meant the woman’s hands broke out into a rash; and for the woman to produce close to ‘eight children’ while ‘sitting down’ and depending on the husband for ‘nappies’; ‘household needs’ and even her own ‘panties’. All that mattered in those days was for the family to get cows. How long this ‘luxury’ lasted was never given consideration. It is imperative that both attend school otherwise it would be ‘unfair’ to send the one and not the other. That way neither will have reason to ‘complain’ they were deprived of an education. Wife says she would approach a friend and ask for help (with finances).

Gran2 thinks the saying no longer applies. Cites the case of her daughter in law who, though married has been in her care for some time. Claims women must study such that ‘like men’ they are able to ‘lift up the hammer’, so that they are ‘not left hanging on to their cheeks’ when husbands abandon them. Maintains one can tell when a child is clever before s/he goes to school. From her experience as a ‘carer’ she ‘sings’ the ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, and ‘u’ vowels to lull the children to sleep. The clever child will upon waking up, utter mostly the ‘a’ vowel. Being quick at learning to speak is a sign that the child is ‘clever’. **Sister2** says in this day and age she does not agree at all. Says husbands tend to mess women’s lives up; she believes in the female child as boys engage in all sorts ‘bad habits’. **Aunt2** echoes the general feeling that marriages are not what they used to be. Argues that young women should invest their future in education otherwise all they can get out of marriage is to ‘getting burnt’. Would rather young women studied further than getting married because if uneducated the young mother is faced with the inevitability of having to fend for her young ones. Thinks girls should be sent to school before boys do because girls soon ‘run out time’, they must be educated before they become aware of the world around them.

QUESTION: Type of home likely to produce succeeding children

Day 1: Father3 argues that children who are well-fed and clothed are unlikely to ‘loiter’ or think ‘like street children’. **Mother1** thinks parents should set an ‘example’ for their children, they

must work hard so that children may learn not to sit back and expect ‘handouts’. She claims her family holds a gathering at the beginning of each year where they look back and then each member discusses their plans for the new year. For **Mother2** it’s about providing for the needs of the learner. She points out that what people do not realize is the fact that the home is an ‘extension of the school’ in that parents are supposed to help learners with learning material that they could not master at school. The home should work hand in hand with teachers. **Mother3** thinks a home without money can do very little to ensure success for its children. **Mother4** thinks it is children from poor home backgrounds who tend to succeed more with their education because the background spurs them on to do better. According to this the majority of learners from well to do families tend to take things for granted. For **Mother5** it is a ‘peaceful’ and ‘loving’ home environment. For **Mother6** the financial position of the home is immaterial. If parents are determined enough they will make means for the learner to reach his potential. According to **Sibling1** the family must motivate the child, the child must also involve himself in projects which may expose him to bursary opportunities.

Day 2: **Father1** thinks parents must provide all school needs as this may affect children in a negative way. **Father2** recommends motivating the child through talks. **Mother7** thinks as long as parents speak with their children the home background is immaterial in determining their children’s success at school. **Mother8** cites the example of her ‘educated’ neighbours back in the EC. In this home all the children have professions that range from ‘teachers’ to ‘social workers’, **Mother8** links this to ‘good’ ‘treatment’ on the part of the parents. For **Mother9** it is a loving home environment as opposed to ‘warring families’. This has a ‘relaxing’ effect on the child.

Day 3: For **Mother11** discipline prevails regardless of the financial standing of the home. According to **Mother9** the home has to meet the children’s needs. **Gran1** describes these as ‘very difficult’ and challenging times where ‘teachers’ exist both within and outside the home environment. Says the external teachers tend to be more influential. Advises that if all the customary conditions have been met then the help of social workers be sought out when things get out of hand. In **Mother12’s** opinion today’s children are confronted by very serious problems, so parents must be approachable and enjoy a ‘friendly’ relationship with their children. The kind of advice or help parents offer their children could take the form of referral to other more knowledgeable individuals when the parents cannot help.

Day 4: **Mother13** thinks poverty at home can motivate the child to study hard. **Mother14-** thinks a home should ‘not be wanting’ and have ‘food’. Parents should try by all means available to provide for the children. **Mother7** thinks the learner should not be made to feel the financial constraints of the home. Parents should not be obstacles in their children’s education and must do whatever it takes to provide for their children. **Mother15** thinks children from poor backgrounds usually succeed. Parents should make sure their children ‘hold their own’ among others, by providing needs and attending parental meetings when invited.

Day 5: **Mother16** argues that for a good education homes need money because children must wear school uniform, the school bag has to be filled with books, and there is the problem with school fees. **Mother17** thinks children from poor homes tend to do well at school, their backgrounds acting as motivators. Her former classmates from well-to-do homes have landed in all sorts of problems, with ‘jail’ being cited as an example. For **Mother18** the determining factor

is 'parental care' as in keeping tabs on everything to do with school work. **Aunt1** says the parent must be supportive to a child, be friends with their children, know their children, and be trusted by their children (the husband returns and the tension starts all over again). **Mother19** says it 'depends'. When her children's school goes out on an outing she assists teachers and will even go on the trip herself to give a hand where needed. She remembers the case of one child who did not turn up for the trip because her drunk parents had 'overslept' and forgotten to wake her up. She sees this as the kind of situation that might drive a child into 'drinking', 'quitting' school or getting into 'bad habits'. As parents they have prohibited the learner from watching certain movies regardless of whether she qualifies in terms of the stipulated 'age restriction'. She has also talked the learner out of involving herself too much in projects, arguing that these will always be around. The mother would rather sit in the dark than switch on the lights in the house. The learner knows wherever she is, that this is her responsibility. This is how the mother had grown up in the rural areas. She applies a 'curfew' kind of discipline for all children in the house.

Day 6: Cousin1: The husband thinks the financial standing of a family is immaterial, what is important is how the parents treat their children. Caring starts with the 'appearance' of the child, there must be nothing out of place in this regard because these are some of the reasons why children 'lose concentration' at school. An example given is that of a child with a 'patch' or 'tear' on his pants. The wife thinks the child needs to 'know poverty' so that he may always remember 'where he is coming from'. He must learn to 'accept his situation' and to vow within himself that he is the one who is going to 'take the family out of its misery'. She thinks children from poor homes tend to 'mature earlier' and this she believes is part of their 'struggle' to get themselves out of the situation. She believes that children who have 'russians' and 'burgers' for breakfast, who are provided with everything they need remain 'dependent' 'children' whose mind 'sleeps'. They tend to see no point in getting an education, even at the age of twenty five/ eight these youths fail to think 'like an adult'. They will always 'ask' for things. The husband reiterates the idea that it all depends on the way children 'are brought up'. Parents should not spoil children such that they have no regard for anyone, neither should children be 'abused'. What matters is the 'correct' upbringing which will ensure that children survive when their parents have died. **Gran2** thinks parents must motivate children. For **Sister2** both the well-to-do and the poor home can achieve this. Poor homes try by all means to give their children education. According to **Aunt2** parents should pay for school fees and buy school uniform.

QUESTION: Suggested areas of improvement for ZWHS

Day 1: Father3 is troubled about the learners who are locked outside the gates because of late-coming, but suggests they have no excuse for this as they are 'not' herding cattle as some parents had had to do in their time. **Mother1** has nothing to suggest, wishes for parent involvement at classroom level as is the case in the preschool situation. Realizes this would be impossible in a high school context with the different learning areas being taught by different people. **Mother2** cannot think of anything she would like to change. **Mother3** can't think of anything that deserves changing and commends the school for its locked gates. **Mother4** cites the example of a teacher who, despite being requested by learners refused to define the meaning of a certain word. Although the mother thinks at Std 10 level learners should have advanced vocabulary at their disposal, she also thinks teachers need to check their attitudes when it comes to issues like this. Another bone of contention is the fact of offending learners being sent out of class for days on

end. This sometimes spills over to affect innocent learners who find themselves being punished for sins committed by others.

Day 2: All parents see nothing to fix.

Day 3: The biggest challenge for **Mother11's** daughter is English. The latter attends Saturday classes to get help with this. **Mother12** wishes that the learner could be less rigid or stubborn, that he could 'listen' when talked to. She has a problem with the excessively short skirts worn by some learners, as well as the decision to lock up the school gates. This in her opinion is no longer doing the trick and needs to be revised.

Day 4: Mother7 wishes his son could 'learn to listen' to people, both to his teachers, father and people in general and to be 'respectful'.

Day 5: Mother19 has picked up on the Maths and Physics problem for most learners in the school. She wishes the school could do something about this.

QUESTION: Reason/motivation for learner studying at ZWHS

Day 1: Father3's reasons include convenience in terms of proximity, the fact that his first born son had also been to the same school, plus the fact that the school had a good reputation as the teachers were doing what they were supposed to do. According to **Mother1** the other schools are not performing well. She heard about the ZWHS reputation from other parents and likes the fact that the school 'communicates' with the parents and is very 'strict' with its learners. For **Mother2** the learner's elder sister before him had also attended the same school. The mother liked the idea of the locked gates that latecomers have to contend with. This in the mother's view forces children to decide what they want in life. The school is also said to teach well as evident in the fact that ZWHS learners would have work to do right from the beginning of the year. ZWHS teachers are further said to summon parents to the school when there is a problem with the child. Compared to another high school that one of the mother's children had gone to, ZWHS stood out because of the neatness of its school uniform. **Mother3's** primary school teacher advised the learner to go to ZWHS because of the 'good reputation' that this school enjoys. She compares ZWHS to an under-performing school in the neighbourhood and claims learners in the other school spend more time playing than in class. The mother is so happy with ZWHS that she has sent her last born to this school even though the child wanted to follow friends to another school. **Mother4** herself was a ZWHS learner and says in her time the school was nicknamed '*The Robben Island*' because of its 'strictness' in terms of 'punctuality' and the quality of teaching. Quite a number of the teachers who had taught her still teach at the school though she is not sure about the subjects. This is why she sent her daughter to the school. **Mother5** says the learner's primary school sends its learners to ZWHS so the PS teacher forwarded her form to ZWHS. Because of this the mother made a conscious effort to send the learner's younger sibling to ZWHS because she had seen how her first born child who is an ex-ZWHS learner has turned out. The mother claims that it was on the recommendation of her daughter's primary school teachers that she was sending her children to ZWHS. For **Mother6** it has become a family 'custom' to send all the children to ZWHS. The grade 11 hurdle has never served as a deterrent because the mother blames the failure on her children rather than on the school. **Sibling1** went to

ZWHS not only because of the proximity of the school but also because of the school's 'caring' and 'strict' nature. The school does 'all in its power' for its learners to pass. She cites the 'afternoon classes' as an example.

Day 2: Father1 claims there is another high school that is nearer to his house than ZWHS is. His reasons for choosing ZWHS over this school include the 'safety' feature that comes with the high fencing as this protects children from 'gangsters'. **Father2** chose ZWHS because he was avoiding bus-fare, and claims he had also 'heard' about the school's pass rate and good code of conduct. **Mother7** loves ZWHS because of its 'strict code of conduct' which results in its good pass rate and is evident in the neatness among the learners. She sees 'parents' in the ZWHS teachers because of their 'consultative' and 'caring' behaviour. **Mother8's** child chose to go to ZWHS because she likes the idea of the 'afternoon classes'. **Mother9** wanted her daughter to choose the nearest school as she could not afford bus fare. It was the daughter who chose ZWHS against the neighbouring schools. She is happy with the idea of her child being at ZWHS.

Day 3: Mother11's elder brother went to ZWHS. This is the only high school the mother 'recognises' because of its high 'pass rate', the 'neatness' among its learners and teachers who have been teaching at the school for a considerable period of time. The learner's elder brother had gone to another high school in the neighbourhood. Both he and the mother were not impressed with the school in question. **Mother9** took her son to ZWHS because of the proximity which makes it possible for her son to save on bus-fare while making it possible for him to come home for lunch. She was impressed by the high educational standards the school maintained, the neatness of its learners. In a nutshell she believes in the school. For **Gran1** ZWHS was the learner's 'choice' among various high schools. Though she is not clear what motivates the choice the grandmother is satisfied that the move had nothing to do with the influence of friends. All of **Mother12's** children go to the same schools and remain within one school from start to finish. They have all followed the *Vundla (feeder school)* to ZWHS route because this saves the parents money that would otherwise have been wasted on uniform. Moreover over time learners develop relationships with their teachers which the mother considers good for their progress. She loves the school because of its high pass rate. It is the only school she knows of where individuals from outside offer learners assistance with certain subjects as happened with her elder child and the Maths class.

Day 4: Mother13 chose ZWHS because it is the closest so the learner can have his lunch at home; **Mother7's** husband chose ZWHS for proximity. They did not choose the other local high school because of the 'wildness' of the area in which it is situated. **Mother15's** elder sister before her had studied at ZWHS and passed without hassles, so she expected the same with the learner.

Day 5: Mother16 chose ZWHS for proximity. She is also content with the school because teachers inform parents when there is something worrying. **Mother17- Zamani** (feeder school) feeds into ZWHS. The mother is happy because the school is close by both for the learner and herself as a parent. **Mother18's** child chose ZWHS. The mother was happy because of proximity as she has no bus-fare. She is happy because the learner is 'always in sight' and visible. **Aunt1** opted for proximity, the good pass rate, the culture of 'strictness'. In the said school a learner is a learner and school uniform is school uniform. According to **Mother19 Siyalungisa** (a lower level

school), feeds into ZWHS. She opted for the convenience in terms of distance, given the problems people always encounter with regard to transport and travel. The learner has lunch at home, and teachers are able to send messages summoning parents to the school. Parents are happy with the school.

Day 6: According to **Cousin1** the decision was taken by the learner and his aunt while she was still alive. The learner is happy so the guardian couple is also happy. **Sister2** likes it because there is no need for transport, and he eats lunch at home. She is further happy with the way the school conducts itself. The school's strictness becomes evident in the time the learner takes when they come home for lunch. He is always rushing to get back in time for class. If they miss the class the learner will be kept out of class till the parents visits the school. All of **Aunt2's** children go through ZWHS, she loves the school because it is quite close by which makes it possible for them to come home for lunch. She also appreciates the school as a centre for learning because she has read about the school's good results.

QUESTION: Feelings, thoughts and plans around the learner doing Grade 12, prediction of the end of the year results

Day 1: Father3 is happy that the learner is in grade 12 and hopes he will pass. **Mother2** has no doubt that he will pass grade 12. **Mother3** cannot say what the future holds but is praying. **Mother4** is confident that her daughter will pass Grade 12. **Mother5** is very happy about her daughter's achievement because she is the first in her family to have come this far. The mother thinks she'll be able to make it on her own in life. **Mother6** is confident that her daughter will pass. **Sibling1** is happy about the progress made so far, and describes her younger sister as 'promising'. She can only offer to put her through some short courses and has urged her to start applying for bursaries as soon as possible.

Day 2: Father1 is very happy that learner has come this far and would like her to proceed to university. He is praying for her to pass. **Father2** has no objections and prays that the learner will pass. The parents will make means for the learner to go to the tertiary institution of his choice. **Mother7** motivates her son to study very hard so as not to go back to ZWHS to repeat the class. She is praying very hard for him to pass the grade. **Mother8** would have loved for her daughter to go beyond Std. 10 as this would give her a sense that God has been kind to her. **Mother8** appreciates the progress her daughter has made up to this point, and prays that her daughter may pass the class. **Mother9** is concerned about the results, and the future. She asks God to come to her rescue.

Day 3: Mother11 is both happy and anxious that her daughter is doing Grade 12. She is 'anxious' that English may not cause her daughter to fail the grade. The daughter is presently under a lot of pressure from the children in her community because 'all eyes are on her'. She is the only one doing grade 12 in the neighbourhood. Her predecessors, former classmates and successors are counting the number of days toward the day that grade 12 results will be made available. They are all planning to buy the relevant newspaper. Quite a big number of the youth is not going to school in the area. The mother expresses concern over such children forming friendly relationships with her daughter because these children do not give her child time to do her school work and will come looking for her at awkward times. These also form part of the

bulk of the 'watchers'. **Mother9** is very happy, prays that God will give the parents and their son strength. **Gran1** is very happy and considers it a milestone that her grandson has made it to such a challenging class. She is praying that all will go well for him. She had attended a grade 12 parents' meeting. She 'tells' herself with unflinching confidence that her grandson is among the exclusive 'ten' 'good' learners out of a hundred that the teachers were highlighting in their report-back to parents. That is the measure of the faith and love she has for the learner. She leaves the learner's fate in the exams in the hands of 'The Above'. **Mother12** is happy about this and realizes the need for him to act now. The onus is now on the parent to provide for tertiary education.

Day 4: Mother13 is happy and enthusiastic about this and she attends parental meetings. She is praying that her wishes for him could come true. She would like her son to go to Pentech (Peninsula Technikon) or UWC since both are close by. The mother cannot predict her son's future. **Mother7** is very happy about achievement. She drums home into the learner's mind the need to study hard so as to qualify for bursaries, because these are given out on merit. The father is praying for him to pass though he cannot guarantee this will be the case. **Mother15** is 'happy' about her being in ZWHS. She is convinced she will pass and follow the route of the other children who are studying elsewhere. She can now proceed to her level of satisfaction. The end of the year performance will depend on the effort she puts in now.

Day 5: Mother16 would love for him to proceed but she has no 'strength'. She does not know what will happen. **Mother17** is worried about the expenses around the farewell function which is around the corner, and later university education. **Mother18** has not thought beyond Std 10 but learner has hinted she would like to go to a 'college' because she knows her parents cannot afford university. The mother is hopeful, with this being subject to the level of determination she sees in the learner. After ZWHS **Aunt1**'s child will go wherever he wishes, and she does 'not doubt' that he will pass. **Mother19** is happy about her daughter's progress, but is also 'gritting [her] teeth' with apprehension.. She claims parents have no way of knowing what their children get up to once they are out of sight. Though today's children 'drink' and 'take drugs', she is happy with her daughter as she is 'still the same' child she has always been. The learner knows she has to be home by six, as it is her responsibility to turn on the house lights, draw the curtains and prepare the evening meal. The mother is prepared to sit in the darkness and wait, when the learner finally arrives she has to give a full account of her where she is coming from. Her daughter being in grade 12 means she is 'at the verge of becoming something' in life. For 2006 the learners' father has approached his employees for financial assistance. Their response was that they were prepared to help if she is doing 'Maths and Science'. All that the learner needs do now is work very hard; the family plans to apply for bursaries as well.

Day 6: Cousin1 is happy that the learner is doing his matric. He claims it would make him even happier if he were to pass with a 'distinction'. If this were to happen it would bring such 'a relief' to the family, because then the learner will qualify for a job after he has undergone some 'short training courses'. The rate at which the learner does things suggests that he will pass at the end of the year. Of this they are 'convinced'. **Gran2** chose ZWHS because of its proximity. She says parents were called to a meeting in which ex-ZWHS high achievers were acknowledged for their efforts. She likes the manner in which the school runs its affairs and thinks if the learner maintains her present pace she will pass the final exams. **Sister2** is happy her brother is doing std

10. She has confidence in him but does not know what the step after gr12 is going to be. **Aunt2** has discussed the future with the learner, and the learner thinks she might have to work first as she has no hope of a bursary. The aunt is worried this might retard the learner and is praying for a bursary offer.

QUESTION: Career wishes for learners, and the reasons thereof

Day 1: Father3 has no specific wish for his son, and leaves this up to him to decide, he is however proud of his 'drawing' talent. **Mother1** is not the biological mother of the learner therefore feels she cannot say much on this point. She intends to 'retire' to the 'deeply rural' 'Gubengxa' in the EC where she had started a crèche in 2003. This is a place where her services are needed to shake things up a bit. She sheds a few tears when she hears about the beautiful things that the learner had to say about her as one of the latter's guardians. **Mother2** wishes her son to go as far as he wishes with his education, and for him to choose for himself as he knows more about career opportunities than she does. **Mother3** would have loved her daughter to become whatever she wishes, and has no specific career in mind. **Mother4** says her daughter is 'handy' around the house, she helps with electrical faults and can 'revive' things. The mother is also aware of her daughter's 'artistic' talent and her interest in designing and wishes to leave it up to her to decide her career. **Mother5** would have liked her daughter to be a social worker because she has a disciplinary streak about her. Were it up to **Mother6** to choose she would love her daughter to be a nurse because she has a patient personality and would help her mother with her elderly sickly plus 100years old grandmother, Sibling1 would have loved her sister to teach. She has observed her younger sister motivate other children and 'patiently' helping them with their school work though the sister's interest lies in the 'engineering' field.

Day 2: Father1 has never considered what his daughter might one day become, and will leave it up to her to decide. **Father2** has no say over career choice. It is up to learner to decide, he as father would have preferred it if he were to own a business because he does not talk much. **Mother7** wants what the son wants for himself. **Mother8** would have loved to see her child presenting on television because she thinks these jobs not only help focus the child, but offer good salaries as well. **Mother9** cannot say much because she does not know much about careers.

Day 3: Mother11 thinks daughter would make a good social worker because she is always offering advice to others. Her male friends also consult her on various issues. **Mother9** wishes the learner could become a doctor one day. **Gran1** wishes the learner would follow a career in 'social work' because he has a 'sharp eye' and cares for the next person. According to this the learner has brought home children with various problems before. **Mother12** will support whatever the learner wants.

Day 4: For Mother13 social work looks like a good profession judging by the mother's brother who has made giant leaps and 'buys cash'. She also suspects her son might turn out into a business person and is happy that in the event of her death they should be able to run and maintain the present business. She is also planning to retire to the EC as soon as the learner starts working. **Mother14** does not wish her daughter should become a nurse as this is such a tough job. **Mother7** would have loved learner to be a lawyer. The profession needs a clever person

who knows what he is about. **Mother15** says her daughter is good at interrogating, so she would like her to follow the legal fraternity.

Day 5: Mother16 finds it 'difficult' to decide on a career for her child because two of her older children never became the people they had studied to be due to the scarcity of jobs. As a result she sees no point in obsessing about the career though she would have loved for him to become a 'social worker'. This is because of his 'soft-spoken' nature; **Mother17** knows about son's ambition to become a pilot. **Mother18** wishes for a 'social worker' daughter because the learner likes offering advice. **Aunt1** 'sees a lawyer' in the learner in that he 'thinks deeply', 'can differentiate', and is 'not easily overcome'.

Day 6: Cousin1 says they have heard him express such high hopes as in being 'a pilot' and have seen nothing 'wrong' with this. **Gran2** would have loved her grandchild to run her own business one day, because she likes selling things. She uses the money to buy her school needs and to help around the house. **Sister2** would be happy if her brother could be a lawyer because he is always 'cornering' people and wanting to get to the bottom of things. **Aunt2** has never thought about the learner's future career.

QUESTION: Envisaged obstacles

Day 1: Father3 cites lack of determination as a possible obstacle that his son may have to face. **Mother1** thinks it is perhaps up to the child's biological mother is to decide. According to **Mother2** nothing stands in the learner's way as the family will make a concerted effort for him to go to university. **Mother3** thinks money will be an obstacle. Besides lack of money for further education **Mother4** is concerned that her daughter's struggle with Maths and science will get in the way of her career as a future naval officer. **Mother5** is unemployed and knows that the disability grant would be 'insufficient' for further education. **Mother6** thinks 'laziness' might get in the way as sometimes happens in some homes. She cites examples of children who 'drop out of sight' and go to Johannesburg without informing their parents. **Sibling1** cannot afford to send her sister to university.

Day 2: Father1 has no money for the learner to proceed. **Father2** thinks problems would arise if he were to die though he is hopeful that the one daughter already at a tertiary institution would take over. **Mother8** fears 'jealousy' might hinder her daughter's progress. She recalls an incident where the learner had claimed she had a 'mental block' in class. **Mother9** lacks money.

Day 3: Mother11 says parents not having sufficient funds to send learner to a tertiary institution could present as an obstacle. **Mother9** lacks money. **Gran1** claims she has taught the learner to mind his own business. She is ready to send him to any tertiary institution of his choice, and has made provision for this. **Mother12** anticipates no obstacles as the learner has his own and the younger brother's grant to start him off. In case this is insufficient the mother says he'll have to do part-time work over the weekends.

Day 4: Mother13 claims the learner's social worker uncle has promised he will work hand in hand with his sister to help further his nephew's education. **Mother14** lacks money. **Mother7** equates her lack of money with obstacles. Without the prospect of a bursary he sees no future for

his son. **Mother15** thinks the child might later, with the influence of friends, grow lazy and not wish to study further.

Day 5: Mother16 lacks money. **Mother17** lacks money, and foresees problems if the mother will still be unemployed by then. **Mother18** thinks it will be her lack of money and that of determination on the learner's part. She thinks the learner 'has to want to study', as forcing her would not yield good results. **Aunt1** anticipates only one obstacle, i.e. lack of money.

Day 6: Cousin1 says they are not sure what the piloting dream entails, so they cannot say how much of this they will be able to afford. **Gran2** does not think money is much of an obstacle because one can work and 'put aside' a small sum for one to continue with one's studies, till one is able to reach one's dreams. To her 'it doesn't matter when' this happens because education is 'timeless' as nobody is ever too old to learn. **Sister2** sees money as the sole obstacle in her brother's way. **Aunt2** does not foresee any stumbling blocks.



APPENDIX E
Paraphrased Learner Interviews
As conducted with Grade 12 respondents in 2005

DAY 1. QUESTION: Possible challenges in Grade 12; proposed mechanisms for tackling these

Male1: does not foresee any problem in coping with Grade 12. Later contradicts himself and claims he finds the 'higher grade' Maths and Science challenging. To cope with these he, together with two other classmates come to school during the weekends. They read 'in advance', so that by the time the teacher reaches a certain chapter in class they have already covered it, he also gets help from his cousins. **Female1:** Maths and Physics (particularly Chemistry which she had not been able to grasp since grade 11). She gets help from Cape Tech students she had met at a camp (she is the chairperson of the *Sihlobo* Project which aims to 'basically unleash the potential of the youth' by engaging them in talks and activities). She had taken her Maths textbook along so that she could during breaks 'compare' notes with learners from other institutions. Teachers don't all teach in the same way, she keeps hoping to find new ways to 'counter her problem'. As a result of the camping trip Cape Tech learners have offered to tutor all interested learners. **Female2's** elder sisters are all working this year, leaving behind only the young and male components of the family and their elderly grandmother (altogether a family of 11 in a one-roomed house with back rooms). This leaves her with the responsibility of house cleaning, child minding and cooking; the learner has had to forget about afternoon classes and rush home so that she may 'wash the baby', 'cook' and attend to her grandmother's needs; these have caused her stress before. On the school front problems include 'unreasonable' teachers who will send learners out of class at the slightest provocation and expect the affected parent to come to the school 'over nothing', just so that the teacher may talk with the parent 'in the absence' of the learner. Other teachers sometimes 'sulk' for no apparent reason and make the class extremely 'uncomfortable'. One teacher 'always miscalculates' their marks and has robbed her of '13marks' in one instance. She believes they sometimes fail because of this teacher's poor calculating ability. Another teacher is said to teach in a 'round about' way such that learners have been compelled to consult a previous teacher for clarity. Another 'lazy' teacher would give very few classwork exercises which he 'never bothers to mark'. The same teacher had tested learners only 'once' in 2004. Learners were never told how they had performed in that test. Learners have discussed the problem with their class-teacher who seems to take this lightly. Subject-wise challenges include Maths and the chemistry part in Physical Science.

DAY 2. QUESTION: Challenging learning areas

Female3: Geography has been a challenge, because she does 'not understand' her teacher. Although he does explain himself and even taps into Xhosa to clarify things, for some reason this does not seem to help his learners. To counter her problem she attends Geography afternoon classes that are offered by a representative from the Western

Province although this is designed to assist only one of her classmates (a rugby-player in whom the provincial team is investing). All learners are welcome to the class, and this has helped the learners. Other WP representatives also offer Biology classes. **Female4** feels challenged by Maths and Geography; she also does not understand the Afrikaans language and is in no position to answer even ‘simple’ questions in the language. She plans to mingle with ‘local classmates’ who are competent in the learning areas.

DAY 3

Male2 sees no major challenges as he always manages to pass all of his learning areas, though some better than others. English is one such subject he needs to improve in. He ‘buys’ and ‘reads’ newspapers like *‘The Daily Sun’* and *‘Laduma’* for sport, and other books. He does ‘crossword puzzles’ and ‘keeps abreast’ of things. He has minor challenges with Biology and Afrikaans. He needs to read Biology in order to pass. **Male3** has had problems with Biology only. His cousin had once taught him that ‘with determination one could achieve anything’ and also ‘to fight’ for what he wants, he is determined to beat the problem by ‘working hard’ and ‘pulling up [his] socks’. **Female5** identifies Geography as her problem. She had hoped for a new teacher because she does not understand the present one. She is doing her best to understand the teacher and will even read Geography after class. She is also hoping the Saturday classes she attends will solve her problem. Her other problem is Biology, the noise that dominates during the class makes her lose concentration. Though one of the favourites among teachers across the board, learners undermine her (i.e. Biology teacher) authority. One positive thing about the Biology class is that several teachers have now come on board to teach the class. One such teacher is Mr Makina who is ‘strong’ and will send learners out of class if they don’t wish to listen. The learner suspects the problem with her sweet Biology teacher’s lack of authority is because the teacher is ‘old’, ‘warm-hearted’ and likes to share her views with the class. Hers is not a strong personality. **Male3** thinks there is no cooperation in class. When he approaches classmates about studying after school he gets negative responses. Those who are more competent in some of the subjects are reluctant to share knowledge with him. He has to do go to the library to look for information. Another tendency with his classmates is to give preferential treatment to some teachers and will make noise when it is other teachers teaching. History and Geography are his weak points, the latter to a lesser extent. The history teacher is said to simply give a ‘skeleton’, and to ask them to flesh this out on their own. He struggles with the ‘introduction’ and ‘conclusion’ to his essays. Also, although the teacher tries to explain, the learner fails to understand him. He admits history is all about ‘essays’ and ‘source based questions’, so he will have to focus on these in order to improve. The learner also blames himself for not giving history his best, and also today’s youth for ‘learning to forget’. He feels grade 12 learners deserve to be treated with ‘kid gloves’.

DAY 4

Male4 finds it ‘hard to concentrate’ in class because of certain individuals who ‘make noise’. He cites an incident where he as a School Governing Body (SGB) member was confronted by learners about gates that were being closed during the lunch hour. This had

led to chaos in class. He claims his class is ‘ranked’ the ‘naughtiest’ class of all grade 12’s because it is a combination of three streams and is the largest. He feels his strength ‘weakening’ as he has not completed ‘most’ of his projects. He has failed the Geography, Xhosa and History tests and suspects this has to do with him ‘not’ being serious about his school work, and ‘over extending’ himself. He is involved in the SGB work, the Amy Biehl and Molo Songololo projects, and has just been approached to take part in a drama project. His focus is more on these than his school work. He foresees problems with Afrikaans because the teacher does not come to class. When he finally does the period is almost over by the time he gets there. Teachers have embarked on a strategy of not coming to class as long as the class is dirty, so periods go by without teachers. Male4 plans to address the issues with the principal in a meeting that is about to take place. On a personal level he promises to ‘pull up [his] socks’ because he has a problem with all three of his content subjects, i.e. Biology, Geography and History. He also is going to discard some of the projects. For his studies to be effective he needs to write his own notes. Though her English teacher has been teaching her since Grade 10 **Female6** is still afraid of the teacher. The learner tries to ‘force [the language] down her throat’ but she still fails it regardless. She cites a case where they ‘rewrote’ the ‘same test’ which she had previously failed, where she had failed it even the second time around. Once home she had ‘burst into tears’. She claims she ‘likes’ English, and has been reading the ‘*YOU*’ magazine and the ‘*Cape Argus*’ since Grade 10. She struggles more with ‘Paper 1’ than ‘Paper 2’ in the English exam. The former deals with ‘language’ while the latter is literature based. She has shared her knowledge in the other subjects with a learner who is competent in English, with the hope that she would learn something from her. Instead the learner in question just says she is ‘not sure she knows English’. Maths is **Female7’s** biggest challenge. She no longer attends Saturday classes because these were of no use to her. The Maths teacher there had his own way of teaching which clashed with that of her ZWHS teacher, with both ‘confusing’ the learner in the process. **Female8’s** biggest challenge is ‘time management’. She sometimes ‘takes longer to understand’ and thinks it ‘unfair’ of her to expect teachers to take her ‘far back’ during the afternoon classes as teachers are sometimes ‘very busy’. To counter her problem she asks her elder sister for help, and also uses the afternoon classes to thrash out problems with group mates who have different strengths. She plans to attend Saturday classes that are about to take off at ZWHS. In Grade 11 **Female9** had a problem with Maths and English. She forced her way into the exclusive *Ruggers*’ (i.e. the provincial rugby-player learner who is being assisted by the WP) class. The problem she once had with Maths in the past had to do with ‘signs’, till her Maths teacher (Mr Maths) drew up a sign table for her. She however cannot study Maths on her own. In English she struggles with the grammar section. The *Ruggers* English coach, Mr Rugby Coach teaches well, especially where ‘poetry’ is concerned. She think her problem with English stems from her being ‘isiXhosa speaking’ and not being exposed to English much. Although she reads in English she would like someone to explain things to her and requires ‘absolute quietness’ in order ‘to grasp’. This is made impossible by learners who make noise in class. **Female10** struggles with Maths. She ‘understands’ while the teacher is in class, but the information is never there when she is on her own at home. She prefers to practise the subject with friends. With Geography the problem is her ‘noisy classmates’ who make it impossible for her to follow the teacher’s lesson. In the ‘quiet’ of her home she is able to understand the

subject. To counter her problem she and a group of learners practise after the Saturday classes. **Female11** ‘fails’ particularly Paper 1 in English tests. She thinks her problem is largely a question of her neglecting the language, and also ‘being too lazy to think’ as some questions are ‘not that difficult’ to answer. Her other problem is with the Geometry section in Maths. She finds it easier to understand when the teacher explains in class but when ‘the question paper’ is placed before her she ‘goes blank’. She tries to pass tests. **Male5** does not fear the unknown, he will forge forward and will see what transpires. He claims he has ‘self-confidence’. The reason he had failed grade 11 was his weakness in Maths and English. He had told himself he would no longer take the subjects for granted and studied hard. In the past he used to get less than the minimum mark of 33% in English because he did not read any of the English books. He did ‘research’ and got a summary of the prescribed book. Where Maths is concerned he had studied with Grade 12 learners, and this had helped him.

DAY 6:

Male6 has a problem with Afrikaans. Even though the teacher uses English to explain the story he struggles with vocabulary when writing, so he always fails the literature section. He prefers the grammar paper. To counter his problem he pencils in the English explanation of words so that he doesn’t get stuck when studying. He also has an Afrikaans ‘dictionary’ and reads the ‘short stories’ and ‘poems’ in the language textbook, and also the prescribed text. He uses the dictionary when doing this. According to **Female12** Higher Grade (HG) candidates do not get the in-depth kind of information they need from teachers. On rainy days teachers and learners don’t come to class and school respectively, resulting in teachers being reluctant to teach for the benefit a few learners. Teachers do not take kindly to being reminded about their duties. Her new classmates are just another breed of Grade 12’s that ‘plays cards’ and ‘makes a lot of noise’ in class. She tries her best to bring them around by offering to help with ‘poetry’ but they just ‘will not concentrate’. **Female13** struggles with English which she calls ‘the most important’ subject of all. They recently wrote an English test which highlights the ‘importance’ and ‘universality’ of the English language. This echoed what Ms English had always been saying about the language. Her problem lies with the ‘tenses’. When proof-reading she has noticed her tendency ‘to leave out’ words. Maths is her other problem. All she needs to do is ‘practise’ it. One home the learner can no longer look at her books because reading by herself ‘does not help’. Her sister is doing ‘a lower grade’. She would have benefited from a study group or the Saturday classes. Though she had brought these to her parents’ attention right ‘at the beginning of the year’ she still ‘did not register’ for the classes. The afternoon classes rob one of concentration. **Male7** worries about the possibility of ‘gangsters’ mugging ‘in public’ as he knows he would refuse to comply. This he believes could lead to him getting shot. He also fears that ‘something bad’ could happen to his family ‘toward the end of May’, in which case he would ‘not be able to recover’ in time for his June exam. He wishes his family could stay the way it is, and for ZWHS to keep on locking the gates thereby reducing the chances of gangsters finding their way into the school, and for him to hold on to the new improved being that he has become. Subject-wise he worries about Biology and Maths (though to a lesser extent). The problem he has with Maths and English ‘will be solved’ soon enough

because of the help he gets at St Francis (i.e. an institution which offers Saturday classes), the video cassettes he watches on Sundays, and the assistance they are getting from ZWHS's Maths teacher when they have a problem. The English teacher tells them to come together as a 'group of four', as studying alone is 'not a good idea'. Mr. Noodles also helps with all the subjects 'except' Xhosa and Afrikaans. There they get the chance to ask questions. Among ZWHS, the St Francis classes, the video cassettes and Mr Noodles he is convinced there is bound to be someone who'll 'make sense' to him.

DAY 7

For Male8 to pass gr11 he had convinced himself he would have to 'work hard' and also with the people 'who know'. He put 'an extra effort' into the subjects he was struggling with, but 'did not neglect' the ones he understood better. The four months were full of 'ups and downs'. He had more 'difficulty' with certain sections in Maths than with the other subjects. His home area is also 'crime'-ridden and he gets to hear a lot of 'gunshots', he finds this 'disturbing'. His problem with Maths is 'geometry' based, and he struggles with 'angles'. For Maths he proposes to work with learners who know the subject better. As far as the gunshots are concerned the solution would be for him 'to go to the library' in Crossroads. By the time **Male2** writes exams he'll have tried and 'covered' aspects that he is not comfortable with. He does not foresee any problem. Where he experiences problems he will consult an 'outsider' who will give him an 'experience' 'different' from the one he has been getting at ZWHS. This gives him another perspective on things. He has a challenge in Afrikaans because he 'does not commit' to the subject. To overcome his problem he consults people on his street who are conversant with the language for help with paragraphs, while he 'scribbles notes' on the side. He and his two gr12 friend 'compete' between themselves, and this keep them on their toes as noone copies from the other. On a personal level **Female14** lives in anxiety of something happening to her family as this would affect her negatively. Subject-wise her only threat is Afrikaans. She started learning the subject in high school. Her 'only' solution to her problem is a 'positive attitude' toward the language. She points out that 'the more negative' her attitude to the language grows, the 'farther' away it is going move from her. She does not seem to be able to understand the language even though she reads. The Afrikaans teacher explains in isiXhosa. In his presence she understands, the problem comes when she is alone. She also has an Afrikaans 'dictionary'. It is unfortunate that Afrikaans and isiXhosa are the only subjects that are excluded from the Saturday classes. She gets so bored with Afrikaans sometimes that she wishes she did not have to listen to it. When writing she wishes someone could be close-by 'to translate' for her. **Male9's** 'envisaged' challenges are the 'chemistry' side in Physics, Maths (though to a lesser extent) and the 'comprehension' portion in English. This is where he feels he needs to put in an 'extra effort' as these areas have the potential to 'pull [him] down'. To combat the problem his cousin buys newspapers which he reads. He consults a dictionary when he gets stuck on the meaning of a word. He has seen a 'slight' improvement in his last English test, and is 'waiting to see' what will happen on the next test. His Physics teacher does not like being questioned too much and accuses the learner of being 'stubborn', so the learner takes his problems to his Grade 11 teacher.

DAY 8

At a personal level **Female15**'s problem is her 'shyness'. In class she finds it very difficult to lift up her hand when there is something she does not understand. She would rather ask the more knowledgeable learners. She has never thought of seeking the teacher's help away from prying eyes, and has had no problem with the help from other learners. She will try to approach teachers in private. Her other problem is with Maths—she thinks the source of her problem is her 'attitude' because she hardly ever practises the subject. For Maths she'll join and practise with a Maths group. **Male10**'s first challenge is 'lack' of study space at home. With three playful siblings in the same room reading becomes a big challenge which he tries to overlook. He feels scared as fate seems to have played a hand in him finding himself doing Geography; English, Maths and Biology all at 'higher grade'. He fears Biology the most because of the 'terminology' that the subject uses. His other concern is his classmates who seem to take his attempt at exemption to mean he thinks he is 'cleverer' or 'better' than the rest. They always monitor his movements and 'laugh at' him when he remains behind to study after class. Subject-wise Maths is his biggest challenge. As a coping mechanism he plans to register at St Francis so that he may put his Saturdays to good use, in addition to the effort he makes during the course of the week. He has heard that there are bursary prospects in his school though he is not sure how far true this is. **Female16**'s challenges are Biology and Maths. As a 'slow learner' she needs to go over what she had been taught in the Maths class. Teachers on the other hand have a 'syllabus' to cover—this is how she gets to lag behind. She wishes teachers could give her more of their time. Teachers tell them they need to forge ahead. Those with problems need to read again at home or ask other learners to help. She is 'totally' blank where Biology is concerned. After reading a section she 'cannot recall' what the previous section had been all about. She claims she is not the only one who has this problem. Her classmates, some of which have been at ZWHS for 'a long time', take teachers for granted. They show no respect for one of the teachers, make noise and talk back to the teacher. The teacher in question sometimes targets 'row by row' or moves from 'group to group' with her explanations. Sometimes learners ask questions that are 'way off base'. Things were much better while Mr Biology was teaching because all learners knew they would be 'punished' if they misbehaved. To deal with her problems she is going to request that the Maths, Biology and Geography teachers should each teach them for a week during the vacation. She has heard about the *Fezeka* Saturday classes which have just recently taken off, but she has not been able to attend. **Male11** is 'slow' in Accounting and gets confused. He is there when the subject is taught in class, he attends after-school classes and has grunted 'yes' in the past. The problem appears when he has to work 'on [his] own'. He finds the Accounting terminology 'confusing' as he cannot decide 'which side' a company's money should appear. He does not know 'where to start' when he has to calculate 'depreciation'. He aims to give the other subjects his best so that his score may be 'high', but is not suggesting he has given up on Accounting. The St Francis classes help in that by the time he gets to class he already has 'an idea'. He claims the afternoon classes have 'not yet been mobilized'. Since he 'cannot study' a challenging subject by himself, he chooses to go home after school.

DAY 1. QUESTION: Stream, reason for choice of stream; views on the importance of subject selection

Male1 is doing Maths, Physics, Biology and the 3languages. He chose Maths because he grew up enjoying working with numbers. He thinks it is very important for people to choose subjects, a learner should consider if he can cope with the subject and also loves it. He wouldn't advise others to do a subject simply because they see a future in the subject, or on the understanding that they would find extra assistance. 'Without love' for the subject in question, there will be nothing driving the learners to practise or study the subject on their own. **Female1** is doing Maths, Physics, Biology and the 3languages. Compared to history she thinks Physics allows one to 'spread' one's horizons in that there are few limitations in science. She thinks one should choose subjects that one 'loves' so that one does 'not' get bored. She likes science because it is 'practical', 'visible' and subject to 'proof'. **Female17** does Maths, Physics, Biology and the 3languages. She chose the stream because she has not yet seen anyone with Maths and physics sitting around without a job. She believes these open up a lot of opportunities. She thinks it is important to choose subjects, especially if one is going to 'continue' with those subjects in question. **Female2** 'feared' Physical Science, so she wanted to get 'a taste' of what this was all about. Now she knows there is nothing to it. This together with her plan to be either a pilot or civil engineer one day saw her choosing the stream. Her other interest is in drawing. Subject choice is very important because with a Maths background one can do many things, like 'banking' and others.

DAY 2

Female3 is doing Geography; Biology; Home Economics and the 3languages. She used to do History in the past but would fail the subject. She found Home Economics (HE) 'easier to understand' so she stuck with it. HE does not require much reading as the subject is more of a 'practical' nature. It is important that one should do subjects one 'understands' as this might otherwise lead to 'failure'. **Female4** does Biology, Geography, Maths and the 3languages. She wishes to be a tv presenter or climatologist. The choice of subjects is important as this has to be in line with career plans. She argues one cannot do home economics if being a tv presenter is the objective.

DAY 3

Male2 is doing Maths and Physics because he had asked his class-teacher what stream to take in order to qualify for a course in Electrical Engineering'. The choice is important because a connection exists between careers and the subjects one must do. **Male3** is doing Maths, Science, Biology and the three languages. In his observation people doing History and Geography 'struggle to find jobs'. With Maths and Physics one 'can go everywhere', and that includes jobs which require Geography and History. Learners are 'not supposed' to reach grade 12 without having considered what route they are going to take after grade 12. This is a decision that learners should take while doing 'Grades 9 and 10', 'irrespective of whether money is/is not available'. **Female5** chose Maths because she likes calculations, and had hoped her elder brother would be there to help with

Geography. Her interest in Biology stems from her wish to be a nurse one day. Subjects have to be in line with the learner's 'goal'. **Male3** wishes someone would explain to them what the possibilities are for a learner doing his stream of subjects; so that he knows exactly which way to go once he gets to the tertiary level. He took history with the idea that that he would one day become a lawyer, but later switched to courses which would take him less than seven years to finish because he needs to do something for his mother 'before she dies'. 'Tourism Management' or HR on the other hand will take him about two to three years at the technikon. When asked if learners were getting any outside help with history as was evidently the case with other subjects Male3 expresses regret for having joined the history stream. He feels it is 'looked down upon', and states that general comment suggests history is for 'lazy people'. They have suggested the idea of guest teaching, but nobody seems to care. The Saturday classes were full by the time he arrived for registration, so he has no extra help with History. He does not see any point in choosing subjects like Xhosa that he will have no use for later on in his life. He thinks learners should do only subjects that they will take to the tertiary level.

DAY 4

Male4 is doing Biology, Geography, History and the 3 languages because he wishes to become a 'lawyer' one day. Teachers have persuaded him to do Commercial subjects before but he chose not to. **Female6** is doing Maths, Physics, Biology and the languages. Where Accounting allows one access to 'the bank only', Physics and Maths have 'more opportunities'. She thinks subject choice is determined by career aspirations. **Female7** says when she reached grade 10 she chose Maths, Geography and Biology because she knew she could not cope with Physical Science. She had an ambition to be a social worker one day, because she is an 'open' person. It is good for learners who know what they want in life, in order for them to choose relevant subjects. **Female8** is doing Maths, Physics and Biology. Everyone at her home has done these subjects because it was her late mother's wish. There are more opportunities for learners who have done these subjects. Her mother had been a 'teacher', 'nurse' and 'clothing designer'. The learner has experienced no difficulty with the subject combination. Choice of subject depends on 'how much one understands' the subject in question and also what one 'intends to do' in the future.

DAY 5

Female9 is registered for Maths; Geography and Biology. She chose these subjects because she is 'in-between' 'social work' and 'the navy'. Although she loves social work she is worried she may not be able to afford it, while the latter offers opportunity for study while working. 'No money' is required to do the latter, instead she is told the naval career 'pays well'. She had also heard from the 'Take 5' television programme that Maths, Biology, Geography, and Physical Science are requisite for a naval career. The latter two are relevant especially if one is to master 'direction', or 'dive in'. To achieve this one has to know the molecular make-up of gases. She argues that learners need to decide in grade 11 what they wish to do in the future, so that they may match this with the relevant stream. **Female10** is doing Maths, Geography and Biology. She has always

understood Geography but Maths not. She chose the stream ‘hoping’ she ‘could improve’ in Maths. Quite a number of careers require Mathematical ability, hence her choice of the subject. It is important that learners choose subjects they understand or those with which they can get assistance. **Female11** does Accounting, Economics; Maths plus languages. Her grandmother ‘had forced’ her into the stream, she would otherwise have opted for Home Economics. The latter the grandmother is said to have dismissed as being a dead end. She had told the learner that Accounting on the other hand could earn her a job as ‘a cashier’. Subject selection is good in that it paves the way to one’s career. **Male5** does Biology; Maths and Physics. He saw ‘open’ opportunities for people doing these courses in SA. With Maths and Physics he could do ‘maritime studies’; civil, chemical and mechanical engineering; or undergo naval or air-force training. He never entertained Geography and History as he thought these were for the ‘lazy’. He decided against Accounting and BE as there were not that many opportunities for Black people in the field. Big companies employ white people as ‘book-keepers’ and there are hardly any Black bank managers or accountants who don’t suffer from ‘racial attacks’. Choice is important if one considers one’s future career. One ‘cannot’ become a doctor with a History and Geography background.

DAY 6

Male6 does Accounting, Economics and Maths. He wishes to become an accountant. In Grade 8 they did 9 subjects, so he saw how well he had performed in the three subjects. Subject choice is ‘important’. The learner is the one who ‘knows best’ how good he is at a particular subject, and also what he would like to be in the future. Parents and teachers may send him in a particular direction so it is ‘good’ that the learners should choose their own subject, in case things go wrong. **Female12** does Accounting, Economics and Maths. She chose subjects aligned to a career in Chartered Accounting or Marketing. Choice is best, it depends on the individual’s ‘hobbies’. She argues that a party hopper in her eyes cannot become a doctor as this is always on call. The same applies with the ‘shy’ person, a marketing career would also not be suitable. **Female13** does Biology, Maths and Physics. Before they were moved to the present location he had a neighbour who was one grade ahead of him, and had advised him to check which of his OBE subjects he had passed well. He was to check these against the list of subjects he was supposed to choose from. They had jointly decided on the stream in question. This had worked out well for them both as learners. When the learner’s family moved he lost both the neighbour and his good grades. His mother had her own theories about the decline. Subject choice is important for one’s career. **Male7** does Biology, Geography and Maths. At home his elder brothers were always complaining about the ‘complexity’ of Physics, Accounting and Business Economics. His family had never anticipated he would do Geography, but that he would do Biology, Maths and Physics. He had seen his friends doing the Geography stream and had ‘jumped in’. All that his family told him was that as long as Maths was part of his stream it was fine. His mother went to the length of coming to ZWHS to ensure that he was indeed registered for Maths. The family approved the fact that his stream also included Biology. He claims he does not have the mentality that says he cannot do certain subjects. He sometimes wishes he could have done Physical Science so that his dream to be either a ‘pilot’, ‘surgeon’, or ‘bank manager’ could be realized. He

has talked to his brother's friend who works as a career guide about career options and he would advise him which subjects are necessary for which career. His career choice now lies between a 'tour guide' and a 'lawyer'. He claims he tends to get attracted to 'all careers' but has 'no regrets' about his choice of subjects. He thinks learners should be prepared for their dream careers from Grades 5 and 6. During the 2004 Saturday classes while doing Grade 11 his Life Skills teacher at both ZWHS and St Francis, Ms LO would talk about 'interests' and 'values'. Although it is 'not' necessarily too late he feels that had these been discussed at an earlier stage learners would have had that much longer to think about their career interests. He claims had he known about his 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' in time he would have been better placed to make a good career choice.

DAY 7

Male8 chose Accounting, Economics and Maths were chosen because he 'loves business'. He thought these might help him achieve his dream to own 'not just any shop' but a 'very big' one, where he would have his 'own employees'. Learners must choose the kinds of subjects that will help them realize their goals in life, so that they don't have any regrets later in life. **Male2** chose Accounting, Economics and Maths. His ambition had been to become a doctor, but he could not wrap his mind around either Physics or Biology, but was 'good at' Accounting and BE. He 'continued' with these. Careers demand certain subject combinations, to avoid regrets one must choose subjects. He is happy with his selection though being a doctor is now out of the question. He is into 'numbers' and the 'economy' now. **Female14** chose Commerce, i.e. Accounting, BE and Maths. Her stream 'fits in well' into her planned career in Marketing. Learners who just follow friends will struggle once they get to the tertiary level, and may have to start from scratch. She cites the case of someone who discovered while already in the working field, that the job she was doing was not for her. She then had to go back and study. **Male9** chose Biology, Maths and Physics. He had 'done research' before choosing the subjects. He had also seen people 'fixing electricity' in the past, and was interested. He 'had asked around' which subjects he would need to do the job. Since he was 'not weak' in the 'Natural Sciences' and Maths at the time, he thought he would be fine with Physical Science when he reached the higher grades. He is able to pull a few electricity 'stunts' already, has 'tested' and 'successfully' fixed faulty irons and refridgerators, by 'connecting wires' in the past. He would not link this 'success' to his physical science knowledge as they have 'not yet' gone in 'that deep'. He thinks it is just 'the kind of person [he] is' as he likes 'working with [his] hands'. Subject choice is important otherwise learners might do subjects that are not appropriate for their chosen careers. This would be disastrous as the learners might then be forced to do jobs they do not want.

DAY 8

Female15 opted for Accounting, Economics and Maths. She has always been 'good at' Economics, so she chose the stream. She had started doing Accounting in grade 10. She 'likes' the subjects and 'wanted' to do them. Subject choice matters because people differ, what is good for one person may not necessarily be so for another. Through subjects learners choose future careers. **Male10** is doing Biology, Geography and

Mathematics. The stream was not of his choosing. Upon arrival at ZWHS he and a friend had registered for HE which he had taken up to Grade 9. Once in Grade 10 the learner had suggested they change to Maths and Geography as he had heard about ‘lack of jobs’ for HE learners. Other learners were also making fun of their ‘cooking’ skills. Although his heart was in the Maths and Physical Science class as he loves ‘chemistry’ and ‘experiments’, he had opted for his stream because he was not sure he could cope with the ‘calculations’ in the two subjects. At the UWC ‘Open Day’ he had learnt he could do ‘B.Sc in Computer Science’, ‘Medical Bioscience’ and ‘Dentistry’ with his Geography background. Despite this he still is not sure what he wishes to do. The time they had spent at UWC was too short to make sense of everything, so he will try the next UWC exhibition. He thinks it is important that learners should choose subjects. **Female16** chose Biology, Geography and Maths because she had passed Maths well in gr10. When she had to choose between Maths and History she had opted for the former. She is happy with her combination of subjects. She thinks that these would qualify her for a ‘naval’ job which she ‘loves’ very much. She does not know what she will do because the date for submission of applications has already passed her by. Learners are ‘compelled’ to select subjects. In class they have asked the HE group about their job prospects, and they ‘could not come up’ with anything. When people do not choose subjects this is an indication that they do not have future plans. **Male11** is doing Accounting; Economics and Maths. When he first arrived at ZWHS he had not been aware about the concept of ‘subject choice’ and had found himself in the History/Geography stream. He had failed that class. Failing Grade 8 together with complaints from his predecessor brothers about the complexity of Biology and Physics had helped steer him in the direction of the present stream. He also liked the idea that he would be bringing a ‘new’ area of knowledge at home. He has no regrets about his choice and has not yet given thought to his future career. As far as basketball is concerned he thinks going abroad would be ideal. To achieve this he needs to go to university, where he hopes to get assistance via his sports coach. He still has not decided which degree he’ll do at university; he thinks it is important to choose subjects so that one does not do subjects that ‘do not belong together’. This is so that subjects are in line with the proposed career.

QUESTION: Definition of a ‘good’ teacher

For **Male1** a good teacher knows about the rights of children. S/he must dig into their backgrounds in order to understand learners. He acknowledges the difficulty this poses given the many classes that go with the subject teaching system. **Female1** does not expect teachers to assume the role of ‘social workers’ but that they should at least ‘communicate’ with learners and try to get to the real reason ‘behind’ learners’ failure. An example given is the case of learners who ‘sleep in class’ and could be doing this because they don’t get the chance to do so at home. Rather than ‘shout at’ the learners the teacher should rather try to find out ‘exactly’ why. She accuses teachers of taking things at face value and never delving deeper to find out why learners fail. She argues that the big numbers are not an issue because the incidences of learners who behave in this manner are few and isolated. Teachers can then decide on cases that need serious attention and disregard others. **Female17** acknowledges that teachers are in most cases old people, but thinks they should ‘befriend’ learners. She does not think this should

compromise the strictness that normally characterizes the teacher-learner relationship. **Female2** find her Life Orientation teacher Ms LO a good example of a good teacher. She is approachable, will even visit the learners' homes in order to solve problems, and is 'never' too busy to help.

DAY 2

For **Female3** this is someone 'nice' (i.e. 'has a good approach'), 'communicates'; offers advice on what learners could do to pass; and is 'approachable'. As far as **Female4** is concerned this teacher is 'understanding', 'patient', communicates with and encourages learners to say so if they do not understand something.

DAY 3

Male2 describes this teacher as someone who teaches well, does not tire easily, gives homework and class-work before testing, and gives a scope for the test. In this way the teacher makes it easy for learners to pass. **Male3** thinks s/he listens to learners' viewpoints, does not refer learners with problems to other teachers, s/he must 'not' be serious 'all the time' but allow some time for 'jokes', and be 'well-mannered'. He cites a case when a teacher had called him a '*kwere-kwere*' (a name given to foreigners in the SA context) because he had mixed a bit of Zulu into his work. **Female5's** good teacher communicates with learners and attends to learner grievances. For **Male3** the teacher has to care about his work, does not give up on learners as learners have different levels of abilities. In terms of this teaching should not be about finishing the syllabus while leaving the learners behind. Such a teacher he is never too busy to work.

DAY 4

Male4 thinks that regardless of their qualifications teachers need to bring themselves down to the level of their learners, and to try and 'understand learners'. He thinks teachers with university qualifications tend to look down upon the technician ones (as one teacher had apparently commented in class). He thinks that the mergers (between and among tertiary institutions) will level the ground to show that 'no teacher is better than the other', but that teachers are 'one and the same'. They must strive to know a bit about learners' backgrounds. For **Female6** teachers must 'push' learners to do their work. When teaching they must 'paint a picture' in the learner's mind, and give 'examples'. **Female7** thinks a good teacher is 'never too busy' to help, explains well in class; and learners feel free to approach him/her. **Female8** defines this as a 'dedicated' teacher who can actually identify learners' 'writing styles', and 'keep track' of their progress.

DAY 5

Female9 thinks a teacher should 'not smile too much' as learners tend to undermine the authority of such a teacher. S/he must render assistance when required to do so in class and not snub learners who come asking for clarity/explanation after school hours, as this would be an indication that the learner 'cares' about his schoolwork. Good teachers do

not boast about the fact that they get their salaries at the end of the month regardless of whether/not they come to class. Teachers must ‘not only think of themselves’. **Female10**’s good teacher teaches and explains ‘well’; ‘respects’ and ‘is respected’ by learners. **Female11**’s good teacher on the other hand ‘loves teaching’; ‘forces’ the learner to work hard (as learners are always asking for extension of due dates), and encourages learners. **Male5** thinks this is someone who communicates with learners, makes learners feel free though disciplined. S/he encourages mutual respect and does his/her work.

DAY 6

Male6 thinks good teachers do their work and come to class regularly. If they cannot make it to class learners should have something to do in their absence. They should inspire ‘respect’, and be able to keep good control of their classes. **Female12**’s good teacher answers questions to the learner’s satisfaction, shows no favouritism, is not lazy like some teachers who come to class only to sit and do absolutely nothing. **Female13** claims all of his teachers are good. They understand his clueless state and devise means of making knowledge accessible to him. They devote themselves to their work and attend classes everyday. This has the effect of keeping learners on their toes when it comes to doing their homework. If they know all the teachers will be there they cannot afford to come to school without their homework done. Good teachers ‘teach’ and ‘punish’ when it is appropriate to do so. **Male7** describes these as those who are ‘lovely’, ‘communicate’ with learners, are ‘approachable’, ‘make sense’ when teaching and do ‘not’ get tired or bored.

DAY 7

Male8 thinks good teachers ‘understand’ their learners and ‘are dedicated’ to their work. They give learners ‘advice’ on personal issues, encourage learners who fall behind in class. They either make time to help learners with their problems, or look for someone ‘good’ to help the learners. **Male2** thinks good teachers have time to ‘laugh’ and ‘be serious’ so that learners can interpret the teachers’ moods and know what they ‘like’ and ‘dislike’. They don’t snub but communicate well with learners. **Female14**’s good teacher explains and teaches well, is patient and does not easily get bored. **Male9** defines this as one who comes to class, learners listen as he teaches, and leaves learners in a good mood so as to set the mood for the next class. He admits allowing for jokes right at the start opens a loop hole for learners to render the class chaotic, so this has to happen at the end of the session.

DAY 8

Female15 thinks good teachers make all their learners feel appreciated. Though most learners would not necessarily agree with her she thinks it is good for teachers to ask questions at the beginning of the class as this serves to ‘rouse’ learners. Also teachers should ask ‘all’ learners questions in class as this ‘breaks the ice’ for the shy learners. She finds ‘raising a hand’ scary, but does not mind answering when asked to do so. **Male10** thinks good teachers do not teach for the whole period but set aside a little time to talk

about the 'facts of life'. They talk about the effects of 'drugs' and 'alcohol' and how Grade 12 learners should behave. **Female16** argues good teachers teach in such a way that learners understand them. **Male11**'s good teacher does not miss class; does 'not rush through' but encourages responses that show when learners have/not understood in class.

DAY 1. QUESTION: The definition of a 'good' learner

Male1 thinks he must be disciplined, listen, focus; take nothing for granted but do things to the best of his ability, knowing very well that there will be 'no second chance'. Those who fail grade 12 at ZWHS are not allowed back into the school. They go straight to a finishing school. **Female1** says this is someone who 'reads', 'participates' in class, 'behaves' in an appropriate manner and 'dresses neatly'. For **Female17** this is a learner who 'listens to', 'respects', 'obeys' the teacher and is always ahead with his schoolwork. **Female2** considers herself a 'good learner' and owes this to her mother. She 'reads', is 'not cheeky' but 'disciplined'.

DAY 2

Female3 thinks good learners 'do their work', and care about school and know their purpose in life. **Female4** says these must have a good attitude, be humble, obedient and do school work.

DAY 3

According to **Male2** learners must be respectful, behave whether 'within' or 'without' the school premises, must distinguish between the 'good' and bad, show determination and stick by their decision. How well they pass will be determined by the effort they put into their school work. **Male3** thinks learner must be 'honest' and 'serious', know 'when' to play and study. S/he must be a role model for other learners. **Female5** expects learner to be 'disciplined' and 'respectful'; and take teachers as 'parents'. She says the tendency is for learners to highlight that it is because of them that teachers get paid, and the learners forget that they also get 'information'. **Male3** says this learner must read his books, listens in class, not be shy to ask the teacher to repeat himself in or after class, and must revise once home.

DAY 4

Male4 can tell if learners are good depending on whether or not they wear school uniform or are neat. They must do school work and engage in extramural activities so that they may be 'in control' of their lives. He would call himself a good learner because of his determination to pass. **Female6** thinks good learners 'respect' both teachers and their work, and do not 'select faces'. **Female7** says learners without respect are 'nothing'. This is to be coupled with hard study, she considers herself a good learner because in all her life as a learner her mother has never been called to school to hear complaints about her. She 'has never talked back' to a teacher but will inform the teacher, in private, if the former had said something to upset her in class. **Female8** thinks what makes learners

good is 'hard work' and 'good behaviour'. Learners 'must communicate' with others and 'not' study in isolation as there is 'nothing' to gain from this kind of exercise. They must 'share' knowledge. At the moment she would call herself an 'in-between' kind of learner because she is 'struggling to cope with the pressure' of her work.

DAY 5

Female9 thinks a good learner 'reads', does not do all that friends do, like 'going to parties' or obsess about boyfriends. Good learners study 'in groups'. She qualifies for the title of good learner because even on Fridays when there is no *Ruggers* class she 'never' rushes home after school. Instead she 'reads' her books and has so far 'passed' all of her tests. **Female10** thinks good learners have 'respect', listen in class and do their work. She is good learner because she 'listens' and does her school work. **Female11** thinks good learners 'love' school work; do not need to be pushed but 'initiate'; read 'ahead'; work with learners from other schools to 'share' ideas, are 'not too proud' to ask other learners when they have a problem. She claims learners like this become popular, which in turn causes jealousy among learners. She cannot call herself a good or bad learner as such, because while she 'cares' on the one hand she also 'does not care' on the other. **Male5** thinks he is 'not' necessarily clever but 'disciplined', adheres to the 'school rules' and is not found wanting where his school work is concerned. He considers himself a good learner because he laughs and jokes when it is appropriate, submits 'all' outstanding work in time, whether/not he knows the answers or 'feels lazy'. To do the opposite in his opinion would be 'a waste of [his] time'.

DAY 6

Male6 describes this as someone who is always neat at school, is in uniform; arrives in time, attends regularly or brings a doctor's certificate, does schoolwork, participates in class, respects 'each and every teacher', does not steal from others, does as told; reads books and passes tests. He considers himself a good learner because 'since arrival at ZWHS' he has never exchanged words with a teacher. The misunderstanding he had with another learner did 'not' result in a fight, despite people 'provoking' them into one. Instead the two are now friends. **Female12** thinks these wear school uniform, show respect for teachers and learners, do school work and are responsible for themselves. She is a good learners because she does all of the above and also knows what she wants out of life. **Female13** thinks good learners are 'rare'. They love and do their work, do not look down upon others, keep the class clean and motivate others into doing good things. She considers herself a good learner but argues that her effort 'alone' does not make much of a difference. **Male7** approves of learners who do not bunk classes, arrive in time for classes, do homework at the appropriate time, submit assignments in time, study hard and pass. If they do not, they need to learn from their mistakes; have solutions to their own problems, and ask questions. He feels learners should have enough confidence in themselves to ask when they do not understand in class, should participate in class, be approachable, communicate with other learners and respond in class. He is not a good learner but is changing because he appreciates the good he sees in other learners and 'tries' to do good. He used to be a late comer especially on rainy days. He claims on a

recent rainy day he was ‘the first’ to arrive, and he can also be the ‘last’ to leave. These are things he could not do before. He communicates well with both teachers and learners, participates in class and ‘sits still’ in class though he sometimes ‘finds’ himself in the ‘Grade 9’ class.

DAY 7

Male8 defines good learners as ‘disciplined’, and regard teachers as ‘parents’. They respect anyone older than they are, do their school work and do not engage in bad habits like ‘smoking’. He regards himself as ‘good’. **Male2’s** good learners are ‘not cheeky’ but appreciate the fact that they are ‘still children’ who, though at school are as good as being in the company of their ‘parents’. They ‘listen’ and ‘obey orders’. He is ‘good’ at times (when he does as told), and ‘bad’ at others as he may sometimes ‘hurt’ people ‘without intending to do so’. **Female14’s** good learner is ‘dedicated’ to his school work, is ‘goal-directed’, disciplined and does as told. He is that kind of learner because he ‘listens’, and loves to do as ‘told’. **Male9** thinks good learners listen, read their books, ask the teacher in class and not other learners after class, help learners if they are unsure about something that he knows. According to this teachers find it hard to take learners who are known for bad behaviour in class seriously, so learners need to ‘ask’ and ‘keep quiet’.

DAY 8

Female15 maintains good learners share their knowledge with other learners. She considers herself a good learner because she would like others to share her knowledge with others, but her shyness gets in the way. She had never considered how other learners who do not know she is shy might view her. **Male10** says good learners listen in class, ask when they do not understand. They study and do not dress as if they are ‘going to work’, but wear school uniform. He considers himself good because he does all the things he has mentioned. **Female16** thinks good learners come to school in time; do their school work and pass tests. They also show respect for teachers. She considers herself a good learner though she is not always in time for school. She does her work and passes ‘some’ of her tests. **Male11** thinks a good learner ‘listens’; ‘participates’ in class; and ‘passes’ tests. He regards himself as a good learner because he does all of these.

DAY 1. QUESTION: What motivates the learner?

Male1 is motivated by thoughts and plans for the future, the fact that his parents will die one day and he will be left with noone. He also needs to satisfy his parents. **Female1’s** grandmother motivates her. The learner claims she is the result of a teenage pregnancy, that out of the R20 a month that her grandmother got as a domestic servant she sent her expectant mother and all of her other children and grandchildren to school. As a grandchild the learner also had ‘the basic things’. This has taught her that ‘everything is possible’ where there is ‘determination’. She would also like to fulfill both hers and her grandmother’s dream for her to ‘be someone’, and to ‘change her situation around’. The idea of her struggling in the same fashion as both her mother and her grandmother before

her had done is just ‘beyond’ her imagination. She feels she is ‘able’ and is faced with ‘many opportunities’, Secondly she grew up among people who were better off and shared whatever they had with them. It is her wish that she one day be able to do something good for her grandmother. **Female2** says her ‘role model’ mother is ‘everything’ to her, she gets her motivation from her.

DAY 2

Female3 wishes to study further and be a ‘social worker’ one day. The type of institution she goes to will be determined by finances at the time. She does not wish to waste any time. **Female4’s** mother motivates her. Though completely illiterate she will remind her about homework.

DAY 3

Male2 claims ZWHS runs a Truancy Reduction Project (TRP). He has learnt a lot from this, and has since joining the project given up smoking. **Male3** wishes to be the first to ‘represent’ his family because the highest standard attained at home is standard 10, so he will ‘fight’ for his ‘dreams’. **Female5** wishes to fulfill her ‘dreams’ and realizes that her success depends on her. **Male3** says education is very important nowadays. Jobs are linked to qualifications and education puts food on the table and qualifies one for a good job. Successful role models are people who ‘stuck by their books’.

DAY 4

Male4 gets motivation from the church, the ‘company [he] keeps’ and his parents. His friends always think of ‘positive’ things to do. **Female6** derives ‘pleasure’ from being taught something she understands. She also finds comfort in the company of other learners. **Female7** craves success, she wants a car and a beautiful house. She would like to do something no matter how small for her ‘illiterate’ mother, before she dies. The former never had a chance at education. **Female8** is motivated by her ‘orphan status’, their dependence on her elder sister and an ambition to help her sister with the younger children one day.

DAY 5

Female9 gets motivation from her ‘illiterate parents’, and the ‘poverty’ that exists at her home. She wishes to ‘change’ her life around, reward her parents for bringing them up and to see to her younger sister’s education. **Female10’s** home situation motivates her. She would like to move to a ‘good area’, probably in the ‘suburbs’ in the future. **Female11** ‘never knew’ her biological mother. Negative comments from family members give her the will to succeed one day. She would like to see disappointment written all over their faces. Her grandmother also gives her ‘good advice’, so she listens to her. **Male5’s** family problem pushes him. He does not wish to see history repeat itself. His

younger brothers do not have to go through the same life. He wishes he could succeed quickly to prevent them suffering further.

DAY 6

Male6's successful role models make him thirst for success as he does not wish to be tempted to engage in criminal activities for a living. He fears this might lead to untimely death. He does not wish to drink, smoke or prowl during the night. **Female12** finds motivation in her 'background', and her mother's recent 'death'. Though the second born in the family she feels more 'like a mother' than a sister to her siblings, because compared to her elder brother she has been better able to 'adapt' to her new situation. This was made possible by her quick grasp of and switch to isiXhosa. Being in CT has also exposed her to much more than her brother who lives in the EC. The brother's Alice (a town in the EC) school does not have access to computers and textbooks, and some of the classes have no roof. In CT on the other hand, through projects like Molo Songololo she now knows about her rights among other things. The career **Female13** is striving for is 'nothing new'. Of the successful people she knows, not one of them had had a 'comfortable upbringing'. They have stories similar to the learner's to tell. It is only after they have succeeded that they are able 'to afford' things. They are then able to 'close the gaps' in their lives, then people say good things about them. Among the people selling things at the bus terminus **Male7** he has been able to recognize people that he had studied with. The wish not to turn out like these people motivates him. Positive reinforcement comes from his 'employed' elder brother, who owns a house and car. He asks himself why he cannot be like him and 'be something' in life. He has seen good and bad examples on the television series '*Gaz' Lam*', and uses this as a 'guide'. A number of people he knows 'rob' people, 'get shot' and land up in jail in the process. He has learnt to do what is 'right'.

DAY7

At age 3 **Male8** was hospitalized for 6months, and survived the accident. He suffered head injuries and lagged behind in his school work because of the regular check ups he had to attend. He failed Sub-B, and has since decided nothing will ever stop him. The bouts of 'forgetfulness' he suffered while in primary school are 'not that bad' anymore. Since high school he has grown quicker at remembering things. As learners they talk about their plans, laugh at one another, and suggest that some career plans 'will not materialize'. It is comments like these that drive and motivate **Male2**. They have also come across many challenges as learners, and have heard many 'stories' that 'successful people' have to tell. From these he tells himself he is 'going forward'. **Female14**'s 'role-models' motivate her. Her aunt grew up at a time when education was not such an important thing. She (aunt) lost her parents at a tender age and can still stand on her own two feet. Though unemployed her EC mother 'by all means' available (other than selling her body) ensures that they do 'not' go to bed on 'empty stomachs'. Her aunt's 29year old ex-daughter in law is an 'independent' and 'business-minded' 'goal-reacher' who is always thinking of 'something' to do. Lastly her cousins, though older than her with some of them 'married', had never flaunted their boyfriends in front of their parents. In

this day it is common for parents to know about the people in their children's lives, yet these cousins manage to keep this piece of information away from their parents. **Male9** is the first out of three siblings to have progressed this far. Everyone looks up to him. His mother in the EC derives 'strength' from, and is very proud that he is on the brink of success. Giving up on school now would be like a slap in his mother and family's face. He also needs to set an example for his younger sisters, and to make a name for his family, even if his mother is no longer there to see this.

DAY 8

Female15's family motivates her. Her father loves education; so she wishes she could be someone who will 'look after' her family one day. When the idea strikes her even 'in the middle of play', and 'especially' so if she is with children who do not attend school; the learner knows she 'must stop playing'. This is because she is the one who will take her family out of poverty. Her father always 'encourages' her to read, offers her 'incentives'. She is 'the first' to pay for her school needs, and he never hesitates to do this. She thinks her father loves education more than her mother does. As the first born **Male10's** family looks up to him as 'the only one' who can provide for them in the future. He wishes he could succeed so that he may send younger siblings to school. He wishes he could build a rural family home where they can practise 'traditions' and 'customs'. This home would be acknowledged by all as the 'main' family home. **Female16** loves education and wishes she could become someone in the future. **Male11** gets motivation from learners who are more competent than he is, so he strives to reach their level.

DAY 1. QUESTION: What happens beyond the Grade 12 Class?

Male1 would love to study further but knows this is unlikely to happen because he has younger siblings that are still at school. His elder brother is sitting at home with a Std 10 (or matriculation) certificate, the father cannot afford to take him any further. He would have loved to be a civil engineer one day. For **Female1** tertiary education is next. She has applied to UWC for a 'law' degree, and to Pentech for Business Communication. **Female2** would like to go a technical college where she can put her hands to good use, if there is sufficient money for her to do so. She has approached some people she knows for 'bursary forms' and is also on the look out for help.

DAY 2

Female3's parents have not discussed the next step in detail, but have promised to do all in their power to help her study further. She has never applied for a bursary before, and has no hope of securing one for herself. In the event that one could be made available to her she'll grab it with both hands. **Female4** does not think she'll proceed beyond grade12. They'll apply for bursaries but if none are made available she'll sit and do nothing. **Male3** will do 'piece jobs' so as to accumulate funds for further study. He expects only 'moral' rather than financial support from his family after grade12.

Female5's first love is 'piloting', a dream she cannot realize because of financial constraints and her incompetence in Geography. The father who had claimed tertiary education would be no problem during our interview is said to 'exaggerate' as he only has 'two goats' to his name. The learner is unsure about the number of cows they have as these are in the Eastern Cape. **Male3** wishes to enroll for 'Tourism Management' or 'Human Resource' at a tertiary institution though he does not yet know the duration and amount involved. He hopes to be through with his education by 2009/2010.

DAY 4

After Grade 12 **Male4** plans to take a 'gap year' which he plans to use to explore as a USA/Chinese/Australian 'intern'. By so doing he hopes to first 'relax [his] mind', and then gain knowledge into 'how other people live' and 'deal with difficult situations', and to achieve more. **Female6** has 'no plans' for the future because she has been told that the subjects she is doing have no connection to the 'advertising' course she had in mind. Her problem is incompetence in English. Her second choice lies in 'car manufacturing'. **Female7** does not think she is good with books. Her struggle with grade 11 Maths made her realize it would be a 'waste of money' for her to consider tertiary education. She wishes she could always have someone around, that she could ask for help. She would 'love' to work in the navy because she loves the way naval officers 'salute' and 'respect' one another. Though she appreciates the parallels between the navy and the police force she claims she has no regard for the latter, because in her opinion the police 'do not do their work'. She had recently read from the local '*Vukani*' newspaper about 'three people' voicing their complaints about the service. She does not know much about the naval force, but they had been promised a 'career exhibition' since 2004. In 2006 the learner will do a computer course and apply for a driver's license, because according to the '*Take 5*' television programme one needs physical science in order to join the navy. **Female8** will apply for admission but must ensure she 'qualifies' first. Her sister always encourages them to become 'whatever' they wish, and does 'not put money first', even though she has her own child to think of.

DAY 5:

Female9 is 'anxious' that she may not pass Maths well and that the navy may not accept her application because of this. In that case she will do a computer course and a driver's license. The '*Cape Argus*' newspaper seems to suggest this is a good combination for someone looking for a job. She knows she cannot afford further education. **Female10** and her family have been waiting for her late father's monies to come out. She hopes to study further in 2006 but does not know whether/not the money will be available by then. **Female11** would have loved to study further but cannot, because her retired grandparents cannot afford this. She has no hope of securing a bursary either, as these are made available to learners who qualify for exemption because they do HG subjects. If all fails she will apply for a 'driver's license'. **Male5** wishes to join the navy because he will not be able to afford further study. Once in the navy he could do law or chemical engineering.

DAY 6

Male6 wishes to study further, both his aunt and grandmother are determined to see him through. He wishes to become an 'accountant' or 'general manager'. **Female12** would have loved to study further but is worried about her siblings back in the EC who 'lack' many things. This tempts her into wanting to work so that they may also reach grade 12. **Female13** does not wish to think about the future but cannot help it as they get visitors from the various institutions encouraging them 'to apply'. In case some miracle happens she is not aiming high, and will settle for 'any two and a half year course'. If it were up to her she would have loved to be a doctor. The stream she chose was to allow herself room to choose any field that she could afford, when the time came. **Male7** plans to go to either UWC or UCT. He owns up to his 'fear' of 'higher grade' subjects and claims he does all except one subject on standard grade. He will take anything that comes his way. like the 'nature reserve' option that he has just recently heard about. Now that he knows about the requirements of the course this will help him 'push' himself up on the relevant subjects. He wishes ZWHS could give them more information on careers, but also knows he would be regarded as 'forward' if he were to ask that teachers should organize a 'career exhibition' for them.

DAY 7

Male8 would like to 'work during the day' and 'study in the evenings' and that there could be a three hour period between the two activities so that he may relieve his brain. If he does not get a job he'll have to study straight away, but is worried this will take him 'ages' to get where he wants. He would have loved to start 'making money' as soon as possible, so that by the time he reaches 23years he has made giant strides with his planned business venture. **Male2** plans to study in 2006, though he may not necessarily reach the level he had had in mind. He would like to do a six-month course in law or a 'part-time job', just to keep busy. He is going to apply for bursaries. **Female14** wishes to study further while also working on the side. She does not think she will be able to study solely on her parents' pocket, because her 'widowed' and 'unemployed' mother has other children to think of. She is considering the idea of work during the day and study in the evening, but fears this might tire her out. She has been receiving money as a result of her father's death. This she has been putting aside for her future education. If **Male9** passes well his aunt could be persuaded to part with some money which would see him through technikon education. If that happens he is thinking of taking a course in 'electronics' so that he may do like his sister had done in his case, i.e. send the younger generation to school. His aunt had done the same for her daughter, but the learnership she was registered in turned out to be a fake.

DAY 8

Female15 knows there is no money for her to pursue higher education, so she will settle for short 'courses' that will help her secure a job. Examples of the courses she has in mind are training for cashier work and computer literacy. **Male10** wishes he could study at UCT. He has heard that lectures there take a 70% /30%; split between 'practical' and

'theory' respectively. He wishes to do dentistry. UWC had assured him he would qualify for the course. **Female16** wishes she could get a bursary because her parents cannot afford further study. If this fails she will apply for a computer course and a driver's license, because these are necessary requirements in the job market. Her elder sister once missed out on a job opportunity because she did not have these. If **Male11** gets a good pass he'll go to Cape Tech to do an 'eight year' accounting course. Cape Tech is where he'll get basketball 'contacts'. If he fails he will 'not qualify' for bursaries and may afford a six months computer course and a driver's license. After a year's work accumulating money he'll go back to studying.



APPENDIX F

Paraphrased Teacher Interviews

1. The IsiXhosa teacher talking about her isiXhosa teaching experiences

Despite isiXhosa being the mother tongue of about 98%-99% of the learners at ZWHS, and it therefore being compulsory for learners to pass the language; despite the language being one of three official languages within the Western Cape Province (WCP), and a language largely spoken in two (i.e. WCP and the Eastern Cape Province) of the nine provinces in SA, it is perceived by most learners as a dead-end subject. Looking at the subject from a different angle the Xhosa teacher at ZWHS likened the language to what she called 'udlezinye' (i.e. a python). In terms of this isiXhosa was said to give learners access to other languages. Readers who are familiar with debates around second language acquisition will relate to this. A study conducted by Nomlomo on one of the township schools around CT also highlighted the importance of the mother tongue in making more accessible scientific concepts to primary school children (2007). The study had been conducted in one of the townships around CT.

The following are some of the salient points the Xhosa teacher had to say about the subject:

- **Learners:** She cited learners' 'urban upbringing' and 'different home backgrounds' as having left them with no regard for Xhosa customs, thereby making it difficult for the teacher in question to penetrate them.
- **Teaching:** the structuralist angle that the teaching of the subject demanded was said to complicate things further for teachers, as learners were said to see no point why they had to study formatives and changes in sound processes. See also par. 6.2.2d below where the Biology teacher confesses to not finding any justification for the plants section in the already overloaded Biology syllabus. Considering the fact that learners were most unlikely to use this knowledge, the Biology teacher had described this section of the Biology syllabus as 'far-fetched'. What these teachers (pars. 6.2.2a and 6.2.2d) seem to be highlighting is the need for relevance in the subject matter, rather than syllabi which serve to create distance between schools and their learners. In terms of this, in that the physiology section was seen to help learners understand how their bodies work, the Biology teacher wished he could incorporate into this syllabus the interests of his learners (par. 6.2.2d).
- **Interrelatedness among subjects:** Most of this teacher's passes in isiXhosa (i.e. "about sixteen to seventeen A's" probably in any given year by the sound of things) were said to always come from the Science, Geography and Accounting streams. This, the teacher believed was made possible by the fact of learners in this stream being in a position to kill two birds with one stone. In terms of this, because the Xhosa grammar section in the past used to be structuralist and

scientific (as was implied to be the case with science), learners would be expected to apply a principle. This was seen to place these learners at an advantage because of their innate ability to analyze a literary text, which they would then combine with their scientific mind of applying principles that govern the language. In terms of this the teacher saw a bit of science in the grammar section of the isiXhosa language.

- **Syllabus:** The teacher found the isiXhosa syllabus too scattered and requiring that she link up sections that belong together or build up toward one another, regardless of whether these appear at the top or bottom of the syllabus.

2. The Afrikaans teacher talking about Afrikaans teaching experiences

Other than Afrikaans being seen as the language of the oppressor, learners were also said not to see what value learning Afrikaans would have for them after Grade 12. In reaction to this the teacher claimed he would advise his learners to be realistic when it came to Afrikaans. Being realistic meant learners acknowledging the fact that of the three official languages in the WCP, Afrikaans and English were in actual fact 'more' economically viable and official than isiXhosa.

- **Examinations:** Learners found the phrasing of exam questions 'baffling'. In the past questions would require learners to rewrite in the '*verlede tyd*' (i.e. past tense), today examiners are said to provide learners with an example, and to instruct them to follow suit.
- **Teaching:** Most Afrikaans teachers in townships were said to struggle with poetry as they were said not to have a background in poetry, they never having majored in it in the first place. In terms of this in the past there had never been that many black Afrikaans teachers, and it was unheard of for Coloured teachers to come and teach in African schools.
- **Language:** The challenge with Coloured Afrikaans teachers was that they landed up teaching Afrikaans through the medium of English as they were said not to have Xhosa as a common ground for the negotiation of meaning.
- **Language:** Though the use of the MT (i.e. isiXhosa in this case) was said to have its negative side, this teacher was of the opinion that it was only after learners had understood in isiXhosa, that they would be able to answer in Afrikaans;
- **The Grade 12 class:** Teachers in the lower grades were accused of just pushing unprepared learners along. The fact of the OBE curriculum ruling out any possibility of double periods was seen to make matters worse. In terms of this, the fifty-five minutes short (as implied by the teacher's tone) periods made damage control impossible. This point highlights some of the challenges faced by those teaching the matric class. Lower grade teachers' shortcomings (e.g. par. 6.2.2e where the teacher concerned was decent enough to own up to an inadequate

teaching pace on his part) and irresponsible actions (e.g. par. 6.2.2c where the teacher had picked upon ‘vacuums’ in the knowledge base of two of her Grade 12 classes), and the teacher who complained about teachers ‘just pushing unprepared learners along’ (par. 6.2.2b) were also said to make teaching in this grade ‘stressful’ as success and failure were said to reflect more on teachers than the learners themselves. This challenge highlights why it is unfair and unrealistic of the Education Ministry to focus on this end point, when it is so clear that learning, is a building-up process similar to the ‘suitcase’ analogy used by the Biology teachers (par. 6.2.2d). Suggested by the Ball (1994) and Prinsloo and Stein research (2004) is a sense the process starts as early as preschool. The recommendation made by the English teacher, about Grade 8 and 9 specifically needing reading sessions drives this point home (par. 6.2.2c).

- **The system:** This teacher further claimed not to understand why Afrikaans was being given the same second language status as English, when Xhosa was being studied as a third language on the other side of railway line (i.e. the previously white areas). Teaching Afrikaans as a third language was seen as having the potential to give black learners better access to the language as the emphasis would then be more on the spoken (i.e. communicative function) rather than written language.
- **The system:** Despite all the negativity around Afrikaans as a learning area, ZWHS learners were said to have always passed the subject. It had taken all the good things the Afrikaans teacher remembered from his own Afrikaans teacher, which he would then ‘spice up with humour’, for this ZWHS teacher to get his learners up to this point (the good pass rate). In terms of this learners were said to burst out laughing the minute he set foot in class. When confronted about this he claimed to have asked why it was that teachers with serious classes tended not to perform better than his. The teacher’s winning formula involved ‘letting it flow and keeping it casual’. Because of this, learners’ attitudes toward Afrikaans were seen to be changing for the better.

3. The English teacher reflecting on her English teaching experiences

While Afrikaans was said to be spoken only in the WC, the Free State and Gauteng Provinces, according to this teacher one could speak English wherever one went. In line with this English was said to be the language of power. The English subject has also been the subject of some heated debates as some parents went up in arms over their children being registered at Standard Grade (SG) rather than Higher Grade (HG). Other troubles experienced by this teacher included:

- **Teaching conditions:** Big numbers were said to make it impossible for teachers to cater for different potential levels. The Mathematics teacher concurs with this teacher on the point about large classes (see par. 6.2.2f).

- **Policy:** Having to follow the departmental curriculum and pace-setter was another challenge. Since the implementation of the restrictive June common paper, with this being coupled with the departmental curriculum and its pace-setter she felt like she had been robbed of her autonomy to do what she thought was best for her learners. In terms of this, by the end of June all teachers had to have covered the same amount of work. Describing the Bantu Education past in almost nostalgic, as ironic as this may sound, the teacher relived how the time-table of the day had compelled learners to ‘stand up and read’ in class. This time-table was said to provide slots for comprehension, grammar, oral exercises, reading while also making it possible for teachers to be ‘technical’ in teaching language structure. All of these are seen as insignificant in today’s middle class school curriculum in SA, seemingly to the detriment of many working class learners. English being the medium of instruction (MOI) through which at least three out of six or seven subjects are taught in township schools, any mishap in the delivery of this language tends to have serious ramifications. This tends to affect other subjects as well. Consider for example the concern registered by the History teacher (par 6.2.2g) about his learners’ struggle with essay writing. According to this, History learners were unable to create from start to finish, something of their own.
- **Policy:** A departmental rule prohibiting learners from repeating the same class twice was said to ensure that even learners who were not Grade 12 material reached this class. Because they knew they would ultimately be condoned learners were said not to bother to read. Then there were learners who were condoned on the basis of age, who, in the teacher’s opinion were neither mainstream material nor academically inclined. According to this teacher some African families’ view of specialized school as something to be ashamed of was another challenge. In her view the affected learners could have been channeled into the practical domain. The kind of mentality suggested by the teacher in question is something Stofile and Green would have condemned in the strongest terms. It is these co-authors’ concern that special schools tend to ‘label’ children. These schools are said to create an impression that learners are at fault, when in actual fact it is the system itself that is failing learners. According to this, the child then suffers a damaged self-concept as the tendency is to blame oneself (2007).
- **The system:** Other English teachers were said to have considered overlooking departmental prescription, and doing what had worked for them during the apartheid era (i.e. delving deeper into the rules and structure of grammar) as today’s learners were seen to be unable to master grammar without those basics. The teacher was of the opinion that Grades 8 and 9 specifically needed reading sessions. Drawing from her own educational experiences, one of the good things had been a class reading exercise, which was said to have compelled learners to stand up and read. Back then the time-table is said to have provided slots for comprehension, grammar, oral exercise and reading. Having tried to implement this when she started teaching, the teacher had soon felt overwhelmed as the timetable just would not allow it.

- **Teaching:** The teacher associated challenges with literacy levels she described as being low, big gaps in the knowledge base of learners, both of these being ‘vacuums’ she could not ignore as a Grade 12 teacher. Of the two classes she had found herself sitting with in 2005, she was meeting one for the first time, while she claimed to have made contact with the other to a varying degree. Her frustration in the given scenario came from the realization (which had come later), that had it not been for the fact that these learners were just coming to grips with some of the language skills, the two Grade 12 classes in question would have been good classes of English learners. In line with this, the teacher concerned was all for the idea of ‘rotating’ classes. Grade 12 was said to be stressful with this being said to have the effect of making teachers feel like they were the ones who would be sitting for the exam. The success and failure of learners being said to reflect more on teachers than learners themselves, having a reputation to protect was another challenge for some teachers.
- **Home:** Although the school was seen as having a big role in helping with language acquisition, both the home and the language learner were said to have just as much responsibility. This is something that many working class African homes are not aware of.
- **Learners:** Learners were said to be generally unable to read, despite the communicative approach putting less emphasis on language structure. The teacher confessed to having been tempted in the past, to revisit the former structure, and to being ‘technical’ when teaching language structure. Though learners were perceived to love oral presentations and literature, they were said to struggle with grammar and creative writing. In terms of this, some of the most eloquent speakers in class were said to have the worst writing ability, with spelling and punctuation errors being the most common. This point is probably where the home could have come in, by starting children off on a path that would provide them with some foundation.
- **Learners:** Lack of appreciation for the literary text was another learner-related challenge, with one teacher being said to have given up on class reading because he used to end up laughing all by himself. In terms of this learners would fail to pick up on the humour in written texts. The interviewee had once encouraged learners to tell English jokes in class, an exercise which had led to learners laughing. Having established the source of the jokes as having been books, the teacher could not grasp why learners failed to recognize jokes in literary texts. This point is an interesting one. If the Afrikaans could get learners to laugh like he claimed to have been able to do, while using the medium of oppression in the process, it is possible that the problem has more to do with teacher variables than the subject itself. Simply put, these teachers could probably learn a thing or two from the Afrikaans teacher, instead of attacking him like they appear to have done.

- **Learner:** One of the problems facing English teachers where Mathematics/ Science learners were concerned was the tendency among these learners, to focus more on these subjects than they do on English (with languages in general being viewed as being just languages and therefore less deserving of learners' attention). According to this teacher when it came to the prescribed sources many learners would have no clue where the chapters lay. As far as this teacher was concerned, good language learners tended to be able to actually name chapters by their titles, an index that they had a relationship with their English books. This teacher's final word on the acquisition of English was that this was within the individual learner. In line with this the good language learner was said to work hard; take part in extramural activities, debates and essay writing competitions, read, to be forward, adventurous and prepared to face up to challenges. There unfortunately appears to be an under-supply of this kind of learner.

4. The Biology teachers reflecting on their Biology teaching experiences

Though the Biology results were described as 'not' being good, one of the two Biology teachers saw no clear indication that learners disliked the subject. She implied the subject could be likened to a 'master key', in that it was said to open doors to many fields. In terms of this learners who had done Biology were said to be in a position to relate to diseases like malaria, which would sometimes crop up in their lives. In this sense, the subject was said to make it possible for learners to explain what is happening around them. The subject was further said to be in a category of its own. What this means is it could be linked to any other subject by those learners with exemption in mind. All that exemption was said to take was a high year mark in this subject. For this to happen the learner who had been working consistently throughout would have won the battle halfway through the year.

- **Syllabus:** One teacher wished he could have two to three years working on the Biology syllabus, so that he could incorporate the interests of learners into the year plan. As things stood at the time of the interview, there was altogether too much content and very little time in which to do it all, as far as both teachers were concerned.
- **Syllabus:** In the Biology syllabus only Grades 10 and 11 were said to be linked, leaving Grade 12 isolated. The challenge was in finding the Grades 10-12 link, i.e. in view of the Grade 11 syllabus misfit. The one teacher claimed to have told his learners that what they were doing in Grade 10 was building up a little suitcase of information which would help them understand all the Grade 12 terminology later on. This could only be made possible by rotation. This is the second time the idea of rotation has been suggested thus far (see also par. 6.2.2c above). One of the things which teachers seem to be missing in their teaching is a sense of continuity. This point also talks to the need for professional teachers which are a rarity in many township schools, as addressed below. Quite a few teachers in townships schools do not feel they are properly equipped to handle the senior classes. This tends to create problems.

- **Syllabus:** Learners were further said to struggle with the plants section which the teacher also saw as ‘far fetched’ when one considered whether or not learners would be able to use the knowledge. He could understand the need for learners to do the human physiology section, as learners needed to understand how their bodies work (see par. 6.2.2a for a discussion of the notion of relevance in subject matter).
- **Facilities:** Due to the lack of proper facilities (e.g. a properly equipped laboratory, etc.) teachers were consequently having to theorize ‘experiments’ and ‘improvise’.
- **Language:** having to teach Biology in English was proving to be a huge problem for the Xhosa-speaking teacher. She found teaching the subject particularly challenging when it came to describing the process whereby sound is interpreted, as this made getting through to learners a challenge. The teacher however identified being Xhosa-speaking as an advantage she would put to good use whenever this kind of problem arose. The same was however not true of the Afrikaans-speaking Biology teacher in the same school, according to the Xhosa-speaking teacher. The fact of the examinations being in English was said to work against her favour, because Xhosa was said not to have equivalents for Biological terms. The Afrikaans-speaking teacher on the other hand claimed to sometimes use ‘*n heel deurmekaar*’ (i.e. a wholly confused) combination of the three languages. This sense of absolute confusion was apparently not restricted to the Biology class alone. It appears as if Coloured Afrikaans teachers also need Xhosa in their Afrikaans teaching, for them to be able to negotiate meaning with their Xhosa-speaking learners (par. 6.2.2b above).
- **Terminology:** Biology terminology was also said to be a huge problem because of it being ‘not everyday’ but mainly ‘textbook language’. In terms of this words like ‘meiosis’ and ‘mitosis’ were to be studied regularly, in the same way that one would forget the name of someone one had first met a year ago.
- **Content:** The teachers claimed there was a vast difference between Standard Grade (SG) and Higher Grade (HG) Biology. The former was said to be aligned to the rote learning of the past, while the other required depth. In the latter case questions were described as being data-based, and requiring learners to interpret graphs or analyze data sometimes. This was said to put those doing Mathematics at an advantage where graphs were concerned (see par. 6.2.2 above for motivation to make Mathematics accessible across the board).
- **Learners:** Rather than study the notes, the one teacher thought it would be better if learners studied the diagrams. According to this, the notes would thematically flow from this. Learners’ struggle with source-based work was said to betray a gap in their ability. They are more comfortable with material which encourages rote learning than that which demands higher levels of thinking like interpretation

and application (see par. 6.2.2d). That they prefer this form of questioning to essay writing when it comes to History, also indicates learners' degree of insecurity when it comes to issues of linguistic expression.

5. The Physical Science (PS) teacher reflects on her PS teaching experiences

Citing astronomy, chemical and electrical engineering as some examples, the science teacher claimed PS had a great variety and a lot of fields to choose from. According to this teacher there were lots of bursary offers, (with this being seen to imply this fact was their trump card). Science was further said not to be just a living but also a growing subject, with scientists being needed to develop neighbourhoods.

- **Teacher:** the teacher blamed himself for an inadequate teaching pace which had resulted in a portion of the Grade 11 work being left untaught. This was said to have put pressure on the Grade 12 teacher.
- **Teaching:** Of the two sections in Science (i.e. chemistry and physics) it was common in his opinion, for teachers to feel more comfortable teaching the one and not the other. Mathematics not being his strongpoint, he felt more competent in chemistry while preferring certain sections in physics. This was seen to affect the teachers' teaching where physics was concerned, as the latter section is said to cover a lot of calculations. Were township schools to be staffed with qualified teachers this would not be such a huge challenge. Teachers would work collaboratively to cover one another's weaknesses.
- **Subject:** There was said to be a general fear for PS among learners. By the time they reached Gr10 they would realize the subject was indeed a challenging one. Learners were said to be even 'more' fearful where Mathematics was concerned. In terms of this, the two subjects were also experienced as very tough to teach. Table 3.3.5.2 above, the country's bid to recruit and keep as many Mathematics and Science teachers as possible, the plethora of bursary offers, and the comments from par. 6.2.2f below all combine to help the reader put this remark in perspective.

6. The Mathematics teacher reflects on his Mathematics teaching experiences

With Mathematics learners were said to have more career opportunities and directions than someone in the social sciences. There were moreover more bursaries for learners doing the subject. Learners were said to need to learn Mathematics from an early age, as 'everyday life' was said to need 'basic skills of counting'.

- **Content:** Learners were said to struggle with and to run away from fractions and trigonometry. With geometry the problem was a tendency among learners to use the mind (i.e. what the teacher called 'pondering the why's and wherefores' of the subject) when they should rather be taking the problem as it appears. In terms of

this, rather than take vertical angles for what they are, some learners were said to ask themselves what Grade 10 material is doing in Grade 12.

- **Facilities:** Large numbers of learners and fewer computers than what was needed made it impossible for him to reach all.
- **Subject:** The general feeling toward the subject was said to be dislike or fear of the subject. Most were said to do it because they were told about the opportunities it provides. Learners were said to pass the subject regardless of their fear. In terms of this the teacher's pass rate was said to be continuously picking up.

7. The History teacher reflecting on his History teaching experiences

History was said not to start and end in the classroom, but rather to extend to the community. Because it was seen to combine social, economic and political issues it could therefore not be accused of limiting learners' level of consciousness, like Mathematics was said to be doing. To understand poverty one was said to need an understanding of the economic basis along which poverty rests. This was said to be possible only if one knew history. The teachers had the following points to bring to attention:

- **Subject:** Negative sentiments about history as a subject were said to make learners feel dull and stupid. Consequently it was only a few learners who were really interested in the subject, as well as those who would pass it. The majority was however said to do history because they had no alternative, given the fact that they could not perform well in Mathematics (see par.1.3.5 above). The teacher confessed to relying on two to three learners to prove they as teachers had done their job. Once he had identified the sparks he would then monitor their progress.
- **Syllabus:** He found the Grade 12 history prescriptive and not as liberating as the higher education version where students are able to argue a certain point of view with their lecturers. At high school level learners could only bring in this kind of information when doing research projects. This had not been a problem when learners were doing Grade 10 history. Because he had been the one marking the subject, his learners had been free to express themselves.
- **Content:** The teacher identified a clash between the university content and that of the textbook which was prescribed at the time. The teacher had a problem with the colonists' point of view which presented the *Mfecane* section in a manner which suggested the Cape had been depopulated while concealing the fact that colonists had forced their way into the land. The *Bambata* section was also said to be reflected as a 'rebellion' rather than a 'revolution'. By mobilizing all the tribes King Chaka was also presented as having been 'barbarian' and 'cruel'.
- **Content:** As far as this teacher was concerned, some of the restrictions came in the form of him being unable to present learners with what he considered accurate information. He felt confined by having to stick with the inaccurate textbook

content as he had examinations to think about. The teacher wished he could infuse the people's history into the existing textbook knowledge, to give learners a sense of balance. Were he to create space for what he called 'the people's History' in his classes, chances were that learners would not be able to separate the two histories when time for the externally marked exam came around. The fact of teachers having to teach content they do not believe in must be quite a challenge. In line with this I think it is safe to speculate that other township teachers faced with the same predicament can only teach such a subject half-heartedly.

- **Language:** Learners were further said not to have a good command of the English language. Those who were good at English tended to be more English than historical, submitting tasks written in 'pure English' rather than historical facts, connotations and implications. He had noticed that learners tended to do better in questions that are source-based rather than on essay questions. The latter type of question was said to demand that learners create something of their own from start to finish. In terms of this, the biggest challenge was said to lie with essay construction which supposedly linked up with learners' non-existent command of English. Though he could not blame language teachers for this kind of problem he wished that these could use history content for comprehension passages so that the learners would have some idea by the time he got to a particular section.
- **Learners:** learners were found to be robots rather than transformers of knowledge or active participants. This appears to be also a problem of the policy than simply that of the learners themselves. Considers in this regard the implied tension between the textbook and the people's histories as was suggested in the longer version of this interview.

APPENDIX G

My "Family"

I am one of two children of Nkosinathi & Nopasika Tata. My older brother is Thamsanga. I have not spend much time with my own parents, My father passed away when I was only 6yrs old and I don't ^{have} a clue of what happend to my mother, After the death of my father I became my father's sister responsibility. I started school in Lusa primary and Zodwa who is the sister to my father and also who is a pensioner. has been paying for my education since grade one. Zodwa is then the one who has been playing an important role in my education, with the help of her youngest daughter. With the time I wouldn't be where I am today. (Id) I pray god to give them many more years to live.

My family Talk about My family

I am the only one who care about my family who always support my family even if my family is suffering in money I can take my money and give my Mother to buy some food. My mother is also work hard ~~for us~~ to other side to makes us proud of him. When I was citing alone thinking about this condition I found some plan to make my family to survive in life.

On Sunday morning I wake up and I go in Cape Town to buy some camera. After that I starting to photo some people around Kite but when I was in this business I didnt work the way I think because I found some up and downs. Because before I start this business I wasnt research about it. to get some experience to do it, But I walk through in this conditions. Because I know that if you pray God. God can give you everything you wants.

After I ^{was} work some hard, my business was so successful I was called in birthdays Funerals Churchs and Miss. I didnt forget my family ^{and} I having this success because I was work for my family.

My message in young people is dont support your family if you can dont just looking your family suffering do something. makes some plan. do forget to pray God. Because God is everything to us.

My family

the person who have been helpful to my education needs, is my sister and my father. My father I just pay school fees only but my sister she is okay there when at school need some money to raise funds and when I want to stop going to school she always supporting me to go to school because she never finish school because of our father. Now she don't want me to be like that and maybe one day I'll be someone who will change the world. I trade to listen to her but I see myself that I not coping because I don't even concentrate because I'm used at class and I don't have friends to talk about my problem so I thought to myself that I must live school, even my father his not supporting me although he knows that my father had died 17 years ago. So what that what make my sister want me to go to school so I stated to think if I want to go ahead at school I must go and live home so I did but thing got mess because I live with my aunt and her daughter and my sister the one who's been supporting me. So when her daughters have this grudge to their hearts about my father that my father throw them out in his house when they were young and their mother my aunt but my aunt don't have that grudge. So they state to do thing to my sister and her baby and I. I said I want to stop school they say I'm write so I just listen to my sister about school because

Hi!! My Name is Bandile Akh Beyer I AM Going To Tell You About My Life AND THE POSITIVE THINGS THAT I've Achieve in My LIFE. THINGS THAT I DO AT SCHOOL AND WHAT KIND OF A PERSON I AM I'M ALSO GOING TO TELL YOU LITTLE BIT ABOUT MY FAMILY AND WHAT HAVE THEY DOEN FOR ME TO BE WHERE I AM TODAY, IT'S ALL THANKS TO THEM, BUT ALL IN ALL IT'S ALL ABOUT ME, MYSELF AND I SO COME WITH ME AND READ ABOUT ME AND MY LIFE EXPERIENCES MYBE MY STORY WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE OR THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT YOURSELF

I Come From A Family of six, I was born AND RAISED IN CAPE TOWN CITY OF BEAUTY. I'M THE ONLY CHILD FROM MY MOTHER, MY MOTHER'S SIST HAS TWO CHILDREN A GIRL AND A BOY, THEN WE HAVE A BIEBER BROTHER. WE ARE TERMINING IN THE OLD LOCATION IN NYANAKA. NYANAKA MEANING THE MOON, I RAISED BY MY MOTHER, SHE IS A SINGLE PARENT BUT MY FATHER GIVES A MONEY WHEN I WANT IT AND I UNDERSTAND WHEN HE DOES NOT HAVE IT, MY FAMILY SUPPORTS ME TO WITH EVERYTHING, MOST IMPORTANT THING THEY GIVE ME IS LOVE. MY LIFE AS A YOUNG MEN CHANGES OVER A PERIOD OF TIME BECAUSE AS A TOWNSHIP BOY U EXPERIENCE MANY THINGS LIKE KILLINGS, RO FIGHTS AND MOST OF ALL THE CONTROVESY OF THE YOUTH DYING OF HIV TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND MANY MORE. BECAUSE I COME FROM A LOVING AND CARING FAMILY THEY WERE BESIDE ME ALL THE TIME HELPING ME TO OVERCOME THE BAD THINGS THAT WERE HAPPENING. THEN FROM ALL THE GOOD THE BAD EXPERIENCES I DECIDED THAT I MUST AND I DID TURNED INTO A NEW LEAVE AND BECAME A BETTER PERSON IN LIFE.

P1112

MY LIFE STORY IN SCHOOL WAS NICE FIRST IN PRIMARY SCHOOL THINGS WERE NOT THAT BAD, BECAUSE I WAS A SMALL BOY NOT KNOWING MUCH. I! WONDERSFUL TEACHER THERE WHICH WHERE TEACHING US AS CHILDREN TO LOOK OUT FOR LIFE IN HIGH SCHOOL, AND BE THE PEOPLE THAT WE ARE, PEOPLE THAT HAVE RESPECT FOR ADULTS AND OTHER PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES. THEN I

My Educational Experiences

My educational experiences have not been that bad, but fun. When I was in primary the experiences that I had are the ones that help me to cope at high school.

Especially the one that I got from my grade 6 & 7 teacher who was Mr XXX who always says never quit. So even when things seem to be going wrong I just think of him, because when you are growing up there are obstacles that wait when you want to quit, such as when you have no money to come to school and be forced walk few miles to school.

Here at ZIMTS I experienced a lot, first of all is to be responsible be punctual because there is no one to go after you like did in primary. Also here at high school you must never ever be very sensitive to words anything because you might end up quitting school.

Conclusion if you are serious with your education stay strong be prepared and always practise to be a responsible person.

My education experiences

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My education experiences was at Muzeni low primary school. My ~~teacher~~^{Principal} of muzeni low primary is I love my principal of my school because they love the child. For example my principal if don't have a money for eat at school he give you food money. The other day the children they going to the assembly.

They children sing before will sing will see child colaps. And the other ~~teacher~~ take her and they have this child a fresh air, This child tell the teacher if their was hung because from back her home ~~they mother~~ the didn't have food and they don't have money to buy food so that why he colaps.

My principal go to town and he came back of school. And he gave the child the food and money. So that why I love ~~you~~ my principal and love my lower primary because the teacher of lower primary they have care.

And teacher of lower primary they understand if for example you don't have money to pay the teacher will not tell you in front of other child if you not pay fee because he know people are not the same.

My Educational experience (Good & Bad)

In High and Primary

Primary School Solihull PPS

It was a knightmare!

I was in standard 2 and I was unharmed in front of the class by a teacher's hate even now! MEM I had a tan afro and wanted me to shave/cut it which I did not want to, I mean, it was my right to do what I like with my hair and she cut it out with a scissor the next day my shirt was dirty she called my brother she was in Std 5, made me take it off and wash it in the class sign 'Person'. She beat me to death when I stabbed a boy I burned his sisters hair with matches from that day I stayed alone! 3 biscuits at home excuse escaping in the morning give play with trains from Cafe Town to Kaptein'skip that's when I got out of hand and became a reward

Still my brother sat with me down and advised me to be a normal kid which I was it told me to go to school this school which he was in and told me what I'm doing he did it for me and I won't pass it in 5 minutes I'm ahead and still can't

There not much I can say about this school because in the previous 5 years I was in to school much in making it for my brother to get every thing I want. I usually was serious during the year November exam,

People who know me from outside are surprised that I'm in Std 9 because of the things I do even I!

But after all ZMIB is a good school to be in and I love it so much that I don't want to be out any more.

APPENDIX I

What I see myself doing in ten years time

In I see myself in ten years time as a owner of my own big business or a M.C. of and make my own label of music And sign my own records.

My life style will be a good, live luxury life As a owner of my company As a musician I will sing till the day I die, because music is almost everything. And I will be in top 10 in the globe. of ~~my~~ My life will be in stars, everybody want to see around the world. ~~then~~ I My cars will be Maybach and Tacosont and I here a driver where every I go And when I talk out of my cars I ~~want~~ walk on my Red carpet. Everybody screaming for me.

My family will be living in suburbs.

TOPIC 3: WHAT I SEE MYSELF DOING IN 10 YRS TIME

When I was young my aunt will ^{tell} ~~promise~~ me to promise her that when I am older I won't quit school under any circumstances. Then I did make my promise which I will never forget. All my people are successful in life, so why should I be successful!

My aunt had never had much time to study because she was very sick from asthma, but she was very clever. Because me, I have power to make my father wild I intend to do any kind of a sort to make my father bright. I came from a successful family.

I always wanted to be an accountant or an auditor for that matter. I want to be like my father, living in the suburbs houses in Kelisriver.

In ten years time I see myself living with my sister having good lifestyle or maybe owning my own company.

I don't think I will be having any children or any boyfriend for that matter. Having money and someone to run your life is not good. Boyfriends might be the ones who would make you fall, because you have your own money. They ~~at~~ might think you want to be the one to own him not him owning you. So that is why I think I must not depend on ~~any~~ anyone's shoulders.

What I see myself doing in ten years time.

In my occupation, I see my self as a sport ~~man~~ ^{man} playing Basketball internationally getting paid for my team from United States of America living in a memorable house that I can afford with my salary. The house having seven rooms three toilets or computer room which there's things to be a few computers. And having three cars two for me and the other for my ~~love~~ ^{wife} and I will be married with 5 children. Why? Because I will be married and start my own basketball team with my family and basketball is played by five players and substitutes. Which is in the years following ten year I'll be managing my own team.

Therefore as possible obstacles is that in South Africa as in whole, I'm not the only one who plays basketball and not the best of them all. To play for teams from USA you must be the best of the best and the could be some injuries could get before the ten years come and the doctor could tell me to stop playing or he will be forced to cut my leg because of the injuries in my ~~hand~~ ^{hand} knee. And there are the things I fear most in my obstacle life.

*Occupation

I will go ahead with my studies ~~then~~ be cause what I want to be is to be a Loyer. So what takes 7 Years in tertiary. So I've got to work hard. So what I'll be come a Loyer.

*Life style

I'll be working all the time. So I won't have time to do things like to have fun like others if I'm not working. If I go to my sister and maybe her husband and their children and spend the day there. On weekends I will go out with my friend and spend some time with them. On Sunday's go to church and thank God for what he did to me for all this past years then go home to my children.

*Family life

I will have 3 children not married. Live with my children in a big house with (Lisigeshua) to help in the house when I'm at work. Saturday take them to my sister or maybe things will be fine to me and my father, take them to his house. So that I could have some time alone in the house then late I take them bring the home.

*The things that could stand in my way is that I won't have money to finish my studies and maybe I could die before time because of heart attack that I could have very soon.

APPENDIX J



COSATU

MARCH

TO

PARLIAMENT

THURS 16 SEPT '04

Keiserg'raacht
11:00am

**ALL PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS WILL
 BE MARCHING TO PARLIAMENT TO
 DEMONSTRATE THEIR SUPPORT
 FOR WAGE DEMANDS!**

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

Issued by COSATU Western Cape, 358 Victoria Rd, Salt River Centre, Salt River. Tel: (021) 448 0045. Allie's Printing Services Tel: (021) 931 2142

APPENDIX K



Just outside ZWHS



Inside ZWHS



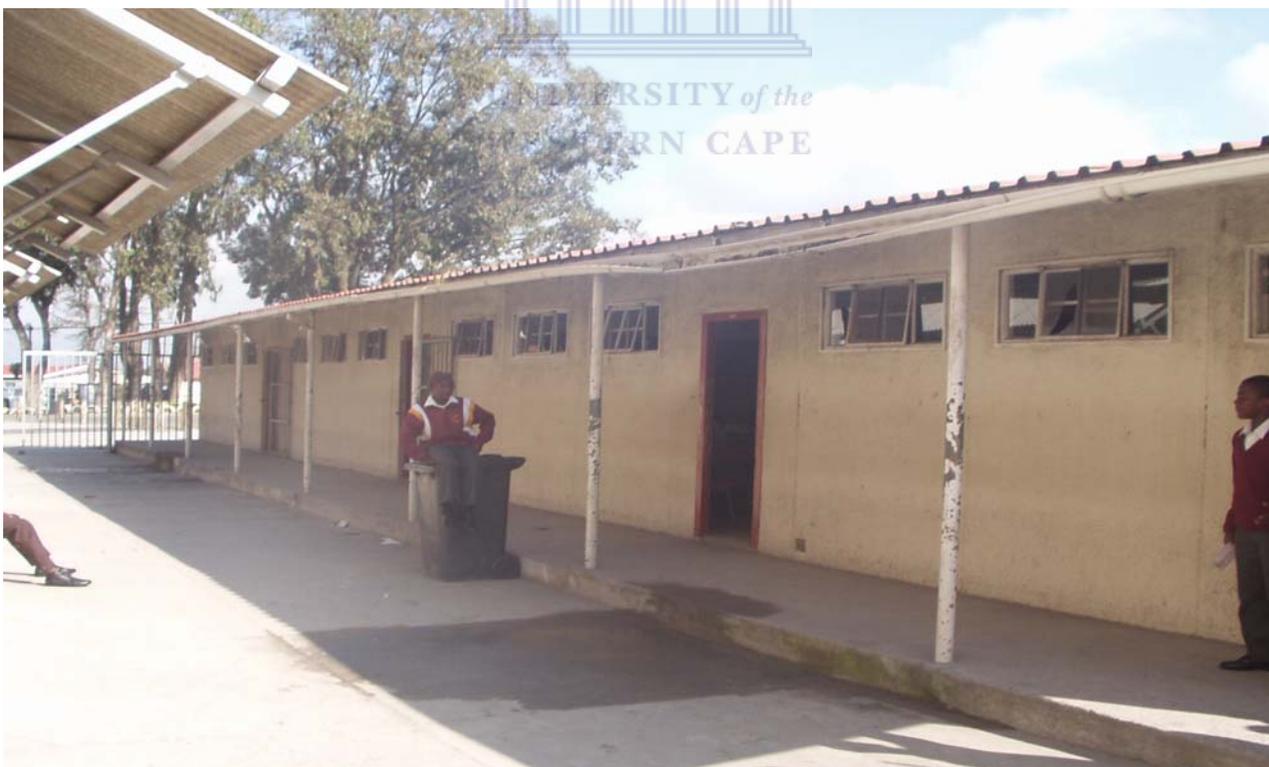
Taxi rank just outside ZWHS



One of the offices at ZWHS



Just outside ZWHS



Junior block at ZWHS