

Self-configuration experiences of Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties within the learner- teacher relationship

Suzaan Wessels

23288477

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Supervisor: Prof HB Grobler

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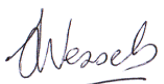
Preface

This dissertation is presented in article format in accordance with the guidelines set out in the **Manual for Postgraduate Studies, 2013 of the North-West University**. The technical editing was done according to the APA guidelines and requirements set out in the manual. The article will be submitted to *The Journal of Special Education*. The guidelines for the submission to the journal are attached in Addendum 5, Journal submission guidelines.

Declaration

I, Suzaan Wessels, declare herewith that the dissertation entitled: **Self-configuration experiences of Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties within the learner-teacher relationship**, which I herewith submit to the North-West University: Potchefstroom Campus, is my own work and that all references used or quoted were indicated and acknowledged.

Please ensure final document is signed

Signature:  _____

Date: 31 October 2014

Mrs S. Wessels.

Editor's confirmation, signature and contact details:*Declaration*

This is to declare that I, Annette L Combrink

Accredited language editor and translator of the

South African Translators' institute

have language edited the dissertation by

Suzaan Wessels

With the title

*Self-configuration experiences of Intermediate Phase learners with
mild learning difficulties within the learner-teacher relationship*



Prof. Annette L Combrink

Accredited translator and language editor,

South African Translators' Institute

Membership no. 1000356

Date: 23 October 2014

Summary

Key words: Self; self-configuration; Intermediate Phase learners; mild learning difficulties; Dialogical Theory of Self; Gestalt Field Theory

More often than not learners with learning difficulties are treated differently from normal mainstream learners. Often they experience themselves in a less positive manner because of the interactions with various teachers who may not always have enough patience to deal with these learners while trying to cope with large numbers of learners on a daily base.

This study was conducted to explore self-configuration experiences of Intermediate Phase learners with learning difficulties within the learner-teacher relationship. Literature indicates that the self is a complex construct to define and can be interpreted in various ways. The researcher aimed to understand how the self is configured in experiences that learners have with their teachers and how these experiences contribute to and affect self-configuration. The theoretical frameworks of the Dialogical Theory of Self and the Gestalt Field Theory were used to gain an understanding of how vital relations and context are in the configuration experiences of the self.

A qualitative case study with purposive sampling was conducted. The study was done at a single school where all the learners in the school have learning difficulties. There were nine learners that fell in the Intermediate Phase category and all of them were boys who voluntarily participated in the research.

Data were collected by means of a semi-structured interview in which the participants were asked to use incomplete sentences and a visual map that they made to help them express their experiences. A follow-up interview was conducted to check that the meaning that the learner ascribed to his incomplete sentences and visual map was

accurate and an opportunity was given to add something should the participant want to. Participants were given this opportunity as some of them had difficulty in expressing themselves adequately during the first session as a result of their learning difficulties in so much as they struggle to find words that express their feelings and what they wanted to communicate.

Data were transcribed and analysed by means of thematic analysis. The study indicated that it was aspects such as quality time the teachers spent with the learners and the tone of voice of the teacher that contributed to the self-configuration experiences of the learners.

Further research is necessary to determine whether this is the experience in other schools that cater for learners with learning difficulties and how this knowledge may be used to bring greater awareness to teachers to better understand how learners experience their relationship with regards to self-configuration. Quantitative studies can also be conducted to investigate the impact of teacher-learner relationships on self-configuration.

Opsomming

Sleutelterme: Self; self-konfigurasie; Intermediêre Faseleerders, matige leerproblematiek; Dialogiese teorie van die self; Gestalt Veldteorie

Dikwels word leerders met leerprobleme anders behandel as gewone leerders in hoofstroomskole. Hulle ervaar hulleself dikwels in 'n minder positiewe lig as gevolg van die interaksies met verskeie onderwysers wat nie aldag genoegsame geduld het om met hierdie leerders om te gaan nie, terwyl hulle 'n groot aantal leerders op 'n daaglikse basis moet hanteer. Hierdie navorsingstudie is gedoen om die self-konfigurasie ervarings van die Intermediêre faseleerders met leerprobleme binne die leerder-onderwyser verhouding te ondersoek. Literatuur dui daarop dat die self 'n komplekse konstruk is om te definieer en dit kan op verskeie maniere geïnterpreteer word. Die navorser het gepoog om te verstaan hoe die self gekonfigureer is binne ervarings wat leerders met hulle onderwyser het en hoe hierdie ervarings bydra tot – en selfkonfigurasie affekteer. Die teoretiese raamwerke van die Dialogiese teorie van die self en die Gestalt Veldteorie is gebruik om 'n begrip te kry van hoe noodsaaklik verhoudings en konteks is in die konfigurasie-ervarings van die self.

'n Kwalitatiewe gevallestudie met doelmatigheidsteekproefneming is uitgevoer. Die studie is afgeneem by 'n enkele skool waar al die leerders in die skool leerproblematiek ervaar. Daar is nege leerders wat in die Intermediêre fasekategorie geval het en almal van hulle is seuns wat vrywilliglik deelgeneem het aan die navorsing.

Data is ingesamel deur middel van semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude waarin die deelnemers gevra is om onvoltooide sinne en 'n visuele kaart wat hulle gemaak het om hulle te help om hul ervarings uit te druk, te gebruik. 'n Opvolgonderhoud is gevoer om

seker te maak dat die betekenis wat die leerder aan sy onvoltooide sinne en visuele kaart toegeken het akkuraat is en die geleentheid is aan die leerder gegun om, sou hy iets wou byvoeg, dit te kan doen. Deelnemers is hierdie geleentheid gegun omdat sommige van hulle as gevolg van hulle leerproblematiek dit moeilik gevind het om hulleself na behore uit te druk gedurende die eerste besoek. As gevolg van hulle leerproblematiek het hulle dit moeilik gevind om die woorde te vind om hulle gevoelens uit te druk - dit wat hulle wou kommunikeer.

Data is getranskribeer en geanaliseer deur middel van tematiese analise. Die studie het aangedui dat dit aspekte is soos kwaliteittyd wat onderwysers met leerders spandeer en die stemtoon van die onderwyser wat bydra tot die selfkonfigurasie-ervaringe van die leerders.

Verdere navorsing is nodig om te bepaal of hierdie die ervaring sal wees in ander skole wat voorsiening maak vir leerders met leerproblematiek en hoe hierdie kennis gebruik kan word om bewusmaking onder onderwysers teweeg te bring om groter begrip te kry van hoe leerders hulle verhoudings ervaar met betrekking tot selfkonfigurasie. Kwantitatiewe studies kan ook uitgevoer word om die impak van onderwyser-leerder verhoudings op selfkonfigurasie te ondersoek.

Section A

Part 1

Orientation to the Research

Orientation and problem formulation

Family encompasses the living world of a young child. However, as children grow and move into school-going age, they are introduced to environments outside the family (Collins & Van Dulmen, 2006). School becomes the environment where they spend most of their time outside the family (Cooper, Coll, Bartko, Davis, & Chatman, 2008; Çubukça, 2012; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997; O'Connor, 2010). Relationships with teachers and peers, as well as experiences they encounter during their time at school, have an impact not only on academic performance, but also on how they view and experience themselves (Davis-Kean, Jager, & Collins, 2009; McCormick, O'Connor, Cappella, & McClowry, 2013). Their relationships with teachers especially can play a significant role in the self-configuration of learners (Davis-Kean, Jager & Collins, 2009).

The researcher is interested in how the self is configured in Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties, particularly from the learners' perspective within their relationships with their teachers. During the Intermediate Phase, which falls in the period of middle childhood, meaning-making becomes more pertinent (Dennis, n.d.; Huston, & Ripke, 2006). During this phase children develop a sophisticated concept of self. They make social comparisons regarding abilities and appearances, peers become more important and their sense of self is influenced by what happens in the classroom, academic achievements and the feedback they receive from their social contexts (Davis-Kean, Jager & Collins, 2009; Morin, Maïano, Marsch, Nagengast & Janosz, 2013). Intermediate Phase learners (Gr. 4-6) experience transition phases from Foundation

Phase, where they only have one teacher and one classroom, to going to different teachers for different subjects in different classrooms. This transition could affect self-esteem, class preparation, perceptions of quality of school life and achievement motivation (O'Connor, 2010; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997).

The development of a sense of self is always contextual and relational (Davis-Kean, Jager & Collins, 2009; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997) and therefore there is a reciprocal nature between the influence that the social context and individual have on one another (Bell, 2013; Stets & Burke, 2000). Within the individual, the sense of self develops further through inner dialogue, perceptions, and intra- and interpersonal relationships. It is through the contact with others, as well as the contact with the inner self, that "self" is revealed (Phillipson, 2009; Yontef, 1993). The self is a complex construct to define. Oysterman, Elmore, and Smith (2012) state that the self is a social product that is influenced by the people surrounding the person, the interaction and contact between them and what happens in the moment. Social context influences the experience of self-configuration (Phillippson, 2009; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997). It is within this social context that the relationships that learners have with their teachers may be a factor in how learners view themselves. The relationship between vulnerable learners, such as learners with mild learning difficulties, and their teacher may be even more important to the self-configuration of learners (O'Hara, 2005).

Research done by Prunty, DuPont and McDaid (2012) indicates that learners experiencing mild learning difficulties place a high value on the positive relationships and support they receive from their teacher. According to O'Hara (2005) learners with mild learning difficulties need a more compassionate and caring approach from their teachers. Learners who do not enjoy a supportive relationship with their teachers may experience

more conflict and frustration within the teacher-learner relationship, as well as low academic achievement, not feeling connected to the school and meagre self-direction (Morin, Mañano, Marsh, Nagengast & Janosz, 2013; Rudasill, Reio, Stipanovic & Taylor, 2010). The contact and interaction between learner and teacher are important during this phase of development as learners develop a truer sense of self-understanding during this time (Grier, 2013).

Previous research has focused on teachers' experiences of learners with difficult behaviour, teacher characteristics and the child-teacher relationship from the perspective of the teacher (Kesner, 2000, Rudasill & Rimm-Kaufmann, 2006; Rudasill, Reio, Stipanovic & Taylor, 2010; Saft & Pianta, 2001; Stuhlman & Pianta, 2002; Wentzel, 2002) as well as foundation phase learners' learning disabilities and problem behaviour and relationships with peers and adults (Giarelli, Clarke, Catching, & Ratcliffe, 2009; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997; Murray, Murray & Waas, 2008).

Self-configuration, specifically as experienced by learners in the Intermediate Phase of their school career experiencing mild learning difficulties, needs further investigation. Learners with mild learning difficulties are often overlooked when it comes to understanding how important daily interactions with teachers are. Research investigating the experience of self-configuration, which develops within the learner-teacher relationship, especially in the South African context and of learners with mild learning difficulties is scarce. Research done in South Africa has focused on the social interaction in South African schools (Kitching, Roos & Ferreira, 2011), difficulties learners experience being taught in their second or third language as the language of instruction (Myburgh, Poggenpoel & van Rensburg, 2004) and discipline difficulties experienced in South African schools (Van der Walt & Oosthuizen, 2008). To gain a better understanding of how

Intermediate Phase learners develop a sense of self, it is important to investigate the self-configuration experiences of these learners with mild learning difficulties from their own perspective. Learners with learning difficulties do not always have the means to express themselves or voice how they experience the self when interacting with authoritative adults such as teachers. The researcher is co-owner of a support centre for learners who chose to follow a home school education curriculum as well as learners in mainstream schools. As such, parents of learners are aware of the support services offered by the support centre. One of the services is to aid parents in finding a school that might best benefit their child's needs.

The school where the research was done is a school very close to where the researcher lives. In order to be able to inform parents about what possibilities there are for their child, the researcher contacted the school in order to find out what facilities they offer. It was during this first visit to the school about two years before the research commenced that the researcher first became aware of what the school under consideration was all about. The school under consideration had been recently (2011) established to cater for learners with learning difficulties. The owner started this school after she had taught at one of the remedial schools and found that there were areas she thought she could improve on. Their emphasis is on small groups and acknowledging each learner. During the meeting with the principal and owner, the researcher was made aware of the number of learners who came from numerous schools that cater for learners with learning difficulties. These learners expressed the view to the teachers of the current school that they felt as if they were not seen, listened to or acknowledged at their previous schools. The researcher became interested in just how the interaction and relationship with their teachers contributed to the configuration of self within these learners. The approach that this specific

school has is to focus not only on the academic performance of the learners but to observe closely when attention and concentration declines by means of monitoring the learners. Learners are discussed at the staff meetings the headmistress holds with the teachers and in those meetings they attempt to discover why the learner's attention and / or concentration decrease in order to provide additional support to the learner. If this model of school can accomplish positive self-configuration experiences to learners, other schools might be able to enhance their learners' experiences as well.

In this research context, mild learning difficulties refer to learners who have difficulty mastering academic content. The learners who participated in this study come from one specific school under consideration and are referred from mainstream schools. Many of these learners are learners with learning difficulties, ranging from concentration problems to difficulty with reading and writing. There are only a small number of learners per teacher in their current school (it may vary between eight to ten learners per teacher and often there is an assistant present as well). They find it very difficult to keep up with the fast pace in mainstream schools. Some of the learners have difficulty expressing themselves in a fluent manner and need time to formulate their thoughts and words.

Although they have difficulty in formulating what they feel, these learners are very aware of what they experience when they are with their teacher. The difficulty in expressing themselves quickly puts them at a disadvantage in mainstream schools due to the fast pace at which learners need to work and respond. However, some of the learners are capable of re-entering mainstream schools. The learners participating in the research have difficulty expressing themselves initially in an elaborate way using expressive and descriptive words because they can only formulate simplistic sentences and need time to

gather their thoughts and words. Once they have ordered their thoughts and words they can express their feelings in such a way that they could be understood.

The theoretical frameworks for this study are the Gestalt Field Theory and the Dialogical Theory of Self. Gestalt psychology influenced the founder of the Field Theory, Kurt Lewin (1890 – 1947). The concept Gestalt refers to a coherent whole with specific properties that cannot be derived from the individual elements and also cannot be seen as the sum of the individual elements. Gestalt may be defined as the whole which is more than the sum of the parts (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). The sum of these elements can be seen as the individual's life space (Man, 2010). It is within the relationship between the person and environment or life space that the person's reality can be defined and each field is unique as the individual gives meaning to what happens within his field. The field is constantly changing, as each part of the field is potentially equally meaningful (Mann, 2010).

Gestalt Field Theory describes behaviour as the function (patterns of interaction) of individuals in their environment or field (Shoda, 2004). Field theory states that these co-existing facts make up the dynamic field, which implies that the field depends on every individual part of the environment. There is always interconnectedness (Woldt & Toman, 2005) between the individual and the psychological and physical factors in a particular context (Joyce & Sills, 2006). MacKewn (2010) states the importance of the context in order to understand individuals as well as their contribution and responsibility in giving meaning to their field.

From this point of view, this study acknowledges that each participant may experience unique and diverse fields depending on their subjective experiences (Mann, 2010) and how they have adjusted to that experience or field.

The Dialogical Theory of Self provides insight into how the person views the self in relation to the self and the social context. It thus refers to the interconnectedness between the self and society. The self is seen as emerging from a multifaceted context and is always relational. In the same way as humans develop relationships with other people, so do they build relationships with themselves (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Hermans (2012) states that the dialogical theory of self is based on a conception of the self as a society and part of positioning and repositioning in collective history and personal development. Perceptions of the self has an impact on the perception of how others view oneself.

The interconnectedness of the self and society as well as the relational nature of the self, capture the essence of the dialogical theory of self (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). This study is interested in the connectedness between the learner and the teacher and the experience of the connection and interaction regarding self-configuration. From the above discussion the research question was defined as: How do Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties experience self-configuration within the learner-teacher relationship?

Research aim

The aim of a research study is to inform the reader about the intent of the research (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2009). The aim of this study was to conduct qualitative research to explore and describe the self-configuration experiences of Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties within the learner-teacher relationship within the boundaries of a case study design.

Concept descriptions

The Self

Sense of Self is described by Philippson (2009) as that which materialises when brought into contact with a given context or field. Yontef (1993) also describes the self “as a process that occurs at the boundary” and that there cannot be a “self” apart from a context or field. According to Polster (2005) experiences within the field shape the way in which the self is viewed as experiences reveal what is otherwise hidden. In this study, the “field” will be the contact learners have with their teachers and the school environment and how their sense of self is shaped within this relationship.

Self-configuration. The self is not seen as a fixed structure in Gestalt Therapy Theory but as a function to make contact with the environmental field. Contact with the environment is described as spontaneous, deliberate and creative. It is within these experiences and reactions with the environment that learners learn about and configure their “selves” (Lobb & Lichtenberg, 2005). According to MacKewn (1997) the self exists in the interactions between the individual and his/her field and in relationships between two people. Thus, the self is innately relational. This study is interested in how the self is experienced and configured in the relationship with the teacher. How learners experience and perceive their environment contributes to self-configuration. For the purposes of this study, self-configuration is thus seen as a process occurring within the reciprocal relationship with others and is not merely an intra-psychological process.

Learner-teacher relationship.

Engagement with the school plays a key role in social and cognitive development, sense of achievement and high self-esteem as well as being fundamental to learners' well-

being. The relational context must be examined in order to understand the relational quality between learner and teacher (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010).

The school context is vitally important in learner-teacher relationships as learners spend most of their time at school and are exposed to new and unfamiliar adult and peer relationships that must be integrated along with acceptable classroom performance (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997). Chong, Huan, Quek, Yeo, and Ang (2010) also identify the sense of relatedness towards teachers as one of the dimensions important to middle-school learners. As the contact between learner and teacher influences how learners perceive themselves, it is important to investigate how learners experience their relationships with their teachers. It is within this contact with their teacher that learners discover how others view them and thus it does contribute to self-configuration.

Middle childhood

Middle childhood is an important developmental phase as the impact and power of relationships are amplified (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). Collins (2008) and Cooper, Coll, Bartko, Davis and Chapman (2008) further describe the middle childhood as a period of transition. Learners enter a new phase in their school career and experience physiological, psychological and cognitive changes. The participants of this research study fall into the middle childhood phase and are in the Intermediate Phase (Gr. 4-7) of their school career.

Mild learning difficulties

“Learning difficulties” is a term that the United Kingdom prefers to older terms such as mental retardation and it is also used differently in the USA where it refers to specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia (Rithey, 2003). Alloway (2009) states that in the UK any child in need of assistance to succeed in a mainstream school is classified as a child

with special education needs. The term “special educational needs” refers to problems ranging from physical, sensory, emotional, and behavioural and speech difficulties. In the UK learning difficulties are defined in the context of IQ. Individuals obtaining a score below 70 are seen as individuals with learning difficulties and those with an IQ of between 71 and 84 as learners with borderline intellectual functioning (Alloway, 2009).

According to Westwood (2008) the term learning difficulties is a general term used to indicate that learners have difficulty in coping with the school curriculum. Westwood (2008) further states that it is a term without precision as it does not differentiate between learners with difficulties due to socio-economic disadvantages or limited opportunities to learn or support at home and those learners with specific learning disabilities. These are learners of average intelligence but who experience difficulties in literacy and numeracy. The commonality that learners with difficulties share is the failure to acquire proficient reading and writing skills (Westwood, 2008). The inability to successfully master literacy and numeracy impact almost all areas of the school curriculum. Along with the difficulties experienced in literacy and numeracy, these learners also portray ineffective coping strategies with work given to them by their teachers (Westwood, 2008)

Dednam (2011) states that South Africa uses a broader term since 1997 when South Africa’s Integrated National Disability Strategy indicated “the social environment as the actual barrier when needs of people with impairments are not met.” The term learners with learning impairments was since used to correspond with the document (Dednam, 2011). In South Africa, the term *learning difficulty* is a general term referring to learners who struggle with one or more learning areas despite their intelligence being average or above average. Learning difficulties usually manifest once the learner starts formal schooling and as the demands in school escalate, the learning difficulties the learner experiences become

clearer (Health24, Feb. 2013). Learning difficulties are therefore a neurological condition and not due to the lack of opportunities. Learning difficulties interfere with the learner's ability to store, process and recall information (Gould, 2011). Learning difficulties can range from auditory processing problems where the learner has difficulty understanding and carrying out instructions and this makes it difficult for learners to learn how to read and spell, and cope with specific reading disorders and scholastic disorders. Scholastic disorders refer to attention and concentration difficulties as well as memory, planning and motor planning problems (Health24, Feb.2013). Learning difficulties affect the learner's spoken and written language ability, mathematics, reasoning, memory, coordination and emotional maturity (Gould, 2011).

Globally, learning difficulties refer to a general developmental delay in children, which results in their experiencing difficulties in all areas of a school curriculum. Due to the developmental delay experienced by learners, they need a high level of support in mainstream schools. Learners may display one or more of the following: poor visual and / or auditory memory, immature social, listening and attention skills and communication skills (verbal and non-verbal) may be poor. Supportive strategies are put in place to provide work in smaller quantities, more personalised attention, and a multi-sensory approach to learning, monitoring and assessment of progress, making use of rhythm and using simple language (Teaching Expertise, 2013). For this study, mild learning difficulties refer to learners who need more personalised attention in primary school. In the participating school, learners receive individualised attention, multisensory learning, allowing movement and rhythm as well as breaking the work into more manageable portions. Learners are closely observed and assessed to note their progress in order to provide adequate support.

Literature study

The following themes were explored as a step towards achieving the research aim: Sense of self and self-configuration; learner-teacher relationships; dialogical theory of self; Gestalt Field Theory, middle childhood and specifically the intermediate phase, as well as mild learning difficulties. These themes are discussed in part 2 of section A in the form of an integrated literature review.

The body of the literature review included books, academic journals, both national and international, search engines that were inclusive but not exclusively North-West University search engines, Google, Google Scholar and dissertations.

Research methodology

Research approach and design

A qualitative research approach was followed. According to Ponterotto (2005) qualitative methods encompass empirical procedures to explain and give meaning to the lived experiences of research participants in a specific context. Brown, Knoche, Edwards, and Sheridan (2009) concur that qualitative research follows a holistic worldview that (i) consists of different perceptions and opinions that create different realities for each individual (ii) these perceptions are not static but dynamic and (iii) context gives meaning to what we know. Qualitative research tends to be done in naturalistic settings, focuses on context and is interpretive according to Marshall and Rossman (2011). A qualitative approach suited this study best as the study was done in a natural setting - the school environment of the learners – exploring how learners with mild learning difficulties experienced self-configuration within their relationship with their teacher.

The qualitative case study as design was chosen for this study, as it provides the researcher with the means to explore the complex phenomenon within its natural context (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2012). According to Creswell (2007) the case study research “involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (Creswell, 2007:73). Creswell (2007) further states that the case study is a qualitative approach wherein the case or bounded system is studied over time by means of in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information such as interviews, reports, observations, audio-visual material. Since it is important to understand the case itself, an intrinsic case study approach was followed (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010; Stake, 1995). Creswell (2007) states that the focus of the intrinsic case study is on the case itself as it presents a distinctive situation. Baxter and Jack (2008) emphasize and concur that the purpose of intrinsic case study research is not to understand a generic phenomenon and to build a theory but the case itself.

In this study the case (the self-configuration of Intermediate Learners with mild learning difficulties within the learner-teacher relationship) was pre-selected in order to learn more about how their relationship (daily experiences within the classroom and outside of the classroom) as well as interaction such as communication with teachers either within the classroom setting or socially outside of the classroom, influence self-configuration. (Stake, 1995). The boundaries of this case study are the learners which partook in the research as well as their school environment as the research was conducted within the school setting and not involving other social settings such as family or friends. The need to understand the case further is supported by Lodico et al. (2010). This specific case study was done to explore and create awareness of how the relationship specifically

between teacher and learner with mild learning difficulties influences the self-configuration of said learners.

Participants and sampling method

Research was done at a specific school on the East Rand, Gauteng Province for learners with mild learning difficulties. There are twenty-nine learners in the school, all with learning difficulties ranging from mild learning difficulties to autism. There are four separate classes, the Foundation Phase class (Gr. 1-3), a separate Gr. 4 class, the Intermediate Grade class (Gr. 5-7) and a class for children diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and other forms of autism. Most of the learners have been taken from mainstream school due to difficulties in coping with the work, relational difficulties and negative influences from peers. The aim of the school is to support the learners to re-enter main stream schools from Gr. 8-12.

The research was done with nine learners in the Gr. 4-7 phase. The Gr. 4-7 learners have been diagnosed with mild learning and reading difficulties. These learners have difficulty coping with the learning of academic content, but are taught skills to help them master academic work. After completing Gr. 7 some of these learners enter mainstream schools again. Most of the learners are in therapy, according to the principal, have fair verbal communication skills and are accustomed to expressing feelings and experiences.

Criteria for inclusion in the research study were children who were in the Intermediate Phase or in the age group ten to thirteen and have mild learning difficulties who could speak English. These participants could communicate fairly well as long as they were given enough time to respond and did not feel pressured. Although gender and ethnicity were not used as criteria to exclude learners from this study all nine participants were boys and there were equal numbers of white and black learners, because one set of parents

had decided not to participate. Non-probability methods are used in qualitative research. These samples are not statistically representative of the population but are selected because they reflect and represent the characteristics of the sample population. In purposive sampling the participants are selected because their characteristics will contribute to an understanding of the research question (Ritchie, Lewis, Elam, Tennant & Rahim, 2014). A purposive sample (Ritchie et al., 2014) was used to obtain participants for this study as the researcher was interested specifically in the self-configuration experiences of these learners. This sampling method was appropriate in the light of the fact that it is used to select participants that can provide the necessary information (Ritchie et al., 2014; Creswell & Plano & Clark, 2011).

Data-collection method

The staff-room was made available to conduct the research. The research commenced after the teachers and assistants were in their various classrooms and the staff room was not in use. The incomplete sentences formed the questions for the structured interview. Due to similar experiences learners experienced in their relationship with teachers, there was a risk that the answers to the incomplete sentences provided by the learners could be very similar. Time constraints prohibited long term observation and in-depth interviews taken over a lengthy period of time which may have resulted in a more diverse collection of answers. Yet the structured interview by means of the incomplete sentences and the consequent follow-on interviews did provide insight into the self-configuration experiences of the learners. The incomplete sentences and visual maps, as part of structured interviews, took between 30 and 45 minutes per participant and the follow-up interviews took between 15 and 20 minutes. The participants had fair communication skills according to the teacher who work with these learners on a daily

basis. The researcher observed that the learners did have fair communication abilities but not all had extensive vocabulary and some had to search for words to express themselves. This made collecting data slightly more difficult. Because these participants do face this challenge, it makes hearing their view of their experiences so much more important.

As it is very important to provide the participants with structure and predictability, and also to allow them to become comfortable with the interviewing process, it was decided to start with a structured interview using incomplete sentences. By using the incomplete sentences (refer where it can be located) as the questions for the structured interview, it allowed the participants to answer in a fashion that allowed them not to feel rushed and as they could take enough time to order their thoughts. This provided these participants with support in their expression of their experiences. Sentences were read aloud along with the participant and words that the participant did not understand were explained to the participant. As some of the participants had difficulties with the mechanics of writing, the option was given to all the participants whether they would like to write (complete the sentences) themselves or whether the researcher had to do the writing for them. For those participants who chose the latter option, the researcher completed the sentences for them by writing their answers down verbatim. The incomplete sentences were effective through letting the participants start organising their thoughts pertaining to experiences they had had with their teachers. After completion of the sentences, the information that was given was discussed with them. Following the sentences, the participants were asked to draw a visual map of how they experienced themselves when they were with their teachers. Those participants who had good communications skills and a good vocabulary were asked to write down concepts of how they saw themselves within their relationship with their teachers. The word bank was placed on the table close enough for the participant to reach

for it should he want to use it, but not directly in his field of vision. The participants could add to the list. Participants added the concepts that were important to them. These words were available for other participants who could explain how they felt but struggled to give their descriptions as a single concept or in a few short words. The participants could freely choose from those words (word bank / key words) if they preferred to do so. Although participants could have been led by this way of doing, they were not forced in any way to make use of the key words or concepts. It was not required of the participants to write sentences. Words such as “confident”, “believe in self” and “useful” were used.

Drawing the visual map was challenging for some of the participants but all of them completed the task. After participants had completed their visual mapping (Theron, Mitchell, Smith, Stuart, 2011), they had an opportunity to explain what they meant with the concepts they had elected to use in their drawing. The explanation of their visual map was a key factor for the researcher to understand their visual maps as some of the key words were applicable to a previous school they attended and some to the current school they attend. Information from sentences and visual maps were then compared and discussed. Thereafter, during a follow-up visit, the researcher conducted interviews with the participants in order to gain additional information pertaining to their relationships with their teacher and to make sure the researcher understood what the participants meant with their incomplete sentences. During the follow-up interview some of their completed sentences that were referred to were read to them to make sure that they had explained the correct concept.

Member checking formed part of the follow-up interviewing process. As some of the participants found it difficult to freely express their feelings and thoughts, it helped greatly to have first done the incomplete sentences as the participants were calm and relaxed

during the interviews. The interviews nevertheless proved to be challenging as participants could not always remember what had happened in previous school environments prior to the current school or did not have an extended vocabulary and most data came from their experience of the current school environment. The experiences these participants had had in previous schools were important to them as all of them came from different school environments prior to enrolment in the school under study. They could report with ease how much better their current school environment and relationship with their current teacher were but that meant that the researcher had to ask them to think back to their previous experience with which they could compare their current situation and relationship.

Data analysis

Textual data analysis of interviews and incomplete sentences was done by means of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) which is a specific method by which patterns in data can be identified, analysed and reported. The researcher used the schematic drawings the participants had made to gain more themes and thematic analysis was implemented to analyse these visual maps or schematic drawings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher studied the visual maps or schematic drawings and identified similarities or repetitive themes that might give insight into the self-configuration experiences of these learners that partook in the research. Those self-configuration experiences that were drawn close to the centre were symbolic of themes that the learner felt was more closely related to him – he could identify more strongly with that experience in a positive manner than those the learner chose to draw further away from the centre of the page and more closely to the border of the page.

There are six phases, according to Braun and Clarke (2006) that are of relevance to this study. Phase one is where the researcher thoroughly familiarizes herself with the data.

The researcher personally transcribed the data interviews and read carefully through the data a few times. Phase two entails the generation of initial codes that included the meaning of the words used in the data. The third phase consists of a search for themes. Potential themes were identified as certain concepts appeared repeatedly. Another researcher went through the same process to make possible a comparison of identified themes. This phase was followed by the fourth phase in which these themes were reviewed. Themes were then named and defined (fifth phase) followed by the last phase where a report was produced.

Research procedure

The procedure was as follows:

- The research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. The researcher first visited the school's headmistress and explained what the research study entailed. After the headmistress had indicated that she was willing that research could be conducted at the school, a consent form was sent to her. Written permission was obtained from the school's headmistress (see addendum.2). The school's headmistress informed the parents about the research and obtained their permission for the researcher to send them consent forms.
- The headmistress informed the learners as well and explained to the learners what the study was all about. Thereafter the researcher sent out consent forms to the parents (see addendum 3). They could choose whether their child could participate in the study or not. After the consent forms had been sent to the parents, assent forms were sent to the learners in Gr. 4-7 (see addendum 4). Both the consent form and the assent form contained the goal of the research and outlined ethical aspects to be addressed.

- Incomplete sentences and visual mapping formed part of structured interviews, which were conducted during school hours with the consent of the headmistress and teacher of that class. The incomplete sentences were administered, followed by the schematic drawing or visual map portraying concepts of themselves as they experience themselves within their relationship with their teacher. Follow-up interviews served as an opportunity to gain more data and to do member-checking with the participants. To ensure thoroughness a voice recorder was used while conducting the interviews.

- Transcriptions and thematic data analysis of the gathered data were done.
- The results were presented in article format.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is based on crystallization (Ellingson, 2009) as a substitution for triangulation in this study. The principles and strategies for enhancing the trustworthiness of the data (Ellingson, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The principles and strategies for enhancing the rigour of the data through crystallization

Principles	Strategies	Application in study
Deepened complex interpretations	Data collection	The researcher followed three different qualitative research methods including structured interviews, incomplete sentences, visual mapping and unstructured follow-up interviews. To ensure the thoroughness of the interviews, the researcher used a voice recorder to record the interviews.

	Member checking	<p>During the first session, the incomplete sentences and visual mapping provided a structured opportunity for the participants to express themselves freely. After completion of the visual maps participants were asked questions about the visual map and to clarify information that was obtained during the structured interview by making use of incomplete sentences. During the second session the researcher used follow-up interviews to gain clarity and to make sure she did not add any information to what the participant had actually said. The researcher checked with the participants that her interpretation of the descriptions given by the participants was correct.</p>
Analyses	Thematic Analysis	<p>Inductive data analysis was used to transform data into meaningful information according to Braun and Clarke (2013). Visual mapping was thematically analysed according to Braun and Clarke (2006). Another researcher also did thematic analysis on the data to confirm identified themes.</p>

	Detailed descriptions	The researcher provided a detailed description of the research findings. These descriptions allow for the creation of a holistic picture of the findings in a multiple-integrated manner, thus sketching the realities of the lived experiences of the participants.
	Paradigms	Field theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of everything happening in the environment, while the Dialogical Theory of Self explains the dialogue between learner and teacher as well as the internal dialogue the learner has with himself. These theories also reflect in the data analysis where the researcher indicated the relevance of the paradigms to direct quotes of the participants.
Genres of representation	Multiple texts	Data were collected in various forms such as writing, conversation and visual expression and allowed the researcher to combine, compare and interweave accounts of the particular phenomenon in various ways.

<p>Researcher Reflections</p>	<p>Reflexivity</p>	<p>Throughout the processes described, the researcher continually considered how her perceptions might influence the findings. This made her conscious of her role as a researcher and her responsibility to confirm the true meanings participants gave to their experiences and as far as humanly possible, not include her own interpretations thereof.</p>
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Ethical considerations

The research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus (NWU 00060-12-A1). Ethics are usually associated with norms and values that distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. These norms and values are taught at home, church or at school and apply continuously throughout life (Resnik, 2011). Babbie (2010) states that ethics is concerned with what is right or wrong and that individuals gain their perception of moral norms from different sources, ranging from political paradigms to religion. Most people do not ponder ethics as most of the time it is seen as “common sense”, yet due to different perceptions of what is right and wrong as well as personal life experiences, there are many ethical debates in society (Resnik: 2011).

Resnik (2011) states that ethical norms tend to be broader than legal norms. Gaiser and Schreiner (2009) concur that “ethical” and “legal” are not synonymous. The disciplines studying norms of conduct have their own standards for behaviour to suit their goals and

aims. These help the members to coordinate their actions and gain the trust of the public. Ethical norms apply to research as well (Resnik, 2011). “There is always an ethical *why* in research, related to the *ends* of the research activity” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008).

Strydom (2011) states that the social researcher has two basic categories of responsibilities: the responsibility to human and non-human participating respondents as well as the responsibility to the discipline of science - and the researcher has to honestly and accurately report his/her research. Researchers should guard against ethical lapses such as faking data, inaccurate report writing, treating respondents with a superior attitude and not informing the respondents regarding goals and purposes of the research project. With technological advances the traditional considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and what constitute private and public spaces, copyright and virtual personae face new challenges (Gaiser & Schreiner, 2009).

Apart from gaining ethical clearance from the North-West University, the following ethical norms were followed in the course of this study:

Voluntary participation and informed consent

Participants' behaviour may change when they know they are part of a study, even if it is only to be observed while doing a mundane activity. This may complicate the issue of voluntary participation. Some researchers feel that participants must not be given extensive information regarding the study (Strydom, 2011). According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2008) the provision of information is a balance between full disclosure and omitting certain information that may be significant to participants.

For the purpose of this study, full disclosure of the study and what was to be expected of them was given to the participants. Before the research commenced, permission was obtained by informing the principal, parents and participants of the planned

research, which entailed that the headmistress of the private independent school and parents received consent forms and learners received assent forms. The consent letter, with the ethical code number, was shown to the headmistress to establish authenticity of the study. Participation was strictly voluntary. There was one couple who did not want their child to participate in the study and their choice was respected and accepted without any discrimination. Only participants whose consent letters were received and whose children had given consent as well were included in the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Strydom (2011) states that each person has the right to decide what information and to what degree attitudes, beliefs or knowledge he or she wants to make public. Privacy or anonymity involves personal privacy. Confidentiality is a continuation of privacy in that it involves the agreement between participant and researcher to limit access of information to others. Resnik (2011) agrees that confidentiality involves the protection of confidential communications.

Confidentiality was established by ensuring that the data collected were kept in a safe and secure place in the form of a file cabinet that was locked and only the researcher had access to the key. Names of participants were coded (e.g. "P1") and were removed in the final report. Since the school under study is a small school where learners and teachers know each other very well, confidentiality was of the utmost importance. The participants were seen in a separate closed-off office to ensure that their anonymity during data-collection phase. Since the headmistress is also the teacher of the participants, the teacher brought the participant to the office. That way the participants' anonymity was ensured so that assistants to the teacher did not know that the learner had taken part in the research.

After completion of the study, the research data will be kept at the North-West University for five years after which it will be destroyed.

Competence

The research project must run from start to finish in an ethically correct manner. Therefore, researchers are obliged to make sure they are competent, adequately skilled and honest in undertaking the research (Strydom, 2011). Research must contribute to scientific knowledge (McBride, 2010). The researcher has had research experience as part of the master's course at NWU and had guidance and supervision from her supervisor.

Beneficence

According to McBride (2010) a risk-benefit factor analysis should be conducted in order to ensure that the benefits of the study outweigh the risks to participants.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher had interviews with the headmistress and owner to ascertain whether such a study and the results obtained from it could be of benefit to the learners attending the school. There was a chance of emotional risk to the participants as they had to recall incidents within their relationship with their teacher that might have been unpleasant or traumatic for some of the participants. A registered counsellor was arranged should participants need debriefing afterwards. None of the participants made use of this service. Learners with mild learning difficulties do not often receive the opportunity to express how their self-configuration is influenced by relationships with teachers. This research gave the participants the means and opportunity to express how they experienced interactions and incidents with their teacher from their perspective. No remuneration was given to any participant or the school. No costs were involved for the participants or their parents either.

Report findings and role of the researcher

According to Strydom (2011) without informing the public regarding the outcome of the study, the research contributes very little to scientific knowledge and will not be seen as research. Therefore the report writing must be unambiguous, honest and must not be manipulated in order to be able to confirm a certain point of view. After completion of the study, the researcher will give feedback to the headmistress, parents and participants by giving the school a written report or holding a parents evening or both, depending on the needs of the parents and participants.

The role of the researcher. The role that the researcher plays cannot and may not be underestimated in the ethical debate. The researcher is the person who will determine the quality of the scientific knowledge as well as the accuracy and reliability of the ethical decisions that are made. Being morally responsible involves moral integrity, sensitivity and commitment to moral issues (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008). The researcher, as far as humanly possible, did not bring own judgements or opinions into her interactions with the participants. Information given during the interviews was kept strictly confidential and nothing was added or omitted from the data by the researcher. All participants were treated with the utmost respect and dignity.

Emotional support

Emotional support was available to the participants by arranging a registered counsellor who would have seen the participants at no cost to them. None of the participants or their parents made use of this service.

Choice and structure of dissertation

The dissertation follows the article format as prescribed by the North-West University.

The APA referencing style was followed. The dissertation consists of the following

sections:

Section A

Part I: Orientation to the research

Part II: Literature study

Section B: Article *Hear their voices: Self-configuration experiences of learners with mild learning difficulties within the learner-teacher relationship*

Section C: Summary, evaluation, conclusion and recommendations.

Section D: Addenda (on cd).

The Journal of Special Education has been identified as a possible journal for submission.

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Section A

Part II

Literature review

Introduction

The literature review that follows explores the subject matter of self and self-configuration of learners with learning disabilities within the learner-teacher relationship. Global perspectives on self and self-configuration as well as South African perspectives are included in the review. Literature on self and relationships, learning difficulties, the phase of middle childhood and adolescence and the importance of relationships, including relationships with teachers and the school environment during this phase are reviewed. Articles, books and dissertations written in various disciplines such as psychology, health, education and sociology are used in the literature review. The theoretical frameworks in support of this research study include Gestalt Field Theory and Dialogical Theory of Self. Literature on “self” is varied and covers various constructs but literature on self-configuration within the learner-teacher relationship from the learner’s perspective is scant. The constructs will be discussed as well as the challenges the study presented with the limited participants and their specific set of difficulties in terms of the ease of self-expression, they experience.

The Self

The self is a complex phenomenon that is very difficult to define from only one definition or from just one perspective (Leary & Tangney, 2012; Pfeifer & Peake, 2012; Philippson, 2009; Poster, 2005; MacKewn, 1997). Pfeifer and Peake (2012) state that the term “the self” encompasses diverse constructs such as self-awareness, self-esteem, self-recognition, self-concept, self-enhancement and the social self. Leary and Tangney (2012)

create awareness of the need for clarity and on what is meant by the term *self*. According to these authors self is used interchangeably for referring to the person himself, the personality of a person, to the person's self-knowledge and self-awareness.

Leary and Tangney (2012) go further by stating that the psychological process behind the self allows people to think about themselves consciously - who they are, what they like and experience about themselves, not only when they are alone, but also when they are in certain situations and relationships. Leary and Tangney (2012) write that the ability to reflect on oneself ("reflexive thinking") is what defines self. It is the ability to think and pay attention to oneself. Oysermann, Elmore, and Smith (2012) state that this knowledge of who one is, is called an "identity". Identities are those aspects of oneself that define the person and includes traits, social relationships and social roles. Identities encompass what happened in the past, what is happening in the moment and what one would like to have happen in the future – what the individual would like to overcome or become. From this, it can be seen that identities guide or focus attention and give meaning to certain aspects of the situation in which the individual finds himself. These identities form an individual's self-concept according to Oysermann, et al. (2012). Self-concept is how the person would describe and think of himself/herself. Identities and self-concept are not the only ways in which individuals obtain information about themselves. Other self-aspects such as feedback received from interactions with other people, self-image and the use of the senses (touch, smell, hearing) also provide information about who the person is. According to Leary and Tangney (2012) it was Cooley (1902) who expanded William James's concept that the self develops with regard to others in the environment. The self is influenced and composed by the view others hold of the individual. The views and opinions of others are incorporated in how people see, think and feel about themselves. The

capacity for self-reflection is at the core of what is it to have a self (Leary & Tangney, 2012).

Complex human behaviour involves a degree of self-reflection - from how one chooses to present oneself to others and how to cope with feelings such as shame and guilt to our manner of communication and interaction with others. Self-reflection aids the feeling of knowing oneself (Leary & Tangney, 2012). This feeling of self-knowledge is important as the self is used to make decisions, to make sense of things, as a self-regulatory, motivational and perceptual tool. Theories create the assumption of stability on which this feeling of knowing oneself is based. Yet the self, as well as learning disabilities, are very fluid and context-sensitive; what is knowledge in one situation may not be applicable and accurate for another situation (Oysermann, et al., 2012). Self is always seen in relation to a context and relationship or social experience. Therefore the self is seen as a social phenomenon and the context is very important (Morf & Mischel, 2012).

Leary and Tangney (2012) also emphasize the formation of the self that occurs in specific social situations, including relationships. As self involves reflexive thinking (Leary & Tangney, 2012; Oysermann et al., 2012), the interactions and opinions others have of individuals, influence how individuals perceive and feel about themselves. The individuals' "reflected selves" thus influence self-esteem, especially within context-specific situations. Thus the context wherein the learners have a positive or negative experience of how a teacher perceives them may influence them in a similar fashion in other similar situations/contexts with other teachers. According to Oysermann, et al. (2012), those aspects that make up the self, are dynamically constructed in the context. Lynch and Cicchetti (1997) also state that the sense of self is contextual and relational. Lob and Lichtenberg (2005) concur by stating that it is within relationships that the self is expressed

or that a definition of self is given to the context/environment. The contextual and relational nature of the self refers to the social roles created, how previous experiences and contacts have been integrated and assimilated and how adjustments to changes are made. These concepts can be explained in more detailed when Polster's (2005) view on the self is taken into account.

According to Polster (2005) self is better explained and understood when the following processes are taken into consideration: "Point/Counterpoint", "Configuration", "Animation" and "Dialogue". In certain situations a person may act with confidence while in a different context he/she may lack confidence. When there is a strong manifestation of self, it is referred to as a "point" whereas "counterpoint" refers to a weaker manifestation of self. Thus the context determines how the person will act and therefore how others will view him/her in that context. There is thus a "configuration" of a self, for example either confident in relationships or exhibiting a lack of confidence. The attribute the person is exhibiting within that social context is animated (put into action). "Dialogue" refers to the inner dialogue the individuals have as they experience the situation and if they are going to follow their "point" or "counterpoint" in a situation (Polster, 2005). From the above it is clear that contact-making with the environment is important to understand the situational context of self.

Gestalt Field Theory sees the self as the ability to make contact with the environment. Field Theory creates awareness of the context in which the individual finds himself in as well as the individual's responsibility for giving meaning and taking part in creating the environment (Mann, 2010). The individual is never isolated or completely independent but always connected to and part of a greater social context or field (Joyce & Sills, 2010). The field is always in flux as each experience creates the opportunity for

growth and change in perceptions and as all the parts or aspects of the field are interconnected, a change in one part impacts on the whole field (Mann, 2010). It is within this contact-making –the meeting between the *I* and the *other* person - that the self emerges (Philippson, 2009; Yontef, 1993). The self cannot be seen as separate or on its own (Polster, 2005). Through contact-making experiences the self is formed and the messages received from these experiences contribute to the development of characteristics which in turn guide emotions and behaviour. The person, those experiences (contexts) that are meaningful and noteworthy enough to cause a contributory factor to the self and the meaning that is ascribed to the experience are all factors that contribute to the self (Polster, 2005). Through the interaction with others feedback is provided regarding who we are, whether we are “good” or “bad”, “worthy” or “not worthy”. These repetitive messages and contact-making or interaction with others, play a role in self-configuration (Polster, 2005).

Self-configuration in the context of relationship

Since the sense of self is always relational and is understood in the context of interpersonal behaviour and interactions, the relationships learners have with teachers will influence their sense of self within that relationship. Philippson (2009) emphasizes the interaction between the self and the field or others with whom the individual interacts. The context determines how self is experienced and presented to the field (environment) – that what develops and is shown to others in a given situation. The self comes to the fore in the contact-making between the individual and another person or encounter in the field (Mann, 2010; Yontef, 1993). Philippson (2009) and MacKewn (1997) see self-configuration as a process of continuous reinvention and growth. The self re-organises and reinvents itself with each interaction with another human being or contact with the field in a unique

intersubjective response to that encounter (Bradfield, 2012; Philippson, 2009; MacKewn, 1997). Stets and Burke (2000) as well as Kesner (2000) state that there is a reciprocal relationship between the self and the social world whereby the social context and the individual impact on each other. It is in the interaction between self and the field or environment that the self manifests itself and therefore the self is always relational (MacKewn, 1997). It is within these relationships and contact-making with the field that the self is constructed, refined, grown and understood (Mischel & Morf, 2003). Polster (2005) states that each experience influences the previous experience, making self-configuration a continuous process.

The dynamic reciprocal relation between self and context that is present, may lead to some uncertainty or anxiety as new aspects of self may emerge in the different social contexts the person encounters. The emergence of new aspects may cause some uncertainty as the self is generally seen as something that is stable and the fluidity in the self may not be understood at times (Oysermann, 2012). Despite this dynamic side to the self-configuration process, there is according to Philipson (2009) a continuity in the self that lessens the uncertainty and anxiety that may be experienced with new interactions. This continuity means that the self does not start anew with each interaction, but builds on previous experiences. The continuity and stability present in the self, provide the opportunity for depth in relationships and contact with others (Philippson, 2009) and offer support for each new encounter in the field (MacKewn, 1997). Oysermann et al. (2012) point out that the self is used as a tool to make sense of the context and surroundings, for keeping up a sense of worth and regulating behaviour. For the self to do all of these aspects, it is important that there is sensitivity for the context and new situations (Oysermann, et al., 2012).

When taking into consideration that each social interaction and context influence how individuals perceive themselves, it is also important to remember that in certain situations the individuals might believe whatever messages they receive from the encounter. The message of either being “good” or “bad” may be accepted without question – not being sensitive to the context at all. Here the reciprocal nature of the relationship between individual and social context needs to be kept in mind. If each situation impacts on the next situation (Polster, 2005), it may be that messages that have been received in one situation are “carried over” to another, without considering the context. When a message is believed and taken into the make-up of how the self is perceived without thinking about the truth worthiness of the message, it is called introjection (Mann, 2010; Polster, 2005). Introjection can be positive as it creates a source of learning about the world (context) around us, but can also be negative as it is a “swallowing” - a taking-in of the mistaken beliefs about the self without assimilation (Mann, 2010; Polster, 2005). Thus messages received from situations contribute to self-configuration. This leads to the question of which situations will contribute to self-configuration and which ones will not be seen as important enough to incorporate into the self.

Polster (2005) writes that when a new situation is significant enough to register with the individual and may contribute to the self-configuration process, it is at first very loosely (weakly) organised. As individuals attempt to fit this new experience into their existing frame of reference, much attention is given to this new experience. When there is little discrepancy about what the individuals already know about themselves and the message the new experience is giving out, there is less inner conflict and struggle. This means that the internal unity is more and that in turn makes the configuration process easier. The configuration process becomes much more challenging when there are differences

between the new experience and the individual's existing frame of reference. All the experiences (positive and negative) that individuals go through contribute in the end to the formation of self (Polster, 2005).

According to Witmer (2005) meaning and learning can be found in relationships and he sees the teacher-learner relationship as an integral part of education. Bell (2013) states that meaning is created through interactions with others. These interactions range from face-to-face contact to social media where different world views, dialogues regarding different aspects of themselves and ideologies are available. The self is influenced and composed by the view others hold of the individual. The views and opinions of others are incorporated in to how learners see, think and feel about themselves (Leary & Tangney, 2012). The relationships that learners have with their teachers influence their self-configuration and may contribute to how learners interpret who and what they are in the long term.

Although research investigating the relationship between teacher and young children is available (Degotardi, Sweller, & Pearson, 2013; Leftot et al., 2010; Rudin-Gorelik, 2010; Spilt, Koomen, & Mantzicopoulos, 2010), not much research is available in terms of investigating the impact of the relationship between the older child (middle childhood to adolescence) on self-configuration (Degotardi, Sweller & Pearson, 2013). As the relationship between learners and teachers occur in the school environment it is important to keep the social context in mind when investigating self-configuration within the learner-teacher relationship.

Leary and Tangney (2012) underline the importance of taking the social context, in this instance the school environment, into account when looking at how experiences within the learner-teacher relationship can contribute and influence self-configuration as there is a

reciprocal nature between social context and the individual. Teachers are not always aware of the social context the learners find themselves in, whether it be at home or culturally. When teachers know more about their learners' everyday lives and experiences, what happens between learner and teacher should be more successful as experience builds competence that forms the lens through which information is interpreted (Singal & Swann, 2011).

The self-configuration that takes place between learners and teachers in the school environment is incorporated into the being of the learners. The way learners perceive themselves while with their teacher is a perception they will carry with them while outside the school environment as well. When teachers take an interest in learners' lives outside school hours, they indicate to the learners that they, the teachers, see learners as worthy and important and that they are willing to listen to learners. The understanding and support learners receive from their teacher are of even more of importance when those learners experience learning difficulties and may feel more vulnerable in the school environment (Prunty, Dupont & McDaid, 2012). Therefore, it is important for teachers to attempt to understand the social context and daily experiences of their learners to foster positive experiences wherein self-configuration can take place.

Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties and the school environment

According to Cooper, Coll, Bartko, Davis, and Chatman (2008) middle childhood is an important phase as it marks children's first meaningful encounter with situations outside of the family. Magnuson, Duncan, and Kalil (2006) concur that middle childhood represents the time when the influences of out-of-the-home environments increase. The family still plays an important part in the well-being of the child, but during middle childhood, the child starts

participating in activities at school and the community and interacts with peers and teachers outside of the family environment (Magnuson et al., 2006).

Authors Collins (2008) and Cooper, Coll, Bartko, Davis, and Chapman (2008) state that middle childhood is an important phase in the life of a child as this is seen as a transition stage as well as a period of change in the psychological, physiological and cognitive domains. The importance of middle childhood becomes clear when taken into account that this is the time when different and overlapping contexts must be negotiated as children move into adolescence and adulthood (Cooper et al., 2008). The middle childhood phase - also the period in which the Intermediate Phase of school falls - forms the phase where learners start to write formal tests and examinations, rotate classes for different subjects and are prepared for the senior phase of their school career. Intermediate Phase learners (10-13 years of age) are still in the concrete operational phase (Department of Education, IP CAPS training, 2012). According to Shaffer and Kipp (2014) the concrete operational phase (age 7 to age 11 years) is the phase when children start thinking more logically about their experiences. Learners in the Intermediate Phase are discovering their unique learning styles, need emotional and social support from their teachers and need continuous repetition in order to integrate the work they are doing (Department of Education, IP CAPS training, 2012). The emotional development that learners experience points to the changes in thought processes and impacts on behaviour, both socially and cognitively (Keenan & Evans, 2009). Emotional development includes the awareness that whatever emotions they feel may differ from another's emotions. Middle school children begin to develop knowledge about their own emotional processes, coping strategies and strategies that work for them (Keenan & Evans, 2009). As learners are still in the concrete operational development phase, they are still developing the skill to evaluate themselves in terms of what others think of them based on

the feedback they receive from others (Kick, 2005; Leftot, 2010). Social perceptions and reasoning, the expansion of their knowledge base, stability and comprehensiveness of self-concepts as well as the ability to self-regulate and form social networks develop during the middle childhood phase (Cooper et al., 2008). Learners' self-configuration is shaped in how they perceive their experiences and encounters with others, cognitively and emotionally (Molloy, Ram & Gest, 2011). According to the Department of Education (IP CAPS training, 2012) learners who do not master the required competencies during the Foundation Phase may experience difficulty in literacy (such as reading and comprehension) and numeracy skills, have a slow learning pace and learners may experience low confidence.

Learning difficulties are defined as the problems or difficulties that learners experience in obtaining new knowledge and skills. The level or rate at which these learners obtain new information differs from the rate at which other learners of the same age acquire information (Oxford Dictionaries Online, 2014; Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2014). Learning difficulties can vary from learners being able to cope with learning given extra attention and support by teachers to learners that cannot grasp the work even with additional support and help from teachers. Although these learners can reach the set outcomes of a learning area, they do not perform to their full potential and achieve results not equal to their input given to the task of learning (Dednam, 2011). Teachers are not always aware of these learners experiencing difficulties due to the fact that they can achieve the learning outcomes, especially with the support and additional attention of teachers. The group of learners who cannot achieve improvement regardless of the input of teachers is classified as learning impaired – they experience learning difficulties in spite of good teaching, stable homes and positive and stimulating environments (Dednam, 2011). The terms *learning disabilities* and *learning difficulties* are used interchangeably.

The term *learning difficulties* refers to the whole range of learning disabilities. Learning difficulties imply that the person will find it difficult to learn, understand and remember new content or things. Difficulties can be experienced in a wide range of things including communication skills (NHS, 2014). Causes of learning difficulties vary. The causes of learning impairments and associated learning difficulties are unknown and varies from country to country as well as from community to community. It does appear that learning difficulties are higher in disadvantaged communities but it is not clear if this is due to the lack of stimulation and learning opportunities, learning impairment or due to other factors (Dednam, 2011). There are different models that attempt to explain the causes of learning difficulties. These include the deficit model (referring to the cognitive and perceptual weaknesses in learners), the inefficient learner model (referring to the learner not approaching learning in a systematic manner) and the environmental factors model (referring to the quality and appropriateness of teaching offered) all contribute to understanding the complexity of learning difficulties (Westwood, 2008). When taking into account what Gestalt Field Theory postulates on the impact that all role players in the environment or field has on an individual (Yontef, 1993), it becomes clear just how complex it is to determine the exact cause of learning difficulties and why there can be more than one cause to the learning difficulty experienced.

Learning difficulties not only affect the individual, but the family and society as well (Zkapoulou, Pashou, Tzavelas, Christodoulides, Anna, & Iliana, 2013). This relationship is also reciprocal with the families and society also having an effect on the individual. Individuals experiencing learning difficulties may face challenges at school in thinking, attainment and retention as well as processing information and knowledge. Due to these difficulties in reading, understanding new information and applying new knowledge they

received in class, learners with learning difficulties often need more individual attention in school. The requirement to go at a slower pace, explaining the learning material more than once and working at the learner's pace may affect the relationship between learner and teacher (Brady & Woolfos, 2008). Prunty, Dupont and McDaid (2012) indicate in their research that learners experiencing mild learning difficulties place a high value on support and their positive relationships with their teachers. O'Hara (2005) further states that learners with mild learning difficulties need a more compassionate and caring approach.

Within the family environment, learners receive compassion and care from their parents. This may be different in the school environment, which will influence the learner-teacher relationship. Learners may encounter a different experience and expectation between home- and the school environment. Experiences of discord may be in various forms such as conflicting experiences of expectations, interpretations of meanings, interactions as well as forms of relationships (Signal & Swann, 2011). Messages the learner receives whilst with his parents may differ from the messages he receives whilst with a teacher (Westwood, 2008). Conflicting messages may be difficult to understand or put into context for the learner who is in a period of transition (middle school age and concrete operational development phase). The many different relationships learners experience fulfil different needs and functions and each is a different type of interaction (Degotardi, Sweller & Pearson, 2013).

How teachers perceive learners with learning difficulties contributes to the nature of learner-teacher relationship (Westwood, 2008). Prilleltensky (2005) states that the well-being of a person's relationships with the people and community he is part of, determines relational well-being. Focusing specifically on the school context, Naidoo and Willis (2000) point out the importance of relationships in schools. Although interactions with teachers are

restricted, teachers become significant adults beyond the family (Ahnert, Milatz, Kappler, Schneiderwind, & Fischer, 2012). Lynch and Cicchetti (1997) emphasize that the school environment is the leading extra-familial environment children are exposed to.

Theoretical frameworks in support of this research study

Dialogical Theory of self

The dialogical theory of self is a recent development in the social sciences (Hermans, 2012). According to Hermans (2012) the dialogical theory of self was greatly influenced by William James's idea of the extension of the self. The extended self includes what the individual experiences internally (thoughts and feelings) ("Me") as well as that which the individual can call his/her own ("Mine"). The extended self does not see the individual and the environment as separate entities. Influenced by reading the polyphonic novel of Bakhtin wherein mutually opposing and independent perspectives were embodied in characters involved in a dialogical relationship, Hermans (2012) used this metaphor to explain his view of dialogical self-theory. This novel marked the breaking away from the omniscient author in novels or literature. Characters had their own voices and were seen as being their own creators of their world. The characters of this novel were viewed as being "next to" and not "under" the creator of the novel. This metaphor of the polyphonic novel went beyond James's extension of self in so far that the characters were independent and had a voice. Hermans and his colleagues saw that the self, as extended dialogically to an independent other, could be used as a metaphor as the self can be extended to a broader societal and historical context - hence the metaphor of the "society of mind" (Hermans, 2012).

The idea of the society as a mind was introduced in 1985 by Minsky, a computer scientist. He considered the mind as a "hierarchically organized network of interconnected

parts that function as a society” (Hermans, 2012, p. 3). Dialogical self theory sees the self functioning as a mini-society as well as being an intrinsic part of the macro-society.

Hermans (2012) explains further that the self is surrounded by society, which serves as an external influence and functions as a mind of society in itself. Society is not seen as a social structure that is separate to the individual selves but rather a “society-of-selves to which the selves of individual agents give their original contribution” (Hermans, 2012, p. 4).

The reciprocal relationship between self and society is evident in this view as a change in the individual leading to change in the society and vice versa. As society becomes more complex due to factors such as globalisation, so does the self also become increasingly more complex. The society and culture to which the individual is exposed, influence the self (Hermans, 2012).

Bell (2013) states that dialogical theory of self explains the formulation of self as multiple I-other positions (“voices”) where meaning making occurs in dialogue with others through interpersonal- and intrapersonal dialogues. Collective voices are expressed in national languages, dialects, social circles and ideologies and to a degree reflect the individual’s voice. The Dialogical theory of self sees the power differences as power struggles between positions in the self and these positions in the self are responding to counter-positions in the self which may or may not agree with the collective influences (Hermans, 2012). The dialogical self is a useful construct in which the person is seen as a combination of multiple and often opposing self-understanding. It is from this perspective and philosophy that the term dialogical self was coined. The dialogical self can be explained as a dynamic profusion of *I*-positions in the society of mind. It is from an intense interconnectedness with the field that the self emerges. The self is inherently bound to specific positions in time and space. The embodied *I* is spatially located and can position

and reposition itself in space. The self, as a temporal process, is involved in this process of positioning and repositioning. These different positions between which the I can fluctuate among, are involved in relationships of dominance and social power. *I*-positions can be voiced, so that a dialogical relation can develop between them. Each voice has a story to tell about the experience they have from their viewpoint. The different voices exchange information about their relevant *Mes* and in that process a complex, multi-voiced structured self is formed (Hermans, 2012).

Hermans and Dimaggio (2004) further explain the dialogical theory of self as the combination of dialogue and self. Everyday people love telling their stories to others. As these stories are very subjective and personal, it is done from the storyteller's perspective regarding space and time. In this narrative, there are always two positions involved – the position of the storyteller and the second position is formed by the environment. These authors further explain that a self-narrative is more than a simple story with a beginning, middle and ending. A self-narrative is endlessly shaped and reshaped by two or more voiced positions that streamline and renew an existing story through their dialogical reciprocation. There is a field of tension between the narrator and the listener in which any temporally organised story is continually challenged by spatially opposed individuals engaged in the dialogue. Due to the interwovenness of internal and external dialogues, the self can be described as multi-voiced and dialogical process. Hermans and Dimaggio (2004) theorised that from infancy onwards interpersonal relationships become part of the self. Based on interpersonal relationships these memory patterns may influence relationships throughout life.

Although dialogue plays a vital role in the practice of the dialogical self, body language (non-verbal communication) contributes much of the communication happening between

individuals. Body language entails facial expressions, gestures, vocalisations and intonations. Non-verbal communication (body and body movements) form the physical basis for the figurative movements in a multi-positional self (Gallagher, 2011). The self is therefore utterly immersed in a world of relationships by both the spoken word and non-verbal communication (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004).

Gestalt Field Theory

Yontef (1993) states that field theory is a method of exploring. Field theory describes all the aspects, the whole field, of which an event is currently part. The field perspective can be used to study anything - objects, events or systems. The philosophy and methodology makes field theoretical. The field is phenomenologically defined. Depending on what is being studied the field may be small, huge, tangible or intangible (Mann, 2010; Woldt & Toman, 2005). The general characteristics of field theory are:

- 1) A field is a systematic web of relationships.
- 2) A field is continuous in space and time. The field is seen as holistic. There is an inter-relatedness between components and events in the field that come together in time and place to form a whole. It is this whole that is seen as the field and is dynamic in nature.
- 3) Everything is of-a-field. There is nothing that does not stand in relation to another fact or component. All components of the field influence one another.
- 4) Phenomena are determined by the whole field. All experiences and organisms are determined by the field of which they are part of. The field shapes or determines how the person will be as the person cannot be independent of the field of which he is part of. "The whole field determines the parts" (Yontef, 1993:305)
- 5) The field is a unitary whole, which means that everything affects everything else in the field. The dynamic nature of the field implies that everything is interrelated and that

there is constantly interaction between all the parts of the field. This is the reason why the field is always dynamic in nature and not static. The unified whole can be separated into different parts to gain an understanding of the whole but the whole cannot be composed by adding elements as the whole is a systematic unity.

6) Perceived reality is “configured by the relationship between the observer and the observed” (Yontef, 1993:295). The field theory perspective states that the time, space and awareness cannot be separated from the field. Thus field is always in a certain context and cannot be seen as an objective event.

7) The principle of contemporaneity. There is no other reality than the present and only the here-and-the-now can affect present behaviours and experiences.

8) Everything is a process. The dynamic forces of a field (time, space, movement and action) result in everything being in a process, being moving and changing. With each new experience, new aspects and knowledge are gained and it is incorporated into the new whole.

9) Insight into genotypic invariants. Insight refers to the knowledge that one takes responsibility for in terms of owning one’s part of the field. Insight also refers to the knowledge that the choices one makes influence one’s own field. Insight leads to understanding and knowledge that can be applied to other variables or situations in other concepts and circumstances.

The field in Gestalt Theory refers to the individual-environment entity. Gestalt Field Theory postulates that an individual can only be understood as part of the social-cultural background and economic environment of which an individual is an integral and interactive part references. Gestalt Field Theory refers to the interconnectedness and settings in which events take place. All interactive phenomena constitute the field (Mann, 2010; Woldt

& Toman, 2005; Parlett & Lee, 2005; MacKewn, 1997). The field is constantly in flux and people change their perspective of the field as they actively organise and reorganise their perspective of their field and attach personal meaning to events in the field (Parlett & Lee, 2005; MacKewn, 1997). Each piece of new information or experience can result in new understanding and change (Woldt & Toman, 2005). Yontef (1993) describes the field as a whole in which the parts are responsive to one another and in immediate relationship. Parlett and Lee (2005) concur that field is in an ever-changing pattern of being made and remade as well as encompassing the entire situation people find themselves in. Thus the field can be described where meeting between individuals take place. The Gestalt Field Theory postulates that the individual is never in isolation but is always in contact with everything else in a particular context (Joyce & Sills, 2010). The totality of the different independent factors of the individual and the environment constitutes the field as the field is very subjective and contextual (Mann, 2010).

It is an oversimplification to call the field merely a subjective reality. Latner (1992) in Parlett and Lee (2005) wrote that no one aspect in a field is separate from other aspects in the field. This being part of the field includes the observer of that field (Woldt & Toman, 2005). Contact between individuals is a relational product that functions optimally when both the needs or experiences of the self and the demands of the environment are grasped. The self is equidistant (of equal distance) between the organism and the environment and as such is in an exceptionally relational position (Woldt & Toman, 2005). Therefore the interconnectedness of all aspects in the field, thus the total situation, must be taken into account. The field theory attempts to describe in a coherent and rational manner how individuals respond to the total circumstances pertaining to a situation in creative and effective ways (Woldt & Toman, 2005; Yontef, 1993). The field view of

development sees the sense of self as a co-creation between the individual and the environment (Woldt & Toman, 2005). Field approaches are descriptive and focus on observing, describing and explaining the exact structure of that which is being studied (Yontef, 1993).

Field theory can be summarised as the framework for examining events, experiences, organisms and systems as meaningful parts of a “knowable, totality of mutually influencing forces that together form a unified interactive continuous whole (field)” (Yontef, 1993, 321), and not just classifying those forces according to their innate nature. The event, object or organism’s identity and quality is formed only in a field, in context and relationship and can only be known through a configuration formed by an reciprocal influencing interaction between observer and one being observed (Yontef, 1993).

The field for this study includes the meeting between learners and teachers and what exchanges took place within that meeting, the individualised meaning learners ascribed to that meeting and how learners organised or remade their configuration of self whilst engaging the field.

CONCLUSION

This research is concerned with the self-configuration experiences of learners with mild learning difficulties in the Intermediate Phase within the learner-teacher relationship. In an attempt to better understand how self-configuration is experienced by the learners from their perspective in their relationship with their teacher, the researcher explored the self in relational context. The literature review brought to light the complex nature to define self. Furthermore attention is given to the phase in their school career these learners find themselves in as it is an important transition phase both psychologically and cognitively. The outcome of having learning difficulties in the classroom is looked at in terms of

performance to bring awareness of the difficulties these learners face every day. In an attempt to better understand the self and self-configuration, the theoretical frameworks of Dialogical Theory of Self and Gestalt Field Theory are employed. Within the context of dialogue and the field theory, the importance of social context, relationships and own perception contributing to self-configuration become clear.

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Section B

Article

Hear their voices: Self-configuration experiences of learners with mild learning difficulties within the learner-teacher relationship

Abstract

Within the learner-teacher relationship, learners receive messages of who they are in the eyes of the teacher and so their self-configuration is shaped by the interactions with their teacher. To understand their self-configuration experiences it is important that their voices be heard regarding their own experiences within their relationships with their teachers. This article focuses on learners' self-configuration experiences within this relationship from a Gestalt field theory and Dialogical theory of self, perspective. A qualitative case study design was followed with nine learners with mild learning difficulties. The participants were purposively selected and participated voluntarily. The results showed that learners ascribe meaning to themselves when teachers spend time with them, feeling valued, confident and experiencing a sense of worthiness.

Keywords

Self, self-configuration, Intermediate Phase learners, middle childhood, mild learning difficulties, learner-teacher relationship, Dialogical theory of self, Gestalt field theory, qualitative case study

Learners spend between five to six hours per day in the presence of a teacher/teachers and the school environment which makes the school environment the foremost extra-familial environment children are exposed to (Cicchetti, 1997; Cooper, Coll, Bartko, Davis, & Chapman, 2008). The self-configuration of learners is influenced by the manner in which the teacher interacts with learners

and the teacher's reaction to learners is influenced by the learners' response toward the teacher. In this manner, the reciprocal nature of the relationship between learners and teacher and their environment or field, contributes to how and what learners think and learn about themselves (Davis-Kean, Jager, & Collins, 2009). It is therefore important to listen to how learners experience themselves within their relationship with their teachers.

The self is a complex construct to define (Leary & Tangney, 2012; MacKewn, 1997; Pheifer & Peake, 2012; Philippson, 2009; Polster, 2005). According to Leary and Tangney self is the ability to reflect on oneself, while Oysermann, Elmore and Smith (2012) define self-concept as how individuals think about and describe themselves. According to Gestalt therapy theory, the self is seen as the ability to make contact with the environment. It is within this contact with the environment that the self emerges (Lobb & Lichtenberg, 2005). Various authors concur that the formation of self occurs in a social context and within relationships (Leary & Tangney, 2012; Oysermann, et al., 2012; Philippson, 2009; Stets & Burke, 2000). The sense of self can only be understood within the context of interpersonal interactions, relationships and behaviours. This context is what Gestalt therapy theory views as the field (Mann, 2010; Philippson, 2009). When a noteworthy experience occurs, it is registered as a contributory factor to self-configuration (Polster, 2005). Ninivaggi (2013) states that emotion, feelings, thinking and the environment, dynamically influence self-configuration. The self-configuration process is continuous process of reinvention as each experience contributes to the growth of the individual that leads to new insights and self-knowledge (Bradfield, 2012; Diehl, Youngblood, Hay, & Chui, 2011; MacKewn, 1997; Philippson, 2009; Woldt & Toman, 2005). Although there is continuous reinvention occurring in the reciprocal relationship between self and the field/environment as the self is reorganising, reconstructing and refining itself after each experience, there are qualities of stability and continuity that provide depth to relationships (Kesner, 2000; MacKewn, 1997; Philippson, 2009; Stets & Burke, 2000). The field

or environment plays an important role as Gestalt field theory postulates that all aspects of the field are interconnected and relational (MacKewn, 1997; Mann, 2010; Parlett & Lee, 2005; Woldt & Toman, 2005). Just as the self is reorganising and reconstructing itself, so the field is continuously in flux as individuals change their perspective of the field and give meaning to events in the field (Parlett & Lee, 2005). The school environment is such a place of flux where learners are exposed to numerous messages from different teachers and peers, especially so when they move to the Intermediate Phase (Magnuson, Duncan, & Kalil, 2006).

Another theory relevant to self-configuration is the Dialogical Theory of Self. According to this theory the meaning an individual ascribes to himself emerges from the interconnectedness with the field (Hermans, 2012). The self is bound to specific positions in space and time and in a process of positioning and repositioning (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004). Dialogical Theory of Self holds the view that meaning making occurs within dialogue – both interpersonal and intrapersonal dialogues (Hermans, 2012). Interpersonal relationships that give meaning to our understanding of who we are, influence relationships throughout the different developmental stages of life (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004).

Relationships that give meaning to understanding the self are especially relevant during the Intermediate Phase, as this is a transition phase. Learners in the Intermediate Phase are normally in their middle childhood phase of development. Middle childhood is a time of psychological, physical and cognitive changes (Collins, 2008; Cooper, Coll, Bartko, Davis, & Chapman (2008). Learners start to rotate classes and write formal tests and exams when entering the Intermediate Phase, making it a phase in which learners must master different and often overlapping contexts. During this phase learners are still in the concrete operational phase where they start to engage in more logical reasoning and are still in need of both social and emotional support from their teacher (Department of Education, IP CAPS training, 2012).

Keenan and Evans (2009) state that middle school children become aware of their emotional processes but still need to develop the skill of how to evaluate themselves and how others perceive them (Kick, 2005; Leftot, 2010). According to Molloy, Ram, and Gest, (2011) self-configuration of learners is formed in how they cognitively and emotionally evaluate their own experiences and encounters with others, even more so for learners with learning difficulties.

Learning difficulties usually emerge when formal schooling (Grade 1) begins (Gould, 2011). Learning difficulties indicate that the learner has difficulty in acquiring new skills and information in comparison to others learners of the same age - learners thus find it difficult to understand, retain and express new knowledge or content they learn in class (NHS, 2014; Oxford dictionaries online, 2014). Despite the required and appropriate efforts, learners with learning difficulties cannot cope with the demands and pace set in schools and struggle to keep up with their peers (Gould, 2011). Due to difficulties with understanding, retaining and expressing new information, learners with learning difficulties often require more individual attention from the teacher as the teacher needs to explain the work more than once, and the learner needs to work at a slower pace. These factors may negatively influence the learner-teacher relationship (Brady & Woolfos, 2008). Teacher support and positive relationships with their teachers are of high importance to learners with learning difficulties (Prunty, Dupont, & McDaid, 2012).

Through the interactions with others, meaning is created (Bell, 2013) and according to Witmer (2005) not only is the meaning and the learning that is part of relationships important but the relationships between teacher and learners are of fundamental importance in education. Within the learner-teacher relationship, learners receive messages of who they are in the eyes of the teacher and so their self-configuration is shaped by the interactions with their teacher (Leary & Tangney, 2012).

As a result of the tremendous pressure teachers find themselves in with overcrowding in the classroom, it may happen that learners with learning difficulties are not heard when they are in need

of teacher support – both emotionally and socially. Although there are studies on the relationship between teacher and young children (Degortardi, Sweller, & Pearson, 2013; Leftot et al., 2010; Rudin-Gorelik, 2010, Split, Koomen, & Mantzicopoulos, 2010), research on the Intermediate Phase learner with mild learning difficulties is scarce. To understand their self-configuration experiences it is important that their voices be heard as they experience themselves in their relationship with their teacher. This information may support teachers in their approach to learners and support offered to learners with learning difficulties. The following research question guided this study and analysis: How do Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties experience self-configuration within the learner-teacher relationship?

Method

Setting

The school in question is an independent primary school catering for the needs of learners from grade 1 to grade 7 with learning difficulties. There are only about thirty learners in the school and only ten learners in each classroom. This allows for close cooperation and interaction between teacher and learners. There were Black and White learners in the school, with more boys than girls, at the time of the study. There were about fourteen learners in the Intermediate Phase group at the time of the research. Special attention is given to the development of memory (both short term and long term), logical thinking, verbalisation and memory (auditory and visual memory). Learners are arranged in a semi-circle and certain learning areas are done using computers. While sitting at the computer, learners sit on large balls and not conventional chairs. Learners do not rotate classes but remain in one class with one teacher. This provides the opportunity to create a meaningful relationship with the teacher. Fridays are set aside for socialisation and all the learners are taken to

the local municipal swimming pool where the teachers and learners spend the morning before returning in the afternoon.

Participants

The participants were the learners in the Intermediate Phase. Permission was obtained from each participant, their parents and the headmistress/owner of the school where the research was conducted. The participants were purposively selected on the ground of their age – they are currently in the Intermediate Phase of their school career - and because their learning difficulties are mostly located in reading, writing, organising their thoughts to express themselves (memory), which motivated their parents to place them in this particular primary school. Furthermore, purposive sampling was relevant as each one of the participants contributed to the better understanding of the aim of the study. All the participants whose parents gave consent were boys. The ethnicity/race of the participants was an equal number of black and white participants. All of the participants are fluent in the English language, which is also the language of instruction in the particular school. There was no need for the use of a translator. Research was conducted in English. Participation was voluntary and participants, whose assent forms and consent forms from parents were received, were included in the study. As the owner and creator of this school employs a different approach from what she did when teaching in other remedial schools, it was decided to do the research in this setting to explore the experience in terms of self-configuration.

Design of the study

A qualitative research approach (Merriam, 2009) was followed that according to Ponterotto (2005) entails procedures that explain the lived experience of the participants. The qualitative research approach gives meaning and takes into consideration the social context, which was important in this study as the social context forms part of the field the participants engage with. Furthermore this approach considers different points of view and opinions to create a holistic worldview (Brown,

Knoche, Edwards, & Sheridan, 2009). It also allows the researcher to explore a complex event in its natural setting (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2012). The researcher was interested in the self-configuration of Intermediate Phase learners in this specific setting which led to the choice of an intrinsic case study design.

Data-collection methods. Structured interviews that comprised incomplete sentences and visual maps were conducted with all the learners in the sample who were in the Intermediate Phase. The structured interview, that included incomplete sentences and visual maps, took between 30 and 45 minutes, while the follow-up interview took between 15 and 20 minutes. Due to their learning difficulties, these learners cannot concentrate for a long period of time and they tire easily. All of the participants had learning difficulties and found it easier to work in a structured environment.

To provide the participants with the opportunity to become more comfortable with the participation in the research and the interview process, and to support them in ordering and expressing their thoughts, the structured interview was done in the form of incomplete sentences. This gave the participants the opportunity to express themselves at their own pace. The incomplete sentences were read aloud to those participants who had difficulty in reading with ease and felt more comfortable with the researcher reading the sentences to them. Some of the participants had difficulty in writing with ease - it takes a long time and they preferred the option where the researcher wrote their answers down verbatim. After the incomplete sentences had been completed, the answers given were discussed with the participants. Thereafter participants were asked to draw a visual map of how they experienced themselves within their relationship with their teacher. Once the participant had completed it, these visual maps were discussed and information gained from the sentences and the visual map was then compared. During the follow-up interview member checking was done to ensure that participants had nothing to add to what they had already stated. The

researcher also wanted to confirm the meaning the participants gave to data during the first session and that nothing was added to the participants' words.

Data analysis. The researcher transcribed the data and applied thematic analysis to analyse the data obtained. Transcribing the data and reading through the transcriptions several times enabled the researcher to get familiarised with the data. Thereafter initial codes were given and themes were identified and constructed. The next step was to review themes and then define the themes after which the writing-up of the themes and data in a coherent manner (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, the information that was obtained from the incomplete sentences was compared with the information obtained from the visual maps. Member checking was done in a follow-up interview to make sure the correct meaning was ascribed to what the participant said. Additional thematic analysis was done by another researcher to compare the identified themes.

Results and discussion

This study explored the self-configuration experiences of learners with mild learning difficulties within the learner-teacher relationship. The main themes and sub-themes that were identified are listed below:

Themes	Subthemes
Self-configuration as experienced through time spent with teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners feel valued • Learners feel more confident. • Learners experience a heightened sense of worth.

Self-configuration as a result of how the teacher communicates with the learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring and interest are conveyed through tone of voice. • Learners feel encouraged and capable due to teacher's tone of voice. • Learners feel recognised.
Self-configuration as a result of the meaningfulness of the learner-teacher relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learner-teacher relationship relates to self-configuration in academic and social environment. • Learner-teacher relationship relates to feelings of safety and trust.

Self-configuration as experienced through time spent with the teacher

Many of the participants had been in mainstream schools or other remedial school settings before attending their current school. Learners spontaneously divulged how they experienced their previous school in comparison to their current school environment. The three themes that emerged relate to how learners feel valued, confident and worthy when a teacher is willing to give of their time willingly and patiently.

Learners feel valued. Just as adults feel more appreciated and valued when they are treated with respect, so do learners. When teachers are willing to give of their time in a patient and respectful manner, learners experience themselves as being valued as human beings (Boynton & Boynton, 2005; Rimm-Kaufmann, 2014). It is important that teachers get to know their learners so they understand the academic challenges of their learners and support their learners in a timely manner when learners do not understand the instructions clearly (Rimm-Kaufman, 2014). Most of the participants shared their experiences of their previous school environments as they spontaneously compared the two school environments. Participant 5 did not experience much quality time with teachers in his previous school as he explained, according to him, that the teachers were not willing to repeat instructions or explanations of the work to be done. “... *they did not tell me exactly what to do all the time, it was simple things but they did not tell me exactly what I must (were) suppose or how I must do it*” (P5I). In contrast, when having a teacher who is willing to

spend more time on learners, such as clarifying and repeating instructions, the learners experience themselves as happy, valued and that they matter as the teacher is willing to invest time in them. “*I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when he helps me with my questions when I sometimes get confused*” (P9IS). “*My teacher makes me feel important*” (P4IS) – asked to elaborate on this sentence the participant answered: “*It makes me feel that I matter*” (P4I). The Gestalt Field Theory postulates that everything is of the field and that all events are interconnected, intertwined and ever changing. Each new experience contributes to a new understanding of self and change (MacKewn, 1997; Parlett & Lee, 2005; Joyce & Sills, 2010; Woldt & Toman, 2005). The interaction between learner and teacher influences how the learner experiences himself – either positive or negative. In this example, the Dialogical Theory of Self is applicable where the meanings learners ascribe to themselves are interconnected with the situation (Hermans, 2012). “*I feel valued by my teacher when she says “great job”*” (P2IS). Learners who do not get clear instructions communicate to themselves that they are not as valuable to the teacher as those learners the teacher does spend time with. When a teacher does spend time with a learner the meaning the learner ascribes to himself is much more positive. “*I feel valued by my teacher when he compliments my work and makes me (feel) special*” (P5IS).

Learners feel more confident. As learners experience themselves as important enough for teachers who spend time with them, learners’ confidence increases. It takes time and patience to build the confidence of learners. Learners with learning difficulties need to work at a slower pace and teachers need to explain the work more than once and often in creative ways. In an overcrowded classroom or in a classroom where a learner with learning difficulties is among learners who do not need to work at a slower pace, this can put pressure on the teacher-learner relationship (Brady & Woolfos, 2008; Department of Education, IP CAPS training, 2012). One participant described his experience where in one school he felt rushed and pressured whilst in the present school he feels

much more confident about his abilities: *“My teacher teaches me about myself that I am very smart but (at) the old (previous) school the teacher used to be rushed because we had a lot to do for the whole term”* (P9IS). Dialogical Theory of Self, according to Bell (2013) explains the constitution of self as multiple *I*-positions where meaning is given to dialogue when interacting with others. According to the Dialogical Theory of Self, a person can be seen as an amalgamation of more than one and often even opposing self-understanding (Hermans, 2012). So although learners may feel that they are confident or are keeping up with the rest of the class, the messages that the teacher gives to them through dialogue indicate to learners with mild learning difficulties who are not keeping pace and need to rush through the work say the opposite. This does not boost confidence as learners then fall behind and do not understand the work. Participant 4 captures the lack of confidence as follows: *“Like I should not even be there. They were not teaching me actually much”* (P4I).

At the current school, the teachers allow enough time for the learners to perform the tasks given to them and allow learners to experience success with the task at hand. This results in the configuration of believing in themselves to be smart and confident: *“My teacher makes me believe that I can do anything”* (P3). *“My teacher makes me believe that I am not stupid and I’m as smart as I can in the class and I won’t let him down”* (P9IS), *“My teacher makes me feel confident”* (P1IS). On the question of what is the most important thing a teacher must teach a learner, participant 4 answered: *“How to be confident in working, actually doing it”*. Supportive teachers assist in the configuration of confidence in the learner: *“...it makes me feel very confident that someone is...that someone is (...) helping me”* (P3I), *“My teacher makes me believe that I am good at maths and helped me. It made me feel that I am good”* (P7IS). Participant 9 displays a “point”/“counterpoint” concept that Polster (2005) describes in his understanding of the self. A “point” can be seen as a strong manifestation of the self while a “counterpoint” is a weaker manifestation of self. When a

learner sees himself as “stupid” his counterpoint is at the fore, but after his experience of himself has changed because of his interaction and relationship with his teacher, his stronger view of self (“point”) becomes prevalent. This change also reflects the dynamic nature of the contact (field) between people as no one is ever isolated but always part of a social context (Joys & Sills, 2010).

Although the study focuses on mild learning difficulties one of the participants with mild cerebral palsy was included in the study as he is doing the normal school curriculum as all the other learners except for the fact that he has to type his work on a laptop as writing is a slow process for him and he walks with a tight gait (his walking speed is thus slowed down). He was included in this study as this research is to understand the self-configuration of learning with mild learning difficulties and not excluding a learner based on his physical ability when he is part of the rest of the learners in the mainstream school environment (Kruger & Botha, 2011). This participant suffering from cerebral palsy was not permitted to take part in any of the physical education activities in his previous school. Although he longed to take part in just the basic activities, his teacher denied him the opportunity. This made him feel that he was not part of the group and not confident at all. In the school where the research took place, he met teachers who believed that everyone should be given a chance. His teacher allowed him to take part in basic physical activities that were still safe for him. This culminated in the self-configuration of confidence and belief in self: *“My teacher makes me feel that I can believe in myself”*; *“I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when she allows me to do sports”* and *“My teacher has shown me that I can do anything if I set my mind on it”* (P7IS).

Learners experience a heightened sense of worth. Most learners indicated that in the school they are currently attending, the teachers make them feel special and worthy as they receive credit for work well done, and because of the learner-teacher interactions. From the findings it becomes apparent that being in a relationship with a teacher who takes time and care of acknowledging even

the mundane or non-significant tasks (for example work done in class or homework, and not just tests and examination results) contributes to the development of self-configuration. The following quotes indicate self-configuration concepts such as worthiness by various participants: *“My teacher makes me believe that I am a star”* (P2IS). *“I see myself as a great person when I am with my teacher (P2IS)”*. *“My teacher makes me believe that I am a good boy”* (P3IS). By not being ignored by his teacher at his current school, it makes the learner feel: *“Like I am actually worth something for once. Like it is worth being here”* (P4I). *“My teacher makes me feel that I am a great person...”* (P6IS). *“My teacher makes me believe that I am important again”* (P4IS). The sense of worthiness is enhanced when teachers take the time to listen to their students: *“I feel valued by my teacher when my teacher listens to me”* (P1IS). The change in learners’ perceptions about themselves are evident of the field that is always in flux where each experience is an opportunity for growth and change as all the events and parts of a field is interconnected (Mann, 2010). With each contact and experience, the self reorganises and redefines itself (Bradfield, 2012; Philippon, 2009). According to Mischel and Morf (2003) the self emerges within this contact with the environment. The redefining and continuous reorganisation of the self with each meaningful interaction, makes the self-configuration process a continuous one (Polster, 2005).

Self-configuration as a result of how the teacher communicates with the learner.

Learners form concepts regarding self as they interact with their teacher (Leftot et al., 2010). An estimated 38% of what people communicate is processed through tone of voice (Wood, 2009). It makes sense, then, that how learners perceive that their teacher’s tone of voice could contribute to the learners’ perceptions of their capabilities, encouragement and self-configuration. The tone of the teacher’s voice serves as a reflection on whether learners experience the relationship with the teacher positive or negative. The findings indicate that the learner’s perception of the communication or interaction between learner and teacher influences how the learner experiences

himself. Emotions experienced range from feeling sad to feeling not being respected. To the question of times when the relationship with the teacher does not feel “good”, one learner answered: *“Like when she likes, maybe shouts at me”*, thereafter the learner answered the question on how does it make him feel when she shouts at him with one word: *“Sad”* (P11).

Polster (2005) points to the fact that as a situation happens, people talk or reason with themselves in order to make sense of the situation. This inner dialogue will lead the person to follow either a “point” or “counterpoint” in the situation. The characteristic or trait the person is experiencing in that situation will be put into action. Contact-making with the environment aids to understanding the social context (Polster, 2005). If the teacher sounds disapproving of learners, their self may be configured in a way that is experienced negatively as their inner dialogue will put this negativity into action.

Caring and interest are conveyed through tone of voice. The teacher’s tone of voice is a very important aspect in communication with the learner. Through tone of voice the teacher can communicate commitment, interest and caring. Through encouragement and expression of appreciation, teachers can assist learners in feeling validated and recognised (Silver, 2014). The school the participants are currently attending is geared to dealing with learners with learning difficulties. The teachers have a calm and relaxed approach to the learners. The small number of learners in the Intermediate Phase makes it possible for the teaching staff to approach learners in a calm and relaxed way, as they do not have to deal with overcrowding in their classroom. Tone of voice can convey to the learner how much the teacher cares for and are interested in the learner.

These participants are in the concrete operational phase of their development. During this phase learners start to think about their experiences, discover their unique learning styles and go through physical and psychological changes. Due to all these changes learners need their teacher’s emotional and social support (Shaffer & Kipp, 2014). As these learners have not yet acquired the

necessary skills to evaluate themselves in terms of the messages they receive from others, be it verbal or through tone of voice (Kick, 2005; Leftot, 2010) teachers must be sensitive to what message their tone of voice conveys. Teachers sounding calm or telling jokes in the class are seen as teachers that care and that show an interest in their learners. Creating an atmosphere free of stress in the classroom may contribute to a configuration of being cheerful, content and happy. “*She (teacher) would sometimes tell jokes and then the whole class would laugh*” (P2I; SD). “*What I love about my teacher- when my teacher is calm with me*”; “*I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when she does not shout*” (P1). In contrast to being perceived as caring, shouting results in negative configuration: “*It (teacher shouting at learner) made me feel useless. She sounded furious and she did not care about me*” (P6I).

Learners feel encouraged and capable due to the tone of the teacher’s voice. Teachers not only impart information on learners, but help learners define who they are. Daily interactions with the teacher inform the learner if they are slow or smart, important or not. These messages are conveyed by the way teachers speak to learners, through their facial expression and the amount of time devoted to each individual learner (Heijnen-Maathuis, 2014). Tone of voice refers to the intonation of the voice expressing what we feel (Oxford Dictionaries Online, 2014). The tone of the teacher’s voice may convey the message that the teacher does not think the learners could do the work or task at hand causing learners to lose the confidence and belief in their own abilities when the teacher shouts and sounds angry. On the question: “What did you believe of yourself when they shouted so many times at you?” one participant responded, “*That I could not do my work, I could not finish it*” (P2I). In contrast, participants expressed how their teacher inspired them to persevere with work they find difficult: “*I am inspired by my teacher when she encourages me to do difficult work*” (P1IS). “*My teacher makes me believe that I can do my work better*” (P5IS). Participant 2(IS) captured how tone of voice led to encouragement as follows: “*My teacher makes me feel very happy*

when I have a difficulty in finishing my work and I finish it. My old teacher got angry and she yelled at me if I did not get my work right". Due to the fact that learners with learning difficulties obtain and retain new information at a slower rate, learners view their relationship with their teacher in a serious light (Prunty, Dupont & McDaid, 2012; O'Hara, 2005) and they emphasize the need for a compassionate and more caring approach towards these learners. When learners do not have the skill set yet to evaluate the accuracy of what the teacher thinks (through tone of voice) about the learner's ability to perform the task at hand (Leftot, 2010), learners will be affected by what the teacher says as they will believe the message given to them. This "taking in" without evaluating and validation of the message is called introjection (Mann, 2010). Introjection can be a source of learning about self and does not necessarily have to be negative (Polster, 2005). *"My teacher makes me believe that I am... I was told I am good at maths and helped me. It made me feel that I am good"* (P7IS). When a teacher does not have a positive relationship with a learner, the self-configuration of self-doubt may emerge as a result: *"I see myself as being able to do some things but not everything, I doubted myself when I was with my teacher"* (P7IS). In contrast, the same participant feels completely different in the school he is attending currently where the teacher showed her beliefs in his abilities: *"My teacher makes me feel that I can believe in myself"* (P7IS).

Learners feel recognized. Recognition is very important to learners and has a tremendous positive outcome on learners (Schoolnet SA, 2014). Being recognised refers to the teacher acknowledging the learners' work, their attempts (effort) as well as their person. Many of the participants have difficulty with writing and reading. It takes them longer than usual to write even a short sentence and when placed in a mainstream school, they could not keep up with the rest of the class. Participants thrive on recognition from the teacher for work done well: *"...I can do the work properly and that I can do (my work) well"* (P5I). *"They see me as an important person"* (P6I). *"My teacher acknowledges me when they say: "Well done!"* (P1IS). To the question of how his teacher

made him felt recognised, this participant answered: *“He used to always say that my work is good, he used to tell me that I could do anything I want if I set my heart to it”* (P7I). In the current school participants are attending, the teaching staff not only recognise their academic work but also their person: *“What I love about my teacher is he sees us as individual people...”* (P4IS). Gestalt Field Theory states that everything in the field effect everything else and that the only reality is the here-and-the-now (Yontef, 1993). Recognition given by teachers to learners lead to positive self-configuration while also feeling positive towards the teacher.

Self-configuration as a result of the meaningfulness of the learner-teacher relationship

The learner-teacher relationship is very important in the process of self-configuration. Learners spend most part of the day in the presence of the teacher and as such the teacher plays a significant other in the life of a learner. As stated by Leftot, et al. (2010) learners who experience a positive relationship with their teacher are motivated to perform or work harder for their teacher. This is reflected in the comments of some of the participants: *“I see myself as more important person because of (School’s name) and when I am with my teacher I feel more important everyday”* (P4IS). *“My teacher makes me believe that I am not stupid and that I am as smart as I can be in class and I won’t let him down”* (P9IS). *“My teacher makes me believes that I can read and do maths”* (P8IS). *“My teacher makes me believe that I am a kind and happy boy”* (P8IS). A positive learner-teacher relationship has taught these participants how to persevere until they succeed. At the school where the research took place, there is very close cooperation between learners and teachers. Teachers and learners work in very small groups and there are constant close interactions between them. The following responses are indicative of the positive learner-teacher relationship: *“I am inspired by my teacher when she encourages me to do difficult work”* (P1IS). Learners are encouraged to keep trying until they succeed. This fosters the self-configuration of perseverance. *“My teacher teaches me about myself how to believe in myself”* (P2IS). In previous schools the

teachers did not always show the learners that they believed the learners could do it. Thus a teacher instilling the belief in learners that they are capable and must believe in themselves is a very important outcome of the positive learner-teacher relationship. Heijnen-Maathuis (2014) writes that the way learners experience positive learner-teacher relations will influence their experience of school. Teachers create positive learner-teacher relations by providing a positive classroom climate. This is done by respecting learners, making the lessons interesting, encouraging learners and motivating learners to believe in their own abilities. Rimm-Kaufmann (2014) concurs that positive learner-teacher relationships can be fostered by teachers interacting respectfully with learners, be supportive to learners that need assistance and respond to learners' questions. This indicates that the teacher is willing to repeat information to the students in such a manner that contributes to their perception that teachers do care about them. In addition, Rimm-Kaufman (2014) states that one of the characteristics of a positive learner-teacher relationship is a teacher who shows personal interest in their students and does not show frustration and anger towards learners.

The learner-teacher relationship relates to self-configuration in the academic and social environment. During the Intermediate Phase of schooling, learners rotate between classes, spending between 45 minutes (single period) to about 90 minutes (for a double period) with a teacher. This includes rotating between classes and settling in the new classroom for the subject they have for that period. Rotating classes cuts the time learners have to spend with teachers and this influences their ability to easily form close connections (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). That way it is very important to establish and nurture positive learner-teacher relationships (Heijnen-Maathuis, 2014; Rimm-Kaufman, 2014).

At the school where the research was done, learners only have one teacher (or a teacher and an assistant) and do not exchange classes. They are thus not exposed to different teachers for different subjects or periods. This enables learners and teachers to form close connections within both the

academic and the social environment. Academically learners want to please their teacher and do not want to disappoint their teacher: *“My teacher makes me believe that I am not stupid and that I’m as smart as I can in the class and I won’t let him down”* (P9IS). *“I feel valued by my teacher when I am doing my work, she tells me I must do my work great and she believes that I can do it”* (P6IS). *“I feel valued by my teacher when I have done something or said something no one knows or heard of”* (P4IS). In the contact-making between self and “other”, the self emerges (Philippon, 2009). The contact-making experiences form the self and the meaning the individual gives to these experiences contributes to characteristics that in turn will guide the individual’s emotions and behaviour. If the experience is significant enough it will be registered as a factor that contributes to the configuration of self (Polster, 2005). The teachers in the school under study can affect the learners regarding the social environment during their weekly visit to the swimming pool as this creates an informal atmosphere and interaction opportunities between teacher and learners. Self-configurations of pride, being part of (belonging) and contentment are fostered within the learner-teacher relationship: *“What I love about my teacher is she is so kind she would complement me on my clothes on Fridays”* (P2IS). *“What I love about school is that I can be with my friends and go swim”* and *“I feel happy and content with my teacher when we are going to the pool and he has games for us”* (P5IS) *“What I love about school is when I arrive I am respected by almost everyone in the school”* (P4IS).

Learner-teacher relationship relates to feelings of safety and trust. Trust refers to the learners being able to trust teachers with their emotions, fears and need to feel safe. When learners experience what trust is through the example the teacher sets, they can in return experience themselves as trustworthy when the teacher asks them to be trusted. In this process of being able to trust and be trusted, the self-configuration of trustworthiness emerges. Even with being entrusted to execute everyday tasks such as taking a teacup back to the kitchen for the teacher, fosters a self-

configuration of “*I am trusted*” in participant 1. Being trusted further inspires him to perform better academically for his teacher. “...*I will take her cup of tea to the kitchen. I do my work better for her, right for her*”. Trusting a teacher is displayed in the following statement made by participant 1:

“*When one of my friends are mean to me I run to my teacher. There is a person (name of person) and I will tell her and she will sort it out*”. Polster (2005) states that through constant contact-making with others and receiving feedback from them whether we are “good” or “bad”, shapes self-configuration. These meaningful experiences do not need to be huge or big events, but can involve being included in an everyday task from which the learner was previously excluded.

In his previous school participant 2 was not always included when the teacher asked learners to assist her with chores, such as moving desks, rearranging the classroom or asking learners to carry her books for example. He expressed himself as being trusted when his teacher at the current school entrusts him with simple instructions such as to bring her a book from the shelf: “*When she includes the whole class*” and “*When she says: “Could you please get me like those books on the shelf” and then I go get her it*”. A teacher’s trust in the learners’ ability to perform a task, no matter how small, leads to the configuration of “being trusted”. “*I see myself as trusted and good when I am with my teacher*” (P5). Even the smallest act of caring can hugely impact on the learner (Zakrzewski, 2014). A learner with the self-configuration of being trustworthy would not only see himself as being trusted at school but in other areas of life as well.

Participant 6 describes himself as being trusted at school as well as at extra-mural activities such as scouts: “*I can be trusted with sending messages from one teacher to other teachers when I am with my teachers*” and “*like in a different school like scouts they say that I can be trusted that I can put up the flag. That I can be trusted that I won’t cheat and that I won’t do anything that they don’t want me to do*” (P6I). These participants who did not experience being trusted by teachers in their previous schools, see each opportunity their current teacher asks for their trust as an important

task. Mundane tasks are seen as proving to the teacher that they can be trusted with instructions, tasks and assignments. The self-configuration of trust and being trustworthy is then applied in other areas of their lives as well. To excel in the school environment, both academically and emotionally, learners need to trust their teachers. Trust implies that there is a reliance on the competencies of those entrusted with learners to do no harm, but take care of learners. Trust, according to Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, and Hoy (2001) forms the foundation of strong relationships.

Learners indicated that they could trust their teacher with emotions as well as to feel safe at school: *“I can trust my teacher when I say something to her”* (P1). *“There is a person named (person’s name) and I will tell her and then she will sort it out”* (P1). *“I can trust my teacher when I am doing my work”* (P3), referring here to the knowledge that his teacher will not single him out for making mistakes. Some participants indicated that they feel safe in general at school: *“I can trust my teacher mostly all the time”* (P2). *“I can trust my teacher when I am at school”* and *“I can tell my teacher almost anything without getting into trouble”* (P4). *“I can tell my teacher when I am hurt to help me”* (P5). Participant 9 describes his trust in his teacher as follows: *“I can trust my teacher when he speaks to the class and says no one will hurt me and tells me what we are going to do in the class”* and *“I can tell my teacher that I am a little bit afraid of some people at the school”*.

According to Walsh (2006) communication is at the heart of building trust. Walsh (2006) describes the building of trust at the hand of Covey’s (1989) metaphor of an emotional bank account. Building trust is a process and cannot be rushed. As teachers invest into their learners by acts of being kind, willing to listen and be available and believing in their learners, so the learners’ trust grows in teachers. This is compared to a bank account in which deposits have been made. As reserves build up, so trust in the teacher builds as well. The inverse is also true. If a teacher does not invest in learners, no reserves are built and trust is limited or fragile (Walsh, 2006).

The following comments indicate further self-configuration that took place due to the positive interaction with the teacher: *“My teacher makes me believe that I am a star”* (P2IS). *“I see myself as a great person”* (P2IS). *“My teacher makes me feel happy”* (P3IS). *“My teacher makes me believe that I can do almost anything”* (P4IS). *“I see myself as a more important person every day when I am with my teacher”* (P4IS). *“I feel valued by my teacher when he compliments my work and makes me feel special”* (P5IS). *“I see myself as trusted and good when I am with my teacher”* (P5IS). *“My teacher makes me believe that I am a great person”* (P6IS). Participant 2 captures the self-configuration within the learner-teacher relationship as follows: *“I feel proud when she says that I got all my work right. I feel proud about the person who I am”* (P2I).

Greenberg and Murray (2009) write that the relationship between learner and teacher may have a long term effect on the learner’s motivation and behaviour. Rimm-Kaufman (2014) affirms the long-term implications of trusting positive learner-teacher relationship on both academic and social development of learners. Chambers (2001) emphasizes the importance of recognising children’s individuality. Teachers interacting respectfully with learners, responding to their questions and offering assistance demonstrate but a few ways in which teachers can foster good learner-teacher relationships (Rimm-Kaufman, 2014). Self-configurational concepts resulting from time teachers spend with learners resemble overall evaluations of the value and worth learners ascribe to themselves, similar to global self-evaluations (Leftot et al., 2010).

Learners who find academic work difficult appreciate comments like these from their teachers as it builds not only safety and trust but a sense of recognition in learners as well. *“I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when every school day-that they be kind and that they don’t make you feel like you are a nobody- they make you feel that your somebody in the world”* (P6IS).

Attitudes and expectations of teachers may greatly influence the performance of their learners, both in terms of what the learners learn as in the quality of learning opportunities. Teachers must furthermore be cautious about not labelling learners who may need more time to understand the instructions or who are confused about the assignments given to them. It is important that teachers believe and are able to develop and adjust instructions in order to engage all learners, assist them in learning and support them in becoming responsible members of their classroom community (Banks, Cochran-Smith, Moll, Richert, Zeichner, LePage, Darling-Hammond, Duffy, & McDonald, 2005). Learners receiving positive feedback from teachers and who have a personal connection with teachers, are likely to be more trustful and have positive classroom experiences conducive to learning (Rimm-Kaufman, 2014). Authors such as Hamre and Pianta (2006) state that teachers with high expectations for their learners' academic achievement motivate learners to reach those high expectations with learners achieving more, feel more competent as learners and experiencing a greater sense of self-esteem.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

One of the limitations of this research study is the small number of learners who took part. Although most of the learners in the Intermediate Phase of the school under study took part in the research, it does remain a small number of participants. Future research could investigate self-configuration using not only one but a few schools catering for the needs of learners with mild learning difficulties. Another limitation is the difficulty participants had in expressing themselves with ease and finding vocabulary that truly reflected their deepest experiences. Due to their limited concentration span, the length of interviews also had to be kept short, which could have had an impact on the quality of the data obtained.

Conclusion

Self-configuration is experienced by the learner-teacher relationship in terms of the meaning learners ascribe to themselves when teachers spend time with them feeling valued, confident and experiencing a sense of worthiness. The teacher's tone of voice contributes greatly to learners' perceptions that the teacher believes in their abilities and that they are recognised. Furthermore, self-configuration seems to be a result of the meaningfulness of the learner-teacher relationship that enhances both academic and social perception of self, whilst instilling trust and safety in learners.

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Section C

Evaluation, limitations, recommendations and conclusion

Introduction

This section provides an overview involving the summary and evaluation of the research project in the context of the research question and research aim. Aspects such as the research design, theoretical perspectives, data gathering and data analysing procedures are incorporated into the discussion. The general experiences of the researcher are reflected on and lastly a discussion of the limitations and recommendations for future study concludes this section.

Evaluation of the study

The school environment encompasses the biggest extra-familial environment for school-going children. Learners spend approximately six hours every day for five days a week at school interacting with teachers and their peers. The learner-teacher relationship and interactions create opportunities wherein learners will learn who they are as seen by their teachers. The middle school years (in which the Intermediate Phase of schooling falls), are seen as a transition phase due to all the developmental changes which makes this stage an important phase for self-configuration experiences.

This research study focused on the interconnectedness of the learner-teacher relationship. The research question at hand was *how do Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties experience self-configuration within the learner-teacher relationship?*

The aim of the research study was to explore and describe the self-configuration experiences Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties have within the learner-teacher relationship. This was done following a qualitative research approach. At

the time of the study, the research participants attended a school in the East Rand that caters specifically for learners with mild learning difficulties. Some of these participants came from mainstream schools, while others came from schools catering for learners with mild learning difficulties. All the participants have difficulties with reading and writing as well as working at the fast pace that mainstream schools maintain.

Although the participants need to work at a slower pace and cannot express themselves as readily and with the same ease as other mainstream learners, these participants can express what happened with them in their relationship with their teacher or teachers as well as how it made them feel about themselves.

An intrinsic case study design was chosen. The intrinsic case study design was the best choice of the three categories (intrinsic, instrumental or collective) of case study design, as the researcher was interested in exploring the case itself, as she was interested primarily in the experiences of the Intermediate learner with learning difficulties. The case study is exploratory in nature and does not focus so much on generalising across cases or building theory than be interested in the case itself. All the participants participated the study voluntarily and all the necessary assent and consent forms and permissions were given. The participants were by chance all male, black and white learners and English-speaking. Only one learner in the Intermediate Phase chose not to participate in the research. His choice was respected and he was not discriminated against in any shape or form.

Data were collected during two sessions. Due to the challenges this particular case presented in terms of the participants' ability to express themselves with ease, the structured interview was done by giving the participants the questions in the form of incomplete sentences to complete. This allowed participants to not only order their

thoughts but also to answer at a pace that they felt comfortable with and without pressure to give answers immediately. This worked well for learners as they could take time to formulate their answers or ask for clarification before they answered. Their answers to the incomplete sentences gave the participants an idea of how they wanted to formulate their self-configuration experiences when they did their visual map or schematic drawing of their self-configuration.

During the follow-up interview during the second session, participants were given the opportunity to clarify meanings and/or add to their experiences as reported during the first interview. Although the opportunity was given to provide additional information regarding their self-configuration experiences when they were with their teacher, no new information was forthcoming during the follow-up interview.

Audio recordings were made of the interviews and later transcribed by the researcher. Data were transformed into meaningful information by using inductive data analysis. Thematic data analysis was used to categorise data into emerging themes and divided into three main themes with subthemes.

The first main theme was: Self-configuration as experienced through time spent with teacher with sub-themes: Learners feel valued, more confident and experience a heightened sense of worth. Teachers who spend time with learners convey the message that learners are worthy of their time and that the teacher enjoys spending time with the learners and this contributes to enhancing the confidence of the learners.

The second main theme was: Self-configuration as a result of how the teacher communicates with the learner, with sub-themes: Caring and interest are conveyed through tone of voice, learners feel encouraged and capable due to teacher's tone of voice and learners feel recognised. Through the tone of the teacher's voice, learners felt their

teacher was interested in them, believed in their abilities and encouraged them to do well in their work. The tone of voice affirmed the value of the learners and they felt recognised and respected by the teacher.

The third main theme was: Self-configuration as a result of meaningfulness of the learner-teacher relationship. Sub-themes were: The learner-teacher relationship relates to self-configuration in academic and social environment and learner-teacher relationship relates to feelings of safety and trust. Within their relationship with their teacher who is caring and interested in them not only in terms of what happens to learners during school time but outside of the school environment as well, learners could carry their self-configuration experience over to events outside of the learner-teacher relationship and school context. If a learner felt that his teacher trusted him during school, he animated this trust in his social context away from the school environment as well, because he experienced himself as being trustworthy.

The researcher concluded that although the participants had to deal with different learning difficulties, and they all expressed the need for recognition by their teacher which was for most shown by the teacher's willingness to spend time with them. The importance of a positive learner-teacher relationship was made clear by the results.

In the researcher's opinion the methodology that was implemented in this study was effective and theoretical frameworks of Gestalt Field Theory and Dialogical Theory of Self explained the self-configuration experiences of the learners in their relationship with their teacher well. As the study focused on the self-configuration experiences of Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties within the learner-teacher relationship, the qualitative research approach was best suited to understand their experiences. The learners' self-configuration experiences were the case under study and therefore an

intrinsic case study design was apt. The structured interview gave participants ample time to familiarise themselves with the research setting and what is expected of them so that they could answer at their own pace with ease. Yet, most of the participants could not give elaborate answers to describe their configuration experiences. Their descriptions were brief and to the point.

Experience of the researcher

The discussion that follows addresses the researcher's experience of the research process from a professional and personal point of view.

The professional experience of the research process

The researcher offered support to parents with children who have learning difficulties at school. The researcher is not a clinical or counselling psychologist but do work with learners experiencing learning difficulties. As a result, the researcher is always looking for schools that can assist learners in need. As such when the school where the research was done opened in 2011, the researcher made contact with the headmistress. In this meeting the researcher became aware that the headmistress worked at a remedial school and thought she could improve on certain aspects. Knowing from her contact with parents of learners in other remedial schools that learners still encountered negative experiences with their teacher, she became interested in how this school would deal with the learner-teacher relationship and the subsequent self-configuration experiences of learners therein.

The researcher was not involved with the school under study and therefore saw herself as fairly removed from the participants and had no preconceived ideas as to what results the research would yield. The initial literature review indicated the importance of teacher-learner relationships and interactions not only globally but also locally. Previous

research was mostly done from the perspective of the teacher and not from the learner. The researcher found it difficult to find literature on how learners with mild learning difficulties experience their sense of self in their relationship with their teacher.

The participants were all very friendly and willing to participate in the study. It was important for them to be able to express their point of view to the researcher as they do not often get the chance to tell people how they experience themselves within their relationship with their teacher. Although the choice to start the research with the incomplete sentences provided the much needed time to build trust with the participants, it still was a challenge to conduct the interviews with the participants. They knew what they wanted to say but had to search for words and sometimes that proved difficult for them. Writing out their thoughts seemed to give them more time to construct and order their thoughts. The researcher also realised that some words she chose – although not difficult – were not at a level the participants understood and had to change her choice of words or explain the concept to the learners. Sometimes participants gave an answer because they did not know what to answer but felt they had to give some answer and went with an explanation the researcher gave. The combination of the various methods of data collection proved, however, to give a more comprehensive picture of what participants experienced as they had ample time to complete and draw their visual maps to their satisfaction. Their difficulty in expressing thoughts and reading ability were present across the board. This made the interview process frustrating as the researcher felt she had to elaborate on her questions as she could see that the questions could not be asked the same for each of the participants.

Another frustration experienced was the fact that during the second session two of the participants were absent. Working with such a small number of participants could,

according to the researcher, have an impact on an understanding of the self-configuration experiences of the learners.

A personal experience

The researcher found the first data-collection session daunting as she did not know what the learners' communication ability truly was. Teachers working with these learners deal with them on a daily basis and experience them quite differently to someone who is not used to the way they express themselves or the vocabulary they are using.

The researcher found the interviewing interesting and insightful but found ascribing themes to the data difficult and frustrating. She is of the opinion that future research with learners with learning difficulties should involve collages as these use already printed pictures and sketches that convey feelings that can be put in the correct context as opposed to words that these learners struggled with. During one visit the audio recording device became faulty and this also led to great frustration on the part of the researcher.

The research experience left the researcher with the knowledge that the most important gift any educator can give a learner is the gift of time and acceptance. This study has energised the researcher to put even more effort into her own relationships she has with the learners that come to her for support from various schools insofar as to take cognisance of their different fields and experiences they have within their field of self-configuration. Learners come to the researcher for extra classes in school subjects as the researcher runs a tutor centre. Experiences that influence how they view themselves must be taken into account when trying to understand why learners have difficulty in grasping academic work – it may result from an emotional experience that they need to work through as social relationships also contribute to successful academic performance.

Limitations of the study

Certain aspects can be regarded as limitations of the study:

Small sample. The small number of participants due to the small number of learners in the school limits the experiences of the learners to one specific setting. In this research setting the language of education was English and all the participants spoke English at home. It would be more representative if participants from other schools, males and females, including other languages and with various cultures (Indian and Coloured children who were not present in this school under study) could be part of such a study in order to determine whether the themes identified are applicable to other settings as well. Should a learner with a home language other than English be included in future research the adequate support should be provided for those learners in order to avoid the possibility for the learners not to be able to understand and interpret questions adequately.

Absence of participants. As the number of participants was already so limited, when learners are absent during a session, it does have an impact. Time constraints prohibited the researcher from revisiting the two participants who were absent during the follow-up interviews as they were busy with examinations.

Number of schools involved in research study. As mentioned before the school under study is very small in their number of learners enrolled with them. More than one school might give additional information.

Data-collection method. The researcher did explore the self-configuration experiences of Intermediate Phase learners with mild learning difficulties within the learner-teacher relationship. However, due to the limitations on their ability to use rich vocabulary to describe their experiences and their sense of self, the researcher feels that there is much more to be discovered about the self-configuration of these participants than what

was revealed during the research. Learners who struggle to order their thoughts and express their experiences with ease could perhaps be accommodated by using methods such as collages that does not depend on words to portray their experiences.

Gender of participants. Only males participated in the research study. Participation was voluntary and therefore it was not planned that no females participated but it would be necessary to also explore female learners' self-configuration experiences.

Recommendations for future research and practice

The researcher recommends that future research on this topic should include multiple schools of various sizes in order to have a larger and varied research population.

It could also be insightful to use both qualitative- and quantitative methods to determine how learners experience themselves in their relationship with their teacher.

The researcher recommends that as this study indicates that learners value the time teachers spend with them as well as how the teacher sounds when communicating with the learner, further training be provided to teachers to be able to approach different learners in different ways that are used successfully in the school under study. It must be kept in mind though that the school under study is fairly new with limited number of learners. If their numbers grow substantially and they are of similar size as other remedial schools, it would be interesting to repeat the study and determine whether the same results will be obtained. It is easier to deal with learners in small groups than when teachers must deal with large groups.

Conclusion

The interactions and relationships that learners have with their teachers are very important in the learners' self-configuration experiences. The Intermediate Phase of school presents itself with a new adaptation phase in learners' school career as it is the phase

where they start to alternate classrooms, have more than one teacher, start with formal tests and examinations. It is also during this phase that they start to think more critically about themselves. As their relationship with their teacher is such an important part of their school environment, it is important that the learner-teacher relationship be a positive relationship. Due to the myriad of experiences learners have while in relationship with their teacher, a qualitative research method was seen as being best suitable to obtain information pertaining to the self-configuration experiences of learners.

The study concluded that the time teachers give to learners, their tone of voice when communicating with learners and the meaningfulness of the learner-teacher relationship all contribute to positive self-configuration experiences of learners in the Intermediate Phase with mild learning difficulties.

Addendum 1

Structured Interviews (Incomplete sentences and visual map)

Participant 1

Please complete the following questions

1. **I can trust my teacher when** I say something to her.
2. **My teacher is supportive when** she helps me with my work.
3. **My teacher is someone who** - sometimes she shouts at me, she is friendly when she helps me..
4. **My teacher teaches me (about myself)** clever.
5. **My teacher makes me believe that I can** work hard.
6. **My teacher makes me believe that I am** clever.
7. **I feel valued by my teacher when** my teacher listens to me.
8. **I am inspired by my teacher when** she encourages me to do difficult work.
9. **My teacher acknowledges me when** they say: "Well done."
10. **I can tell my teacher** I can tell my teacher a lot of things.
11. **I like my teacher when** she is happy.
12. **I see myself as happy when I am with my teacher.**
13. **What I love about my teacher** is when she is calm with me.
14. **My teacher has shown me that I can** do it.
15. **What I love about school** playing outside.
16. **I am frustrated with my teacher when** she is angry with me.
17. **I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher** when she does not shout.

18. **My relationship with my teacher** - I like my teacher.

19. **I dislike my teacher when** she shouts at me – I do not get shouted at a lot.

20. **My teacher makes me feel** confident.

21. **I would describe my relationship with my teacher as** good.

Interview (Probing)

Interviewer: It seems to me like you have a really good relationship with your teacher.

How long have you been at (School's name)?

Participant: ((pause)) I am not sure

Interviewer: Have you been here last year as well , is this your first year?

Participant: No, it is not my first year

Interviewer: Not your first year, Ok. Have you always been happy here?

Participant: Sometimes

Interviewer: Sometimes. So when you say sometimes - is that when they shout at you and make you feel.. When they shout at you how do you feel inside?

Participant: Upset

Interviewer: Upset? Why do you become upset?

Participant: Because they shout at me

Interviewer: Because they shout at you. Do you think then it is because they say that you are not good enough or it is because you are frustrated? Why do you not like it?

Participant: Because it makes me upset.

Interviewer: Have a .. has another teacher shouted at you before you came to this school?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: You do not like people shouting at you. Ok. Do mom and dad shout at you?

Participant: Hmm, sometimes.

Interviewer: Sometimes and then you also get upset.

Participant: (Nods head)

Interviewer: Ok. Alright. When you are saying you like playing outside, is that the highlight of your day?

Participant: Pretty much.

Interviewer: What do you do during break time? When you play outside (overlap: participant : sometimes) what

Participant: I play with my friends and we are happy.

Interviewer: Do you jump trampoline, play marbles, do you chase one another, what do you do. (.) Sit and chat? What do you guys do?

Participant: Ahh, we just play, ja sometimes we catch each other

Interviewer: Ah. Okay.

Participant: And I play with my milk and chalk with my other friends in my class

Interviewer: Shoo, that sounds interesting. Alright. Tell me quickly, when you are hmm, (.) when your teacher is helping you with stuff, your work, and you cannot or it is new work and it is difficult work and she is encouraging you, how does that make you feel inside?

Participant: (.)

Interviewer: You say you like it when she talks nicely and softly to you and she smiles, does it make you feel..hmm

Participant: It makes me feel happy

Interviewer: Happy inside - warm and fuzzy feeling inside.

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok and then you say you feel acknowledge or seen when they trust you with things. Things like what . when they ask you to do something for them

Participant: Ja and then I do it

Interviewer: Ok

Participant: I do it for them.

Interviewer: And you do it well. Ok, a thing like what will you do for your teacher?

Participant: Err, will take her cup of tea for her to the kitchen

Interviewer: Ok, ok, cool

Participant: I do my work better for her, right for her

Interviewer: Ok. And tell me the work that you do for her, do you want that ,hmm “well done, (participant’s name)” hmm from your teacher. Do you like it when she

says well done.

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok. So

Participant: Sometimes she does not say anything

Interviewer: And then how does that make you feel?

Participant: Aahh it is fine... I am cool with that.

Interviewer: You are cool with it. Ok. Would you say that hmm your teacher has, yÓúr teacher in this school has taught you good things about yourself?

Participant: Ya

Interviewer: That she has built you up – you you do not feel bad about yourself when you leave here. You feel happy and you want to come back the next day

Participant: Ya

Interviewer: It is not like you do not like coming here

Participant: Sometimes I do not like, sometimes I do not like the school.

Interviewer: Times like when? When do you not like school?

Participant: Like someone like one of my friends are mean to me, then I do not like school.

Interviewer: Ok and if a friend is mean to you, do you tell your teacher or do you just sort it out yourself? What do you do?

Participant: Aahh, I run to my teacher. There is a person named (person's name) and I

will tell her and then she will sort it out.

Interviewer: Ok so you do get support.

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok and when she helps you then you also feel nice and warm and happy?

Participant: Yes

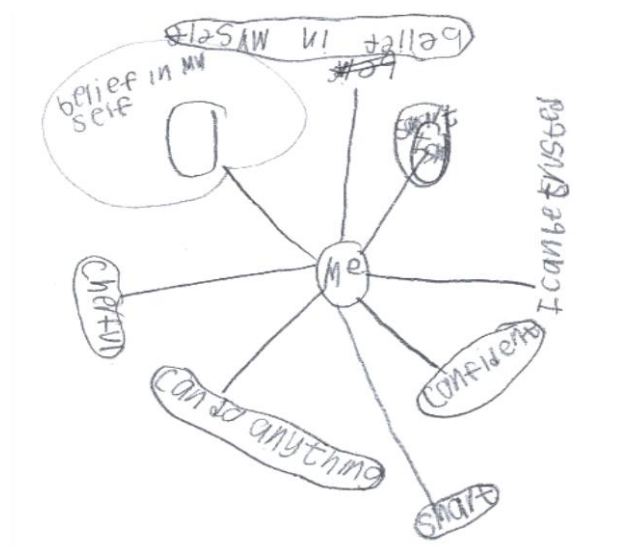
Interviewer: And she does a good job sorting things out?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok. I take it because you look very happy here that you do not often feel unhappy coming to school. Is that right if I say it

Participant: Ja I do not feel unhappy when I come to school

Interviewer: Ok. Well I want to thank you so much for your time, it was really nice meeting you and I hope you have a wonderful day.



Participant 2

Please complete the following questions

1. **I can trust my teacher when** mostly all the time.
2. **My teacher is supportive when** I have troubles at home.
3. **My teacher is someone who** is very kind and loving.
4. **My teacher teaches me (about myself)** how to believe in myself.
5. **My teacher makes me believe that I can** do it, when I cannot do it.
6. **My teacher makes me believe that I am** a star.
7. **I feel valued by my teacher when** she says: "Great job."
8. **I am inspired by my teacher when** she inspires me to do great work.
9. **My teacher acknowledges me when** I get everything right at (in) my maths.
10. **I can tell my teacher** anything.
11. **I like my teacher when** she is very kind.
12. **I see myself as** a great person **when I am with my teacher.**
13. **What I love about my teacher** is she is so kind she would compliment me on my clothes on Fridays.
14. **My teacher has shown me that I can** do it when I have a difficult time doing it.
15. **What I love about school is** - On Fridays we wear civilian clothes and go to the swimming pool.
16. **I am frustrated with my teacher when** she marked most of my work wrong at my other school.
17. **I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher** when we have friendly talks.

18. **My relationship with my teacher** is very good. She is very kind and encourages me to do better.
19. **I dislike my teacher when** - at the previous school, the Afrikaans teacher would yell at me if I did not get a word right.
20. **My teacher makes me feel** very happy when I have difficulty in finishing my work, and I finish it. At the previous school she would get angry and yell at me if I did not get my work right.
21. **I would describe my relationship with my teacher as** a good relationship; she is very kind and loving.

Interview (Probing)

Interviewer: Alright let us talk about what you have drawn here. You say here that you are happy and they that you feel clever and loved and recognised, that you believe in yourself, that you can try new things, that you matter, that you can be trusted, that your confident, cheerful, proud, useful, joy. Sho, these are all positive things that you feel with your teacher. Tell me a little bit about your day when you come to school – how do you guys start, hmm, what does she say in the mornings to you

Participant: She would say Good morning class and how are you feeling, are you good today

Interviewer: And then each one of you get a chance to talk?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok so you get the opportunity to tell everyone in your class what you have experienced the previous day and how you feel at that moment

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: Ok, now if something bad happens do you have the courage to tell that to the class or do you tell that to your teacher when you and she's alone

Participant: Hmm, not really

Interviewer: Not really, do you keep that to yourself

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok, so when do you feel that you have the courage to actually say when things are going bad

Participant: Hmm, I do not quite know

Interviewer: Ok, do you, will you have the courage to go and talk to your teacher when things are bad, when she says I can see that something is wrong, when she approaches you about that

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Then you have enough courage

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok. If, is your teacher somebody that you can approach, in other words can hmm, go to her and just starting to tell her everything or anything, every day things?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok. But you feel a little bit afraid, not afraid but hmm (.) cautious

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: To say what is going on in your heart

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok, why do you think that you are cautious

Participant: I do not know

Interviewer: Did you have a previous experience where you maybe tried that and then they did not listen to you or did not take you serious or did not acknowledge your feelings

Participant: Yes, they did not like think about my feelings at my old school

Interviewer: Ok so you had the bad experience there and now you are , you are not quite sure that you can do it here (at Roxer) yet in any case. What grade are you?

Participant: Grade 4

Interviewer: Grade 4. So maybe when you are here a year or two more or longer, then maybe you can see that you can trust them? So that old school, the teacher in your old school she basically or he, showed you that you cannot always trust your teacher. You can not always .. so you still have that reserve. Ok you say here that you matter. How does your make you feel that you matter?

Participant: That she would include everyone when she .. when she is like moving her stuff in the classroom, she would say to the class if you could please help me to the class

Interviewer: Ok, so she trust that you are able and capable of doing things

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: So she does not assume that you can't. She pulls you in and she ..she says

but you are a person who can do things, so I want you to help me. That makes you feel, what

Participant: Makes me feel very happy and

Interviewer: Right, ok. When do you feel proud when you are with your teacher?

Participant: I feel proud when she says you that I got all my work right.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you only feel proud when you do your work right or do you feel proud about the person you are the rest of the time as well

Participant: Yes, I feel proud about the person who I am

Interviewer: Ok. Here you say (referring to the drawing made) that you are cheerful, what makes you cheerful in your relationship with your teacher

Participant: She, she would sometimes tell (.) sometimes tells jokes and then the whole class would laugh

Interviewer: Ok, so it is fun, it is relaxed in the class

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: It is not a classroom where there is a lot of tension and screaming. It is calm and supportive

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok. When you say here that "I can be trusted" - when does she trusts you?

Participant: When she leaves the classroom to get something from the office she says "I

trust you to be quiet” and then we are quiet

Interviewer: Ok and that when she comes back, does she say anything?

Participant: She says hmm “Thank you, thank you for being quiet”.

Interviewer: Ok and then it feels like – if she can trusts you with that, she would trust you with other things?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Do does that make you feel that anybody can trust you with anything because your teacher showed you that you can be trusted?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok , alright and then this “happy” – when do you feel happy?

Participant: I feel happy when she tells jokes and we all laugh and then we all get our work right, correct

Interviewer: Ok, and your friends? Do you get along with your friends in this school?

Participant: Yes I do

Interviewer: Do you play (Participant nods head) what is your favourite time during the day?

Participant: Ahh, I would say break time.

Interviewer: Break time. What do you guys do?

Participant: We would normally play soccer.

Interviewer: Ok, and I am sure you are one of the stars, hey?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Yes, alright and then you say here that you are useful, when do you feel useful in your relationship with your teacher?

Participant: When she says "Could you please get me like those books on the shelf" and then I go get her it

Interviewer: Ok then she trusts you to go and perform a task and you do it well and she keeps on asking you to do things, that you are that you can actually perform tasks and not just academic work, school work

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok, cool. If you can give advice to your teacher at your old school, what would you tell her she must do differently to become a better teacher

Participant: I would say she needs to be more kind

Interviewer: Ok

Interviewer: And she needs to trust her students more

Interviewer: Alright. Why do you think she did not trust her students

Participant: (.)

Interviewer: Did they listen to her – where you a big class

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok, so there are naughty children in the class

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: And because of the naughty children in the class the good students were also

being classified as being naughty?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Is that what happened.

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: So she did not see each individual, she just saw the whole group

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Is that what you tell me?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok. So you would tell her to be more kind and trust her students. What else can she do better?

Participant: She could communicate with the teacher, ahmm with the students when they are feeling very sad and have troubles at home

Interviewer: Ok and this is what you experience here in this school (current school)

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: So when you are sad and when you have problems, then they actually take time to talk to you

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok and support you in not only with school work but outside of school as well.

Participant: Yes, yes

Interviewer: Ok, super. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your

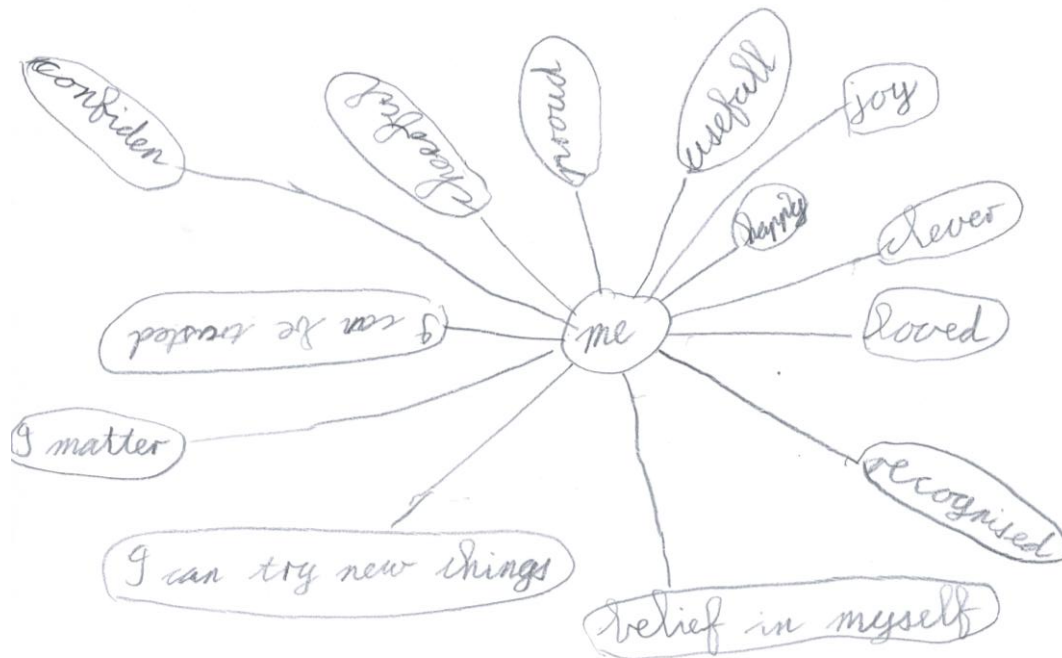
teacher, your relationship with your teacher

Participant: Hmm, not really.

Interviewer: Not really, ok, then I thank you so much for your time and it was lovely meeting you and I hope you have a wonderful day

Participant: Thank you and you too.

Interviewer: Thank you. Bye-bye



Participant 3

Please complete the following questions

- 1) **I can trust my teacher when** I am doing my work.
- 2) **My teacher is supportive when** I make a mistake.
- 3) **My teacher is someone who** is kind.
- 4) **My teacher teaches me (about myself)** that I am healthy.
- 5) **My teacher makes me believe that I can** do anything.
- 6) **My teacher makes me believe that I am** a good boy.
- 7) **I feel valued by my teacher when** I do good work.
- 8) **I am inspired by my teacher when** she teaches us.
- 9) **My teacher acknowledges me when** I do the best I can do.
- 10) **I can tell my teacher** she teaches us well.
- 11) **I like my teacher when** she says my work is good.
- 12) **I see myself as** a happy person **when I am with my teacher.**
- 13) **What I love about my teacher** is kind.
- 14) **My teacher has shown me that I can** do anything.
- 15) **What I love about school is** - when I come to school and learn.
- 16) **I am frustrated with my teacher when** - not frustrated.
- 17) **I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher** I am in class
and doing my work properly.
- 18) **My relationship with my teacher** is very good.
- 19) **I dislike my teacher when** - n/a
- 20) **My teacher makes me feel** happy.
- 21) **I would describe my relationship with my teacher as** a very good
relationship.

Interview (Probing)

Interviewer: You say that you have been at another school before this one?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Only one school?

Participant: Jip

Interviewer: Ok can you remember anything of that school?

Participant: Hmm, I I stayed there until grade 2.

Interviewer: And how was that school?

Participant: It was – it was nice but the teachers were mean, ja..

Interviewer: Explain.

Participant: But there was only the one teacher and.... No it was it was not the teacher it was the child

Interviewer: The child?

Participant: The children that was mean.

Interviewer: Ok, how did you feel in that school?

Participant: I felt , I... I still felt happy but the boy came and I was about to leave.

Interviewer: Why did you decide to leave, what did mommy say why did you need to come here?

Participant: 'Cause the school, the school was closed.

Interviewer: Ok, so otherwise you would have stayed there?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok. Tell me, in this school, how, you say that you are for instance appreciated?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: How do they make you feel appreciated?

Participant: They make me feel like, like when ..if I do, if I do good work, they say “thank you”. They say thank you and well done.

Interviewer: Ok, tell me how do you experience yourself? So in other words I want to know, in your heart how do you feel when you walk through these gates?

Participant: I feel happy like

Interviewer: What makes you happy here?

Participant: The when my teachers and my friends and ja.

Interviewer: So you say that you can say anything to your teacher. Do you talk to her about stuff that goes on at home, with your friends, things that you saw or read about on the news and things like that?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: How many friends do you have here, do you have lots?

Participant: Yes, I think f...five.

Interviewer: Five friends and when you are together do you all feel like you – let me rephrase that do they sometimes struggle at school or are you all a happy group of boys?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: So you have support with your friends as well.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: All right , what does your friends teach you here?

Participant: My friends teach me to have fun and to be kind.

Interviewer: Ok. So you have fun inside and outside the class?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: All right. What has your teacher, hmm, taught you in terms of what person you are?

Participant: She, hmm, she taught me how you must brush your teeth and what you must eat.

Interviewer: Ok and how does that make you feel?

Participant: Happy, it makes me feel like, like appreciated.

Interviewer: Ok, your teacher teaching you all this stuff alright – (participant: yes) does that make you feel that you can go outside of the school and apply the things that she teaches in the classroom?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: If you can do it outside the class – if I can call it the home or in the real world (participant: yes) outside of school context, how does that make you feel if you can – a skill that you have learned in school or learned about, actually do and be.. can you do it?

Participant: Yes (enthusiastically).

Interviewer: And how does it make you feel?

Participant: It makes me feel like I can do anything, like I am good at what I do.

Interviewer: And it looks like you are very hmm proud?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: That you can do that.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok, your whole face just say :”Oh, I am just awesome, I can do that!”

Participant: Yes. (Smiles)

Interviewer: Ok, cool. Is there anything you can tell your teacher, maybe give advice about how she/he can make other children feel better about themselves?

Participant: No I can't because my teacher is doing a great job.

Interviewer: She is doing a great job. Ok, if I ask you what type of person is P4, for instance “I am honest and you can trust me” you know, characteristics, how would you describe yourself?

Participant: I'll describe myself as kind and hmm I yes I play, and I am friendly.

Interviewer: Hmm hmm.

Participant: And I .. ja.

Interviewer: Is there anything else?

Participant: Shakes head indicating that is nothing else he wants to add.

Interviewer: Who taught you that you are those things?

Participant: My mother.

Interviewer: Your mother. Ok. Is there anything of those things that your teacher says yes you are like that or she wants you to be like that?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Things like what?

Participant: Like hmmm like she teaches me how how to be kind also.

Interviewer: And how can you be kind, how does she teach you that?

Participant: She teaches us different ways of how to be kind and helpful.

Interviewer: Kind and helpful with your friends and other grown-ups.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Is there anything in this school that you would change?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: You are quite happy. You are now in grade?

Participant: 4

Interviewer: In grade 4 and what do you want to do one day?

Participant: I want to be a pilot.

Interviewer: You want to be a pilot! That is awesome. Why?

Participant: Because I like flying and fast things.

Interviewer: Fast things. Ok. Is there something in this school because they know it is your hobby..do they know it is your hobby?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: Not. Have you not told you teacher that this is what you like?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: Why have you not told your teacher?

Participant: I don't know. It didn't come to mind.

Interviewer: Did not come to mind. Ok, do you read a lot about those things?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you watch movies about that topic?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok are there any books in this school that you can read about that topic?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: Not. Is that something that you would like to see – more books about your hobbies?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you tell that to your teacher?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Alright. Is there anything that you want to add here (drawing)?

Participant: No, it is alright.

Interviewer: Is it alright. Well then I thank you so much for your time, it was lovely meeting you and I hope you have a wonderful day.

can do anything

wonderful

appreciated

me

confident

happy

Participant 4

Please complete the following questions

- 1) **I can trust my teacher when** I am at school.
- 2) **My teacher is supportive when** I am going (doing) a project.
- 3) **My teacher is someone who** is very clever with us, gets us to have fun in class unlike m previous school.
- 4) **My teacher teaches me (about myself)** that I can have fun at school.
- 5) **My teacher makes me believe that I can** do almost anything unlike my previous school where they made me feel useless.
- 6) **My teacher makes me believe that I am** important again unlike (previous school) that made me feel completely and utterly useless.
- 7) **I feel valued by my teacher when** I have done something or said something no one else knows of or thought of.
- 8) **I am inspired by my teacher when** - by my knowledge of how to do something.
- 9) **My teacher acknowledges me when** I usually put up my hand but in my other school we – I could probably swear at the teacher without being acknowledged at all.
- 10) **I can tell my teacher** almost anything without getting into trouble.
- 11) **I like my teacher when** he acknowledges me, unlike (previous school).
- 12) **I see myself as** a more important person because of (School's name) **when I am with my teacher.** (I feel more important every day)
- 13) **What I love about my teacher** that he sees us as individual people unlike (previous school) they saw us as garbage..
- 14) **My teacher has shown me that I can** do almost anything with ease.

- 15) **What I love about school is** – when I arrive I am respected by almost everyone in the school, I also respect them, unlike (previous school).
- 16) **I am frustrated with my teacher when** I speak to quietly (softly), but that is mostly my fault for speaking to quietly (softly) to him.
- 17) **I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when** he feels and does like a friend and not just a teacher.
- 18) **My relationship with my teacher** is not hatred, but friendly unlike (previous school). One or two teachers I respected but the rest of them were horrible .
- 19) **I dislike my teacher when** - I have never disliked (teacher's name), but in the previous school it is a completely different story.
- 20) **My teacher makes me feel** very important.
- 21) **I would describe my relationship with my teacher as** a good and healthy one.

Interview (Probing)

Interviewer: What do you think is the most important thing a teacher must teach a child?

Participant: (.) How to be confident in working, actually doing it.

Interviewer: Ok. Is this what you experience here?

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: And I see, I read (from the incomplete sentences) that you did not experience it at your previous school

Participant: It was like a living nightmare

Interviewer: Explain that to me, how ..was the teacher... did you have more than one

teacher, only one teacher?

Participant: I went there for three years.

Interviewer: Ok. (.) And how did you experience it

Participant: I think, I think it was for three years?

Interviewer: Three years

Participant: I know I was from .. no , ja – three years

Interviewer: Ok and how did you experience that?

Participant: Hmm, (.) the first teacher was awesome, but the other two were like, (.) horrible.

Interviewer: In what ways, what did they do, say to you, treat you

Participant: The grade 3 teacher was a bully. They said that they had no bullying when we arrived

Interviewer: Hm mmm

Participant: They had no bully signs and everything

Interviewer: Hmm mmm

Participant: But the whole school was a bully

Interviewer: Ok. How did they bully you, the teachers bullied you? (.) or the children bullied you?

Participant: Yeah, both.

Interviewer: Both. How did the teacher bully you?

Participant: (.) Just being (.) .. She would always ignore me

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant: Just like all the other students

Interviewer: Hmm hmm

Participant: They made me feel like I was not worth anything

Interviewer: Ok

Participant: Like I should not even be there. They were not teaching me actually much

Interviewer: Ok

Participant: Hmm. (.) Ja that is it.

Interviewer: Ok. How do you, how do you feel inside of you when you are being ignored?

(.) How does that make you feel?

Participant: Like I am not worth anything, like it is not worth my time

Interviewer: Ok

Participant: I should be doing something else, somewhere else

Interviewer: Hmm. Ok and here (Roxer) you say you are not ignored. You are...when you do something right they (as per completed sentences) they appreciate that – how does that make you feel.

Participant: (.) Like I am actually worth something for once,

Interviewer: Ok

Participant: Like it is worth being there

Interviewer: Ok

Participant: They actually teaching me

Interviewer: If you can – hmmm – in a few words say what your teacher here (school) has taught you about yourself – if you have to then say: "I know now that I am ..."
how would you describe how you are in terms of your experience here with your teacher?

Participant: More confident with working. It is not like (.) like a nightmare everyday to do anything in aahh school.

Interviewer: Ok. I see also that you say in one of your sentences you say that it is fun being at school - you do fun things in class.

Participant: No, he (the teacher) makes it more fun.

Interviewer: He makes it more fun

Participant: It is round about the same thing it is just more fun

Interviewer: Ok and you like it more when he (the teacher) is more like a friend and not just a teacher.

Participant: No.. he is more like a friend unlike the other school when they are just a teacher.

Interviewer: Oh, ok.

Participant: There is nothing special about them.

Interviewer: Ok. What makes him more like a friend? He does what?

Participant: (.) He like talks more about something, not just getting on to the point and

Interviewer: Ok, so he is explaining it (the work) nicely

Participant: Ja,

Interviewer: And does he ever just have a conversation with you, not about school work

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: So he spends some time with you

Participant: Hmm.

Interviewer: And that is important to you?

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: Ok. Having a teacher spending time, taking the time to spend time with you – you say that makes you feel important? Is that right?

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: Does it make you feel anything else?

Participant: If you think of it , if you think of a friend, and you think of not having any friends like to talk to or anything

Interviewer: Alright. Am I right then that you say or if I say it feels like you belong whereas in the other school you did not belong.

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: Ok. If you have to tell those teachers to change even if it is just a few things what advise can you give them now that you know

Participant: What this school?

Interviewer: The previous school - if you that this school (Roxer) takes the time to listen to you and they are explaining the work and they acknowledge you - if you can give that school (previous school) some advise to change – to become better - what would you say? How must they treat children?

Participant: (.) It is just inside of them -

Interviewer: Ok

Participant: You cannot change who they are.

Interviewer: Ok. You can't (participant starts talking)

Participant: You should not just be a teacher, you should be something else.

Interviewer: Alright – ok, take the time to learn, to know people

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: Alright and then you say that for the first time you feel like you are an individual or a person. You have not experienced that at your previous school?

Participant: (.) Ja. I was like nobody

Interviewer: Nobody

Participant: Just a bench sitting there.

Interviewer: Ok and that made you feel ? empty or what?

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: Made you feel.....

Participant: (.) like just nothing

Interviewer: Ok, and now you are something

Participant: Ja,

Interviewer: You have lots of friends here?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok, so you are, when you say you are supported in this school it is not just teachers but it is the friends as well, so the whole experience is better for you here

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: Ok, hmm, let's just quickly see here (looking at the drawing). You say you are inspired by your teacher and you enjoy it when you put up your hand and maybe you say something that nobody else knew about.

Participant: Ja. The way I think of things. Like on do you camp, and he asked how would, how do you crush chalk

Interviewer: Ah ah

Participant: And I just said wrap it up in paper and step on it.

Interviewer: Ok. Right. So here they appreciate what you think and what you say and they take that

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: They do not (overlap) ignore it

Participant: They take it and they put it into advise

Interviewer: Ok

Participant: (.) not just ((pause)) a piece of junk

Interviewer: Ok am I right if I can summarise as what you say and what you do here matter to them?

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: And that makes you feel great inside, it makes you feel like somebody is seeing you,

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: Appreciates you

Participant: Hmm

Interviewer: Ok. Hmm. And then you say my teacher makes me feel very important. What is "important", why is that important, to feel important?

Participant: It is like what you said a while ago, that I matter.

Interviewer: That you matter

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: That you are being seen

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: Being acknowledged

Participant: (Participant shakes head in affirmation)

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you would like to add about how you see teachers - what do you think teachers are there for?

Participant: (.) to teach, have some kind of a friend

Interviewer: Ok, not just work

Participant: Ja

Interviewer: Personal as well. Alright. I thank you so much for your time and I hope you have a wonderful day.

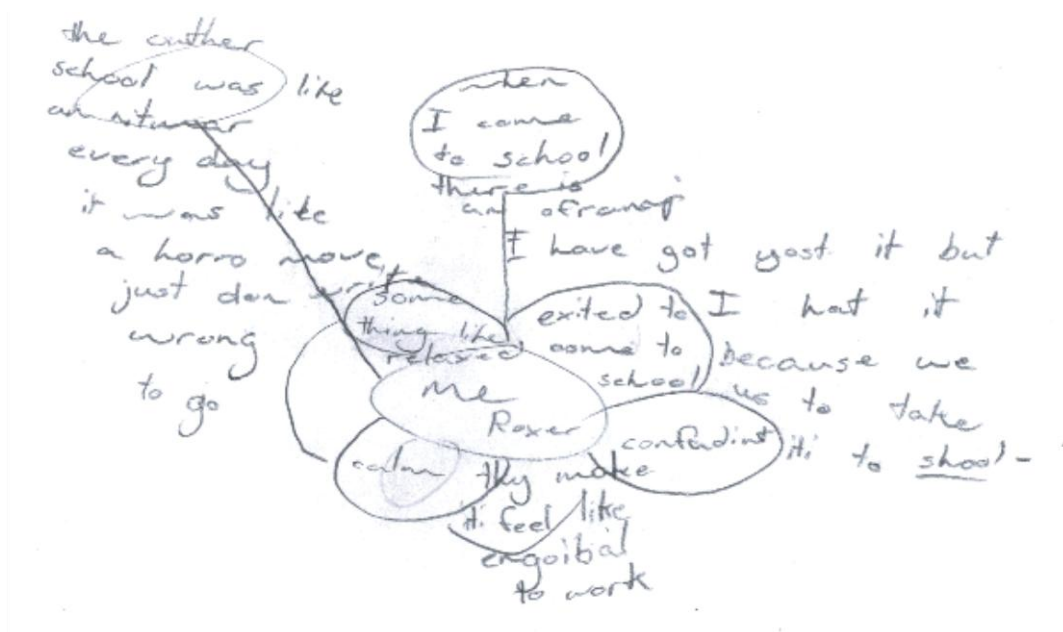
Participant: Ok.

Interviewer: Do you have any questions for me?

Participant: NNo,

Interviewer: Not. Thank you again, I appreciate it.

Participant: Ok.



Participant 5

Please complete the following questions

- 1) **I can trust my teacher when** he is nice.
- 2) **My teacher is supportive when** I am behind my work.
- 3) **My teacher is someone who** helps my work nicely.
- 4) **My teacher teaches me (about myself)** about trust to me and the teacher.
- 5) **My teacher makes me believe that I can** do my work better.
- 6) **My teacher makes me believe that I am** trying to do my best.
- 7) **I feel valued by my teacher when** he compliments my work and makes me
(feel) special.
- 8) **I am inspired by my teacher when** believe that we can do our work.
- 9) **My teacher acknowledges me when** I write neat and well.
- 10) **I can tell my teacher** how I feel about the other children.
- 11) **I like my teacher when** he is nice because we are good.
- 12) **I see myself as** trusted and good **when I am with my teacher.**
- 13) **What I love about my teacher** never shouted at me.
- 14) **My teacher has shown me that I can** do my work nicely.
- 15) **What I love about school is** that I can (play) with my friends and go swim.
- 16) **I am frustrated with my teacher when** I do not finish my work (and) I (have)
to stay until I finish (before I can) go to break.
- 17) **I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when** it is
(when we are) going to the pool, he has (a) game for us.
- 18) **My relationship with my teacher** is just fine.
- 19) **I dislike my teacher when** shouted and blame me for something (I) did not
do.

20) **My teacher makes me feel safe.**

21) **I would describe my relationship with my teacher as** kind relationship.

Interview (Probing)

Interviewer: So can you please tell me how you experienced your previous school. What did they do there that you did not like.

Participant: About.. they treated me like I was useless, sometimes that I make mistakes but sometimes it was just accidents.

Interviewer: Ok, and how did you make... that "feeling useless", how did that make you feel inside?

Participant: Unhappy,

Interviewer: Unhappy, did you believe that you were useless? Did you believe the teachers?

Participant: No, I did not feel useless because they just did not tell me exactly what to do all the time it was simple things but they did not tell me exactly when I must suppose or how I must do it.

Interviewer: Ok, so there was a lot of uncertainty

Participant: Hmm hmm

Interviewer: And then you guessed and then they said it was wrong?

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok. How did you feel hmm, when your teachers, were your ashamed when they.. let me ask you this - if they said you were useless if they pointed out

your mistakes, did they do it with you as an individual privately or did they do it in front of all the rest of the children?

Participant: Hmm, privately

Interviewer: Privately, so they did not humiliate you, they take you one side and said this is what you need to

Participant: Yeah

Interviewer: Ok. How, how did the teacher sound when he did that or she did that , friendly, unfriendly

Participant: Unfriendly

Interviewer: Unfriendly, ok. So you did not feel hmm that he cared, he just pointed out mistakes and did not cared about you as a person or not?

Participant: He did care about me as ja a person but he did not respected me.

Interviewer: Did not respected you, ok. Alright, you say here you are happy at this school because your teacher is nice to you. What is the difference between – how is he nice- between this teacher and your other school's teacher

Participant: Well this teacher here is much nicer and the old teacher at my old school was a bit rude and nasty

Interviewer: Ok. If you say your teacher is nice here, what makes him nice.

Participant: (.) the way that he helps us with work

Interviewer: Hmm hmm

Participant: And helps us do stuff

Interviewer: and do stuff and how does it make you feel when he spends some time with you

Participant: It makes me feel like hmm I am actually useful

Interviewer: Ok. Is he only spending time with you during work or can you go and talk to him just about anything

Participant: Hmm ((pause)) I do not know.

Interviewer: You do not know – do you ever just go to your teacher and just talk to him about normal, everyday stuff

Participant: Only about work

Interviewer: Only work. If you need to, to really.. maybe you have a bad day or you are sad, what do you do with those feelings then, can you go to your teacher or do you go to your friends?

Participant: I tend to go to my friends

Interviewer: You tend to go to your friends. Did you ever in your previous school wanted to tell your teacher how you felt

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: And then because of something he said or she said you decided that you cannot trust your feelings with them

Participant: No

Interviewer: No, so you always never.. it is not something that you did in your previous school and now you have stopped doing it because of them, you have always

just kept it to yourself?

Participant: Hmm

Interviewer: Ok. Alright, let us just quickly look at your hmm drawing that you have made. You say here that you are happy and smart. What does smart mean? What do you think or mean by smart?

Participant: That I can do the work properly and that I can do well

Interviewer: And that you can do it well and when are you trusted? You said trusted - when do you feel trusted?

Participant: To do my work prop and also to help with the others

Interviewer: Ok, help with the others - help the other children?

Participant: Yes,

Interviewer: Ok so they when they struggle you are asked to give them some advice to help them with some steps and so forth?

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: Alright. When you say "nice" (referring to the drawing) what do you mean about nice

Participant: Look I am always polite to them and I never fight with them and they never fight with me

Interviewer: Ok. In your old school – you say that you are sad and angry. Why were you angry?

Participant: Because they treated me like I was garbage, treated me like I was garbage.

Interviewer: Give me an example, when did you feel like garbage?

Participant: Cause I cannot do my work well

Interviewer: Hmm hm

Participant: And also because I did not do the stuff right

Interviewer: Ok. And sad?

Participant: That is because I am always feeling lonely and people don't want to play with me and the teachers are never nice to me.

Interviewer: Never nice to you. Ok. If you had to describe yourself to me, you (name) is how. How would you tell me what type of boy you are?

Participant: That I am a kind boy

Interviewer: Hmm hmm

Participant: Nice

Interviewer: And what else

Participant: And a little bit of anger management

Interviewer: Ok, when do you need some anger management ?

Participant: Oh it is just my brother sometimes making fun at me and he tends to break some of my stuff (pulling a face and laugh)

Interviewer: Oh, yes, that would make you angry , hey?

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: If you can give advice to another teacher, maybe one at your old school, to become a better teacher, what would you tell them?

Participant: That they should start helping the children for any help at all,

Interviewer: Hmm hmm

Participant: And also to be nicer and do not shout and also not to blame them for something that they never done

Interviewer: Ok, is that what happened to you? You got blamed?

Participant: Yeah, I got blamed for something that I have never done (overlap: you never done) ja they said I broke the table but I did not.

Interviewer: Ok. And so even though you said so you have the experience that they do not believe what you say?

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok and that made you feel how?

Participant: That I am not trusted

Interviewer: Ok. Not angry or sad

Participant: Ah a bit angry,

Interviewer: A bit angry, ok. Is there anything else that you would like to include here or are you happy with all how you experience yourself (looking at the drawing and referring to it)

Participant: There often not much joy there (referring to the drawing where he drew his old school)

Interviewer: Ok, not much joy - ok - what makes it joyful in this school

Participant: In this school it is joyful because you can go swimming and more fun stuff and at my old school there is not much fun there.

Interviewer: Just work?

Participant: Yes, mostly more work there

Interviewer: Ok, alright. Thank you so much for your time, I appreciate it, have a nice day.



Participant 6

Please complete the following questions

- 1) **I can trust my teacher when** I am at the zoo.
- 2) **My teacher is supportive when** in class when we do work.
- 3) **My teacher is someone who** is friendly and helps us with my work.
- 4) **My teacher teaches me (about myself)** that I can do anything if I believe.
- 5) **My teacher makes me believe that I can** do my work very neat(ly)..
- 6) **My teacher makes me believe that I am** a great person.
- 7) **I feel valued by my teacher when** I am doing my work, she tells me that I must do my work great and she believes that I can do it.
- 8) **I am inspired by my teacher when** she / they make us believe in them.
- 9) **My teacher acknowledges me when** I do my work, when I am doing it very neatly like my handwriting.
- 10) **I can tell my teacher** when I am hurt to help me.
- 11) **I like my teacher when** she is in a good mood (happy) - because then she always has a smile.
- 12) **I see myself as** - I can be trusted with sending messages to other teachers **when I am with my teacher.**
- 13) **What I love about my teacher** that she is very good teacher and that she never shouts at me.
- 14) **My teacher has shown me that I can** do my work and she would like it anyway as long as I have tried.
- 15) **What I love about school is** that I have all my friends and that I can learn.
- 16) **I am frustrated with my teacher when** they shout at me - at the other school it happened a lot. I cannot cope with it if somebody shouts at me.

17) **I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when** – every school day that they be kind and that they do not make you feel like you are a nobody. They make you feel like you are a somebody in the world.

18) **My relationship with my teacher** is just fine.

19) **I dislike my teacher when** they always shout at me when I was thinking - it was not nice for me.

20) **My teacher makes me feel** that I am a great person and that I am safe.

21) **I would describe my relationship with my teacher as** good.

Interview (Probing)

Interviewer: Ok, tell me about your old school. You say they shout at you at your old school and you don't like being shouted at

Participant: Hmm no I am not use to it

Interviewer: So you never hear shouting at home or

Participant: No, only like once a week and I do not hear shouting

Interviewer: When the teacher shouted at you how did it make you feel

Participant: Made me feel I was useless.

Interviewer: Alright. She sounded angry or she sounded how when she shouted

Participant: She sounded furious and she did not care about me.

Interviewer: Did not care about you, ok. How, you only had one teacher there or (overlap: no)

Participant: I had a few teachers

Interviewer: You had a few teachers, and the other teachers were they nice or were they also shouting?

Participant: Well there was one who was a bit nice and the other one was nice and my maths teacher was not very nice.

Interviewer: Why was (was it a he or a she? She) Why was she not very nice?

Participant: Because she would be strict with us and every time I would get one thing wrong she shout at me in public and tells everyone the wrong, the answer that I picked.

Interviewer: Ok, so and how did that made you feel when she said to everybody that you were wrong?

Participant: Made me feel like no one wanted to be with me, it was not pleasant.

Interviewer: Was not pleasant - did you believe your teacher that you could not do maths?

Participant: Hmm, no – I still tried to do maths.

Interviewer: You still tried, so even though she said you were wrong, you kept on going.

Participant: (Nods head affirming)

Interviewer: Ok. When you say here in your sketch that you feel unimportant – was that also with your other school?

Participant: Ja, the maths teacher.

Interviewer: Oh ,the maths teacher made you feel unimportant. Why, because you got

things wrong? (overlap: no) or were there something else?

Participant: No if I just got one question wrong she would put me in detention and makes me stay there for the whole break.

Interviewer: Ok, so you –were you afraid of that class, were you just frustrated

Participant: (overlap) - afraid of the class

Interviewer: Afraid, ok, so if you knew that you are going to have maths that day how did you feel in your body, how did you feel?

Participant: Nervous.

Interviewer: Nervous, ok. You say here that you are “not seen”

Participant: People just walk by me and then do not say hello and just try and make me jealous

Interviewer: Ok

Participant: Just see me as a not as an important one, that’s why I do this (Pointing to the “not seen” circle he drew).

Interviewer: Ok, and this one (referring to a part of the drawing) says “unable” and you have linked them (“not seen” and “unable”)

Participant: Because I am trying my best to do my, I have tried to like myself and them and they do not see me as hmm hmmm a person and I see myself as unable to be their friends, unable to be seen.

Interviewer: Ok, am I right if I say you felt invisible? Like people just saw right through you.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Like you are not there

Participant: Hmm hmm

Interviewer: Ok, and this "hate"?

Participant: Some people just push me around

Interviewer: Other learners?

Participant: No not, yes some other learners, last time they called me loser

Interviewer: Alright and that makes you feel?

Participant: That I am being hate

Interviewer: Hated?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok, does that still happen?

Participant: Not, no more.

Interviewer: No more, ok. So that was just with your other school, here you are not feeling like that.

Participant: No.

Interviewer: Here, I am assuming all these good things (referring to the positive concepts of his drawing) are from this school.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Proud - when are you feeling proud about yourself?

Participant: When they talk to me in private, when they do not say that I was wrong and they just say that I need to fix that and that

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant: And then they let me have a second chance and then I do it right and they make me feel proud.

Interviewer: Ok, then they say well done and acknowledge that. And cheerful and useful? It is big circles and it is linked together

Participant: They say that I am useful and they cheered, cheered me.

Interviewer: Ok. Alright and "I can do anything" is with this "proud" – is this only to do with your work or with others things as well?

Participant: Other things.

Interviewer: Such as?

Participant: At home, at the school, they make me feel like I could do anything

Interviewer: Ok,

Participant: And (.)

Interviewer: Ja

Participant: Like I can do anything right.

Interviewer: So what your teacher is teaching you here (at school), you feel actually so strong that you can do it wherever you are not just at school - at home, with your friends or at the say for instance the shop- that is how you feel , you are just "I can do anything" - is that right?

Participant: Yes

Interviewer: Ok. I can be trusted you say in your incomplete sentences that you are trusted to take one message from one teacher to another –is there another thing that you can be trusted with

Interviewer: Well, can I say not from the school?

Interviewer: Yes, yes

Participant: Like a different school like scouts

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant: They say that I can be trusted that I can put up the flag. That I can be trusted that I won't cheat and that I won't do anything that they don't want me to do.

Interviewer: Ok, so this means that you are a trustworthy person.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok and that you live it out in all areas of your life – not just at school: scouts, everywhere you go.

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: Alright, that is excellent. And then if you can give your teacher advice from your previous school, what would you tell them, what can they change if you think of your maths teacher or the other one who was not very nice.

Participant: I would say just try and be calm and have one day off and come back and try and talk to the learner in private what they have done.

Interviewer: If a teacher here (current school) talks to you (.) how do you feel, how do you

think do they see you?

Participant: In this school or the other school?

Interviewer: This school.

Participant: They hmm they see me as an important person and everyone equal

Interviewer: And everyone is equal, and that is something that you did not experience at your previous school?

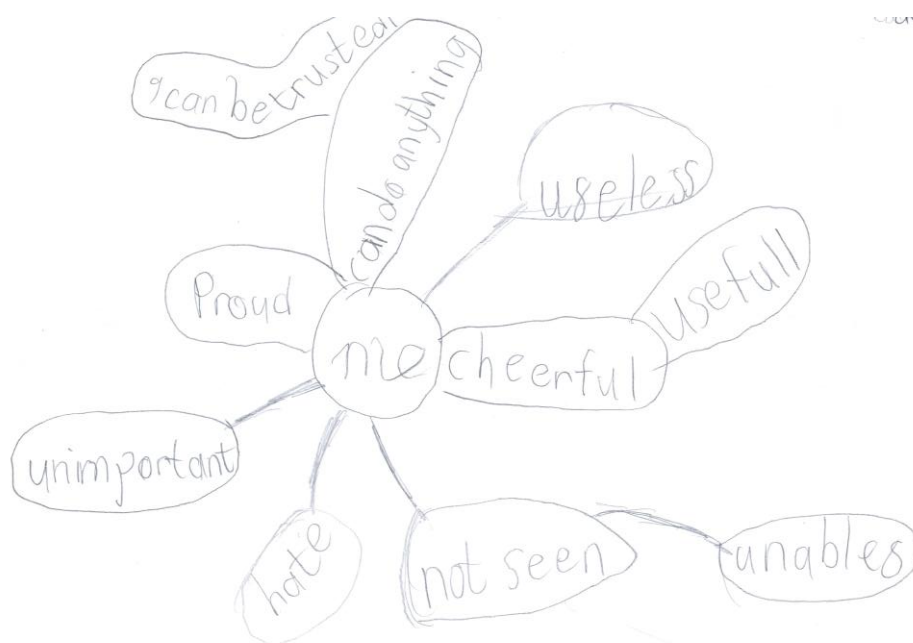
Participant: No. I did not feel it at my other school.

Interviewer: Ok. Is there anything else that you would like to add to this picture of yours.

Participant: No, these things, these things are most important that I feel

Interviewer: That you feel, ok. Well thank you so much for your time, I hope you have a wonderful day further.

Participant: Ok.



Participant 7

Please complete the following questions

- 1) **I can trust my teacher when** she treats me well, she says I am doing well.
- 2) **My teacher is supportive when** she would stand up for me when people teased me.
- 3) **My teacher is someone who** I can trust, who teaches us well.
- 4) **My teacher teaches me (about myself)** that I cannot do anything because she always told me I get stuff wrong and told me I am useless.
- 5) **My teacher makes me believe that I can** do some things but not everything because she did not feel I was good at sport and stuff.
- 6) **My teacher makes me believe that I am** seen as a liar. She did not believe me and blamed me. Here at (school's name) I was told that I am good at maths and helped me. It made me feel that I am good.
- 7) **I feel valued by my teacher when** she told me it was good work.
- 8) **I am inspired by my teacher when** she told me I could take part in cross-country and physical activities.
- 9) **My teacher acknowledges me when** she lets me do what I want to do, like sport and stuff.
- 10) **I can tell my teacher** only certain things - I cannot tell her that I was bullied, she would not believe me. At (School's name) they believe me and stand up for me.
- 11) **I like my teacher when** she makes me feel comfortable and not being mean to me.
- 12) **I see myself as** being able to do some things but not everything, I doubted myself **when I am with my teacher.**

- 13) **What I love about my teacher** she would tell me to do stuff on my laptop and not use pen and paper like in the previous school.
- 14) **My teacher has shown me that I can** do anything if I set my mind on it.
- 15) **What I love about school is** not being bullied at (School's name) and being able to work on my laptop.
- 16) **I am frustrated with my teacher when** she did not believe me when I told her that I was being bullied.
- 17) **I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when** she allows me to do sports (when she believes in me).
- 18) **My relationship with my teacher** is very good.
- 19) **I dislike my teacher when** - she would not let me use my laptop.
- 20) **My teacher makes me feel** that I can believe in myself.
- 21) **I would describe my relationship with my teacher as** very good because they would not let me be bullied.

Interview (Probing)

- Researcher Okay, so you drew this with... that's you and your teacher made you feel confident, afraid, fearful. This one is a very big happy in Roxer and you can try new things also sad, useless, unable and can't do anything. Okay so can we start of with "This is me" (centre circle) - how do you, right now think of yourself? If you have to describe yourself, what words... what... how would you say: "I (P7) is..."
- Participant I think I can do anything that I want to – right now
- Researcher Right now. Okay, do you see yourself as capable, able, strong, intelligent, awesome (words in the word bank)

**Note: Words in the “word bank” refers to words that the participant listed as he experienced himself when he is with his teacher. He then used those words when he drew the visual map.*

Participant Yes

Researcher All those things. Okay so let's go then a little bit back when you in your relationship with your teacher experienced these (pointing to his visual map) feelings – okay I want you to elaborate a little bit more for me. Here it is a small circle that says “confident”

Participant In (School's name), she, the teacher, used to let me feel not confident in myself

Researcher Okay am I correct then when I say the small circle is - sometimes you felt confident (ND01: yes) but most of the time however you did not feel confident (ND01: yes). Okay. And then you put.. hmm ...down here at the bottom sad and useless that (the circles) touch one another but each separate still. Was that a feeling of sadness and the feeling of uselessness that you felt often or just sometimes?

Participant Often

Researcher So how would your teacher basically make you feel sad or make you feel useless?

Participant She used to sometimes hit me, she used to say that I'm useless and I can't do anything and she used to keep me back from sport

Researcher Why did she hit you? For what stuff?

Participant I don't know. She ...The one day I just closed the door and then she came up

to me and hit me behind my head

Researcher Shoo, Okay. And that made you feel sad?

Participant Yes

Researcher Okay. Is that where the fearfulness comes from?

Participant Yes

Researcher When else did you feel fearful?

Participant When she used to shout at me and ... ja...

Researcher Okay, was that all of the time or most of the time or some days?

Participant Most of the time

Researcher Most of the days you sat in her class you were afraid. So you did not enjoy school?

Participant No

Researcher No. Okay. And then you have it , here right in the corner, but in a big bubble, unable. Things like what is unable? You couldn't do what?

Participant She used to say I can't do sports, she used to say that I am useless in sports (Researcher: Okay) and she used to keep me back in sports.

Researcher Now in academic work what did she say there to you

Participant She said that I can't do anything, I'm dumb (keeps both hands up like he is presenting a scale)

Researcher Okay so she equated what, how you are physically with also how... your intellect

So because you couldn't do sport, you also couldn't do things like maths or languages or any of the other subjects. Is that right? (ND01: yes) Okay. And that feeling "I can't do anything" did you believe it?

Participant I didn't believe it but she was telling me that I can't do anything

Researcher Okay why didn't you believe her?

Participant Because I thought I could do anything I wanted to

Researcher You Wanted to

Participant If I set my mind to it

Researcher Okay, so how was your relationship then with your teacher - you believing you can and she believing you can't?

Participant I didn't like her

Researcher Did you fight a lot, did you keep quiet, were you frustrated?

Participant I kept quiet

Researcher You kept quiet. With whom could you go and speak to about this.

Participant My mom

Researcher Okay and her advice was to put you in another school?

Participant Yes

Researcher Okay and then at (school), you felt... or did they tell you that you can do anything or was that something that you discovered on your own?

Participant It was something that I discovered on my own because they let me do anything that I wanted to.

Researcher Okay. So you didn't get a negative message that you "can't". They invited you to try?

Participant Yes

Researcher Okay. What did you do there, what sports did you do there?

Participant There was like fitness,

Researcher Okay PT- normal exercises?

Participant Yes

Researcher Okay.

Participant Yes and like swimming and ja

Researcher Do you still swim and do you enjoy that?

Participant Ja(smiles)

Researcher So when you swim do you think back to the first time that you were allowed to swim at school?

Participant Yes (smiles even bigger)

Researcher And that brings a joyful feeling?) He nods his head. Then his cell phone with a funny ringtone goes off and we laugh about that.

Researcher Okay. If you can tell a teacher like the one in woodlands, okay - not to do something - what would you tell teachers similar to the one you had to give them advise, to maybe change their approach to students

Participant I would tell them not to hit their students, not to make them feel that they can't do anything and that they are useless

Researcher How did you feel when she hit you?

Participant I felt cross and angry

Researcher And you couldn't do anything. Did you say anything to her?

Participant No

Researcher Okay, so you sat with that anger inside of you and how did you deal with that anger? Did you work, did you decide not to work to show her that...

Participant I did work

Researcher You did work

Participant To get my mind off things

Researcher Okay, so am I correct in saying that if someone tells you that you can't do that you go out of your way to show them that you actually can. You don't buy into it

Participant No

Researcher Ok - so you have a strong sense of believe in yourself

Participant Yeah

Researcher Who gave that to you? Who told you that you can do anything?

Participant I just figured on my own that I could do anything I wanted to

Researcher Okay, so no nothing is holding you back. Do you

Participant No

Researcher Okay, Do you, could you experience other children believing the teacher, that what she said to them that they can't do anything and that they actually

believed it?

Participant

Yes

Researcher

And you decided that you are not like that

Participant

Yes

Researcher

Okay

Researcher

If you can say good things about teachers what would that be? Good things that teachers have shown you, what would that be good things that they have taught you

Participant

That they have showed me that I am very clever (Researcher: hmmm) and that I am very clever and that I can do anything that I want to

Researcher

Am I then correct if I may value or summarise it that they actually validate what you already thought about yourself, they now said. So you could say: "Yes, I always felt that and now someone is saying it. So it must be true."

Participant

YES

Researcher

Okay and that made you feel "Yes"

Participant

Yes

Researcher

Awesome, acknowledged

Participant

Yes

Researcher

Is there anything else you would like to contribute to this drawing that you did? Are you happy with this? (P7: yes) Is there anything that I left out or that you would like to add?

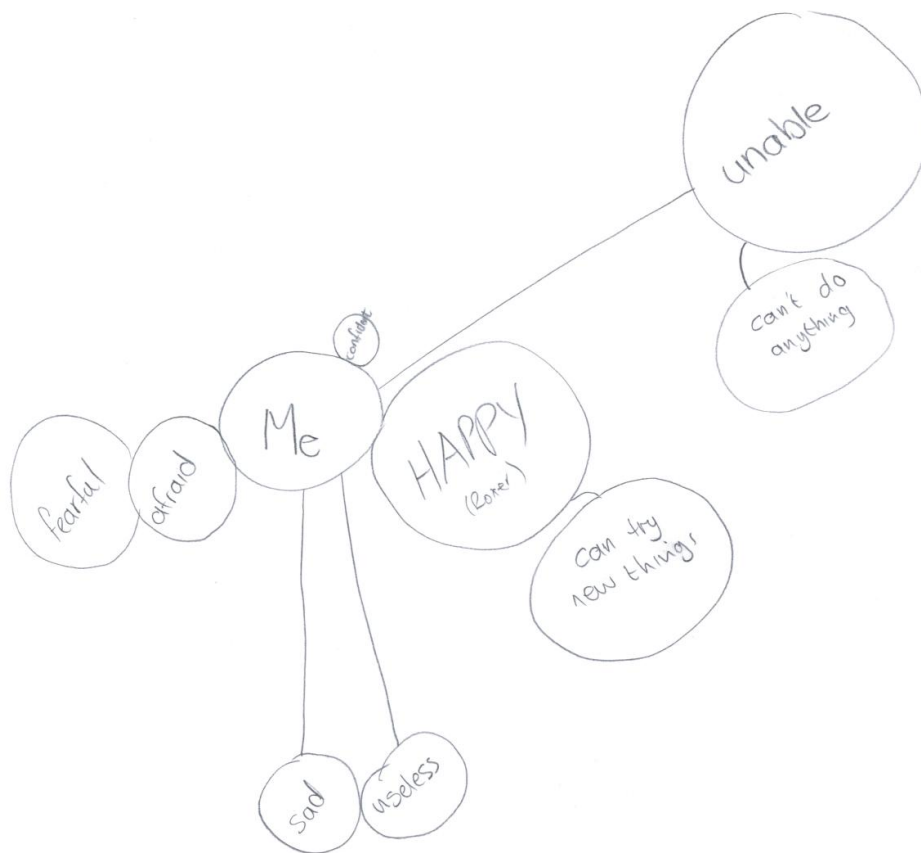
Participant No

Researcher That fine?

Participant Yeah

Researcher Well thank you so much for your time, I appreciate it ok?

Participant Okay.



Participant 8

Please complete the following questions

- 1) **I can trust my teacher when** she smiles at me.
- 2) **My teacher is supportive when** I work hard and my teacher is available.
- 3) **My teacher is someone who** she was happy and honest.
- 4) **My teacher teaches me (about myself)** that I can show I can do anything I can do.
- 5) **My teacher makes me believe that I can** that I can read and do maths.
- 6) **My teacher makes me believe that I am** a kind person and a happy boy.
- 7) **I feel valued by my teacher when** she helps me with my work.
- 8) **I am inspired by my teacher when** she looks at me.
- 9) **My teacher acknowledges me when** she gives me a hug and a smile.
- 10) **I can tell my teacher** everything.
- 11) **I like my teacher when** she laughs.
- 12) **I see myself as** a kind, happy and lovely (boy) **when I am with my teacher.**
- 13) **What I love about my teacher** is when she smiles at me and laughs.
- 14) **My teacher has shown me that I can** do anything that I can do.
- 15) **What I love about school is** the kind and love at that school.
- 16) **I am frustrated with my teacher when** I never was frustrated with my teachers.
- 17) **I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when** she helps me and hug me.
- 18) **My relationship with my teacher** is very happy and loving.
- 19) **I dislike my teacher when** - I never dislike my teacher.

20) **My teacher makes me feel** happy, kind, lovingly.

21) **I would describe my relationship with my teacher as** healthy

Interview (Probing)

- Researcher So let's look at what you have written here. This is you (pointing to the centre circle of the drawing) and "I am kind", "I can do my best", "I am happy", "I am good enough, no I am good at reading", you are helpful..
- Participant I am a bit of a hard worker
- Researcher Ok. Ok and what is this, I can't read well upside down ...
- Participant I am just not good at maths.
- Researcher Not good at maths, ok. If you think of the relationship you had with your teachers and still have with your teachers, when do you find that you started believing what they told you about yourself, in other words if your teacher tells you that this is how you are, when was the first time that you believed that that is how you are?
- Participant Well when I first met the teachers I knew that I was... I was feeling like a p.. like I exist.
- Researcher Okay, okay. So they acknowledged you for who you were?
- Participant Yes
- Researcher And saw you as a person. How did that make you feel?
- Participant It maybe, ag sorry, It made me happy and glad to be .. a person.
- Researcher Okay. Do you have any experiences where a teacher actually made you unhappy about being you?

Participant Well in my other school maybe a little bit of it.

Researcher Can you tell me more about how that made you feel, or what did the teacher say or do?

Participant The way they swear that made me really upset. They swear all the time, non non-stop.

Researcher Okay and that made you feel how inside?

Participant Like I just, to be honest, I just feel like I wanted to die there.

Researcher Okay. Did they ever swear at you?

Participant No they did not but I just hear them swearing at the other children.

Researcher Okay, so that is something that really upset you?

Participant Yes.

Researcher Where you ever afraid that they would speak to you in that manner?

Participant Yes.

Researcher If they had, what would you have done? How would you have felt?

Participant Scared.

Researcher Scared. Is that something that you took with you that you are afraid the moment the teacher sounds like those teachers, that it might also be a similar situation?

Participant (Pause) Yes.

Researcher Okay. What if you think about your teachers, were the happiest moments in your relationship with your teachers? When did you feel absolutely "oh this is

just great” – a nice moment?

Participant Hmmm, like when a , when I was there?

Researcher Yes, with any teacher. When did you feel happy, content?

Participant When I knew that it was a bit, it was safe there to, to explain how we feel about our fee, how our feelings work.

Researcher Ok and tell me when is it safe – explain to me what is “safe”? How do you know that it is a safe place?

Participant It is when I can trust everybody (researcher: hmm hmmm), that are kind and generous to me.

Researcher Okay..

Participant .. ya that is all.

Researcher Okay. How often do you experience do you experience that trust in your teachers?

Participant (Pause) Hmm. What is the question again?

Researcher How often do you find that trust experience that trust in your teacher - is it something that you experience everyday or is that just sometimes that you can trust your teacher?

Participant Every day.

Researcher Okay, cool. If you could change something, so that children feel more safe, that you feel more safe, trusted, acknowledged, what would you tell a teacher, what can a teacher do better... to make children feel that they matter, that they are

important ?

Participant I would tell the teacher to be a bit more nicer to the children and not swear at them all of the time or hit them.

Researcher Or hit them?

Participant Ja.

Researcher Okay. You experienced a teacher hitting children or yourself? Did you see that?

Participant Nah, when I see another child getting hit by a teacher, it is not allowed to hit

Researcher Ja it is not allowed to hit a child.

Participant It makes me all sad and a bit unhappy.

Researcher Okay and if you are sad and unhappy, where do you go with those feelings, to whom can you go and talk to?

Participant I usually talk to my parents about it.

Researcher Okay. Can they do something to a teacher that does not make you feel happy? Did they or have they spoken to teachers?

Participant They have spoken to the teachers, but they went to the principal and I think they (the teachers) got a fine or something to say that he is now hitting children all the time or when he hit me once, so he got a ... I think it was a fine or something. Ja so he said sorry and everything, but it took like... a week for him to phone my father and say sorry, he would never do that again.

Researcher Hmm, and how did that make you feel? When he hit you how did that make you feel?

Participant Hmm, like I was a bit scared and upset when he hit me.

Researcher Ok and when he apologised?

Participant I was about 1% happy with him.

Researcher Okay, when you went back or how was your relationship with that teacher afterwards? Did he ever.. did you ever trust that teacher? Did it stay a very coldish relationship?

Participant Ja a bit of a choldish relationship, it was not like a 100% it was just maybe if I am like in one of a good moods, like if he is in a good mood, then maybe it would go up a bit.

Researcher Okay. Did he ever take or take it out on you – in other words did he ever tried to give you payback for going to your parents or did he leave the matter after he apologised and really changed?

Participant No, he changed.

Researcher Okay.

Participant No, he definitely changed, he did not get back at me.

Researcher Okay, and that made you feel at least you changed something, you did not let it stand?

Participant Ja..Ja, I did , ja.

Researcher When you stood up for what was right, how did that make you feel?

Participant Very happy, because it is it is the right (not clear) by other people, by their parents.

Researcher Okay, did you find that your classmates supported you in that standing up

against a teacher or were they afraid of him?

Participant No, they just did nothing. They did not even tell their parents, because their parents also smack them, they just leave the teacher.

Researcher Ok. Alright. So they did not actually have someone to go to, they did not have support?

Participant No they did not have someone.

Researcher Ok, if you can tell fellow students something about what you can experience in a good, healthy teacher-learner relationship, in other words your relationship with your teacher, when it made you feel good and happy inside, can you help them identify such a relationship, in other words "If your teacher is like whatever then you will have a good relationship. Can you describe to them, what is a good relationship that one can have with a teacher? How does that relationship look like, feel like, how can you see that it is a good relationship?

Participant Hmm, I cannot really answer that one because I never tried it, but I will try. It is when hmm, it is when you see the teacher's face, you can see if, if he/she is happy or sad and I can see that she is a kind person

Researcher Okay.

Participant But if she is like a sad person, then it will be a bit like in a bad mood.

Researcher Okay. Is it – am I correct if I ask you this that you look at your teacher's face and her emotions on her face will tell you if you can go and talk to her, if you can trust her or is it her face and maybe her body language that tells you that she sees you and she is willing to listen to you and spend some time with you as a person, not just doing school work?

Participant (..) That is true, it is sometimes the body movement and the face.

Researcher Okay.

Participant Ja, but I just don't worry about the body movements, I just see the face so I can see what is wrong, or upset or if she is cross or happy

Researcher Okay, so you go very much on how your teacher looks (P9:yes), the face and that will give you an indication. If your teacher looks angry, you think you will be willing to go and talk to her or will you basically avoid her then?

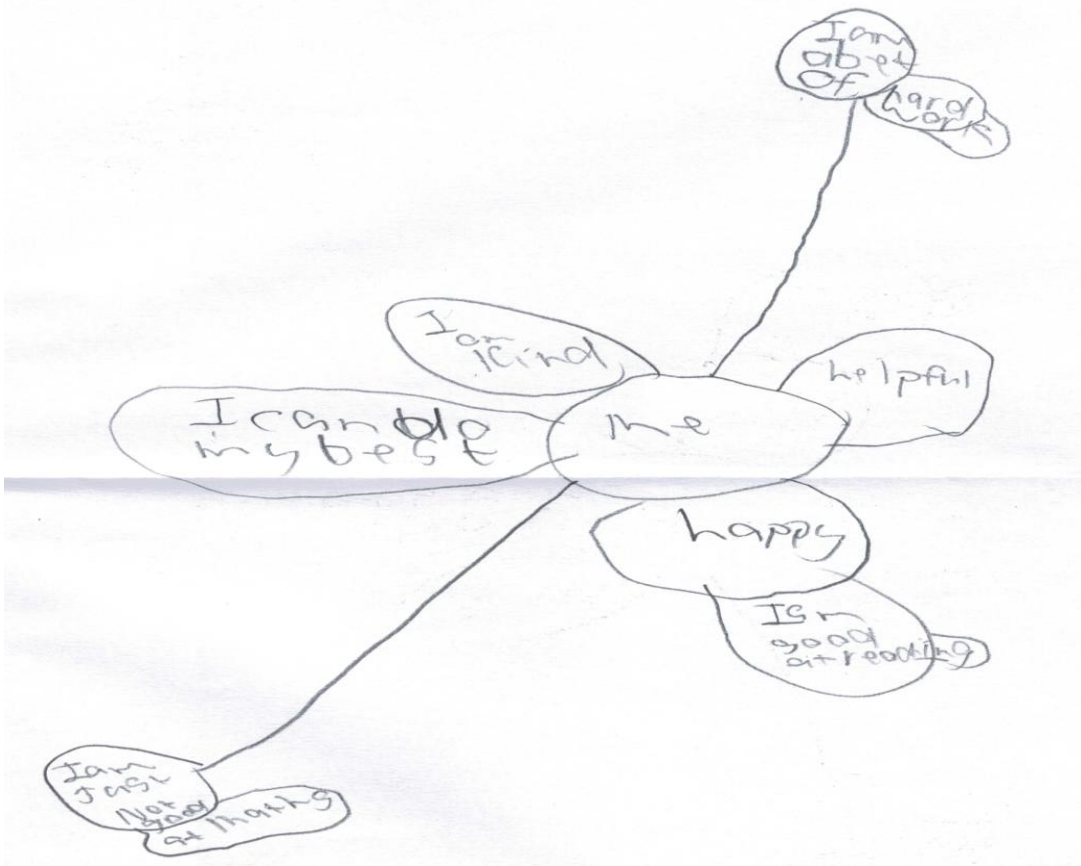
Participant I just leave her and let her, until she calms down, like if she is happy again.

Researcher Okay. Do you, can you hmm, recall an incident that you would describe as the most awesomeist experience you have had with a teacher, that stands out for you?

Participant Well, the last day I was there it made me really like happy, because she gave me a - we threw parties for our –to say good bye and it was really nice to see her.

Researcher Okay, well thank you P9 for taking part.

Participant You are welcome.



Participant 9

Please complete the following questions

1. **I can trust my teacher when** he speaks to class and says no one will hurt me and tell me what we are going to do in the class.
2. **My teacher is supportive when** I don't have hmm like when I am confused in the hmm in my other subjects (if like Afrikaans) if like I am maybe in the Afrikaans and I don't know the answer he will explain it to me in English.
3. **My teacher is someone who** loves / like us when we know what to do every single day. Like when we get to school we always have to take out our reading books and our homework books so that he can check on us that we can read and that we have done our homework.
4. **My teacher teaches me (about myself)** (What do you come to realise about yourself?) that I am very smart but when I was in my old school I was a little bit confused because my teacher she always used to like rush and want to get stuff done because we had a lot to do for the whole term.
5. **My teacher makes me believe that I can** get through the year without getting most of the questions wrong in my exam.
6. **My teacher makes me believe that I am** not stupid –I will be smart as much as I can be in the class as I can and I won't and I won't let him down that hard.
7. **I feel valued by my teacher when** I am in front of the class and when I am doing a speech. (Why does that make you feel valued? Because I'm hmm a little bit scared because last time when I was in my old school there was like a bunch of people in front of me – I'm a little bit of stage fright (R: I can imagine) cause last time I nearly forgot half of my speech. (R: Ok, and here at Roxer?)

and here at Roxer I am calm, I can do the speech, I can remember everything that I need to do. (R: and then you get praised for that?) Yes (R: and that makes you feel awesome.) Yes, that makes me feel awesome.

8. **I am inspired by my teacher when** my teacher when we always do stuff on the computers – when we always get stuck he will always help us with the computers. (R: So he shows patience and kindness and that makes you.. Does that makes you want to do that to other children as well – to also b kind and helpful towards them because he shows you that it is possible?) Yes
9. **My teacher acknowledges me when** I get when I put up my hand and get a question correct and hmm hmm then I get a question correct, hmm then I get a question correct that (R: then you get acknowledged) Yes, then I get acknowledged: “Yes,(name) is correct about hmm about the ecosystem.”
10. **I can tell my teacher** when I am a little bit afraid of some people at the school. (R: And at your previous school could you also tell your teacher that?) Yes, mostly. (R: What is the difference between this school and your previous school - if you tell your teacher here that you are afraid what do they do?) They mostly will say that you don't have to be afraid, everybody here is very kind but if you see somebody that might be doing something horrible to you then you just come and you call me. (R: Ok and at your previous school?) My previous school, it is like a huge school, I had to like find a teacher nearly everywhere. I normally had to walk, walk and walk and then the school break is nearly finished when it is done. (R: So you felt more helpless there? Ja. You felt like there is actually no one there to be for you when you needed them?) Yes.

11. **I like my teacher when** we are inside the classroom, we do a lot of fun stuff, like hmm mixing sugar and see how many it takes to dissolve in the water. (R: Do you like practical stuff, doing stuff?)yes (R: more than writing and reading and the academic stuff?) Yes, I like going outside and playing with my friends and mostly like doing the chicken run where we would pick up the papers.

12. **I see myself as** a normal person in the class **when I am with my teacher.**

(R: Now you say “like a normal person” – your old school did they not make you feel like that?) Hmm at my old school some of the teachers would like hmm scream when we are in hmm in class and somebody would get into trouble and they would scream at the entire class to be quiet, but over here it is mostly like they are saying: “Please keep it quiet. That is more calmer that in the old school.

(Note: Participant was given the opportunity to make use of a list of words written down by other participants but he did not even look at it as he had his answer available immediately.)

13. **What I love about my teacher** is that he has a little bit of a sense of humour.

(R: Ok, you laugh at that, it makes it fun and relaxing in the class?) Yes, it does. (R: Takes away the tension?) Yes.

14. **My teacher has shown me that I can** - not be afraid inside the school – I will always have friends that look after me and I will always be smart, I won't be dumb in this school.

15. **What I love about school is** that every single Friday they always go swimming and we are always allowed to wear civvies on Fridays.

16. **I am frustrated with my teacher when** I can't think of anything that makes me mad here. R: Ok, if you can't think of anything in this school, think of your previous school. Oh, in my old school. R: Yes in your old school – how

frustrated did you get? I got mostly frustrated, I got mostly frustrated when the teacher, when she always likes answers another questions on about every single day when we are supposed to do something else, like doing Maths or English or Afrikaans – we just do something that is just answering questions on the board. (R: Did you find it boring?) Yes I found it boring. (R: Not stimulated enough or you did not understand some of it and then you were trying to figure it out and they would just carry on?) Ja they would just like carry on and then I had to wait like a few minutes until I could figure out what the question was all about . (R: And then you would get behind of where they are and it is always a catch up game?) Yes. R: Is that what frustrated you. Yes, yes.

17. **I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when** he helps me with my questions that I sometimes get confused in.
18. **My relationship with my teacher** is very strong. Everyone in the class, we all love our teacher - he is always fun, he is always plays full, he always plays jokes, hmm.
19. **I dislike my teacher when** I can't think of anything here but at my old school I disliked my teacher when she always screamed so loud when we're, when we're, when I am doing work and some of the other people may be talking .
20. **My teacher makes me feel** like I am part of this school, like I am part of this school - that I am not somebody else but all like the same as everybody else.
(Normal)
21. **I would describe my relationship with my teacher as** a very strong bond.

Researcher If you would look at this previous school (schematic drawing) at your previous school, you were afraid – where you just afraid, like you write here in your sentences when the teacher shouted

Participant Yes, when the teacher shouted at us I was actually quite afraid because I thought if someone got punished, that we all would get punished.

Researcher Ok. Did she ever just screamed at you?

Participant No, she mostly, I did not get screamed at that much but I just did not quite like it when she screams at every body that was in the class.

Researcher How did that make you feel – uncertain?

Participant Hmm

Researcher Were does this afraid feeling came from?

Participant This afraid feeling came from when the teacher was screaming at us.

Researcher Ok, now she was screaming in the class and that made you feel afraid. Was that because you did not know why she was screaming?

Participant No, she did know a little bit of what was I afraid because some of the people was talking.

Researcher Ok, but you did not know if was only them getting punished or was it the whole class getting punished

Participant Yes.

Researcher Ok, did that “Not knowing” I can call it being uncertain about what she is going to do – you couldn’t tell or know what your teacher is going to do next?

Participant Yes

Researcher Alright. Ok, is it important for you get approval from your teacher? You say that you don't want to let your teacher down, here (Incomplete sentences). Did you ever felt like you let your teacher down in the previous school?

Participant A little bit.

Researcher A little bit.

Participant Yes

Researcher And what was her reaction then?

Participant She...she was that I was very smart but that I was only getting 2% that I was getting 2 out of 10 for my spelling tests.

Researcher Ok, and how did that make you feel?

Participant Very sad

Researcher Very sad. Ok. Did you ever saw yourself as if you -when you get 2/10 for a spelling test that that was what you were worth? You were only 20% worth?

Participant A little bit.

Researcher And here (Present school) do they teach you that you are not the mark that you get – that you are still awesome

Participant Yes

Researcher Whether you get 0/10 or 10/10. It does not reflect on you as a person.

Participant No it does not.

Researcher Ok. Is that a big change from your two schools?

Participant Yes. It is a very big change.

Researcher Very big change. Ok. Here you say (visual map) that you are excited. What excites you in this school?

Participant Like when I get into the class you don't know what you will be doing. You might be doing NS, Science, Technology, maybe Afrikaans or English.

Researcher Ok, so you don't have a roster that you know exactly what is going to be

Participant Yes, it just comes out of nowhere

Researcher So it is always something new then

Participant Yes.

Researcher Ok, and that keeps your attention.

Participant Yes

Researcher Ok, cool. And you say here you are hopeful (visual map)- about what?

Participant I am hopeful I think it means that I am proud

Researcher Proud about your work, about yourself

Participant I'm hopeful that I am - that whenever the teacher says like that we are going outside I am very hopeful that I we will be playing or that we are going to throw around a ball or something

Researcher Ok, so do you often not do everything in the class - every now and then he says let us go outside and

Participant Some, some days

Researcher Ok, so that is also and excitement coming in.

Participant Yes. Excitement

Researcher The unexpectedness was the word I was looking for.

Participant Yes, unexpectedness

Researcher Ok. Why do you feel tired (visual map)?Tirednes is not not something that you feel everyday I think because you put it here at the bottom – am I correct?

Participant It is not something that I feel everyday – it is sometimes I get – I kinda get tired because I have been here.. because

Researcher Because of all the hard work?

Participant No, because at my home we always have to eat and sometimes my brother he always takes longer to eat so my mom and my dad are focusing on him and I don't know which time it is for bed.

Researcher Ok.

Participant So then sometimes I get nightmares and then I wake up in the middle of the night

Researcher I see and then you don't feel very awake the next day.

Participant Yes

Researcher And tired

Participant Mostly tired.

Researcher No energy.

Participant Yes

Researcher Ok. When you are tired, how do you experience your day here?

Participant Hmm, my day here – I am more awake, I won't be drifting off to sleep

Researcher Ok,so they can keep you awake and they make you feel a little bit more energetic?

Participant yes

Researcher Ok, that is cool. Alright, I just want to – if you can give some advice to teachers, if they can do something better, or stop doing things, what advice would you give them to help children more. If you have to tell a teacher more , think about this school

Participant Well my teacher - I don't see anything wrong with him.

Researcher Ok.

Participant He's been very playful, he is very kind, he is never mean to us and whenever we, maybe we have been talking he just says: "Guys can you please keep it down" It is not like a huge loud scream

Researcher Ok, you don't like noise.

Participant No I don't like noise that much when I get home. I mostly just lie down on my bed.

Researcher Ok, do you get lots of homeworks?

Participant No, we mostly do some of the homework over here

Researcher Ok, so you have the afternoon off when you get home

Participant Yeah, sometimes I do get a little bit of homework.

Researcher Ok. Alright. Now what did your hmm – if you have to explain to somebody, describe yourself to somebody,

Participant Hmm hmm

Researcher If you think about this teacher that you have now, what would you say he has taught you about yourself? For instance like you can say you like to help other people – What, how are you, (Name is

Participant I am very smart, I always like helping other people, like if a child , like if a children try to fight I try to break them up and I always don't want to make somebody mad.

Researcher Ok. And you will always not always, but that is the impression and the lesson that you got from your teacher?

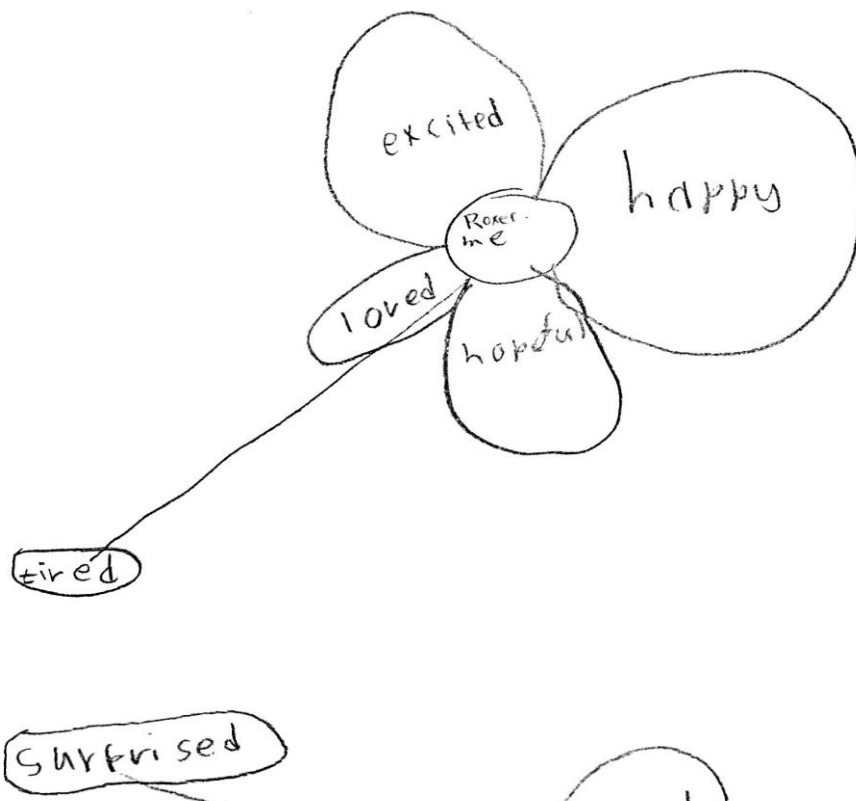
Participant Yes

Researcher Ok. That is awesome. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Participant No

Researcher Nope. Then I thank you kindly for your time. It was awesome meeting you and I hope that you have a wonderful day. Thank you (Name)

Visual maps



Follow-up interviews: transcriptions

Participant 1

Researcher I just want to chat with you in regards to that the previous time I saw you we did that incomplete sentences where you completed the sentences and you made that drawing for me and today we just going to talk about the relationship you had with your teacher, Ok?

P1 Ok

Researcher Today I would like you to tell me more about you and your teacher. Ok, So I would like you to tell me more about you and your teacher. How do you experience your teacher? () What do you feel when you are with him? How he is with you, is it a him or a her – a him?

P1 Her

R Her? How is your teacher with you?

P Hmmm, she's fine.

R She's fine. What does fine mean? Is she friendly.....is ...

P Yeah she is friendly

R is she talkative?

P She is friendly.

R How do you know she is friendly? What in her body language or her voice or the way she talks to you tells you that she is friendly?

P I can't really explain.

R So if you see her, you just know that she is friendly?

P (Nods head affirmatively)

R Ok. How does it make you feel if when you are with your friendly teacher

P It feels fine, alright

R It feels alright

P Yeah

R If you had to explain what is alright, how would you tell me?

P Hmm, (.....) hmm

R How does it feel inside you?

P Oh, ahh yeah it is fine

R It feels fine

P Yeah, it feels good

R It feels good. If you had to tell me about some incidents between you and your teacher, in other words what you and your teacher do in a class, say for instance you do a piece of work, what did she say to you?

P Well she, she helps me with my work sometimes and shows me how to do it.

R Ok So when she helps you, how what does that say to you, about yourself?

P Hmm, like then when she shows me that I can do it right,.. sometimes

R You can do it right

P Sometimes it is hard work

R Ok, and if it is hard for you she helps you?

P Ahh, yes.

R Ok, and then when she is busy with you and she spends time with you, helping you with that difficult work, how does that make you feel for her spending time with you, helping you with your work?

P It makes me feel happy

R Happy, ok

P Happy, Sometimes.

R When you have... you were at another school, ya?

P Ahh, yes

R Before this one.

P Yes, yes.

P Ok. Do you remember that school?

P Ahh yes, (..) it was like a blue school. But they didn't like teach me anything.

R Ah, what, did you just sit in class that you say they did not teach you anything? What.. explain that to me.

P We just like, we just like drink drinks and they just did teach me how to read at all.

R Ok, how did you feel not being able to read?

P A little bit down.

R A little bit down, Ok. What did that tell you about yourself when the teachers did not spend that time teaching you What did that mean to you? What did you think the teachers thought of you when they did not spend time with you teaching you?

P Down

R Ok, when you came here (current school), and they did spend the time? How did that make you feel?

P It was fine, well when I first came to this school, ahh I felt like a little bit shy.

R A bit shy? Ok, how did you get over that shyness?

P I just got over.. hmm I just go used to the school and I got over it.

R You got over it. What made this school, hmm, What happened, how are the teachers here to actually help you to get over your shyness?

P Hmm, ya they helped me.

R They were helpful and how does it feel to have a helpful teacher? What did they do, they talked to you, did they just accept you? What did they do, how was your teacher?

P She was fine

R She was fine. Ok, is there anything in this relationship with your teacher that made you feel that you are in a certain way, either that you are good and that you can do anything? Was there anything in that relationship with your teacher that tells you that you can do those things?

P Yeah

R What? How do you know those things with your teacher? How is your teacher and what does she do and how does that make you feel?

P It makes me feel really good like hmm (...) makes me feel good sometimes

R Is there (Participant talks)

P when she helps me

R Ok, Are there times that it does not feel so good?

P .. ahh .. ya sometimes. Like when she likes, maybe shouts at me ..

R Maybe shouts at you.

P Yeah.

R \when will she shout at you?

P Like when I do not listen to her.

R Ok, and when she shouts at you, how does that make you feel, inside?

P Sad

R Sad, hmm and what does that tell you, someone shouts at you? What does that tell you about yourself? How do you see yourself then.

P Hmm, I see myself just as sad.

R Just sad, not a nice feeling? Are they?

P No.

R If you are sad, can you do the work? Do you believe that you can do the work?

P (.....) No, not really.

R Not really, Ok. When you can't do the work, hmm, what happens inside of you so that you can get over that?

P .. hmm

R What do you say to yourself to actually start doing the work again?

P That I must try harder

R Harder

P (say something unclear)

R Harder and ?

P harder

R Harder and harder. Do you succeed if you try harder?

P yeah

R And how

P Sometimes

R And how does that make you feel when you succeed?

P ... happy

R Happy. Ok, is there anything else that you would like to tell me about your relationship with your teacher and how it makes you feel?

P No

R Not, How do you get along with your friends in your class?

P (pause) No, I just like talk to them, .. like talk.... Because I got like those boy (boy's name) next to me, sometimes I talk to him.

R Ok,hmm can you say he is your friend?

P ... (...) hmm a bit.

R A bit. Is he more like just the boy next to you?

P yeah,

R Ok. Do you feel like the other children in the class that you are at, or in, accepts you?

P Hmm, I think so I do not know.

R Don't know. How do you feel when you are with the other children?

P No I'm fine. Just like maybe they make me feel like a bit shy.

R A bit shy with them. Ok. Do you play with any of the children during break?

P ...(...) hmm not really.

R Not really, you are on your own.

P Nods head affirmatively

R Ok. Do you find that you can go and talk to your teacher, or don't you talk to your teacher?

P No, sometimes I do

R Sometimes you talk to your teacher. What makes you think, in other words if you look at your teacher, what tells you that you can go and talk to her?

P (...) hmm, (...)

R How do you know that you can go and talk to her?

P When you ask her something

R Ok. And when you ask her something, how does she respond?

P Yeah she responds

R Ok, in a friendly way or how?

P No, yes, in a friendly way

R In a friendly way. And if she is friendly towards you, how does that make you feel?

P Also happy

R Also happy, ok. Is there anything between you and the the other students in the class that you can tell me, that makes you aware of how you feel inside of yourself?

P (..) .. hmm sometimes maybe just feel a bit shy around them and sometimes maybe help like play with them and talk.

R Ok, and is there anything else that you would like to add or ask me?

R No

R No, ok then thank you so much for your time.

Participant 2

R Thank you for coming. I want to talk to you about your teacher and you again.

P Ok.

R And get some more information. I would like you to tell me about you and your teacher and this relationship that you have.

P Ok. Hmm, I really like my teacher and sometimes we have a lot of fun

R hmm hmm

P Mostly planned, every single Friday we go to the pool and if it rains we normally bring movies and then we watch them

R ok

P and hmm sometimes we do we do maths all of us mostly like it and we love doing the experiments

R The experiments,ok

P Yes and mostly there is nothing bad, I'm mostly happy with my teacher.

R Ok, so you are happy with your teacher. You say mostly it is fun, if you have fun with your teacher, what does that do to you?

P It helps with..... when I have fun, I usually learn a little bit much more, so say we are doing hmm anytime that we are doing a science experiment.

R hmm hmm

P like hmm we have just planted plants right now and we hmm like watering them and hmm we are looking at them and hmm we would really like to see them bloom.

R Ok, and when you do those fun things, how does that make you feel inside? What does it tell you about yourself if a teacher..

P It makes me feel very happy and excited

R Very happy and excited - what does it mean to you are happy?

P (...) hmm. Full of glee and I just want to have fun.

R Ok, how do you view yourself when you feel happy?

P Hmm what does view mean?

R How do you see yourself, how do you think others see you when you feel happy?

P I feel like...I feel like I just want to play with my friends, play games, play around and have lots of fun together.

R Ok. When you say you go on a Friday to the swimming pool?

P Yes

R Does your teacher spend time with you guys there?

P We mostly have fun there, fun and games at the pool, like when we are almost finished with the swimming

R hmm hmm

P we mostly play games at the pool, like touchers in the jump in the pool and everything

R And having that time with your teacher what does that tell you about yourself?

P It tells me that I get along with some people

R Ok, and how do you know you can get along with people

P Because I am very kind, I don't want to shout at people

R Hmm hmm

P I mostly don't want to hurt them, I mostly just want to be kind and try to make a friend.

R Hmm, ok. What, How did you decide that you can trust your teacher?

P I can Trust him (...) I can trust him because he will always make sure that I don't get hurt

R Hmm hmm

P and if I ... do get sick I will she he will call my parents and then we will have to go the doctor, (sigh) so he must, will always have my back when I need him the most

R Ok, and that tells you what about yourself? How does that make you feel to know that your teacher has got your back?

P I feel, I feel quite safe – I feel safe and I feel secure and I feel like (pause) like I will be ok ... that I won't have to hmm like get hurt, if I do get hurt I will have a person who will take care of me.

R Is it important for you to feel safe?

P Yes

R Why?

P Because I don't want to feel like everything around me feels like I am going to get hurt. I'm going to play with my friend, I feel like I am going to get hurt, so I say: "No, I am just gonna stay right here."

R Did you get hurt in the past?

P No

R Not, it is just something that you don't want to experience

P I just don't want to experience it

R Ok, can you talk to your teacher about stuff?..Every day things?

P Yeah. I most, I mostly talk about what I did on the weekends or what I did on my family holiday, mostly all of that

R Ok, you being able just to talk him about normal stuff not just about school stuff, how does that make you feel?

P It makes me feel that I absolutely have a person that I can talk to..(pause) and I won't have to.. like I hmm just speak to him and tell him what's going wrong

R hmm hmm

P () and hmm everything that is going on in my life that I don't want to experience ok

R Ok, How do you know that you can him about things that are wrong? (..) How does he respond to you?

P ahh. When aah when I like answering a question and I get it wrong, he just, he just says no, no and hmm and he asks somebody else to try answering the question or give another question and see if they maybe get it right and sometimes it is a little bit of fun and he makes everybody laughs

R Ok, alright. How do you get along with your friends?

P We mostly get along when playing outside

R hmm hmm

P We mostly play a lot, we mostly have fun, we mostly play fight

R Ok, and when you get along with your friends, how does it make you feel inside?

P It makes me feel very, very happy.

R Ok, is there anything about your teacher that makes you aware of who you are, what type of person you are?

P Hmm no not really

R Not really. Is there anything that happened between you and your teacher that showed you that you are say maybe clever, maybe reliable,

P I think I am a little bit clever

R Ok, can you explain that more?

P Hmm, mostly I get some of the question wrong..

R Hmm hmm

P But mostly I get all of them correct. So I think I am actually kind of smart.

R Ok, and how does it feel to feel smart?

P (.....) It's really f.. I feel really happy, I have fun and I enjoy it.

R You enjoy it. Ok. Is there anything that you can add towards your relationship with your teacher, what he taught you about yourself, how you are, who you are?

P No, that is mostly it.

R. That's mostly it. Do you perhaps have any questions for me?

P No, I am all good

R Ok, Thank you for your time, I appreciate it.

Participant 3

R Well welcome. I just want to ask some more questions about your relationship with your teacher. If that is ok with you?

P Yeah, its fine.

R Ok. Can you please tell me about how your relationship with your teacher is.

P My relationship with my teacher is very good.

R hmm hmm. How do you know it is good?

P Because hmm, because she never shouts at me.

R Ok, how does it make – Did the previous teacher shout at you?

P No

R Not, so how does it make you feel when someone does shout at you?

P ... It makes me feel a bit down

R A bit down, ok. And the teacher not shouting at you, how does that make you feel?

P ahmm, it feel, I feel very happy.

R Very happy, ok. Hmm if you can give me a description of what it feels like to be very happy inside of you, how would you do that? How would you explain being very happy to me?

P ...(Pause) Hmm Could you just repeat that please

R So, if you say that you are very happy, what does that make you believe of yourself?

P That I can do it, that I can ..(pause) I've like. I believe that I can pass the grade.

R That you can pass the grade. Ok. You say in one of your complete sentences that you can trust the teacher. How do you know that you can trust your teacher?

P (long pause – taking time to think) hmm when (long pause)

R So what about your teacher, tells you that it is ok to trust her?

P Her kindness.

R Her kindness, ok. How do you know she is kind? Explain her kindness to me? How do you know she is kind, what does she do?

P hmm she would say When you finish all your work, and you get your marks, she would say good job, do the same tomorrow. Then when you do the same thing tomorrow, you might go out to break early.

R Oh, ok, that is very nice of her, and when you do achieve that, when you can go to break early, how does that make you feel?

P It feels pretty nice.

R Let you...if you say it feel pretty nice, why does it feel pretty nice?

P Because I know I have finished all my work and I don't have to worry to finish all my work after break when I go back to class.

R Ok, very good. Ok, you also say here (referring to completed incomplete sentences) that your teacher makes you believe that you are a star. So how and what is a star? What does it mean to be a star?

P When she tells a joke then everyone laughs (Researcher: hmm) then then then every one starts laughing that she she would let everyone start by telling jokes.

R hmm hmm.

P Then everyone would laugh.

R Ok, so you have a very relaxed atmosphere in your class, am I correct?

P Yes

R Ok. How does it feel to be in a class where the teacher hmm is willing to tell you guys jokes?

P (...) Sorry, just repeat that?

R So how does it feels in class when your teacher is nice enough to tell a joke? How does that make you feel.....while in the class?

P It makes me feel very confident.

R Confident, ok. If you say here that she inspires you to do great work, hmm, how does she sound when she inspires you? How does, What about her is telling you that she is now really rooting for you, she is inspiring you? Believe in you aht you can do your work?

P When hmm I did all my maths and my Afrikaans right, but if I don't sometimes, sometimes when I struggle with my English and then she, she says you can get it next time

R Ok, hmm So she sounds very accepting, she does not tell you hmm nasty things about yourself when you aren't getting the work right

P She does not, she does not do that

R She doesn't. How does that make you feel to have a teacher that is always there for you, hmm not shouting, not telling you mean stuff? How does that make you feel?

P It makes me feel very happy because then hmm all my other teacher my teacher at my old school would shout at me if I did not get all my work right.

R Ok, and when you were at that school and they shouted at you, what did that tell you about yourself, what did you believe of yourself when they shouted so many times at you?

P That I could not do my work, I couldn't finish it . (pause)

R Ok. Hmm if you have to tell that teacher something, the old teacher that shouts at you, if you had to tell them how it makes children feel , What advice would you give them to stop shouting? (pause) If you had to tell them :”If you shout , this is how a child feels?” so therefore you must stop. How how would you explain to them what it does inside you?

P Hmm, () to tell the teacher?

R Hmm. That one that shouted at you?

P Ok. I'll tell her to stop shouting then peop, then children , if she would stop shouting at them they'll be able to finish the work ()

R Ok, does it mean that you don't believe that you can do it when a teacher shouts, is that what you mean by not being able to do the work?

P Ahm, yah, a little bit.

R A little bit. What else does it mean?

P It means (pause) It means that I can't finish all my work properly, then then I would like start to make have fit hmm get mistakes in my book and then she would rip out the page.

R sho, and how does that make you feel?

P Very sad

R Very sad, Hmm do you s or and if that teacher rips out the page, hmm what do you think she says about you? () How do you see yourself then when she is ripping out your page? How do you feel about yourself?

P I feel very down about it.

R Very down about it, ok. I take it that it does not happen here?

P No

R At this school?

P No.

R Hmm, you also you say here amm, you see yourself as a great person.

(Referring to incomplete sentences). What between you and your teacher

makes you feel like you are a great person? How does she act or say or treats you that you have that nice feeling of “I am a great person” ?

P () Teach Tr She would treat everyone nicely, she would treat everyone with respect and she would also respects us

R Ok, and how what does it do to you when someone treats you with respect

P Hmm I feel very conf confident about myself

R Ok, awesome. You say here (referring to incomplete sentences) that you are able to just chat with your teacher, not just about school work but about also just to have a friendly chat? Is that right?

P Yes

R And you being able to just go and chat with your teacher, how do you know you can, at that moment, just go and chat? What about her tells you that it is fine, how do you decide in other words that you can go and have a friendly chat?

P (..) When everyone has done their work and she is just marking the work, then I will go and just have a friendly chat.

R Ok, and you talk about?

P what I do on the weekends

R Ok, and she listens to you?

P Yes

R What does it do to you when your teacher is willing to listen to you for what you are going to plan to do for the weekend?

P Sorry can you just repeat that please

R So, if you are next to your teacher and you tell her about your plans for the weekend, her willingness, her her time that she gives you to listen to you, what does that make you feel how does that feel and tell you about yourself – a teacher, while she is marking, listening to you, being able to stop and listening to you and give attention to you. How does that make you feel?

P It makes me feel very happy then she pays then she is listening to me because some of the teachers at my old school, never listened to me.

R Ok, if someone listens to you, what does it tell you

P (..) that that person is very kind

R Very kind and those teachers that did not listen to you, how did you feel inside when they did not listen?

P Sometimes I would feel very angry. ()

R Angry, ok. Why would that make you feel angry? What happens inside, what did you want them to do?

P I wanted them to listen, because they would listen to all the other students but to me

R Why do you think that is?

P Ahh I don't know

R Ok, so that was something that always bugged you?

P Yes

R You always wondered about it.

P Yes

R Ok, that feeling of they would listen to other children but not to you, what did that do to you?

P It made me feel very angry because I hmm it wa it was not fair that she would listen to other students but me.

R Ok, and the contrast to here (referring to current school), so the opposite, does this, is this what happens at this school?

P Yes, but my teacher listens to all everyone.

R Everyone ok, so everyone is being treated fairly.

P Yes

R Ok, and how do you get along with your other students in the class?

P Ahh, very well, I get along with, I get along with my other with the other students in the class very well.

R Ok, so you have lots of friends here.

P Yes

R What does that say to you about yourself, how does that feel to have many friends?

P It feels very nice to have friends, because at my old school I had few friends.

R Ok, and when you are with your friends, and you say its very happy, can you just explain that a little bit more?

P We, g hmm, when it is break we would met in break and make jokes and we would all laugh and sometimes we would play soccer or run.

R Ok, so you feel, Am I correct and if I am wrong please say so, that you feel that you belong here, that you are included?

P Yes

R Ok, is that how you feel, ok. Is there anything else that you can think of that is good between you and your teacher?

P (Take time to think) No

R Ok, is there any situation where you do not feel as good with your teacher?

P (Thinks) Sometimes

R When, when don't you feel as good?

P When I don't have .. like when I did no have a a a ahmm if I did not have breakfast or I did not sleep well, then I would not feel good towards my teacher

R Ok, how does it then feels inside you, hungry or do you easily get upset, how do you feel inside?

P Ahhm I wouldn't feel hungry, or sometimes I would just feel tired and not do my best

R Ok, and if you don't do your best? What does your teacher do?

P (..) Well if I don't do my best then sometimes my teacher hmm says t.. just go to the bathroom and come back and drink like a little bit of water and then go back to class.

R Ok, and if she is supportive like that, how does that make you feel?

P hmm, i , it makes me feel very confident that someone is.. that someone is
hmm (long pause) is helping me

R Helping you. Ok, did that happen at the other school?

P Sometimes

R Sometimes. Hmm is there anything that you would want to add to this conversation, do you want to tell me something more about your teacher?

P Ah, no

R No, that it. Ok. Do you have any questions for me?

P No

R Ok, then I thank you for your time.

Participant 4

R The last time I saw we spoke about your teacher and your relationship and I just need to question you a bit more on that, is that ok?

P Yes

R Can you please tell me a little bit more about the relationship that you have with your teacher?

P hmm, hmm I am not sure

R How is it to be in her? Class (P: Yes) Do you like it, don't you like it.

P I like it

R Do you get along with your teacher?

P Yes

R Ok. If you say you get along with your teacher, explain that to me. What happens in the class?

P We communicate and (pause) (thinking) oh and she gives me the right amount of work

R Ok, if you say you communicate, about what do you communicate? What do you talk about?

P Ok, we talk about work and we, she, when I need help she helps me.

R Ok, how does that make you feel when your teacher helps you?

P It makes me feel happy.

R What is happy? Can you explain to me what is happy, what happens here, inside ?

P Like I'm gonna finish my work and it is going to be right

R And if you do get your work right (P:Yes) what do you think about yourself?

P I think I am good and do my work well

R You think you are good and do your work well

P Yes.

R Is that what you said? Ok, cool. When you say that in your one of your sentences that your teacher is kind, what does she do to, for you to know that she is kind?

P She helps me with my work and she tells me what to do.

R Ok and when she tells you what to do, how does she sound?

P He sounds, she sounds she does not sound like angry, she sounds calm.

R Ok, so is it a man or a woman your teacher?

P A woman

R A woman, so it is ok if I call her a "her". Ok, you also say that your teacher, can be trusted. How do you know you can trust your teacher?

P 'Cause she's she is good.

R She is good,

P Yes

R Ok, explain to me what is good, how do you know that, that is a good teacher?

P Hmm, she ,hmm I can't, I don't know how to like explain

R Is it just something that you feel inside?

P Yes

R Is it something that maybe how she looks

P No

R or how she sounds?

P that is it.

R What, she sounds?

P Yes

R How does she sound so that you can decide that you can trust this teacher?

P Hmm, it is like she says "Can I have your papers" then she, then I say yes

R Ok, hmm if you have to think about yourself with your teacher what does your teacher tell you about yourself?

P She tells me I am kind and helpful

R Kind and helpful, and when she says those nice about you, how do you think, what do you think about yourself? (Participants look vague) How do you see yourself?

P I see myself as good

R As good?

P Yes

R Ok, Do you have lots of friends here?

P Yes

R And how does it make you feel to have friends?

P Happy

R Happy. You were at another school before this school?

P Yeah

R Ok, can you remember that school?

P Yes

R Can you tell me about your relationship with your teacher at that school?

P It wa.. the teacher was mean. (pause)

R The teacher was mean. How .. what did she do that was mean.

P Hmm. I am not really sure because it was like a long time ago.

R A long time ago. Ok, all that you can remember is that she was mean (P: yes) and this teacher (here at current school) is not.

P Yes

R Ok. Can you maybe tell me what makes this teacher so kind?

P Hmmm

R In comparison to .. if you think about your feeling that you had for that previous teacher or your old teacher and this teacher. What is the difference?

P This teacher is kinder and he..she helps me ()

R Ok, so I take it the other one did not help you

P No

R Ok, if you have a teacher that is willing to spend time with you, helping you with your work, what does that say to you about yourself, a teacher that is willing to spend time with you, how does that make you feel?

P Happy, happy and glad

R Happy and glad. If you have to say: "My teacher has taught me about myself?" ,hmm because she is kind and helps me with my work, how do you see yourself – how would you describe yourself?

P I'd describe myself as helpful, kind and willing to my work.

R Willing to do your work. Ok, if you say here (referring to the incomplete sentences) that you are a good boy, hmm, what does your teacher tell your or hmm how does she talk to you, that you know that you are a good boy?

R She w, she would say well done or things like that.

P Ok, and do you get any hmm, reward when you have a "Well done" or is that ..

R Hmm yeah

P Ok, so you get a reward in other words. How does it make you feel when you get a reward?

R It makes me feel happy.

P Happy.

R Ok, what kind of rewards to you guys get?

P Hmm, sometimes we go out to break early, (R: hmm hmm) and yes

R Ok, and if you achieve that going out to break early, it says what about yourself?

P It says I did my work, a lot of work and I am good at doing my work.

R And how does that make you feel, to know that you are good at something?

P Good

R Good , ok. Alright, hmm. You can also, or you said you can hmm () hmm that you can do anything - your teacher shows you that you can do anything. What does your teacher do for you to believe that you can do anything?

P She helps me and () yes, she helps me.

R She helps you , ok. If you have to tell someone how your relationship is with your teacher, what would you say? How is your relationship?

P It is a good relationship and () yes

R Ok. A good relationship - can you tell me more about what makes a relationship good between you and your teacher?

P No, I ...

R You just feel it that it is a good one. Ok. Hmm, having a good relationship with your teacher, how does that make you feel?

P It makes me feel happy.

R Happy. Ok. Hmm - do you do fun stuff with your teacher?

P Yes

R Such as?

P Sometime, sometimes we talk and .. ja.

R Ok. And if you talk to your teacher is that about school stuff (P: yes) or is that about everyday stuff.

P No, just ...

R Just school stuff, ok. Can you approach your teacher at anytime to talk to her or just at certain times?

P not anytime, but ja,

R Ok, if you say not anytime, is there certain times in class that you can't?

P No I can (R: you can) in class.

R Ok, when don't you approach her

P Hmm (pause)

R When can you not go to her?

P Hmm (pause) during a test.

R During a test, ok, but mostly then all of the time except for circumstances you can go to your teacher?

P Yes

R Ok. Is there anything that you would like me to know more about your teacher and you?

P Hmm, no, that is all.

R That is all. Ok. Thank you for your time.

P Ok.

Participant 5

R Ok, the last time I saw you, we talked about your teacher and the relationship you have with him,

P Ja

R and you completed the sentences and you drew something for me. I just want to talk a little bit more about your relationship with your teacher. Ok?

P Ok.

R and I am going to ask you – just in general - to tell me how is your relationship with your teacher?

P Pause (thinking). Hmmm, it is like a nice relationship you have with a friend.

R Ok, what happens between you and your teacher that makes you feel it is more like a friend than just a teacher?

P () hmm – just the way he says stuff compared to the when I was at my last school.

R hmm (after a pause) How does it differ?

P The way that he does it and hmm ()

R Ok, in what way does he do it? (participants keep quiet appearing to look for words).

P More friendly

R More friendly. Does he sound more friendly, does he look more friendly?

P () He sounds a little bit friendlier.

R Ok, how does that make you feel when your teacher is more friendlier than the other school?

P It's like I am more welcome (pause)

R Ok, is that important to you to feel welcome?

P Hmm Hmm

R Did you not feel that at your other school?

P Pause, No

R How did you feel in your other school?

P Just, I hated being there all the time ()

R Hmm hmm

P (...) I never wanted to go there, no one really liked me, and that sort of things

R Ok, and here, if you say that they did not like you, are you liked here?

P ...Ja

R How does that make you feel to be liked?

P ... more special. (pause)

R Ok, tell me a bit more about hmm what it does to you to feel special.

P (pause) what do you mean?

R So in your communication and your talk with your teacher, when you feel special –what does it do to you inside (points to own chest)

P ... make me feel welcome, make me feel happier

R Can you tell me how your teacher sees you in class, how does he reacts towards you in class

P hmm, like he wants me to get full marks all the time, hmm ja that is it

R If you have a teacher that believes you can get full marks for your work how does that make you feel, what does that tell you about yourself, how he sees you

P Hmm, like he cares about me, ja.

R Ok, you have friends here at school?

P Yes.

R And how does that feel to have friends here at school?

P ... Same sort of things as in my other school.

R Ok,

P Just more friends.

R Ok, so your friends at the other school was fine, - it was fine there, it was your teacher that you did not like.

P Yes and some of the people because it was a lot bigger

R Ok

P I had about the same amount of friends

R Ok, so it was just a bigger school with more kids

P Ja

R in comparison to this one. You say here (referring to completed sentence) can or makes you believe that you can do anything. How does that , he tell you that? How do you know he believes that?

P Hmm, he will go over the things until I get it right

R Ok,

P Just like with everybody else, he like make sure you get it right, try and get it right the first time

R He is willing to spend time with you

P Ja

R and how does that make you feel – a teacher willing to stop and take time until you get it

P More important

R More important. Anything else that that teaches you about yourself?

P That I am special.

R Hmm

P That is it.

R Ok, hmm you say here that you are valued by your teacher when you have something to share with the class and they maybe don't know what you know. How do you know that your teacher values it, what makes you decide that he is now valuing you?

P Well, he usually, like when we, when I know something and everyone else also knows it, he usually like picks me out off most of them.

R Ok, and how does that make you feel?

P Happy inside.

R And it tells you what? You are..

P Special.

R Ok, good. I see here (referring to the completed sentences) that you can trust your teacher. How do you decide that you can trust your teacher?

P (pause). Like with everything else I was saying, like he likes values me, all that, the friendship, like you trust your friends and he is like a friend to me so I trust him.

R Ok, what makes him a friend, how do you know he is more like a friend.

P we just, hmm, he is like – he is non, he is not like any other teachers that I ever had

R In what way, how does he differ

P He is just more friendly then any of the other teachers... hmm ja, that is it and he goes over it until I get it right

R Ok, so he is not hmmm, pushing you when you are not ready to go on

P JA,

R he will wait until you are ready to move on.

P hmm

R Ok. If you had to compare him with another teacher – with one of your previous teachers and you had to give that teacher some advice - the way that they treat their students

P Hmm

R Ok, what can you tell that teacher hmm that they can do in a different way to make kids more happier?

P Be more friendly – hmm, be nicer, Hmm go over it until they get it right and when one person gets it right you can move on to the next thing for that one person. ...

R Ok, is that what your teacher here does?

P Ja, more or less.

R Ok, and if you get the thing right, if you achieve that goal what he set out, how does that make you feel?

P Hmm (pause) I don't really know

R So you are busy with a piece of work and he has to go over it again with you so that you can understand it and then you get it. How does that make you feel when you actually ge

P Happier

R get the work? Happier

P Slightly excited.

R Ok, why only slightly excited?

P ... It is not like a great like a really big thing.

R Ok, what is a really big thing? What would make you really excited?

P Like getting something that I've always wanted for my birthday, something like that .

R Ok, so school work is not in the same class.

P No

R Ok, alright, do you have any special moment with your teacher that stands out for you

P ..hmm going to the zoo walking around

R Ok, when did that happened?

P Last year, sometime near the end of the year

R Ok, and when you were at the zoo, tell me a bit more, what happened there.

P

R How was the teachers? Where they there the whole time, did they explain stuff to you? What happened there?

P They just like .. they were like a friend ... helping whenever we needed help (pause) hmm just being a friend.

R Ok, alright. Is there anything else that you can add to my understanding of your relationship with you teacher?

P No

R What does that do to you as a person?

P Pause

R So if you are with your teacher, the way that he treats you – what does that say to you about who you are? What type of person you are. How he sees you.

P Like I 'm a special person.... Like sort of one of a kind

R One of a kind. Ok, and that makes you feel how

P Happier

R Happier, ok. So if you had to describe yourself to someone, how would you do that?

P ...

R In light of what your teacher is showing you, in the class about who you are?

P .. I don't really understand

R Ok, how would you say you are: I am... a what type of boy?

P Like a special boy

R Ok, is there anything else that you would want to add?

P No,

R Not, that it?

P Ja

R Do you have any questions for me?

P Hmm hmm (indicating no)

R Ok, then I thank you for your time.

P Ok

R Thank you, good bye

(Recording of this interview is not available as computer with back-ups contracted a virus. Transcription was stored on another device and could be retrieved).

Participant 6 was absent for the follow-up interview

Participant 7

R So I would like you to tell me more about your teacher, you, and your teacher and the relationship you had and what happened between you guys?

P Well in (School's name), my teacher was so ugly to me and she used to hit me and shout at me all the time and make me feel like I was useless.

R How many times did the hitting happen, was it once or

P It was once (R: just once?) that I can remember, but she shouted at me a lot.

R She shout at you a lot and how did that make you feel, inside?

P Ugly, trashy, like I wanted to leave.

R Ok, what did that ... how did she sound when she shouted at you?

P Angry and disappointed in a way – I don't know.

R Ok. Disappointed in a way and angry – and what did that tell you about who you are..() the type of person that..

P It felt like I was useless and not, I couldn't do anything

R Anything else in your experience while you were at (School's name)? Where there any other (Participant shakes his head "no" (negative)). Was there maybe something positive between with your teacher?

P No, (shakes head)

R So the whole thing was a negative experience

P Ya, I did not like it

R Didn't like it. Did you and your teacher ever just talk to each other, or was it always teacher-student?

P No, (Shakes head) Teacher –student

R Always?

P Yes, and she used to do it in front of everybody

R Was something done to her being rude to you or hitting you?

P Well she got a written warning

R She got a written warning

P Ja

R and then she never did it again?

P Ja

R After that written warning, what was...

P I left (School's name) after that

R Ok, and then at (School's name)?

P (School's name) I enjoyed.

R Ok so tell me more about you and your teachers there?

P They were nice to me.

R In what way?

P They like make me feel positive, make me feel like I could do everything.

R Ok.

P It was nice.

R How did you know that they were positive? What about your teacher told you that they are positive?

P He always complimented me on my work and stuff.

R And being complimented on work what did that do to you?

P It made me feel good about myself

R Made you feel good about yourself.

P Yes

R Hmm, was there any negative experience between you and your teacher?

P No

R Ok. So (School's name) was bad and (School's name) is fine or...

P Yeah

R or very positive?

P Yeah

R Your experience at (School's name) and your interactions with your teacher there, how did that make you aware of who you are in other words you came away from that feeling how

P I came away feeling like I did not want to leave, I wanted to go to a school just like that

R Just like that

P Yeah

R Ok. Your interactions with your teacher was that always teacher-student or was that sometimes he just spoke to him

P Sometimes he just spoke to me.

R as friends

P (nods head affirmatively).

R Did you approach him or was he the type of teacher that came to you?

P He came to me.

R Ok, and how does that make you feel when a teacher out of their own come and just talk to you?

P Like I can talk to the teacher whenever I want to about problems.

R Ok, so am I correct then when I say that that instilled a trust in your teacher?

P Yes

R Ok, what did that do.. I want I'm after how did you feel inside yourself when a teacher came and spoke to you like.. not just a scholar but as a .. as a human being just because he can

P I liked it, I felt good about it.

R You felt good. Ok, did you feel like that hmm, where there at any point any experiences between you and your teacher that made you feel like you are worthy, that you are recognised?

P Yes

R Can you tell me more about them?

P He used to always say that my work is good, he used to tell me that I could do anything I want if I set my heart to it.

R So you can do anything if you put your heart to it

P Yeah

R And when he was speaking to you, saying those things to you, how did he sound?

P He sounded..(..)

R What did his voice tell you about how he sees you?

P Like he was proud of me.

R Like he was proud of you.

P Yeah.

R Ok. Hmm. Is there anything else that you can think of you and your teacher an incident something that he did or say that makes you feel that you are a good boy - if you say a good boy, what does good mean?

P Hmm, mmm. I can't think of any.

R Ok so if I can summarise, your teacher at (School's name), sounded like he is proud of you.

P Yes

R That made you feel good.

P Yes

R He recognised your work by saying: "Job well done" and that you can do it. He instilled that believe that self-believe that you can do things. That was something that was not there at (School's name)

P No

R You did not believe those things, they rebuild that at (School's name)

P Yes

R Ok so you went to (School's name) feeling that you couldn't and at (School's name) that you can because of the way the teacher treated you

P Yes

R Ok. Would you say the teacher at (School's name) treats you with respect?

P Yes

R And how do you know it is respect? That interaction with your teacher, how do you know it is respect?

P Because he used to approach me and he used to shake my hand

R Ok, so when he sees you he walked up to you and shook your hand and say
"Hello (name)" and greeted you like that.

P Yes

R Ok, how did that made you feel?

P Good

R Good, something that you were not used to , hey?

P Yes

R Awesome. Is there anything else that you can tell me about your experiences
at (School's name)? Was it only that teacher or where there other teachers
that you had interaction with?

P It was only that one teacher

R Only that teacher. How many kids in the class?

P About ten

R About ten

P Yeah

R And that was for all of the kids (P: Yeah) that he never looked or felt like the
teacher at (School's name).

P Yeah

R Well thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

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Feedback from Study leader:

Participant 7

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R Ok, what did that ... how did she sound when she shouted at you?

P Angry and disappointed in a way – I don't know.

R Ok. Disappointed in a way and angry – and what did that tell you about who you are..() the type of person that..

P It felt like I was useless and not, I couldn't do anything

R Anything else in your experience while you were at (School's name)? Were there any other (Participant shakes his head "no" (negative)). Was there maybe something positive between with your teacher?

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R Didn't like it. Did you and your teacher ever just talk to each other, or was it always teacher-student?

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R Always?

P Yes, and she used to do it in front of everybody

R Was something done to her being rude to you or hitting you?

P Well she got a written warning

R She got a written warning

P Ja

R and then she never did it again?

P Ja

R After that written warning, what was...

P I left (School's name) after that

R Ok, and then at (School's name)?

P (School's name) I enjoyed.

R Ok so tell me more about you and your teachers there?

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R In what way?

P They like make me feel positive, make me feel like I could do everything.

R Ok.

P It was nice.

R How did you know that they were positive? What about your teacher told you that they are positive?

P He always complimented me on my work and stuff.

R And being complimented on work what did that do to you?

P It made me feel good about myself

R Made you feel good about yourself.

P Yes

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P No

R Ok. So (School's name) was bad and (School's name) is fine or...

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R or very positive?

P Yeah

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P I came away feeling like I did not want to leave, I wanted to go to a school just like that

R Just like that

P Yeah

R Ok. Your interactions with your teacher was that always teacher-student or was that sometimes he just spoke to him

P Sometimes he just spoke to me.

R as friends

P (nods head affirmatively).

R Did you approach him or was he the type of teacher that came to you?

P He came to me.

R Ok, and how does that make you feel when a teacher out of their own come and just talk to you?

P Like I can talk to the teacher whenever I want to about problems.

R Ok, so am I correct then when I say that that instilled a trust in your teacher?

P Yes

R Ok, what did that do.. I want I'm after how did you feel inside yourself when a teacher came and spoke to you like.. not just a scholar but as a .. as a human being just because he can

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R You felt good. Ok, did you feel like that hmm, where there at any point any experiences between you and your teacher that made you feel like you are worthy, that you are recognised?

P Yes

R Can you tell me more about them?

P He used to always say that my work is good, he used to tell me that I could do anything I want if I set my heart to it.

R So you can do anything if you put your heart to it

P Yeah

R And when he was speaking to you, saying those things to you, how did he sound?

P He sounded..(..)

R What did his voice tell you about how he sees you?

P Like he was proud of me.

R Like he was proud of you.

P Yeah.

R Ok. Hmm. Is there anything else that you can think of you and your teacher an incident something that he did or say that makes you feel that you are a good boy - if you say a good boy, what does good mean?

P Hmm, mmm. I can't think of any.

R Ok so if I can summarise, your teacher at (School's name), sounded like he is proud of you.

P Yes

R That made you feel good.

P Yes

R He recognised your work by saying: "Job well done" and that you can do it. He instilled that believe that self-believe that you can do things. That was something that was not there at (School's name)

P No

R You did not believe those things, they rebuild that at (School's name)

P Yes

R Ok so you went to (School's name) feeling that you couldn't and at (School's name) that you can because of the way the teacher treated you

P Yes

R Ok. Would you say the teacher at (School's name) treats you with respect?

P Yes

R And how do you know it is respect? That interaction with your teacher, how do you know it is respect?

P Because he used to approach me and he used to shake my hand

R Ok, so when he sees you he walked up to you and shook your hand and say "Hello (name)" and greeted you like that.

P Yes

R Ok, how did that made you feel?

P Good

R Good, something that you were not used to , hey?

P Yes

R Awesome. Is there anything else that you can tell me about your experiences at (School's name)? Was it only that teacher or where there other teachers that you had interaction with?

P It was only that one teacher

R Only that teacher. How many kids in the class?

P About ten

R About ten

P Yeah

R And that was for all of the kids (P: Yeah) that he never looked or felt like the teacher at (School's name).

P Yeah

R Well thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

Participant 8

R Ok, so if you can please tell me about your relationship with your teachers.
How was that relationship or is that relationship?

P hmm,hmm before the other school, before I went to (School's name)
there was this one teacher who I liked, she trusted me for anything, if she
needs, wants a () a message to the office I go there

R hmm hmm

P and hmm, and she helps me a lot with hmm my reading

R ok

P so hmm, ja. (....) The teachers name was Mrs. (Name). She was not a very
strict teacher she was a calm kind, teacher and helped me a lot with my
writing, reading and everything. And my other teacher was more like a
therapist more than a teacher. Hmm, I had to go to that school because I had
something wrong with my hand, you know like a norve, hmm a nerve because
I couldn't hold objects too long or my hand starts shaking.

R ok

P So she helped me with that

R hmm hmm

P but today I still am a bit shaky but I am starting to write a bit decent.

R Ok, what did it mean to you to have a teacher that was kind and helpful?

P It means me that I can () try my best in all my subjects

R Ok

P and hmm it makes me happy to even have a because sometimes teachers are mean and strict and everything like other teachers so I prefer the nice teachers to the strict ones.

R The very strict teachers, how did they make you feel?

P Very scared and unhappy. This one teacher he is really strict, he shouts at everyone he smacks people with a stick

R Sho

P Ja with a stick and he shouts at everything like everyday almost. So every time I walked in the class I wished it was over

R ok,so you did not enjoyed his classes because he made you feel afraid

P Yes

R Ok, if your teacher trusted you to take one message from one person to another or from her to another teacher, how did you know or did you trust her in return?

P Yes, of course

R Ok, how did you decide that she could be trusted?

P Well I could see it in their.... I could tell in their voice when they are kind and niceful

R hmm

P I can understand that I can trust her with what I can do and that she won't shout or maybe if I do something wrong then she can shout , hmm I can in trust her to do or help me with my work or not give me a bad grade

R ok, and her trusting in you, how does that make you feel to know that you are trusted?

P It makes me feel happy that I can , that someone trusts me, like an adult trust me, like they can send me without me walking around and I value it alot

R Ok, and was there or is there anything in your relationship with your teacher that tells you something that tells you something that you don't like about yourself? Have you had an experience like that?

P (..) hmm can you give me an example?

R So have they said something or hmm interacted in otherwise talked to you in a way or done something that you did not feel as good about yourself?

P Yes, I can remember one - I went to the office

R hmm

P I send a message to the office, so to the people that is with the principle, so I went there and then I went back and the teacher said: "Go put this back in the

message place” so I went back but I couldn’t , I did not actually understand what she meant, I went back and then when she came to the person, I made a mistake – it was meant to go to the other teacher

R Ok

P And that made me feel like I was a bit silly and did not focus at all

R Ok, how does silly feel ... If you feel silly, can you explain that – how does it feel or what do you mean by silly

P I mean like hmm, I did not, I forgot to ask to which teacher (R:ok)and that made me feel a bit like I wanted to crawl into the corner and think what I have done.

R Hmm when do you feel really proud about yourself? If you get it right or explain to me .. the opposite when you do go to the office and you do get your messages correct. How does that make you feel?

P It makes me feel happy that I know where these teachers are and I get to see, I can walk outside because sometimes I stay in the class the whole day

R Could you talk to your teacher about any day stuff?

P Of course, jaa. I could tell her that hmm, ... about I could talk about what is happening with my family and everything. I trust her on that.

R If you say you could trust her on that, is there other teachers that you could not trust or did not talk to?

P Hmm, ..., before I went to (School's name) I didn't trust anyone at that school.. () ex..except the one teacher there. She was a very kind teacher there, hmm I could kind of trust her a little bit.

R What makes a teacher trustworthy? In other words why can you trust one teacher and not the other one? How can you tell the difference?

P Well I can tell the difference if it is like a very very strict teacher that just shouts at people every day and doesn't have a life... like a family or anything

R hmm hmm

P and hmm and I'm not sure how to- like a man is very strict. I don't really like the teachers that are men because they are the strict ones compare to the .. the

R ladies

P yes the ladies, the female ones.

R Alright, in your dealings with your teacher, was there anything or incident that hmm, that made you feel that this is a very good relationship that you have with your teacher?

P

R That you felt safe – that this is a very nice place to be?

P Yes, hmm like here, hmm I am safe and I can trust people – that is what I can tell that I am safe in this environment and I can trust people but if I am in another school and I cannot trust and do not like then I cannot trust anymore.

R What does trust mean to you? Safety?

P

R What is safety? If you say that you are safe, what does that mean to you?

P It means hmm that I can learn f.. I can trust people in my life that I can trust to help me with my work, and help me get, hmm, to, I don't know, to Gr. 12, to get a job one day.

R Ok, so safe means trusting another person?

P yes

R Hmm that you will be ok here? Has hmm, if you think of your different schools that you have been to, how was your relationship with the fellow students? So did you have friends, did not you have friends, did you get along?

P Hmm hmm. At my first school I had tons of friends.

R Hmm hmm

P I could trust them, I could play with them.... I could do ... hmm I could just have fun. But at my other school I couldn't trust anyone because they stole I mean they steal and they took almost every thing

R sho

P And they actually... disobeyed the rules. They keep getting out of the class, and in class.

R And that seeing the ... the children disobeying the rules, the whole time, how does that make you feel?

P It's hmm unfair to me and to the other people that are.. are kind like me, are giving its,... (struggles to say the right word he is looking for) and it is actually showing us that they don't show any respect to you, to the teachers and that is why they (the teachers) started getting stricter and starting hitting people, hitting children and ev, everything else.

R Ok, so if someone is respecting you, how must they show that to you, how do you know that someone is respecting you?

P Say for instance like (Boy's name), hmm, I can tell in his voice he is funny, he is kind, he is ... he's like playing with me

R hmm hmm

P I can tell that he is a true fiend and nothing else

R Hmm hmm and a teacher, how do you know you can trust a teacher?

P Hmmm she by the kind voice and she is relaxed I can tell that it is she is a kind teacher

R Ok, Is there anything that you can add to my understanding of your relationships with your teachers that you want to add in terms of what they have taught you about yourself?

P (P) At my first school I could understand that I can try to do my best with my work and everything else. With my other school, to me, they think I can't do anything else because I couldn't teach it (Participant wanted to say he was not taught) they only did four lessons and here I did seven.

R Ok

P That why here the work , here the work is little bit more difficult, but I get through it.

R Ok, If you say that they did not think that you could do it, how did that make you feel

P It made me upset, and I just wanted to stay at my house and work there instead of going to school.

R Ok, so even if the work is more difficult, and you get the support, and you can get through it, how does that make you feel?

P It makes me very happy that I can go through, even if the work is hard, it is more challenging for me and I can make it through it because I am very interested in History, Life Sciences, English and everything else.

R ok, and when you get through that, what does that tell you about yourself?

P It tells me about myself that I am it's a I am very positive that I can do – I can do my best on everything else.

R Ok, super. Is there anything else that you can add or that you want to say to me?

P I think that is all

R Do you have any questions for me?

P (...) Yes, how can you tell if there is a bad or a good students?

R On their behaviour, their tone of voice, telling me that they are listening to me or not, and them having the responsibility to do what we ask of them - so if

you say you are going to do something, then you actually do it without having a policeman the whole time there, so basically trusting the person. Is that answering your question?

P Yes

R Is there anything else that you want to know?

P No, that is fine

R Are you fine, well thank you so much, I appreciate it

P Ok.

Participant 9

R Thank you for coming. I want to talk to you about your teacher and you again.

P Ok.

R And get some more information. I would like you to tell me about you and your teacher and this relationship that you have.

P Ok. Hmm, I really like my teacher and sometimes we have a lot of fun.

R Hmm, hmm

P Mostly planned, every single Friday we go to the pool and if it rains we normally bring movies and then we watch them.

R ok

P And hmm, sometimes we do we do maths all of us mostly like it and we love doing the experiments.

R The experiments ok.

P Yes and mostly there is nothing bad, I'm mostly happy with my teacher.

R Ok, so you are happy with your teacher. You say mostly it is fun, if you have fun with your teacher, what does that do to you?

P It helps with When I have fun, I usually learn a little bit much more, so say we are doing hmm anytime that we are doing a science experiment.

R hmm, hmm

P like hmm, we have just planted plants right now and we hmm like watering them and hmm we are looking at them and hmm we would really like to see them bloom.

R Ok, and when you do those fun things, how does that make you feel inside? What does it tell you about yourself if a teacher...

P It makes me feel happy and excited.

R Very happy and excited- what does it mean to you when you are happy?

P (...) hmmm. Full of glee and I just want to have fun.

R Ok, how do you view yourself when you feel happy?

P Hmm what does view mean?

R How do you see yourself, how do you think others see you when you feel happy?

P I feel like.... I feel like I just want to play with my friends, play games, play around and have lots of fun together.

R Ok, when you say you go on a Friday to the swimming pool?

P Yes

R Does your teacher spend time with you guys there?

P We mostly have fun there, fun and games at the pool, like when we are almost finished with the swimming.

R Hmm hmm

P We mostly play games at the pool, like touchers an then jump in the pool and everything.

R And having that time with your teacher, what does it tell you about yourself?

P It tells me that I get along with people.

R Ok, and how do you know that you can get along with people?

P Because I am very kind, I don't want to shout at people.

R hmm hmm

P I mostly don't want to hurt them, I mostly just want to be kind and try to make a friend.

R Hmm ok. What, How did you decide that you can trust your teacher?

P I can ... trust him (....) I can trust him because he will always make sure that I don't get hurt.

R Hmm, hmm.

P And if I do get sick I will she he will call my parents and then we will have to the doctor, (sigh) so he must, so he will always have my back when I need him most.

R Ok, and that tells you what about yourself? How does that make you feel to know that your teacher has got your back?

P I feel, I feel quite safe –I feel safe and I feel secure and I feel like (pause) like will be ok.... that I won't have to hmm like get hurt, if I do get hurt I will have a person who will take care of me.

R Is it important for you to feel safe?

P Yes

R Why?

P Because I don't feel want to feel like everything around me feels like I am going to get hurt. I'm going to play with my friend, I feel like I am going to get hurt, so I say, "No, I am just gonna stay right here."

R Did you get hurt in the past?

P No

R No, it is just something that you don't want to experience.

P I just don't want to experience it.

R Ok, can you talk to your teacher about stuff? Everyday things?

P Yeah, I most, I mostly talk about what I did on the weekends of what I did on my family holiday, mostly all of that.

R Ok, you being able to talk to him about normal stuff, not just about school stuff, how does that make you feel?

P It makes me feel that I absolutely have a person that I can talk to... (pause) and I won't have to ... like hmm just speak to him and tell him what's going wrong.

R Hmm, Hmm

P () and hmm everything that is going on in my life that I don't want to experience ok

R OK, how do you know that you can talk to him about things that are wrong?
(...) How does he respond to you?

P Ahh, when hmm when I like answering a question and I get it wrong, he just, he just says no, no and hmm he asks somebody else to try answering the question or give another question and see if they maybe get it right and sometimes it is a little bit of fun and he makes everybody laughs.

R Ok, alright. How do you get along with your friends?

P We mostly get along when playing outside.

R Hmm, hmm.

P We mostly play a lot, we mostly have fun, we mostly play fight.

R Ok, and when you get along with your friends, how does it make you feel inside?

P It makes me feel very, very happy.

R Ok, is there anything about your teacher that makes you aware of who you are, what type of person you are?

P Hmm, not really.

R Not really. Is there anything that happens between you and your teacher that showed you that you are say maybe clever, maybe reliable?

P I think I am a little bit more clever.

R Ok, can you explain that more?

P Hmm, mostly I get some of the question wrong...

R hmm hmm

P But mostly I get all of them correct. So I think I am actually kind of smart.

R Ok, and how does it feel to feel smart?

P (.....)It's really f...I feel really happy, I have fun and I enjoy it.

R You enjoy it. Ok. Is there anything that you can add towards your relationship with your teacher, what he taught you about yourself, how you are, who you are?

P No, that is mostly it.

R That's mostly it. Do you perhaps have any questions for me?

P No, I am all good.

R Ok, thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

Addendum ????

This addendum shows the process through which the interview questions (incomplete sentences) went before it was finalised.

Please complete the following questions nice vrae, kan dalk net meer gefokus wees op die verhouding. ek dink van die vrae is te wyd om met die verhouding te verbind

Please complete the following [questions nice vrae, kan dalk net meer gefokus wees op die verhouding. ek dink van die vrae is te wyd om met die verhouding te verbind](#)

1. I can trust my teacher when
.....
2. [My](#) teacher is supportive
when.....
.....
3. My teacher is someone who
.....
.....
4. My teacher teaches me (about
myself).....
5. My teacher makes me believe that....
.....
.....

6. I feel valued by my teacher when

.....
.....

7.

8. I am inspired by my teacher

when.....
.....

9.

10. My teacher acknowledge me when

.....

11. I can tell my teacher

.....
.....

12.

.....

13. I like my teacher

when.....
.....

14.

.....

15. I see myself as

.....wh
en I am with my teacher

16.

.....

17. What I love about my teacher

is.....

18. My teacher has shown me that I can

.....

19. What I love about school is

.....

....

20.

21. I am frustrated with my teacher when

.....

.....

22. I feel happy and content in my relationship with my teacher when

.....

23. My relationship with my teacher

.....

24. I dislike my teacher when.....

25. My teacher makes me feel.....

26. I would describe my relationship with my teacher as