

Grade 7 learners' self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship

G du Plessis

23289996

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree Magister Artium in Psychology at the
Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University

Supervisor: Prof HB Grobler

November 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their help and support in making this possible.

My husband, Faan du Plessis, for all the support, tissues, coffee and chocolates.

My boys, Michael and Morné, for their love and understanding.

My family, friends and colleagues for their endless support and belief in me.

To the principal, for your patience, encouragement, and support.

Salome Steyn and Suzaan Wessels, my partners in crime, for sharing every frustration and every triumph.

Prof. Herman Grobler, my supervisor, for his knowledge, dedication, sense of humour and encouragement.

To the participants, thank you for opening yourselves up and for sharing your experiences with me.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
FOREWORD	ix
DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER	x
DECLARATION BY THE LANGUAGE EDITOR	x
SUMMARY	xi
OPSOMMING	xiii
SECTION A	1
PART 1: ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH	1
1. Introduction and Problem Statement	1
2. Research Aim	8
3. Literature Review	9
4. Concept Definitions	9
4.1 Adolescence	9
4.2 Transitional Periods	10
4.3 Relationships	11
4.4 Teacher-learner Relationships	11

4.5	The Sense of Self	11
4.6	Self-Configuration	12
5.	Research Methodology	13
5.1	Empirical Investigation	13
<i>5.1.1</i>	<i>Research approach and design</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>5.1.2</i>	<i>Context of the research and participants</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>5.1.3</i>	<i>Research procedure</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>5.1.4</i>	<i>Data collection method</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>5.1.5</i>	<i>Data analysis</i>	<i>19</i>
6.	Trustworthiness	21
7.	Ethical Considerations	23
8.	Choice and Structure of the Research Article	25
9.	References	26
PART 2: LITERATURE REVIEW		35
1.	Introduction	35
2.	The importance of relationships with specific reference to the teacher-learner relationship	36

3.	Child Development	41
3.1	Pre-adolescence	42
<i>3.1.1</i>	<i>Cognitive development</i>	42
<i>3.1.2</i>	<i>Social development</i>	43
<i>3.1.3</i>	<i>Emotional development</i>	44
3.2	Adolescence	45
<i>3.2.1</i>	<i>Physical development</i>	46
<i>3.2.2</i>	<i>Social development</i>	47
<i>3.2.3</i>	<i>Cognitive development</i>	48
4.	The Sense of Self and Self-configuration	49
4.1	Self-configuration during pre-adolescence and adolescence	56
5.	Theoretical Frameworks	58
5.1	Field theory	58
5.2	Bioecological theory	60
5.3	Dialogical theory of self	62
6.	Conclusion	63
7.	References	65

SECTION B: ARTICLE	77
Abstract	77
Introduction	78
Methodology	82
<i>Research approach and context of the study</i>	82
<i>Participants</i>	83
<i>Data gathering</i>	84
<i>Data analysis</i>	85
Findings and discussion	86
<i>Theme 1: Learners’ experiences of teachers within the teacher-learner relationship</i>	86
<i>Sub-theme 1.1: Negative experiences within the teacher-learner relationship</i>	86
<i>Sub-theme 1.2: Positive experiences within the teacher-learner relationship</i>	90
<i>Theme 2: Learners’ experiences of themselves within the teacher-learner relationship</i>	93
<i>Sub-theme 2.1: Negative experiences</i>	93
<i>Sub-theme 2.2: Positive experiences</i>	95

Theme 3: Learners' self-configuration within the teacher-learner

relationship **100**

Sub-theme 3.1: Learners are motivated through disapproval from

teachers **100**

Sub-theme 3.2: Learners are motivated through compliments,

recognition or encouragement from teachers **102**

Sub-theme 3.3: Learners' self-regulation within the

teacher-learner relationship **104**

Conclusion and recommendations **107**

References **109**

SECTION C: CRITICAL REFLECTION **116**

1. Introduction **116**

2. Research problem **116**

3. Research question and aim **117**

4. Research procedures **117**

5. Research summary **119**

6. Experience of researcher **120**

7. Limitations of the study **121**

8.	Recommendations	122
9.	Conclusion and contribution	123

SECTION D: ADDENDA

On CD at the back of this document

FOREWORD

This dissertation is presented in article format according to the guidelines set out in the **Manual for Master's and Doctoral Studies, 2013 of the North-West University.**

Technical editing was done in accordance with the requirements described in Section 3 of the manual.

The dissertation is divided into four sections. Section A, consists of Part 1 which is the orientation and problem statement, and Part 2 which comprises of the literature review. Section B consists of the article, and Section C contains the evaluation, conclusion and recommendations. In section D the addenda can be found. (On CD at the back of this document).

The article will be submitted to *Research Papers in Education*.

DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER

I, Georgina du Plessis, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled *Grade 7 learners' self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship*, submitted to the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Artium in Psychology, is my own work, that it has been language edited according to the requirements, and that it has not been submitted at any other university. All references that I have used have been acknowledged.

Georgina du Plessis

Date

DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR

I hereby declare that the thesis, *Grade 7 learners' self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship* by Georgina du Plessis, has been language edited by me. After a career as editor-in-chief at a leading publishing house, I am currently working as a freelance text editor.

Lambert D Jacobs (BA Hons, MA, BD, MDiv)

October 2014

SUMMARY

KEY TERMS: relationships; teacher-learner relationship; adolescents; sense of self; self-configuration; Field theory; Bioecological theory; Dialogical theory of self.

Humans are relational beings, as they are constantly in interaction with others and with their environment. In schools, learners spend at least nine years of their lives in formal schooling, and the relationships they have with their teachers are bound to have an impact on their self-configuration. According to the Field theory, the Bioecological theory and the Dialogical theory of self, which were used as theoretical frameworks for this study, individuals' self-configuration is impacted by their environment, experiences and interactions with others. The focus of this study was on Grade 7 learners' self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship. Grade 7 learners are at the beginning of the adolescent phase, which is characterised by many changes, transitions, challenges and uncertainties. One of these transitions is the forthcoming transition from primary school to high school and a healthy self-configuration could assist learners to adapt to these changes in a positive manner. The research was qualitative in nature and made use of the case study method. This allowed the researcher to use data gathering approaches through which the subjective experiences of the participants could be explored. Twelve participants volunteered to take part in this study, and data was gathered by means of individual interviews as well as group discussions. All interviews and group discussions were voice and video recorded, where after they were transcribed and analysed by means of thematic analysis. The analysis allowed for data to be organised into meaningful themes. It was found that learners' experiences of relationships with teachers are both positive and negative. Self-regulation in learners takes place through encouragement and disapproval from teachers, as well as through lessons learnt from teachers and from past experiences. Further studies around self-configuration and teacher-learner relationships are recommended, in order to make teachers more aware of the importance of

the teacher-learner relationship, and also to determine what the obstacles are in developing supportive and caring teacher-learner relationships. By highlighting the importance, and by determining the obstacles, more meaningful teacher-learner relationships could be encouraged and developed in order to enhance learners' self-configuration experiences.

OPSOMMING

SLEUTELTERME: verhoudings; onderwyser-leerder verhouding; adolessente; sin van self; selfkonfigurasie; Veldteorie; Bio-ekologieseteorie; Dialogiese selfteorie.

Mense is in wese verhoudingsgebonde, wat voortdurend in interaksie met ander en met hulle omgewing is. In skole, spandeer leerders ten minste nege jaar van hulle lewe in formele skoolopleiding, en die verhoudings wat hulle met hulle onderwysers het, het verseker 'n impak op hulle selfkonfigurasie. Na aanleiding van die Veldteorie, die Bio-ekologiese teorie en die Dialogiese selfteorie, wat gebruik is as teoretiese raamwerke vir hierdie studie, word individue se selfkonfigurasie beïnvloed deur hulle omgewing, ervarings en interaksies met ander. Die fokus van die studie was op Graad 7-leerders se selfkonfigurasie-ervarings binne die onderwyser-leerder verhouding. Graad 7-leerders is aan die begin van die adolessentefase, wat gekenmerk word deur baie veranderinge, oorgange, uitdagings en onsekerhede. Een van hierdie oorgange is die oorgang van laerskool na hoërskool, en 'n gesonde selfkonfigurasie kan leerders moontlik help om positief aan te pas tydens hierdie veranderinge. Die navorsing was kwalitatief van aard en het gebruik gemaak van die gevallestudiemetode. Hierdeur kon die navorser data verkry deur van benaderings gebruik te maak waardeur die subjektiewe ervarings van die deelnemers ontdek kon word. Twaalf deelnemers het vrywillig aan die studie deelgeneem en data is ingesamel deur middel van individuele onderhoude sowel as groepbesprekings. Alle onderhoude en groepbesprekings is opgeneem op video- en bandopnemer, waarna dit getranskribeer is en geanaliseer is deur middel van tematiese analise. Deur middel van die analise, kon die data in betekenisvolle temas georganiseer word. Daar is gevind dat leerders se ervarings van verhoudings met onderwysers beide positief en negatief is. Selfregulering in leerders vind plaas deur middel van aanmoediging en afkeuring van onderwysers, sowel as deur lesse wat geleer word by onderwysers en deur vorige ondervindings. Verdere studies rondom selfkonfigurasie en

onderwyser-leerder verhoudings word aanbeveel om sodoende onderwysers meer bewus te maak van die belangrikheid van onderwyser-leerder verhoudings, en ook om te bepaal wat die struikelblokke is in die ontwikkeling van ondersteunende en versorgende onderwyser-leerder verhoudings. Deur die belangrikheid te beklemtoon, en die struikelblokke te bepaal, kan meer betekenisvolle onderwyser-leerder verhoudings aangemoedig word, en daardeur kan leerders se selfkonfigurasie-ervarings verbeter word.

SECTION A

PART 1: ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1. Introduction and Problem Statement

Kurt Lewin is a classic theorist who already stated in 1939 that individuals' behaviour is impacted by their interaction with the environment (or field) in which they exist (as cited in Holmes, 2000). This view forms the basis of the Field theory perspective, which is one of the theoretical frameworks for this study. Field theory refers to individuals not functioning in isolation, because all experiences and interactions take place within a field. From this perspective, individuals cannot be understood in isolation, as they function within certain contexts.

People and events form part of various fields, and meaning can only be acquired through relations within the field. It is not a static approach, but rather an ever evolving system (Sills, Lapworth, & Desmond, 2012; Yontef, 1993). Relationships, families and communities all form part of this context which all have an impact on individuals. Everything in the field (individual, society, cultures) is interconnected and interrelated. One change in any part of the field has an effect on all other parts of the field (Latner, 2000; Lobb, 2005; Parlet, 1991).

Combs (2006) argues that life is a constant process of being and becoming. Individuals are part of a whole range of "organizations" or fields, which influence and shape them. One individual forms part of many fields, which all impact on one another, for example, family, work and church.

Being a teacher, the researcher has always been interested in the teacher-learner relationship and the impact it has on learners. The researcher started reading articles about the teacher-learner relationship and realised that this relationship could have a large influence on

learners' sense of self. The researcher has been part of many teacher-learner relationships in her own life. She remembers how her own teachers made her feel and influenced her when she was still at school, and she has also been involved in many relationships with the learners she has taught over the past 13 years.

For school-going children, their school community is part of their field. Learners go to school with experiences from outside of school (family, friends and the community in which they live). These experiences influence their relationships with teachers and with their peers at school, and in turn, the relationships that form at school, have an impact on their experiences outside of school. This is a continuous process in which each aspect of the learner, each experience and each relationship is influenced by, and will influence all other experiences.

The field affects the person and the person the field (Brownell, 2010; Yontef, 2002). This process of reciprocity is consistent with the view of Holmes (2000) and Mitchell (2014) who state that individuals are interdependent of each other. This interdependency manifests through relationships.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) is another theorist who states that human development takes place by means of interaction between individuals and their environments:

The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded (p. 16).

Bronfenbrenner's theory, which is the second theoretical framework for this study, claims that individuals cannot be understood without considering the entire ecological system in which individuals exist. Each system has an impact on the growth and development of

individuals, and they cannot be separated from these systems (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The systems have been compared to a set of Russian nesting dolls, with individuals being the smallest, innermost doll, with a variety of systems and sub-systems surrounding and impacting individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

From this explanation it is clear that individuals are non-static entities who are constantly evolving. The immediate environment influences this evolution, as does the larger contexts in which individuals reside. The environments and larger settings are also continuously changing and adapting. And all of these structures are in constant communication with each other, continuously influencing each other.

Relationships form the core of both the Field theory and Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory. According to these theories, humans are relational by nature and are in constant relationships with other members of their community, and with their environment. Every action and every interaction is a relationship of some sort. Relationships are responsible for emotional and social behaviour, as well as how individuals perceive themselves (Cozolino, 2006). Individuals are constantly interacting with each other within their fields.

These interactions vary from being simple and quick to complex and intense. Society is filled with infinite interactions and relationships. There is a reciprocal influence between every aspect (person or object) that is involved in every interaction/relationship (Enfield, 2013).

From the above, it is clear that human relationships form an essential part of being. Positive and negative relationships have an effect on the quality of other relationships as well as on life in general (Knoell & Crow, 2013). This is also true for relationships within the education system. "Learning is influenced by social interactions, interpersonal relations and communication with others" (Learner-centered principle work group of the American

Psychological Association's Board of Educational Affairs, 1997, p. 5). The learner is not isolated within the school environment, and many influences (including school climate, peer relationships and teacher-learner relationships) play a role in the holistic development of the learner.

Many studies have focussed on the relationships in the school environment (Froiland & Davison, 2014; Marsh, McGee, & Williams, 2014; Wang, Wang, Gu, Zhan, Yang, & Barnard, 2014). Research done by Valiente, Swanson and Lemery-Chalfant (2012) explored the effect of impulsivity, anger and shyness of nursery school children on teacher-learner relationships. They found that learners with higher levels of impulsivity, anger and shyness, had weaker teacher-learner relationships. This study did not, however, include learners' perspectives and also did not address how teacher-learner relationships may impact on the learners' self-configuration experiences.

Crosnoe, Kirkpatrick Johnson and Elder (2004) conducted a study to explore whether teacher-learner relationships were predictive of academic outcomes and behaviour of learners. This study was done with American high school students. They found that learners with better teacher-learner relationships had more positive academic outcomes and were more disciplined. This study did not explore the teacher-learner relationships in the light of the learner's self-configuration.

In South Africa, Weeks (2009) conducted research in eight primary schools, looking at teachers' and learners' perspectives of caring schools. This research did not cover the learners' perspectives of the teacher-learner relationship, or look at how this would influence their sense of self. In another study Theron and Dalzell (2006) highlighted the challenges adolescents face, and suggested the use of Life Orientation to address their specific needs during this period. They investigated the learners' perspectives of their Life Orientation needs, but did not address teacher-learner relationships or the process of self-configuration.

In yet another study, Mokhele (2006) observed how teachers made use of a positive teacher-learner relationship in managing problem learner behaviours. It was found that teachers with good discipline skills also had positive relationships with learners. This study, however, only focussed on the teachers' perceptions and did not address learners' self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship. From the above studies it seems as if there is room for research conducted on self-configuration of learners within the teacher-learner relationship.

Grade 7 learners find themselves in a transitional stage, in which they are faced with changes on many levels. In 1939 Lewin already noted that adolescents face many changes in physical, cognitive and social areas (Lewin, 1939). This is still relevant today as supported by Louw, Louw and Ferns (2007), who state that in South Africa, Grade 7 specifically, is a period in which learners should be equipped to move from the primary school to the high school setting, and this is seen as a major life transition (Wigfield, Byrnes, & Eccles, 2006). In theory, the Grade 7 year falls into the high school phase of teaching and learning, which adds to the fact that these learners are already in the transitional period from primary to high school even though they still attend the primary school. This is due to education in South Africa that is divided into three phases. The foundation phase being Grade R to Grade 3; the intermediate phase, from Grade 4 to Grade 6, and the senior phase, ranging from Grade 7 to Grade 9 (Department of basic education, 2011). Thus, although Grade 7 learners have not made a physical transition to high school yet, they are already part of a transition phase, which may lead to increased levels of stress.

Transitions in life lead to new challenges and an increase in existing stressors due to changes in the context, the environment and in individuals themselves (Schulenberg, Patrick, Maslowsky, & Maggs, 2014). The transition from one school to the next can be a negative experience for some learners, and could have a negative impact on self-esteem. It causes

learners to worry about the unknown, which leads to an increase in stress levels (Jackson & Schulenberg, 2013; Simmons & Blyth, 1987).

Before the actual transition takes place, learners start to mentally prepare for the transition, and it may cause stress and anxiousness for some learners with lower self-confidence levels. The reason for this being, that high schools are bigger and more impersonal than primary schools. Social circles will be disrupted, as learners may be separated from their usual group of friends. New social connections will have to be made with learners from many different primary schools, and learners will have to cope with a more challenging curriculum (Jackson & Schulenberg, 2013). Learners may worry about feeling like they will just be a “number” in high school, because high school teachers may not get to know them on as personal a level as their primary school teachers did (Wigfield et al. 2006).

In this process of transition, adolescents are also trying to discover who they are, and where they belong, and within this process the sense of self continues to develop (Roeser & Lau, 2002). Relationships play an important role during this period (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2006).

Grade 7 learners are constantly hounded about what to expect in high school by their teachers and they are making decisions as to which high school they will be attending in the following year. Therefore, they are certainly in the initial preparatory stage of this important life transition. Also, being in the early stages of adolescence, when individuals begin to question who they are, the researcher thought that Grade 7 learners would be a fascinating group to study in terms of self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship.

The self develops while individuals are busy negotiating their world (or field) (Brownell, 2010). Erving Polster (2005) also emphasizes the importance of the field regarding the configuration of the self and states that the self is configured through personal

experiences. Each and every experience, whether significant or not, is registered as “raw data”, which contributes to the formation of self (Polster, 2005). According to Louw et al. (2007), a sense of self emerges while engaging in continual reciprocal relationships with others. The sense of self refers to that which characterises people to be unique individuals. It is a complex, ever-evolving system, which develops through interactions with people and the world around individuals (Mischel & Morf, 2003).

Komatsu (2012) adds to this by saying that the self emerges through constant relations with the immediate environment. The sense of self develops as individuals evaluate experiences, and create opinions about each experience. How did it make me feel? Would I like to experience that again, or would I rather avoid similar experiences in future? (Harter, 1999).

The dialogical theory of self, as the third theoretical framework, brings two concepts together, namely self and dialogue. Self was traditionally seen as that which takes place within individuals, whereas dialogue was seen as an exterior event, happening between individuals and “others”. By bringing these two concepts together, it implies that self cannot develop or exist without dialogue (relationships).

Relationships have an impact on self, and self has an impact on relationships (Hermans & Gieser, 2013). This is consistent with Hermans (2008), who claims that the self cannot exist without the influences of others. Social interactions therefore play a vital role in the development of the sense of self (Ness, 2011).

Fand (1999) states that the self is not ignored or non-existent when one enters into dialogue with others, but that it is a continuation of the self. During dialogue, a “common dialogical space” (p. 16) is created, wherein the participants share their points of view, and are influenced by others’ perceptions. After partaking in dialogue, the participants are not the

same as they were before the dialogue took place. The dialogue affects and changes the participants, sometimes minimally, sometimes drastically (Hermans, 2012).

This theory is relevant to the study due to learners and teachers being in constant dialogue with one another. Every interaction that takes place on a daily basis, shapes and forms both the learner and the teacher in some way.

Based on the above discussion, it seems as if the configuration of self primarily occurs within relationships in which individuals partake. These relationships are thus important, especially in the school context where children spend significant time in the presence of teachers. Not much research has been done from the perspectives of learners regarding their experiences of the teacher-learner relationship, especially regarding the configuration of self within these relationships.

The research question that arises from the above problem statement is: How do Grade 7 learners experience self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship? According to Jansen (2011), the research question provides direction, focus and purpose to the study. The above research question guided the researcher in exploring the learners' experiences and guided the researcher in focusing on the aim of the study.

2. Research Aim

The aim of the study highlights the main purpose of the study (Creswell, 2012). The aim of this study was to qualitatively explore Grade 7 learners' experiences of self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship.

3. Literature Review

The following themes were investigated in the literature review:

- Relationships
- Teacher-learner relationships
- Child development
- Adolescence
- Transitional periods
- Sense of self
- Self-configuration
- Field Theory
- Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory
- Dialogical Self Theory

Books, journals and articles were used in the literature study. Databases from NWU as well as Google scholar and Google books were used.

4. Concept Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following concepts are clarified:

4.1 Adolescence.

Louw et al. (2007) describe adolescence as the transition between childhood and becoming an adult. There is no definite period in which adolescence can be confined, but it starts at the approximate age of 11 to 13, and ends at approximately 17 to 21 years of age

(Louw et al., 2007). According to Psychology Today (2014), adolescence refers to the teen years, starting at 13, and ending at 19. They (Psychology Today) describe it as a transitional period in which individuals move from childhood to adulthood. Wise (2000) talks about an age range of 12 to 20 years, but she says that it could even last until 25 years of age. She describes it as a period in which individuals are no longer children, but not yet adults. “A time of turbulence, disturbance and struggle,” is how Wise (2000, p. 1) describes it.

For the purpose of this study, the focus is on Grade 7 learners, who fall into the developmental phase of adolescence.

4.2 Transitional Periods.

Transitional periods refer to time periods in which changes take place (Schulenberg et al., 2014). Many transitions take place during the adolescent years. These transitions include puberty, parent-child relationships, changes in schools, peer pressure as well as changes in cognition and emotional maturity (Ben-Zur, 2003; Jackson & Schulenberg, 2013). For the purpose of this study, the focus will be mainly on school transitions although this cannot be explored in isolation, as all aspects impact on one another (as discussed in Field Theory and Bioecological Theory above).

It is also important to note that Grade 7's have not yet made the transition from primary to high school, but that they are in the process of preparing for this transition, as Grade 7 is the final year of primary school, and as mentioned earlier, actually forms part of the senior phase. Preparation for this transition takes place throughout the Grade 7 year in many ways. Teachers constantly tell learners what to expect, applications are made for high schools, and learners mentally start thinking more and more about the move from primary to high school.

4.3 Relationships.

For the purpose of this study, a relationship is seen as any connection, interaction or involvement with others. Humans are relational in nature, and experience a variety of relationships throughout their lifetime. No relationship is neutral; every relationship has some kind of an impact in the self-configuration of individuals. In some instances the impact may be major, and in some instances it may be minimal, but every interaction has an influence on individuals' lives (Moody, 2014).

Relationships between individuals form an essential part of this study, as learners and teachers are in constant contact with each other during the school day. The relationships, communication and dialogues that take place between teacher and learner cannot be ignored in the school environment.

4.4 Teacher-learner relationships.

Kitching and Roos (2012) state that relationships develop through interactions between individuals. A school is an example of a place where many of these interactions occur and relationships arise. Therefore, the teacher-learner relationship can be defined as the interaction between the teacher and the learner, which develops into a relationship.

4.5 The Sense of Self.

Individuals' sense of self relates to their idea of who they are (Ickes, Park, & Johnson, 2012), and refers to how individuals see themselves. In some instances the sense of self is also referred to as identity, relating to the way individuals think about themselves (Aguilar, Brañas-Garza, Espinosa, & Miller, 2010; Saha, Chung, & Thorne, 2011; Ylvisaker, 2006).

Identity is formed when individuals become invested in who they think they are (Ickes et al., 2012), and therefore the identity and sense of self are closely linked.

Individuals' sense of self forms within the groups of which they are a part, and with whom they identify. The group provides norms for behaviour and individuals adapt to fit into these norms (Aguiar et al., 2010), which impacts on the formation of sense of self. Memories and previous experiences also play an important role in the development of sense of self (Prebble, Addis, & Tippett, 2013).

West (2007) describes sense of self as a combination between the sense of being, and the sense of I. The sense of being refers to how individuals process and make meaning of experiences and "the sense of I is a broader sense of self that overlies and frames current experience" (West, 2007, p. 33). The sense of self is not static, but is a continuous process through which individuals understand their world (Saha et al., 2011; West, 2007).

The self, as seen from the Gestalt perspective, is individuals' abilities to make contact with the environment. By being in contact with the environment (through dialogue and relationships), the individual gains experience, and adapts and changes continuously, and this is how the sense of self develops (Lobb, 2005).

4.6 Self-Configuration.

All experiences help to build (or configure) the self. This is done by fitting new experiences into the current idea individuals have of themselves. In the first few years of life, this process is not very complex as there are few previous experiences with which to connect new experiences, but as the child grows it becomes more and more complex (Polster, 2005).

As discussed previously, no person lives in isolation, but is in constant contact with others through dialogue and relationships. During these dialogues, the person gives of

him/herself, and takes from the other person (Yontef, 1993). Each dialogue is a new experience, and helps in the process of configuring the self.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Empirical Investigation.

5.1.1 Research approach and design.

The research approach was qualitative in nature. Qualitative research allows researchers to look into how individuals see and make meaning of their worlds, from their own experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2011a). In qualitative research, the subjective views of the participants are important, and this is found through interactions or observations of the participants in their natural environment (Nieuwenhuis, 2011a).

Individuals have their own perspectives and experiences when it comes to teacher-learner relationships, and therefore a qualitative approach was used. Through qualitative research, the researcher could look into the subjective experiences of the learners' self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship.

Furthermore, qualitative research looks at a problem or topic from the participant's perspective and gives a rich explanation of the participant's experience (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005).

The case study method is used often in the fields of psychology, sociology, and education, although it is not limited to these fields only. The case study method is used when there is a need to grasp complex social behaviour and experiences. By using this method, the researcher can look into real-life events within the context in which they take place (Yin, 2009).

The case study is used to contribute what we know about individuals, groups and social environments. It allows the researcher to gain knowledge about what is happening in people's lives (Yin, 2009). According to Nieuwenhuis (2011b, p. 76), "case study research is aimed at gaining greater insight and understanding of the dynamics of a specific situation".

A case study is a study of an issue within a "bounded system" (Creswell, 2007). A bounded system refers to a specific setting or context (Creswell, 2007).

This specific study is relevant to the case study method, because the researcher wanted to explore how learners experience self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship. It took place within the bounded system of one school and one grade in that school, with specific focus on self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship.

5.1.2 Context of the research and participants.

The research took place in a Government primary school in an urban suburb south of Johannesburg. The school has one thousand two hundred learners, from Grade 1 to 7. It is a co-ed school, with learners from mainly African, Coloured and Indian families.

There are fifty teachers, as well as 16 administrative and maintenance staff members working at the school. There is a private Grade R that runs on the school property. Learners have access to a modern, well equipped library, and the school offers a wide variety of extra mural activities. The school is very well maintained, with sufficient resources, and qualified, experienced teachers. There are one hundred and fifty-three Grade 7 learners, in four classes. Each subject in grade 7 is taught by a subject specialist, meaning that there is a specific teacher for each subject.

The population group for the study consisted of the Grade 7 learners of the school. Convenience and purposive sampling (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2009) was used to select

participants, as the participants attended the school where the researcher teaches, thus making them easily accessible. Furthermore, purposive sampling (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010) was used, as the focus was on Grade 7 learners, because of the transitional stage in which they are. Further criteria of inclusion were both genders and learners who could speak English or Afrikaans. The participants who took part in the study were never taught by the researcher.

The whole Grade 7 group was asked to stay behind in the hall after an assembly, giving the researcher an opportunity to explain the study to them briefly. Participants were asked to take part in the research on a voluntary basis. They were given time to take the consent forms home and discuss it with their parents.

Twelve participants submitted their consent forms and all twelve were included in the sample. The twelve learners that took part were made up of eight girls and four boys. One participant was Indian, and the other 11 eleven were African, although gender and race was not significant for the researcher.

At the time of the research, these participants had not yet gone through the transition from primary school to high school, but were in the process of preparing for the transition, within themselves, by applying for high schools, and through the teachers who often spoke about what they should expect in high school. As was discussed in earlier paragraphs, it is important to consider that the transition from primary school to high school is only one of the many transitions the adolescent has to face.

5.1.3 *Research procedure.*

After reading many articles relating to the teacher-learner relationship, sense of self and self-configuration, a research proposal was submitted and a title for the study proposed. Consent was received from the ethics committee of the North-West University to conduct the study: NWU 0060-12-A1. Consent forms (see Addenda 1-4 on CD) were drawn up and

handed to the Gauteng Department of Education (District 14) and principal of the school to gain permission for the study to take place.

After getting permission from the GDE and the principal, the learners were asked to remain behind after an assembly, where the nature of the study was explained. Learners who were interested in being involved in the research marked their names on class lists, and those learners were given a consent letter. Twelve learners returned their consent forms, signed by their parents. All twelve of these learners were included in the sample.

The learners were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews with visual mapping being part of the data gathering method. This was the first part of the data gathering process. During these sessions the researcher spent time with each participant on an individual basis. The participants were asked to make a visual/mind map of themselves in relation to their teachers, their experiences with their teachers and what they had learned about themselves within their teacher-learner relationships. After completing the mind maps, the researcher spent time in a discussion with each participant about how they experience teachers, and how relationships with their teachers have shaped their self-configuration. At the end of each individual interview, the researcher told each participant that a group session would take place, and that the researcher might come back to individual participants with more questions about what was discussed in the individual interview (member checking).

After the individual sessions, two group sessions were held with the participants who took part in the individual sessions.

Member checking interviews were held with participants for which further clarity was needed. This was the final part of the actual research procedure.

The semi-structured interviews, the group sessions as well as the second round of member-checking interviews were held in the school's sick room. This is a private section of

the school, with curtains in front of the windows, which helped to ensure participants' privacy. It provided a comfortable, private location in which the discussions could take place.

5.1.4 Data collection method.

Interviews during research allow the researcher to pose questions which encourage the participant to talk about the topic being researched (Howitt, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were used for this study. Semi-structured interviews generate in-depth, comprehensive data, during which the participant does most of the talking and the researcher guides the participant and probes for further and deeper information (Howitt, 2010).

At the start of the interview, participants were asked to draw a visual map of their relationships with teachers and how it had influenced them to be the people they are. This was done so that the participants could gather their thoughts around their relationships with teachers, and was also used as a discussion piece. Visual Mapping is method whereby participants are asked to draw visual images of what they regard as important in their lives. While drawing, the participant brings experiences (conscious and unconscious) to the fore in a projection. Drawings are a way of visually showing parts of the self (Mitchell, Theron, Stuart, Smith, & Campbell, 2011). In the words of Violet Oaklander (2007, p. 53), "the very act of drawing, is a powerful expression of the self that helps establish one's self-identity, and provides a way of expressing feelings."

In this study participants were requested to draw their relationships with their teachers, relating it to the way they see themselves. Paper, pencils and wax crayons were provided to the participants. Participants were asked to draw themselves in the middle, and the way teachers have impacted them around themselves. The visual map was used for three reasons, firstly, for participants to become aware of themselves in their world (Oaklander, 2007). In this study it gave participants the opportunity to become aware of themselves

within the teacher-learner relationships they had experienced. A second reason was for the participants to get their thoughts flowing, and thirdly, as a point from which to start a discussion about the learners' self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship. A drawing cannot simply be clinically analysed by the researcher, and therefore the discussion that follows after the drawing has been made, allows participants to give their interpretations of the drawing (Mitchell et al., 2011). These discussions provided opportunity for rich data gathering to take place. All interviews were transcribed.

After the individual interviews had taken place, two group discussions were scheduled, each group consisting of six participants. There were eight girls and four boys in the individual interviews, and the researcher divided the participants into two groups, each with four girls and two boys. These groups served to discuss teacher-learner relationships in a group setting, and to verify some of the themes that were identified during the semi-structured interview sessions.

Themes were identified by the researcher, after transcribing the individual interviews. From these themes, three broad questions were posed to the participants:

- How do you experience relationships with teachers?
- What do the teachers with whom you have a teacher-learner relationship mean in your life?
- What have you learned about yourself in this teacher-learner relationship?

A general discussion was held with both groups using the above questions to guide the conversation, but also allowing the participants to give their own perceptions of what they had experienced within teacher-learner relationships.

The goal of the group discussions was to determine whether the same topics that were brought up during the individual interviews were also spoken about during the groups. It also served as an opportunity for participants to agree or disagree on issues that were brought up,

as well as to give the participants the opportunity to experience different perspectives on the same issues. The groups gave the researcher a further opportunity to get insight into the perceptions of the participants.

When the group discussions were completed, transcriptions were done. The researcher then looked at the transcriptions of each participant and drew up further questions about issues that were unclear or that the researcher wanted to explore in more depth. This formed part of further member checking, which was done to ensure that the researcher did not perceive any information incorrectly (Nieuwenhuis, 2011c). This contributed to the trustworthiness of the research project, and ensured that the researcher was clear on the participants' point of view, and that data was not contaminated by the researchers own opinions. For some participants, it was not necessary to go into a second individual discussion, as the data from the first interview was clear. These member checking interviews were also transcribed and added to the data set.

All conversations (individual and group) were recorded by video camera and voice recorder, for data collection and transcription purposes. The goal of the video recordings was purely as a back-up, to be used in a case where the researcher could not make out what was said in the voice recordings. It came in extremely handy in one instance, where the voice recording failed.

5.1.5 *Data analysis.*

All interviews were transcribed, whereby the researcher became familiar with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Thereafter, thematic analyses were used to analyse the transcribed data obtained from the individual and group sessions. Thematic analysis is a method by which themes related to the research question are identified from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

After transcription, data was read and re-read, to identify topics of interest that stood out and that were relevant to the research question. The researcher made comments while reading the data, highlighting interesting aspects relating to the research question (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011).

The next step was to develop possible emergent themes (Schurink et al., 2011). This was a process of developing a list of possible themes that came to light through reading and making notes about the data. These were not the final themes, but loose, broad themes that helped with the initial organisation of the data.

After developing a list of possible themes, the researcher read through the data again, and drew up a table into which the words of the participants were grouped together under these possible themes. This was the method the researcher used to code the data (Schurink et al., 2011). The data was coded into broad groups with wide themes. At this stage many themes overlapped with each other, but it served as a way of organising and sifting through the data. Complete coding (according to Braun & Clarke, 2013) was used in this step, whereby all data that was relevant to the research question was coded.

After coding all the data into broad themes, the researcher relooked at the initial list of emergent themes, from where themes and subthemes were identified. A “thematic map” was then drawn up, which plotted out the potential themes and subthemes. Themes were then defined and named, before a report (article) was written (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Visual data was analysed from the discussions about the visual maps. Participants’ interpretations of their own drawings were used as data, and not from the actual drawing or the interpretation of the researcher (Mitchell et al., 2011).

The group discussions were also transcribed and analysed in the same manner as the individual interviews as explained in the above paragraph. This was also done for the member-checking interviews. (See addenda 5-7 on CD for transcriptions of individual, group

and member checking interviews and addendum 8 on CD for an example of thematic analyses).

6. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the truthfulness, applicability, consistency and neutrality of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) pose four questions that researchers could ask to determine whether their research is trustworthy:

- How true are the findings of the study?
In this study the findings are a true reflection of the participants' responses, as the data was not manipulated in any way. The researcher transcribed all data herself, and did not change or adapt any information. Direct quotes were used to support themes.
- Are the findings of the study applicable in other, similar situations? For this study, the results cannot be generalised, as a small sample was used.
- Are the findings consistent? The findings were consistent for this study, because many participants gave similar responses to similar questions, and they also agreed with one another during the group discussions. When many participants give the same or similar responses, and no new information comes to the fore, a point of data saturation is reached (Creswell, 2012).
- Are the findings filled with the pre-conceptions, views and biases of the researcher, or are they true to the perspectives of the participants?

The researcher checked uncertainties with participants during member-checking interviews. The researcher tried not to contaminate any data with her own perceptions or pre-conceptions, but kept to the original responses of the participants.

Nieuwenhuis (2011c) gives the following advice for ensuring trustworthiness.

- Make use of more than one source of data, which helps to validate the findings. This was done in this study, through the use of individual interviews, as well as group discussions and member checking interviews.
- Verification of data by member checking. This was done by re-interviewing some of the participants and asking them further questions about what they had said in the individual and group discussions. Re-interviewing was only done with participants for whom the researcher needed clarity or a more in-depth discussion of a topic.
- Making use of experts to check and validate your codes. This was done via the research supervisor who gave input in whether the codes and themes were valid.
- Bias refers to the researcher's own points of view, which may contaminate the objectiveness of the study, and the data should not be clouded by the researcher's bias. Objectivity was ensured through the member checking interviews, where the researcher confirmed what the participants were saying, instead of contaminating the data with her own perceptions.
- Avoidance of generalisation, which refers to not transferring the findings to the general populations, but rather to stay true to the participants' points of view, and experiences. This was done by not analysing the participants' mind maps, but by having a discussion about what their experiences were. These experiences cannot be generalised to the broader population.
- Ensuring that participants' words are not used out of context, by not only extracting pieces of what was said so that the reader cannot decipher what the participant was actually trying to say. The researcher's own interpretation should never be forced onto the data. The researcher viewed the context of direct quotes and only used whole quotes or parts thereof if similar to the context of the identified theme.

- By maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. This was done effectively during this study by using numbers for participants, instead of using their names.
- By stating limitations of the study. No study is perfect and all studies have certain shortfalls. When recognising and acknowledging these limitations, the researcher enhances the trustworthiness of the findings. This will be addressed in Section C of this study.

Triangulation is another way in which to ensure the trustworthiness of a study. This is done through making use of a variety of data sources in order to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the research question (Schurink et al, 2011). This was the reason behind the researcher making use of individual interviews, as well as the group interviews, in order to ensure that data was gathered from a variety of perspectives.

7. Ethical Considerations

This study falls under the ethical code NWU-00060-12-A1 as approved by the North-West University.

Written consent was obtained from the Department of Education (District D14), school principal and parents of participants. The participants were asked to sign assent forms (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008). (see addendum 4).

The consent form explained the goal of the study, as well as any possible risks and benefits. The aim of the research was explained to the learners before they chose to take part. Participants took part on a voluntary basis, and they were allowed to withdraw from the research at any time. The researcher ensured the participants that their information would be kept confidential.

The researcher ensured confidentiality of all data, by keeping all documents and recordings safely locked away in a safe at the researcher's home, to which only the researcher has access. After the study has been completed, data will be stored at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. The anonymity of the participants was ensured by password protection in all documents, and by not naming participants in the transcriptions or final report. Interviews and group discussions were held in the "sick room" of the school, which is a very private part of the school. There are curtains in front of the windows, ensuring that outsiders are unable to see what is happening inside the room. During the group discussions the researcher and the participants agreed to keep what was said confidential, and not to discuss it with anybody that was not involved in the group.

The researcher ensured that counselling would be provided should any participants show a need for it during or after the research had taken place. The services of two psychologists, who often work with learners from the school, were available. None of the participants showed any signs of discomfort after the interviews and group discussions had taken place, so it was not necessary for anyone to receive any counselling.

The participants were informed that they were participating voluntarily and that they would not receive any remuneration for their participation.

After completion and examination of the study, a copy of the thesis will be given to the school and to the district of the Gauteng Education Department in which the school falls. Feedback will be given to participants. Participants will be invited (via sms) to attend a group discussion, where the overall findings of the study will be explained in such a manner that participants will not be able to identify themselves or others.

8. Choice and Structure of Research Article

The study will be presented in article format, as prescribed by the North-West University.

- Section A consists of the orientation, as well as the literature study wherein all concepts pertaining to the study are discussed.
- Section B forms the article itself.
- Section C consists of the conclusion, limitations and recommendations.
- Section D (which is on a separate CD at the back of this document) contains all the addenda.

The researcher hopes to publish the article in *Research Papers in Education*.

9. References

- Aguiar, F., Brañas-Garza, P., Espinosa, M., & Miller, L. M. (2010). Personal identity: A theoretical and experimental analysis. *Journal of Economic Methodology*, *17*(3), 261-275. doi:10.1080/13501781003792670.
- Ben-Zur, H. (2003). Happy adolescents: The link between subjective well-being, internal resources, and parental factors. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *32*(2), 67-79.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage.
- Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2008). Ethics in qualitative psychological research. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology*, (pp. 263-279). London: Sage.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). A future perspective. In U. Bronfenbrenner (Ed.), *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*, (pp. 50-59). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brownell, P. (2010). *Gestalt therapy: A guide to contemporary practice*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Combs, A. W. (2006). *Being and becoming: A field approach to psychology*. New York, NY: Springer.

- Cozolino, L. (2006). *The neuroscience of human relationships: Attachment and the developing social brain*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton. Abstract retrieved from psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2006-13260-000.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crosnoe, R., Kirkpatrick Johnson, M., & Elder, G. H. (2004). Intergenerational bonding in school: The behavioural and contextual correlates of student-teacher relationships. *Sociology of Education*, 77(January), 60-81.
- Department of Basic Education. (2011). *Curriculum and assessment policy statement: Grades 7-9, Life orientation*. Pretoria: Government Printing Works.
- Enfield, N. J. (2013). *Relationship thinking: Agency, enchrony and human sociality*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Fand, R. J. (1999). *The dialogic self: Reconstructing subjectivity in Woolf, Lessing and Atwood*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press.
- Froiland, J. M., & Davison, M. L. (2014). Parental expectations and school relationships as contributors to adolescents' positive outcomes. *Social Psychology of Education*, 17(1), 1-17. DOI: 10.1007/s11218-013-9237-3.
- Harter, S. (1999). *The construction of the self: A developmental perspective*. New York, NY: Guilford.

- Hermans, H. J. M. (2008). How to perform research on the basis of dialogical self theory? Introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology, 21*, 185-199.
- Hermans, H. J. M. (2012). Dialogical self theory and the increasing multiplicity of I-positions in a globalising society: An introduction. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 137*. 1-21. (Special issue: *Applications of dialogical self theory*).
- Hermans, H. J. M., & Gieser, T. (2013). Introductory chapter: History, main tenets and core concepts of dialogical self theory. In H. J. M. Hermans, & T. Gieser (Eds.), *Handbook of dialogical self theory*, (pp. 1-22). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holmes, J. G. (2000). Social relationships: The nature and function of relational schemas. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 30*, 447-495.
- Howitt, D. (2010). *Introduction to qualitative methods in psychology*. Essex: Pearson Education.
- Ickes, W., Park, A., & Johnson, A. (2012). Linking identity status to strength of sense of self: Theory and validation. *Self and Identity, 11*, 531-544. doi: 10.1080/15298868.2011.625646.
- Jackson, K. M., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2013). Alcohol use during the transition from middle school to high school: National panel data on prevalence and moderators. *Developmental Psychology, 49*(11), 2147-2158. doi: 10.1037/a0031843.
- Jansen, J. D. (2011). The research question. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research*, (pp. 1-13). Pretoria: Van Schaik.

- Kitching, A. E., & Roos, V. (2012). Towards an understanding of nurturing and restraining relational patterns in school communities. *Journal of Psychology in Africa, 22*(2), 187-200.
- Knoell, C. M., & Crow, S. R. (2013). Exploring teacher influence on the lives of students from diverse elementary schools in a rural Midwestern community. *International Journal of Psychology: A biopsychosocial approach / Tarptautinis Psichologijos Zurnalas: Biopsichosocialinis Poziuris, 13*, 31-48. doi:10.7220/1941-7233.13.2.
- Komatsu, K. (2012). Temporal reticence of the self: Who can know my self. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioural Science, 46*, 357-372.
- Latner, J. (2000). The theory of Gestalt therapy. In E. C. Nevis (Ed.), *Gestalt therapy: Perspectives and applications* (pp. 13-56). Cambridge, MA: Gestalt Press.
- Learner-Centred Principles work group. (1997). *Learner-centered psychological principles: A framework for school reform and redesign*. American Psychological Association's Board of Educational Affairs. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/learner-centered.pdf>
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2010). *Practical research: Planning and design*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education International.
- Lewin, K. (1939). Field theory and experiment in social psychology: Concepts and methods. *American Journal of Sociology, 44*(6), 868-896.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lobb, M. S. (2005). Classical Gestalt therapy theory. In A. L. Woldt, & S. M. Toman (Eds.), *Gestalt therapy: History, theory and practice* (pp. 21-40). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Louw, A., Louw, D., & Ferns, I. (2007). Adolessensie. In D. A. Louw, & A. E. Louw (Ed.), *Die ontwikkeling van die kind en die adolessent* (pp. 276-347). Bloemfontein: Psychology Publications.
- Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K. M., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide*. Research Triangle Park, NC: Family Health International.
- Marsh, L., McGee, R., & Williams, S. (2014). School climate and aggression among New Zealand high school students. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 43(1), 28-37.
- Matthews, G., Zeidner, M., & Roberts, R. D. (2006). Models of personality and affect for education: A review and synthesis. In P.A. Alexander, & P. H. Winne (Ed.), *Handbook of educational psychology* (2nd ed.) (pp. 163-188). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Mischel, W., & Morf, C. C. (2003). The self as a psycho-social dynamic processing system: A meta-perspective on a century of the self in psychology. In M. R. Leary, & J. P. Tangey (Ed.), *Handbook of self and identity* (pp 15-43). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Mitchell, C., Theron, L., Stuart, J., Smith, A., & Campbell, Z. (2011). Drawings as research method. In L. Theron, C. Mitchell, A. Smith, & J. Stuart (Ed.), *Picturing research: Drawing as a visual methodology* (pp. 19-36). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Mitchell, S. A. (2014). *Relationality: From attachment to intersubjectivity*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Mokhele, P. R. (2006). The teacher-learner relationship in the management of discipline in public high schools. *Africa Education Review*, 3(1&2), 148-159.

- Moody, V. (2014). *The people factor: How building great relationships and ending bad ones unlocks your God-given purpose*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Ness, O. (2011). Positioning of self and dialogue (book review). *Journal of Constructivist Psychology, 21*, 345-350.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2011a). Introducing qualitative research. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp. 46-68). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2011b). Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp. 69-97). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2011c). Analysing qualitative data. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp. 98-122). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Oaklander, V. (2007). *Windows to our children*. Gouldsboro, ME: The Gestalt Journal Press.
- Parlet, M. (1991). Reflections of field theory. *British Gestalt Journal, 1*, 68-91.
- Polster, E. (2005). *A population of selves*. Gouldsboro, ME: The Gestalt Journal Press.
- Prebble, S. C., Addis, D. R., & Tippett, L. J. (2013). Autobiographical memory and sense of self. *Psychological Bulletin, 139*(4), 815-840.
- Psychology Today. (2014). *All about adolescence*. Retrieved from www.psychologytoday.com/basics/adolescence
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., & Elam, G. (2009). Designing and selecting samples. In J. Ritchie, & J. Lewis. (Ed.). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* (pp. 77-85). London: Sage.

- Roeser, R. W., & Lau, S. (2002). On academic identity formation in middle school settings during early adolescence. In T. M. Brithaupt, & R. P. Lipka (Ed.), *Understanding early adolescent self and identity: Applications and interventions* (pp. 91-132). Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Saha, S., Chung, M., & Thorne, L. (2011). A narrative exploration of the sense of self of women recovering from childhood sexual abuse. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 24(2), 101-113. doi:10.1080/09515070.2011.586414.
- Schulenberg, J. E., Patrick, M. E., Maslowsky, J., & Maggs, J. (2014). The epidemiology and etiology of adolescent substance use in developmental perspective. In M. Lewis, & K. Rudolph (Ed.), *Handbook of developmental psychopathology* (3rd ed.) (pp. 601-320). New York, NY: Springer.
- Schurink, W., Fouché, C.B., & De Vos, A. S. (2011). Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In A. S. de Vos, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouché, & C. S. L. Delpont, *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human service professions* (4th ed.), (pp. 397-424). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Sills, C., Lapworth, P., & Desmond, B. (2012). *An introduction to Gestalt*. London: Sage.
- Simmons, R. G., & Blyth, D. A. (1987). *Moving into adolescence: The impact of pubertal change and school context*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Theron, L., & Dalzell, C. (2006). The specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners in the Vaal Triangle Region. *South African Journal of Education*, 26(3), 397-412.
- Valiente, C., Swanson, J., & Lemery-Chalfant, K. (2012). Kindergartner's temperament, classroom engagement, and student-teacher relationship: Moderation by effortful

- control. *Social Development*, 21(23), 558-576. Doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9507.2011.00640.x.
- Wang, L., Wang, W., Gu, H., Zhan, P., Yang, X., & Barnard, J. (2014). Relationships among teacher support, peer conflict resolution, and school emotional experiences in adolescents from Shanghai. *Social Behaviour and Personality*, 42(1), 99-114.
- Weeks, F. H. (2009). What are the essential characteristics of caring schools? A teacher/learner perspective. *Child Abuse Research: A South African Journal*, 10(1), 1-13.
- West, M. (2007). *Feeling, being and the sense of self: A new perspective on identity, affect and narcissistic disorders*. London: Karnac.
- Wigfield, A., Byrnes, J. P., & Eccles, J. S. (2006). Development during early and middle adolescence. In P. A. Alexander, & P. H. Winne (Ed.). *Handbook of educational psychology* (2nd ed.) (pp. 87-114). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Wise, I. (2000). Introduction. In I. Wise (Ed.), *Adolescence: Psychoanalytic ideas* (pp. 1-6). London: Karnac.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ylvisaker, M. (2006). *What is sense of self?* Retrieved from http://www.projectlearnnet.org/tutorials/sense_of_self_personal_identity.html
- Yontef, G. (2002). The relational attitude in Gestalt therapy theory and practice. *International Gestalt Journal*, 25(1), 15-34.

Yontef, G. M. (1993). *Awareness dialogue & process: Essays on Gestalt therapy*.

Gouldsboro, ME: The Gestalt Journal Press.

PART 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

Humans are relational beings, which refers to the fact that they are in constant and continuous relationships with others and with the environment in which they function (Kagitibasi, 2014). Relationships are one of the most essential practices of life, and individuals spend much time engaging in and thinking about the relationships they are involved in (Willerton, 2010). As time elapses and individuals are exposed to more experiences and relationships, an idea of self, or “who am I?” starts to form. Harter (2012) also links this formation of the self to individuals’ interactions with parents, caregivers, teachers and peers by stating that it is during this process of interaction that individuals evaluate themselves in terms of who they are.

Grade 7 learners are at the beginning of adolescence, which is a transitional stage of their lives (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007). They face many challenges and changes during this period (Gest & Davidson, 2011; Moshman, 2011). Their bodies are starting to change as they enter puberty, and hormonal and mood fluctuations are experienced (Holden, Vittrup, & Rosen, 2011). Adolescents further need to adapt to changes in school and social environments as they prepare to move from primary school to high school (Moshman, 2011). Relationships with their teachers may have an influence on their ability to adapt to these changes in a healthy and positive manner, as the relationships play a role in their development of sense of self.

In this literature review, the researcher explores self-configuration in the context of relationships between Grade 7 learners and their teachers. The review starts with a discussion on the importance of relationships, also in the school community, with specific reference to the teacher-learner relationship. Child development with specific focus on

adolescent development is discussed with emphasis on Grade 7 learners who find themselves in a transitional phase between primary and secondary school. The sense of self is described as a concept and also in the context of self-configuration. Lastly, the theoretical frameworks that served as basis for the research are discussed.

2. The importance of relationships with specific reference to the teacher-learner relationship

Well-being refers to a general sense of feeling good about yourself, being content with who you are, and a general feeling of being emotionally, physically, mentally and socially well adjusted (Diener & Chan, 2011; State Government of Victoria, 2013). Well-being is established on the following levels: personally, through relationships, and within a community. These aspects, which are all interconnected to one another, lead to the overall sense of wellbeing of individuals (Prilleltensky, 2005).

Individuals avoid being isolated from others for long periods of time because “people need people” (Willerton, 2010, p. 20). When adolescents are involved in healthy, positive relationships, they have a firm foundation from which to extend themselves into the world, and from which to develop a strong and positive sense of self. Beliefs, opinions and orientations are formed within group socialisation and individuals adapt their behaviour in order to fit in with specific groups (Martin & Dowson, 2009). While learning about themselves through social interactions and relationships individuals’ sense of self develops and self-configuration takes place (Mitchell, 2014). If individuals have strong, positive, supportive relationships it will have a positive impact on their sense of well-being, and vice versa (Prilleltensky, 2005).

Relationships play a crucial role in learning, starting early in life, as parents teach their children how to speak and how to behave. Adults convey beliefs, morals, values and skills to children. Children learn through socialization, initially with their caregivers, which is later expanded to other adults and peers (Van der Aalsvoort, 2011). In schools, teachers convey information to their learners through teaching, stories and examples (Shafto, Goodman, & Griffiths, 2014). The school community thus provides a further environment in which social learning takes place.

Schools are social institutions which provide opportunities for a wide variety of social experiences (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). Learning is a partnership between learner and teacher, influenced by relationships with peers and family (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Schools and teachers not only play a role in the transfer of knowledge to learners, but also in the overall development of learners as complete human beings. Schools should be a place where learners' academic, social and emotional needs are taken into consideration and are addressed. When this happens, learners feel connected to their school and they have a sense of belonging, which leads to a positive feeling of well-being (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010).

Learners spend significant time at school (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012), not just for formal education, but also while taking part in extra-curricular activities. Therefore many opportunities arise in which learners can develop meaningful (or non-meaningful) relationships with teachers (Yeung & Leadbeater, 2010). Teachers are the primary adult-figures in the academic environment and they play an important role in the relational experiences that take place at schools (Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). Learners who feel comfortable in their relationships with their teachers, have a more positive attitude to school and they also adapt more positively in psychological as well as social areas (Buyse, Verschueren, Verachtert, & Van Damme, 2009).

Many authors and researchers have written about the importance of positive, caring and supportive teacher-learner relationships (Buyse et al., 2009; Spilt et al., 2011; Wang, Brinkworth, & Eccles, 2013; Yeung & Leadbeater, 2010). Positive teacher-learner relationships are characterised by caring teachers, teachers who make time for their learners, and teachers who help their learners (Yeung & Leadbeater, 2010). Strong relationships lay the foundation for forming new relationships, as well as for the development of a secure sense of self (Cornelius-White, 2007). Furthermore, positive teacher-learner relationships can lead to learners who feel motivated and engaged in their learning processes, which in turn leads to successful learning (Driscoll, Wang, Mashburn, & Pianta, 2011). Supportive teacher-learner relationships enhance individuals' levels of confidence, enthusiasm, commitment and achievement on academic and personal levels (Martin & Dowson, 2009). The relationship between learner and teacher is a direct environmental influence that has an impact on the learner. A positive relationship between teacher and learner is characterised by friendliness, understanding and a lack of conflict (Driscoll et al., 2011). This refers to a relationship in which both the teacher and learner feel comfortable and secure. The teacher is interested in the learner as a person, cares about the learner, encourages and communicates with the learner, and vice versa. In many cases, this relationship can have the same value as the parent-child relationship (Louw & Kail, 2007). Learners who have positive, warm and supportive relationships with their teachers, have a more positive attitude towards school, and are less likely to get involved in negative behaviours (Rudasill, Reio, Stipanovic, & Taylor, 2010). In a study done by Wang et al. (2013) it was found that positive teacher-learner relationships are associated with lower levels of depression and less risky or delinquent behaviour in high school (confirmed by McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Yeung & Leadbeater, 2010).

Secure teacher-learner relationships are further linked with positive and holistic learning experiences (Cornelius-White, 2007). Learners who have an emotional attachment with their teachers feel more in control, are more independent and are more engaged in school (Pianta et al., 2012). Learners feel safe and secure, and are therefore able to explore the opportunities of learning in the class (Howes, 2000; Pianta et al., 2012; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011). Relatedness also promotes learners' internal motivation to learn (Danielsen, Wiium, Wilhelmsen, & Wold, 2010). On the other hand, learners who have poor relationships with teachers are more disengaged from school. They have a higher risk of being anxious, depressed, addicted to drugs and getting involved in disruptive behaviours (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). For learners who do not develop relationships with teachers or peers at school, the consequences could be detrimental, leading to disengagement, an attitude of not caring and dropping out of school (Smyth, Down, & McInerney, 2010). Furthermore, learners who have no emotional attachment to teachers were found to have lower self-esteem, and were not very involved or interested in school. Negative relationships tend to aggravate poor achievement, and these learners had a weaker sense of their own identity (Roorda et al., 2011).

For adolescents, who find themselves facing many transitions, close relationships with adults are important and valuable (Driscoll et al, 2011). Positive relationships with adults (teachers) and a caring school environment can be seen as developmental resources which contribute to advanced levels of adaptation during adolescence (Roorda et al., 2011). Adolescents have a need to feel socially and emotionally connected to teachers, as this is a factor in emotional and behavioural development (Wang et al. 2013), and could influence the smooth transition from primary to high school (Yeung & Leadbeater, 2010). Effective learning is facilitated in an environment in which there are nurturing relationships (Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training, 2005).

A transitional period is a time of change from one stage to another (Coffey, 2013). It is a period in which individuals are faced with new challenges and a time in which there is movement from what is familiar to what is unfamiliar. When transitions take place, there are changes in roles, relationships and expectations, which lead to changes in behaviour and self-perception (Meleis, 2010). It can be seen as a period in which individuals need to move out of their comfort zone. When Grade 7 learners move from primary school to high school, there is a change of environment, routine and relationships. Healthy adjustments from primary school to high school depend on the learners' sense of who they are and whether they have a sense of belonging (Coffey, 2013). Self-confidence developed from relationships in primary school can have an influence on how learners adapt to new and challenging environments (Fair, Hopkins, & Decker, 2012). Earlier relationships formed with teachers, predict the quality of the relationships that are formed at a later stage (Rudasill, 2011). Therefore, good quality relationships in Grade 7 could assist the learners in forming good quality relationships with their high school teachers, thus making the transition less daunting (Coffey, 2013).

Even though the participants in the current study have not yet made the transition from primary school to high school, Grade 7 is the last year of primary school, and learners start to prepare mentally for this transition. The relationships that they have formed with their primary school teachers, play a role in their sense of self development, which in turn may play a role in their mental preparation for the transition to high school. The transition to high school is not the only change that these learners are facing. They are in the developmental stage of adolescence, which is known as a period of instability and change (Blackwell et al., 2007). In addition, many other changes take place in the early adolescent stage including physical, psychological and cognitive changes (Wang et al. 2013). In the next section these developmental changes are briefly explored.

3. Child Development

Development is the way in which individuals change, grow and acquire new skills over time (Crowley, 2014), in order to deal with increasing and more complex challenges as they move through the various life stages (Miller & Stoeckel, 2010). During these developmental stages humans, who are complex creatures, develop a wide variety of characteristics and dimensions in many different ways and tempo's (Louw & Kail, 2007). Even though each individual is unique and develops at their own pace, most theorists agree that certain general developmental stages exist for children (Charlesworth, 2014; Louw & Kail, 2007). For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the following stages, as the study focuses on Grade 7 learners whose age range falls within these stages:

- Pre-adolescence (Carr, 2006) or early adolescence (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010)
– approximately 10-13 years.
- Adolescence – approximately 12-18 years (Carr, 2006).

There are many different perspectives on the characteristics, challenges, and developments in each developmental stage (Carr, 2006; Hook, 2004; Hook & Cockcroft, 2004; Louw & Kail, 2007). Pre-adolescence and adolescence is a period, in which many changes and challenges take place (Carr, 2006; Moshman, 2011; Sameroff, 2014). During this time, individuals start asking questions about their own worth, what others think of them, and how they compare to others, and this plays a crucial role in the sense of self development (Neff & McGeehee, 2010).

Grade 1 learners can start school at the age of five, provided that they turn six before the 30th of June in the year that they start Grade 1 (Government Communications, 2013). Some parents enrol their children when they are six, which means that they turn seven in their Grade 1 year, meaning that ages in a Grade 1 class range from five year-olds to seven year-olds. Therefore, learners in Grade 7 range between eleven and thirteen years

of age. Some will be even older if they were retained in lower grades. Based on this information, it is relevant to discuss the developmental stages of pre-adolescence and adolescence in this literature review. Therefore, the discussion that follows serves to provide a platform from which to gain a deeper understanding of the participants in this study.

3.1 Pre-adolescence.

The pre-adolescent years range from an age of approximately ten to thirteen years (Carr, 2006; Gilmore & Meersand, 2014). This is a period in which important cognitive, social, and emotional development takes place (Louw & Kail, 2007). McLaughlin and Clarke (2010) refer to this age range as early adolescence, defining it as the period between ten and fourteen years. It is a transitional period from pre-teen to teen, from primary school to high school and of an increased sense of autonomy. During pre-adolescence, fluctuations of emotions and self-image may occur (Gilmore & Meersand, 2014; Louw, Louw, & Ferns, 2007).

3.1.1 Cognitive development.

According to Raikes and Thompson (2005), thought processes become more logical and consistent during early adolescence. Children are able to consider a variety of perspectives and ideas simultaneously. There is an increase in the speed and efficiency of cognitive processes, as well as in memory. Metacognition develops in pre-adolescence as children start to think about their own thoughts. Pre-adolescents will start to think about previous successes and failures, which allows their sense of self to develop (Harmening,

2010). This allows them to reflect on their own emotions, relationships and behaviours of others (Raikes & Thompson, 2005).

Early adolescence is a time in which “blossoming” and “pruning” of brain connections occur (Brown & Knowles, 2007). Blossoming is a period of heightened growth in which many brain connections are made. Not all of these connections remain intact and they shrink and disappear in a process called pruning. Pruning is not seen as a negative process, but rather a positive one, as it gets rid of unnecessary connections. In the words of David Walsh (2004, p. 34), “blossoming and pruning are critical in brain development, because experiences during these periods, more than at any other time, physically shape the brain’s neural networks and have a huge impact on how the brain gets wired.”

As pre-adolescents start thinking in a more sophisticated manner, it provides a foundation for the way they see themselves in relation to others (Raikes & Thompson, 2005). Relationships with peers and figures of authority play an important role in cognitive development, as it allows individuals to see themselves from different perspectives, and to experiment with different roles or selves. Pre-adolescents experience increased levels of self-consciousness, introspection and uncertainty about who they are (Brinthaup & Lipka, 2002).

3.1.2 Social development.

Pre-adolescence is a time in which much of individuals’ self-concepts are developed and in which they learn to understand the world around them (Louw & Kail, 2007). In pre-adolescence there is an expansion of individuals’ social environment, as relationships with peers and other adults become stronger and broader. More time is spent away from the confines of the family as children get involved in school, sports and other

social activities (Raikes & Thompson, 2005), and become more independent. Friendships help adolescents to form an identity that is separated from their family identity (Tassoni, 2007), thus broadening their sense of self. The role that the teacher plays during this time is very important especially due to the fact that a large amount of time is spent at school (Louw & Kail, 2007).

Relationships are the platform through which individuals get to know themselves, and through which they learn which behaviours are socially acceptable, and which are not (Blakemore, 2012; Grusec, 2011). It is a time in which individuals start to understand the complexity of social roles (Carr, 2006). Individuals learn to anticipate how others will react to their behaviour, and they start to incorporate acceptable behaviours internally (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 2002; Gilmore & Meersand, 2014). The impact of relationships is amplified between the ages of ten and fourteen, and the influence of teachers during this time is critical (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010). These relationships can cause distress for early adolescents if they are not positive, but in contrast, positive relationships can lower levels of distress.

Good, strong and healthy development in the pre-adolescent years, form a solid foundation for the challenges and changes that take place in the next stages. All experiences in this stage prepare individuals for adolescence and adulthood (Louw & Kail, 2007).

3.1.3 Emotional development.

Positive emotions, such as happiness, pride and love, provide individuals with a sense of security and assist them to look for similar experiences that will illicit the same types of feelings. Negative emotions, such as sadness, fear or anger, provide a sense that something is not right. Emotions allow individuals to evaluate their environment and to

adjust to their surroundings (Kostelnik, Soderman, Whiren, Rupiper, & Gregory, 2012).

This adaptation to the environment is referred to as self-regulation.

Brain functions that support emotional responses are developed continuously, and become more and more advanced as individuals move through various developmental stages (Araya, Hu, Heron, Enoch, Evans, Lewis, Nutt, & Goldman, 2008). During pre-adolescence, there is an increase in mood fluctuations and a higher sensitivity to stress factors (Newman & Newman, 2012; Somerville, Jones, & Casey, 2010). Emotions that are mild for adults are experienced much more intensely by adolescents, and they are not yet able to regulate these emotions in a mature manner (Crone, 2009), which leads to many emotional outbursts and extreme fluctuations of moods (Somerville et al., 2010).

Therefore, during this period, any changes in family dynamics, school contexts or peer relationships could lead to emotional distress for the pre-adolescent.

The development of sense of self during this period will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.2 Adolescence.

Adolescence ranges from approximately twelve years of age to approximately eighteen years of age (Louw et al., 2007), but it is also important to note that these ages are not definite indications of the period of adolescence. Individual differences occur in the time of onset of adolescence, and many factors play a role in this. Physical and emotional characteristics, as well as social factors play a role in the time frame of when adolescence starts and ends (Louw et al., 2007).

Vygotsky's (1998) model of adolescent development is a holistic approach, which brings social, emotional, cognitive and motivational aspects into consideration. This means that he does not look at human as development as influenced by only one or two

isolated aspects. Human development takes place as the individual is exposed to a variety of components simultaneously, that are all interrelated and interdependent on one another. Therefore, Vygotsky's model fits well with this discussion on adolescence.

Adolescence is "one of the most challenging and complex phases of life" (Theron & Dalzell, 2006, p. 397). It is a time during which coping abilities are tested and challenged, and is accompanied by higher levels of pressure, anxiety and stress (Coffey, 2013). It is seen by many as a time featured by moodiness, testing of boundaries, experimentation and conflict with parents and other figures of authority (Louw et al., 2007). It is also a period in which individuals are more easily influenced by their peers (Steinberg, Dahl, Keating, Kupfer, Masten, & Pine, 2006), as the sense of self is developing and self-configuration is taking place.

A healthy sense of self is important during this phase of life, in order for adolescents to successfully negotiate all the changes and obstacles they are faced with during adolescence (Coffey, 2013).

3.2.1 Physical development.

From Freud's psychoanalytic view, adolescents find themselves in the genital stage, where sexual instincts become much stronger, but where the teenager must also come to terms with dealing with these instincts in a socially acceptable manner (Louw & Kail, 2007).

Many physical changes occur when sexual ripening (puberty) takes place. Puberty is seen as one of the most dramatic events in human development, and one of the difficulties adolescents face, is coming to terms with the changes in their bodies (Louw et al., 2007). Puberty brings about powerful changes in hormone levels, as well as many

physical changes, such as accelerated physical growth, alterations in facial structure, and the emergence of sexual features (Blakemore, Burnett, & Dahl, 2010).

Adolescence is the period in which hormones are secreted which activate the maturation of the ovaries and testes, triggering changes in reproductive organs. It is a period of heightened growth resulting in growth spurts and changes in appearance (Blakemore et al., 2010). During this developmental stage, adolescents become more aware of what their bodies look like, and are more sensitive to how others perceive them physically (Slater & Tiggemann, 2011). Physical changes, and a higher self-consciousness about body image, could have an impact on the adolescent's sense of self (Shaffer & Kipp, 2014), as they are concerned about what they look like and how others see them.

3.2.2 Social development.

Erik Erikson highlighted the importance of the psychological and social aspects of each developmental stage. He stated that during adolescence, individuals face conflict between identity and role confusion (Miller & Stoeckel, 2010). In this stage relationships are important in order to develop a healthy sense of self. Blakemore (2012) also refers to the importance of relationships during adolescence and states that this period is characterised by significant social development, wherein identity, sense of self, and relationships are highlighted. Erikson's opinion was that adolescents who don't develop their own identity and individual sense of self, would battle to develop and maintain meaningful relationships in their adult life (Louw & Kail, 2007). Based on this, relationships with parents, teachers and peers during this life period are important in order for adolescents to develop a healthy sense of self.

During this period, many changes take place in the dynamics of social, academic and environmental influences, and it is a time of intense psychosocial transition

(Blakemore et al., 2010). Adolescents start to reflect more on social issues, and they become more autonomous and start to develop a sense of social responsibility (Gilmore & Meersand, 2014). During adolescence, individuals place more value on their social relationships with peers, and group acceptance is vital for the development of positive self-esteem (Miller & Stoeckel, 2010). Relationships become more complex and adolescents are greatly influenced by the acceptance or rejection of others (Blakemore, 2012). According to Wang et al. (2013), adolescence is a time in which adolescents often feel vulnerable and in which they need to depend on a good sense of self and strong relationships. Relationships with teachers also contribute to a healthy sense of self development during adolescence (Cattley, 2004), and strong, positive relationships with peers and teachers contribute to the adolescent's sense of belonging within the school environment (Coffey, 2013).

3.2.3 Cognitive development.

Cognitive processes include thought, learning, language, memory, problem solving and decision-making. It is the way in which individuals make meaning of their surroundings (Dupree, 2010). Cognitive development refers to the development of knowledge and means of making logical sense of experiences and surroundings. During adolescence, individuals' reasoning and ways of understanding concepts and experiences become more complex (Moshman, 2011). During this stage, adolescents start to think in a more abstract manner, no longer relying only on concrete evidence (Yurgelun-Todd, 2007). Cognitive functioning becomes more multifaceted, and it is a time during which individuals start questioning previous knowledge and experience (Miller & Stoeckel, 2010). In terms of self-configuration, adolescents spend more time thinking about their relationships and experiences, questioning how they fit in as a person, and evaluate their

place in the environment. As they think about these aspects, the adolescent's self is shaped and formed.

As adolescents come to terms with and adapt to the changes in their bodies, hormones, and social contexts, further cognitive development is triggered. It is through cognition that adolescents make sense of their experiences and relationships (Dupree, 2010). When individuals are in situations that are satisfying, these aspects are assimilated into individuals' thought process, which help them to adapt to these situations in a positive manner, and to seek similar situations. If, however, individuals are in threatening or uncomfortable situations, new cognitive structures need to be developed in order to deal with the discomfort and to restore a sense of comfort. This constant grinding and shaping of thought processes about experiences, form part of how the self configures.

In the school setting, supportive relationships with teachers and peers, are beneficial to the motivation to learn, and for the development of positive learning experiences. When a learner has a positive experience of the learning process, due to positive affect from teachers and peers, the information and skills learnt are more likely to become internalised (Dupree, 2010).

As the individual negotiates through the changes that occur during adolescence, an idea of "who I am" starts to develop. Individuals wrestle with thoughts and opinions of who they are, and where they belong in the society. They realise what their strengths and weaknesses are, as well as what they like and dislike. These aspects are the core of sense of self development.

4. The Sense of Self and Self-configuration

Callero (2003, p. 127) describes the self as follows:

... the self that is socially constructed is never a bounded quality of the individual or a simple expression of psychological characteristics; it is a fundamentally social phenomenon, where concepts, images, and understandings are deeply determined by relations of power. Where these principles are ignored or rejected, the self is often conceptualized as a vessel for storing all the particulars of the person.

This quotation states that the self is not developed in isolation, but that it develops over time, through social interactions and experiences. It is an entity that encompasses the total being of an individual. This fits in well with the field theory perspective that will be discussed later.

The self is the core of a person's personality, and self-concept refers to how individuals evaluate themselves (Louw & Kail, 2007). For the purpose of this study, the self is viewed in relation to the environment and is not seen as if in isolation, as the self is shaped by being in interaction with the environment (Mann, 2010). According to Philippson (2009) and Mann (2010), the self can only be seen in comparison to "the other" and without "the other" there can be no self, as it is through relationships that a sense of self develops.

For the purpose of this study it might be important to clarify the author's view on sense of self in relation to identity, in order to prevent confusion. According to Jenkins (2008), self and identity are parallel in meaning. He sees sense of self as individuals' sense of their own identity. Sense of self, therefore, refers to individuals' perceptions of themselves in relation to others and the environment, which is equivalent to the definitions of identity. Identity, as defined by Eggen and Kauchak (2007, p. 70), refers to "individuals' sense of self, who they are, what their existence means and what they want in life." Identity refers to who you are as a person, your characteristics and personality traits, which include gender, physical qualities, and abilities. Identity is developed as individuals learn about themselves (Tassoni, 2007). It refers to knowing who you are, and knowing who others are (Jenkins, 2008).

Identity relates to how individuals perceive themselves in relation to others and as an awareness of who they are within society (Louw et al., 2007). Identity, therefore, is knowing yourself, knowing where you belong, and knowing what makes you similar to and different from others. It also includes individuals' perceptions of what they believe others think of them (Cottle, 2006). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, identity and sense of self are viewed as similar in meaning, referring to self-development in relation to others.

Furthermore, the description of the self in this study very much builds on the theory of Polster (2005). Polster describes a person as not having one self, but rather a population of selves. This population of selves refer to individuals' different reactions and behaviours in diverse environments and relationships. In the search of who you are, individuals discover many aspects of selves, some being more prevalent than others (Polster, 2005). Some of the more dominant selves form the core of a person's personality. Less dominant selves are often suppressed or hidden, but these also play a critical part in the complete picture of who you are (Polster, 2005). Polster (2005) distinguishes between essential selves and member selves. The essential selves are those which are on the foreground more often and in most circumstances. The member selves are less dominant and may come to the fore only in certain circumstances. Depending on the relationship between individuals, different selves will emerge. In relation to this study, learners may, for example, be outgoing, and confident with their friends with an assertive self on the foreground, but quiet and withdrawn within the teacher-learner relationship, where a more introverted self comes to the fore.

Furthermore, Polster (2005) distinguishes between point and counterpoint selves, which refer to selves that are in the foreground (point), and selves that are in the background (counterpoint). For example, a teacher is not only a teacher, she may also be a mother, and a wife, and a sister. When she is in her class teaching, her assertive self and theatrical self is in the foreground, as she manages her classroom, and brings across knowledge to her learners.

When she is at home, however, her nurturing self comes to the fore, when she is caring for her family. When she is teaching her nurturing self does not disappear, it just moves into the background (counterpoint self), and may emerge when a learner is in need of help or empathy. The self that is in the foreground is referred to by Polster as the point self. These multitudes of selves (or roles) all form part of the individual's make-up, and contribute to the wholeness of the individual. As individuals find themselves in a variety of situations, various selves move in and out of the foreground. Different selves become more or less dominant and visible in different situations. All of these selves influence the individual and form part of the individual's make-up. These different selves are the reason why individuals are adaptable to various situations, and they allow for growth and change to occur. However, growth and change are only possible through the ongoing relationship between the self and its environment.

The individual relates to the environment through three functions of the self, namely the id, ego and personality (Lobb, 2005). The id is the most basic function of the self, and allows the individual to make contact with the world. The ego function of the self, allows the individual to distinguish between *me* and *not me* and can be seen as the negotiator between the id and personality. The ego has the ability to make decisions whether to integrate or reject parts of the field or whether to make contact or to break contact. The personality function of the self relates to *who* the person is, an answer to the question "Who am I?" – how individuals would define themselves (identity). It encompasses the characteristics and attributes of the person. The personality function represents individuals' definitions of themselves, and determines how they make contact with the world (Lobb, 2005). For example, a confident and outgoing person will easily make new friends, whereas a shy, introverted person will take longer to make friends. The three functions can be described as follows: When a learner meets her new teacher, who comes across as strict, for the first time,

a sensation of fear (knots in her stomach) may come to the fore based on previous negative experiences with a teacher who was strict. This sensation of fear would be part of the id function. The personality function would recognise that the individual does not enjoy being exposed to strict teachers and would rather avoid such situations. The ego will then need to negotiate and decide whether the individual should face the teacher or react by trying to avoid the situation. The way in which the individual relates to the environment through these functions will contribute to the sense of self.

The sense of self is a filter through which experience is evaluated and put into perspective (West, 2007). Every experience is evaluated through how individuals see themselves in that situation, and adapt their thoughts and actions accordingly. Each situation has a different impact on individuals, and these various influences shape the development of the self (Mann, 2010). Every situation and experience is evaluated by the individual, by internally asking the following or similar questions: “Who am I in relation to that?” or “How do I compare to that person?” Through this evaluation, a perception of the world, people, and relationships are formed. This forms part of individuals’ subjective experiences, which develops into a sense of self (West, 2007).

The sense of self develops continually over the life-span (Mann, 2010). It changes and adapts as individuals come into contact with new situations and new relationships. The changes in sense of self have an impact on how individuals perceive the world around them (West, 2007). Therefore, reciprocal relationships exist between individuals’ sense of self and the environment in which they function. Changes in the one area will bring about changes in the next, and vice versa (Mann, 2010).

Individuals behave differently in various situations and relationships (West, 2007), and there are as many different selves as there are different situations and relationships (Mann, 2010). Each relationship and experience individuals are involved in, contribute to

how they evaluate themselves, how they behave in the next relationship, as well as in the development of the sense of “who am I?” Each experience and relationship is configured into a pattern of experience, which has been named self-configuration (Polster, 2005). Self-configuration takes place every moment as individuals experience life and relationships. Experiences are classified into new or familiar, comfortable or uncomfortable, good or bad, scary or comforting, likeable or non-likeable (West, 2007). This classification system helps to put the world into perspective, helps individuals to understand the world, and to get to know themselves in terms of experiences by getting to know how these experiences make them feel, and how to behave in diverse situations.

All relationships and experiences have an impact on individuals’ lives, and on their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. It forms the environment (field) in which individuals become who they are (Louw & Kail, 2007). This field in turn forms a crucial part of how the self is configured. The self is formed in an ever changing world through experiences and relationships that have an influence on how the self is configured (Flanagan, 2011). Through relationships individuals perceive their world and themselves. They interact with others and then react on their perception of this interaction. These perceptions of how the individuals see and experience the world have an influence on how the self develops (Flanagan, 2011). The self is formed through relationships with others, and becomes stronger through affirmations, and weaker through disaffirmations (Cottle, 2006). When the opinions of others confirm what individuals think of themselves, the sense of self is strengthened and vice versa.

Polster (2005) further explained this process of configuration by stating that selves form through personal experiences that are grouped together by a configurational reflex. All experiences (significant or not) are registered as raw data, which develops into personal characteristics and eventually forms into a self. As the self develops, individuals fit new experiences into the picture that they have of themselves. Familiar experiences fit into and

strengthen selves that have already been developed, and unfamiliar experiences start the formation of new selves. Each self forms a piece of the puzzle that forms the complete picture of the person. Each of these selves has a voice and should be acknowledged as part of the individual.

According to Hermans (2008), the self can be configured in three ways. The first being when the individual faces a new situation, which leads to “reorganization of the self”, for example when going to a new school. The second way in which the self is configured, takes place when one of the less dominant selves move from the background to the foreground, and a third form of configuration is when two selves work together to form a new self. For example, when the student self and the hardworking self can become a successful self. Past experiences, expectations, and dialogues between selves play an essential role in the configurational process.

As seen from the above discussion, self-configuration is not static, but a dynamic process. Each self has a place and forms an important part of the individual. Selves move from the foreground to the background in various situations, and through this process, the self is constantly being created and recreated. The self is configured through experiences. Similar experiences are clustered together, forming personality traits, and eventually evolving into selves. These experiences occur through constant reciprocal relationships, because people are relational beings. These relationships colour experiences which in turn have an influence on the self-configuration of the individual.

Grade 7 learners have had many relational experiences with family, friends and teachers in their lifetimes so far. All these relationships, as seen in the literature above, play a role in the self-configuration and sense of self development of learners. In the next section attention is given to self-configuration in pre-adolescence and adolescence.

4.1 Self-configuration during pre-adolescence and adolescence.

Some theorists state that sense of self development begins during infancy through recognition of self in the mirror, photographs or in videos (Rochat & Striano, 2010; Rosen & Patterson, 2011). A sense of self starts to form when individuals distinguish between what is “me” and what is “not me”, what is self, and what is other, and according to Rochat & Striano (2010), infants are able to visually distinguish others as separate from the self, which means that sense of self development begins in infancy. In contrast, other theorists believe the formation of the sense of self starts during early adolescence (Swanson, 2010), when individuals start to deal with their varying roles. What is important, however, is that the sense of self becomes more complex during adolescence (Carr, 2006; Meeus, 2011; Rosen & Patterson, 2011; Swanson, 2010). The way in which adolescents see themselves is more complex than in the previous stages of development because adolescents perceive themselves along numerous dimensions and in relation to others (Rosen & Patterson, 2011). They also do not just describe themselves as pretty or clever or shy, but they start to realise that different personality traits come to the fore in different situations (Carr, 2006). This is consistent with Polster’s idea of the development of a variety of selves. As adolescents become more aware of various selves that come forward in different situations, they start thinking more about these selves and how they exist and interact with each other. This is comparable to the configuration of the self as proposed by Polster (2005).

In the pre-adolescent years, children start comparing their own characteristics and skills with those of their peers, and in doing this they start to develop a sense of who they are in relation to others. When children talk about themselves, they start to acknowledge their personality traits and internal characteristics instead of only describing their external characteristics (Louw & Louw, 2007).

Self-concept becomes more complex and differentiated during the pre-adolescent years, as individuals start to realise that not all people they are in contact with have the same opinions. A distinction is also made between true self-concept, which refers to a realistic view of one's strengths and flaws, and a contingent self-concept, which is dependent on approval from others (Harter, 2012).

A further distinction is made between an ideal self and a real self, and this also starts to develop during pre-adolescence (Louw & Louw, 2007). The ideal self is who the child would like to be (for example a good sportsman), whereas the real self is who the child really is (the child tries hard, but is only an average sportsman). If there is a big discrepancy between the ideal and real self, it can have a negative impact on the sense of self. Furthermore, adolescents become aware of a true self and a false self. The false self is comparable to a mask, used in situations where they are afraid to show their true self, or feel that they have to act in a certain way to impress their peers (Louw et al., 2007). This need by adolescents to impress is important because they start to form perceptions of how they think others evaluate them (Carr, 2006).

Sense of self development is a continuous process and in adolescence it develops during a time of confusion, experimentation and questioning of values and rules (Mann, 2010). Many factors play a role in the development of the sense of self, and relationships (with parents, teachers, peers and society) are just one of these factors (Louw et al., 2007). A sense of belonging also plays an important role in individuals' self-development, and this takes place when adolescents feel like they are part of a group with whom they can identify. It is, however, important that adolescents do not merge into the group so completely as to lose their own individuality (Carr, 2006).

During adolescence, the questions of "Who am I?" and "What am I?" become more prevalent as adolescents begin to develop a sense of self. When adolescents have a clear

understanding and answer to these questions, a stable sense of self will develop, which provides stability and healthy adjustment (Meeus, 2011).

Self-configuration and sense of self development are complex, ongoing processes that are impacted by the environment, relationships and experiences. With this in mind, it is clear that the school environment and relationships with teachers play a significant role in the self-configuration of learners. In the next section, the theoretical frameworks that support self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship will be explored.

5. Theoretical Frameworks

In this section the theoretical frameworks that support this study will be explored. Field theory, Bioecological theory and the Dialogical theory of self will be discussed.

5.1 Field Theory.

Kurt Lewin is father of the Gestalt Field Theory (Mann, 2010). According to Field theory, holism is significant, proposing that a system cannot be evaluated in parts, but that the system as a whole should be considered. Within a whole, there are many parts which are interdependent on each other and any change in one of the parts will have an influence on all the other parts in the system (Wagemans, Elder, Kubovy, Palmer, Peterson, Singh, & Von der Heydt, 2012). When considering humans, the same principle applies because humans function within systems: their families, their communities, their cultures, their schools. Any changes within any of these parts will have an impact on the individual, and any changes within the individual will have an impact on the rest of the system.

In the field approach, individuals are not seen as isolated entities, and their concerns, problems or relationships should be considered within the whole environment in which they function (Mann, 2010). Within this approach, every encounter, every interaction and every experience collectively shape individuals into who they are. It is these experiences that are woven into the development of individuals' sense of self.

Individuals have the ability to change and adapt to circumstances and environments in order to remain or move back into a state of harmony or comfort (Mann, 2010). This is called self-regulation. When individuals self-regulate by changing behaviours or searching for new experiences, their environment or field is impacted. Any changes in the field, however, also have an impact on individuals. All aspects of self-development take place within this reciprocal relationship between individual and field, which has an impact on how an individual's self is configured (Louw et al., 2007).

An example from the school environment could be used to explain. If a teacher has a very good relationship with her learners but she experiences a change in her personal circumstances, her relationship with her learners might change. She may have experienced the death of a parent, which puts her in a vulnerable position emotionally. This might make her feel less understanding of her learners' needs as she battles to come to terms with her own emotions, and she might have less patience. The learners may not understand this change in the teacher's behaviour, and this, in turn could impact their relationships with peers or family members, and it could also have an impact on their performance in school, and on how they feel about themselves (sense of self). Learners might then adapt their behaviour by not showing any more interest in that teacher's class (self-regulation).

From this example it can be seen that one change in the field could lead to many other changes within that environment. It can be compared to the ripple effect that takes place when a stone is thrown into water.

5.2 Bioecological Theory.

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory is based on the field theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). He states that context is extremely important in an individual's life. Parents, immediate family, teachers as well as peers have an influence on how individuals develop (Louw & Louw, 2007). Individuals find themselves in a variety of settings throughout their lives, which impact on their development and growth (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). "Over the life course, human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving bio-psychological human organism and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate external environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 6).

Human development takes place through the relations between individuals and their ever changing immediate environments, as well as the larger contexts in which they exist. Four systems within which individuals live are distinguished, namely the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The microsystem refers to individuals' relations with the immediate environment in which they function. There are a variety of microsystems of which individuals are a part, for example family life, classroom environment, and social group (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). These are the systems which are closest to individuals. Socialisation and education form part of the microsystems of individuals (Coleman, 2013).

A mesosystem is a compilation of microsystems that all interact with each other. These interactions between microsystems have an influence on the development of

individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). An example of this could be the interaction between home life and school life, as well as influences from peer groups or church groups. Similarities and differences between these settings are important. When there is a sense of continuity between microsystems, it is better for healthier development, as there is no confusion of values and norms. For example, when the family values and the values of the social group are similar, individuals will not feel confused regarding which system to follow (Coleman, 2013). Mesosystems are formed every time individuals move into new settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

An exosystem is a setting in which individuals are not active participants, but that still have an influence on, or is influenced by these individuals. Examples of exosystems are the work place of a parent, or the family environment of a teacher or friend (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Coleman, 2013). If teachers have problems in their personal lives, it may have an effect on their mood in the classroom, which in turn has an influence on the learners (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This is consistent to what the Field theory proposes.

The macrosystem is a much broader, larger system of which individuals form a part. Within the macrosystem, cultural influences, the values and traditions of a community and the paradigms of a society and the country have an influence on how individuals behave (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). In the context of this study the cultures of Gauteng and of South Africans would be relevant.

The chronosystem was added to the theory by Bronfenbrenner after the initial development of the first four systems. It recognises that systems change over time, and that these changes influence how people behave. Research and technology bring about changes in behaviour (Coleman, 2013). For example, the way people dressed fifty years ago is very different to the way they dress today. Another example is social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, which have an impact on how people relate to and communicate with each other.

5.3 Dialogical Theory of Self.

William James (1890) first wrote about the self in relation to the environment in the 1890's. He stated that the self is not only an internal entity, but that it is also extended externally to the environment (Hermans, 2012; James, 1890). According to James, there are two aspects of the self, ie. the I and the Me. The I is who individuals see themselves as, and the Me extends to external entities in which individuals recognise themselves (Bertau, 2004). The self is “dialogically extended to an independent other” (Hermans, 2012, p. 2), meaning that a dialogical self exists through others. Individuals do not live monadic existences, but are constantly in relation to others. People are social creatures and therefore the self configures through social interchange and intersubjectivity (Hermans, 2008).

The self is further developed through imaginary dialogues that individuals have with themselves and this forms an essential part of how individuals make meaning of their worlds. Through thoughts and imagination, individuals communicate with themselves and construct a reality. This implies that individuals are also in constant dialogue with themselves (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010).

Significant others play an important part in self-configuration, as they make a deep impression on individuals' lives, and also play a part in internal dialogue (Hermans, 2008). “Others” are important in the configuration of the self, through the way in which the individual perceives “others” to evaluate them. Social interactions have an external influence on the dynamics and configuration of the self (Hermans, 2008). The self emerges through contact and experiences within individuals' environments, which include social relationships (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010).

The dialogical self brings the concepts of self (which has been referred to as something that happens in the mind of the individual) and dialogue (happening between two or more individuals) together (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Therefore, the self does

not only develop through internal conversations, but also through dialogues and relationships with others. These dialogues do not only refer to dialogues between individuals, but also include the voices of groups, communities and cultures. Through dialogue, the individual learns, evaluates and responds (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010), thus developing and configuring the self.

Multiple I-positions develop, determined by various experiences or evaluations from others. Examples could be I-as-teenager, I-as-learner, I-as-daughter. Each I-position has a voice, and dialogues exist between the various I-positions. These voices become different characters in the story of the individual, and through dialogue, the characters can influence each other. Some characters are more dominant than others, and can fluctuate in various situations. Each I-position tells its own story based on its experiences. These different characters exchange information about their perspectives, and in doing this, a complex self is constructed (Bertau, 2004; Hermans 2008). (This is comparable to the multiple selves that Polster talks about).

In a healthy dialogical self, the various characters are in dialogue with one another, and bring appropriate characters to the fore for varying circumstances. Unity is found in the “simultaneous, cooperative and dialogical relationship between different sub-selves” (Hermans, 2008). It is this phenomenon that allows an individual to be flexible and to adapt to different situations through self-regulation.

6. Conclusion

From the theoretical discussion it seems evident that humans are in continuous relationships with others and with their environments throughout their whole lives. Experiences within these relationships contribute to the configuration of the self and eventually the development of a sense of self. Individuals learn through relationships, about

their environments, and about themselves. Relationships are therefore the platform through which individuals form an opinion of themselves, and nurturing relationships play a positive role in the well-being of individuals. Relationships are the building blocks for future relationships, as new relationships are judged by the experiences of past relationships.

Due to this relational nature and the time learners spend at school, schools provide a rich social experience wherein learners are exposed to many relationships with adult-figures and with peers. Teachers play a significant role in the relational experiences of learners. Positive relationships with teachers have been shown to have positive influences on the learning process, as well as on the way in which individuals adapt to life in general. With this said, the experiences of the learner within the teacher-learner relationship therefore play a significant role in the self-configuration of the learner.

The Field theory, Bioecological theory and the Dialogical theory of self, seem to be appropriate theoretical frameworks for this study as they all support the importance of relationships regarding self-configuration. It is thus clear that anything that happens within the environment of the individual has an impact on the individual and that the individual also impacts on the environment. The self does not just develop by itself without interaction from others or the environment and this interaction determines self-configuration.

7. References

- Australian Capital Territory Department of Education and Training. (2005). *Teaching and learning in the middle years in the ACT*. Canberra: ACT DET.
- Araya, R., Hu, X., Heron, J., Enoch, M., Evans, J., Lewis, G., Nutt, D., & Goldman, D. (2008). Effects of stressful life events, maternal depression, and 5-HTTLPR genotype on emotional symptoms in pre-adolescent children. *American Journal of Medical Genetics, Part B: Neuropsychiatric genetics*, *150B*(5), 670-682.
- Bertau, M. (2004). The theory of the dialogical self and a proposition for modelling. In M. Bertau (Ed.), *Aspects of the dialogical self*, *11*, 9-35.
- Blackwell, L. S., Trzesniewski, K. H. & Dweck, C. S. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. *Child Development*, *78*, 246-263. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.00995.x.
- Blakemore, S. (2012). Development of the social brain in adolescence. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, *105*, 111-116. doi: 10.1258/jrsm.2011.110221.
- Blakemore S., Burnett, S., & Dahl, R. E. (2010). The role of puberty in the developing adolescent brain. *Human Brain Mapping*, *31*(6), 926-933.
- Brinthaup, T. W., & Lipka, R. P. (2002). Understanding early adolescent self and identity: An introduction. In T. W. Brinthaup, & R. P. Lipka (Eds.), *Understanding early adolescent self and identity: Applications and interventions* (pp. 1-24). Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, *July*, 513-531.

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). The bioecological theory of human development. In U. Bronfenbrenner (Ed.), *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development* (pp. 3-15). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brown, D. F., & Knowles, T. (2007). *What every middle school teacher should know* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Buyse, E., Verschueren, K., Verachtert, P., & Van Damme, J. (2009). Predicting school adjustment in early elementary school: Impact of teacher-child relationship quality and relational classroom climate. *The Elementary School Journal*, *110*(2), 119-141.
- Callero, P. L. (2003). The sociology of the self. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *29*, 115-133. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100057.
- Carr, A. (2006). *The handbook of child and adolescent clinical psychology: A contextual approach* (2nd ed.). East Sussex: Routledge.
- Cattley, G. (2004). The impact of teacher-parent-peer support on students' well-being and adjustment to the middle years of schooling. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *11*(4), 269-282.
- Charlesworth, R. (2014). *Understanding child development* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Coffey, A. (2013). Relationships: The key to successful transition from primary school to secondary school. *Improving Schools*, *16*(3), 261-271. doi: 10.1177/1365480213505181.

- Coleman, M. (2013). *Empowering family-teacher partnerships: Building connections within diverse communities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cornelius-White, J. (2007). Learner-centered teacher-student relationships are effective: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 77*, 77-113. doi: 10.3102/003465430298563.
- Cottle, T. J. (2006). *A sense of self: The work of affirmation*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Crone, E. A. (2009). Executive functions in adolescence: Inferences from brain and behavior. *Developmental Science, 12*(6), 825-830.
- Crowley, K. (2014). *Child development: A practical introduction*. London: Sage.
- Danielsen, A. G., Wium, N., Wilhelmsen, B. U., & Wold, B. (2010). Perceived support provided by teachers and classmates and students' self-reported initiative. *Journal of School Psychology, 48*(3), 247-267. doi: 10.1016/j.jsp.2010.02.002.
- Diener, E., & Chan, M. Y. (2011). Happy people live longer: Subjective well-being contributes to health and longevity. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-being, 3*(1), 1-43. doi: 10.1111/j.1758-0854.2010.01045.x.
- Driscoll, K. C., Wang, L., Mashburn, A. J., & Pianta, R. C. (2011). Fostering supportive teacher-child relationships: Intervention implementation in a state-funded preschool program. *Early Education and Development, 22*(4), 593-619. doi: 10.1080/10409289.2010.502015.

- Dupree, D. (2010). Cognitive development for adolescents in a global era: A social justice issue? In D. P. Swanson, M. C. Edwards, & M. B. Spencer (Eds.), *Adolescence: Development during a global era* (pp. 63-92). Burlington, MA: Elsevier.
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B, Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing student's social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child development*, 82(1), 405-432.
- Eggen, P., & Kauchak, D. (2007). *Windows on classrooms: Educational psychology*. (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Fair, C. D., Hopkins, K., & Decker, A. (2012). Developmental mentoring, relationship quality and school adjustment: The Chapel Buddy programme. *Early Child Development and Care*, 182(1), 107-121.
- Flanagan, L. M. (2011). The theory of self psychology. In J. Berzoff, L. M. Flanagan, & P. Hertz (Eds.), *Inside out and outside in: Psychodynamic clinical theory and psychopathology in contemporary multicultural contexts* (3rd ed.) (pp. 158-187). Plymouth, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Gest, S. D., & Davidson, A. J. (2011). A developmental perspective on risk, resilience and prevention. In M. K. Underwood, & L. H. Rosen (Eds.), *Social development: Relationships in infancy, childhood and adolescence* (pp. 427-454). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Gilmore, K. J., & Meersand, P. (2014). *Normal child and adolescent development: A psychodynamic primer*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.

- Government Communications (GCIS). (2013). *Admission to school*. Retrieved from http://www.services.gov.za/services/content/Home/ServicesForPeople/EducationAndTraining/School/AdmissiontoapublicorindependentschoolgradeRto12/en_ZA
- Grusec, J. E. (2011). Family: Social and emotional development. *Annual review of psychology*, 62, 243-269. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.121208.131650.
- Harter, S. (2012). *The construction of the self: Developmental and sociocultural foundations*. (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Harmening, W. M. (2010). *The criminal triad: Psychosocial development of the criminal personality type*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas.
- Hermans, H. J. M. (2008). How to perform research on the basis of dialogical self theory? Introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 21, 185-199. doi: 10.1080/10720530802070684.
- Hermans, H. J. M. (2012). Dialogical self theory and the increasing multiplicity of I-positions in a globalizing society: An introduction. In H.J.M. Hermans (Ed.), *Applications of Dialogical Self Theory: New directions for child and adolescent development*, 137, 1-21.
- Hermans, H., & Hermans-Konopka, A. (2010). *Dialogical Self Theory: Positioning and counter-positioning society*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Holden, G. W., Vittrup, B., & Rosen, L. H. (2011). Families, parenting and discipline. In M. K. Underwood, & L. H. Rosen (Eds.), *Social development: Relationships in infancy, childhood and adolescence* (pp. 127-152). New York, NY: Guilford.

- Hook, D. (2004). Psychoanalytic, cognitive and psychosocial developmental psychology: The hows and whys. In D. Hook, J. Watts, & K. Cockcroft (Eds.), *Developmental Psychology* (pp. 3-13). Lansdowne: UCT Press.
- Hook, D., & Cockcroft, K. (2004). Basic concepts and principles in developmental psychology. In D. Hook, J. Watts, & K. Cockcroft (Eds.). *Developmental Psychology* (pp. 14-28). Lansdowne: UCT Press.
- Howes, C. (2000). Social-emotional classroom climate in child care, child-teacher relationships and children's second grade peer relations. *Social Development*, 9(2), 191-204.
- James, W. (1890). The self and it's selves. In F. Burkhardt (Ed.), *The principles of psychology, Vol 1.* (pp. 279-316), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jenkins, R. (2008). *Social identity* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Kagitibasi, C. (2014). *Family and human development across cultures*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Kostelnik, M. J., Soderman, A. K., Whiren, A. P., Rupiper, M., & Gregory, K. M. (2012). *Guiding children's social development and learning: Theory and skills* (8th ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.
- Lobb, M. S. (2005). Classical Gestalt therapy theory. In A. L. Woldt & S. M. Toman (Eds.), *Gestalt therapy: History, theory and practice* (pp. 21-40). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Louw, A., & Louw, D. (2007). Middelkinderjare. In D. Louw, & A. Louw (Ed.), *Die ontwikkeling van die kind en die adolessent* (pp. 213-275). Bloemfontein: Psychology Publications.

- Louw, A., Louw, D., & Ferns, I. (2007). Adolessensie. In D. Louw, & A. Louw (Ed.), *Die ontwikkeling van die kind en die adolessent* (pp. 277-347). Bloemfontein: Psychology Publications.
- Louw, D., & Kail, R. (2007). Basiese konsepte van kindersielkunde. In D. Louw, & A. Louw (Ed.), *Die ontwikkeling van die kind en die adolessent* (pp. 1-43). Bloemfontein: Psychology Publications.
- Martin, A. J., & Dowson, M. (2009). Interpersonal relationships, motivation, engagement, and achievement: Yields for theory, current issues, and educational practice. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 327-365. doi: 10.3102/0034654308325583.
- Mann, D. (2010). *Gestalt therapy: 100 key points and techniques*. [Kindle Edition]. Mobipocket.com
- McLaughlin, C., & Clarke, B. (2010). Relational matters: A review of the impact of school experience on mental health in early adolescence. *Educational & Child Psychology*, 27(1), 91-103.
- Meeus, W. (2011). The study of adolescent identity formation: A review of longitudinal research. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21, 75-94. doi: 10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00716.x.
- Meleis, A. I. (2010). Theoretical development of transitions: Role insufficiency and role supplementation: A conceptual framework. In A. I. Meleis (Ed.). *Transitions theory: Middle-range and situation specific theories in nursing research and practice* (pp. 13-23). New York, NY: Springer.
- Miller, M. A., & Stoeckel, P. R. (2010). *Client education: Theory and practice*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

- Mitchell, S. A. (2014). *Relationality: From attachment to intersubjectivity*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Moshman, D. (2011). *Adolescent rationality and development: Cognition, morality and identity* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Neff, K. D., & McGeehee, P. (2010). Self-compassion and psychological resilience among adolescents and young adults. *Self and Identity*, 9, 225-240.
doi: 10.1080/15298860902979307.
- Newman, B., & Newman, P. (2012). *Development through life: A psychosocial approach* (11th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Philippon, P. (2009). *The emergent self: An existential-Gestalt approach*. London: Karnac.
- Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., & Allen, J. P. (2012). Teacher-student relationships and engagement: Conceptualising, measuring and improving the capacity of classroom interactions. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Polster, E. (2005). *A population of selves*. Gouldsboro, ME: The Gestalt Journal Press.
- Prilleltensky, I. (2005). Promoting well-being: Time for a paradigm shift in health and human services. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 33(66), 53-60.
- Raikes, H. A., & Thompson, R. A. (2005). Relationships past, present and future: Reflections on attachment in middle childhood. In K. A. Kerns, & R. A. Richardson (Eds.). *Attachment in middle childhood* (pp. 255-282). New York, NY: Guilford.

- Rochat, P., & Striano, T. (2010). Social-cognitive development in the first year. In P. Rochat (Ed.). *Early social cognition: Understanding others in the first months of life* (pp. 3-34). Florence, KY: Psychology Press.
- Roorda, D. L., Koomen, H. M. Y., Spilt, J. L., & Oort, F. J. (2011). The influence of affective teacher-student relationships on students' school engagement and achievement: A meta-analytic approach. *Review of Educational Research*, *81*(4), 493-529. doi: 10.3102/0034654311421793.
- Rosen, L. H., & Patterson, M. M. (2011). The self and identity. In M. K. Underwood, & L. H. Rosen (Eds.), *Social development: Relationships in infancy, childhood and adolescence* (pp. 73-100). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Rudasill, K. M. (2011). Child temperament, teacher-child interactions, and teacher-child relationships: A longitudinal investigation from first to third grade. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *26*, 147-156. Doi: 10.1016/j.ecresq.2010.07.002.
- Rudasill, K. M., Reio, T. G., Jr., Stipanovic, N., & Taylor, J. E. (2010). A longitudinal study of student-teacher relationship quality, difficult temperament, and risky behavior from childhood to early adolescence. *Journal of School Psychology*, *48*, 389-412. doi:10.1016/j.jsp.2010.05.001.
- Sameroff, A. J. (2014). A dialectic integration of development for the study of psychopathology. In M. L. Lewis, & K. D. Rudolph (Eds.). *Handbook of developmental psychopathology* (pp. 25-44). New York, NY: Springer.
- Shaffer, D. R., & Kipp, K. (2014). *Developmental psychology: Childhood & adolescence* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

- Shafto, P., Goodman, N. D., & Griffiths, T. L. (2014). A rational account of pedagogical reasoning: Teaching by, and learning from, examples. *Cognitive Psychology*, *71*, 55-89. doi: 10.1016/j.cogpsych.2013.12.004.
- Slater, A., & Tiggemann, M. (2011). Gender differences in adolescent sport participation, teasing, self-objectification and body-image concerns. *Journal of Adolescence*, *34*(3), 455-463.
- Smyth, J., Down, B., & McInerney, P. (2010). *Hanging in with kids in tough times: Engagement in contexts of educational disadvantage in relational school*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Somerville, L. H., Jones, R. M., & Casey, B. J. (2010). A time of change: Behavioral and neural correlates of adolescent sensitivity to appetitive and aversive environmental cues. *Adolescent Brain Development: Current themes and future directions*, *72*(1), 124-133. doi: 10.1016/j.bandc.2009.07.003.
- Spilt, J. L., Koomen, H. M. Y., & Thijs, J. T. (2011). Teacher wellbeing: The importance of teacher-student relationships. *Educational Psychology Review*, *23*, 457-477. doi: 10.1007/s10648-011-9170-y.
- State Government of Victoria. (2013). *Wellbeing*. Retrieved from <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/wellbeing?open> Date of access: 30 Jul. 2013.
- Steinberg, L., Dahl, R., Keating, D., Kupfer, D. J., Masten, A. S., & Pine D. S. (2006). The study of developmental psychopathology in adolescence: Integrating affective neuroscience with the study of context. In D. Cicchetti, & D. J. Cohen (Eds.).

- Developmental psychopathology: Developmental neuroscience* (2nd ed.), pp. 710-741. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Swanson, D. P. (2010). Adolescent psychosocial processes: Identity, stress and competence. In D. P. Swanson, M. C. Edwards, & M. B. Spencer (Eds.), *Adolescence: Development during a global era* (pp. 93-124). Burlington, MA: Elsevier.
- Tassoni, P. (2007). *Child development: 6 to 16 years*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Theron, L., & Dalzell, C. (2006). The specific Life Orientation needs of Grade 9 learners in the Vaal Triangle Region. *South African Journal of Education*, 26(3), 397-412.
- Van der Aalsvoort, G. M. (2011). Early social development and schooling. In J. Sanna (Ed.), *Social and emotional aspects of learning* (pp. 143-148). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Vygotsky, L. (1998). Dynamics and structure of the adolescent's personality. In R. W. Rieber, & A. S. Carton (Eds.), *The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky: Child Psychology* (pp. 167-186). New York, NY: Springer Science & Business Media
- Wagemans, J., Elder, J. H., Kubovy, M., Palmer, S. E., Peterson, M. A., Singh, M., & Von der Heydt, R. (2012). A century of Gestalt psychology in visual perception: I. Perceptual grouping and figure-ground organization. *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(6), 1172-1217. doi:10.1037/a0029333.
- Walsh, D. (2004). *Why do they act that way? A survival guide to the adolescent brain for you and your teen*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Wang, M., Brinkworth, M., & Eccles, J. (2013). Moderating effects of teacher-student relationships in adolescent trajectories of emotional and behavioral adjustment. *Developmental Psychology*, 49(4), 690-705. doi: 10.1037/a0027916.

West, M. (2007). *Feeling, being and the sense of self: A new perspective on identity, affect and narcissistic disorders*. London: Karnac.

Willerton, J. (2010). *The psychology of relationships*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Yeung, R., & Leadbeater, B. (2010). Adults make a difference: The protective effects of parent and teacher emotional support on problems of peer-victimized adolescents. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 38(1), 80-98. doi: 10.1002/jcop.

Yurgelun-Todd, D. (2007). Emotional and cognitive changes during adolescence. *Current opinion in Neurobiology*, 17, 251-257.

SECTION B: ARTICLE

Grade 7 learners' self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship

Georgina du Plessis

Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies, Africa Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research, Faculty of Health Sciences, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa

Email: sheepsdps@gmail.com

Tel: +27 83 381 1113

Humans are relational beings, and the self is configured through social experiences. All relationships have an impact on the functioning of the individual and relationships form a vital part of human development. The school climate, which includes teacher-learner relationships, especially plays a role in learners' academic, social and emotional development. The aim of this article is to explore Grade 7 learners' self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship. Grade 7 learners are in a transitional phase of their lives, having to deal with changes as they enter adolescence, as well as the looming transition from primary school to high school. Much research has been done focussing on teacher-learner relationships, but very little focussing specifically on the self-configuration experiences of the learners. This qualitative research project explored the subjective experiences of 12 participants by means of semi-structured interviews and group discussions. Learners had both positive and negative experiences within the teacher-learner relationship which led to positive or negative feelings within themselves respectively. Teacher-learner relationships further played a role in self-regulation of learners through motivation, lessons learnt from teachers and learning from past experiences within the teacher-learner relationship.

Keywords: sense of self; self-configuration; adolescence; teacher-learner relationships

Please note: referencing in this section is done according to the requirements for Research Papers in Education

Introduction

All relationships have an impact on the functioning of the individual (Cozolino, 2010; De Young, 2014; Goldstein, Miehl, and Ringel, 2009) and relationships form a vital part of human development (Goldstein, Miehl, and Ringel, 2009; Kostelnik, Gregory, Soderman, and Whiren, 2012). Social, emotional, moral, physical and behavioural development of the individual are affected by relationships (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2009). Relationships not only have an influence on behaviour, but also on the individuals' perspectives of the world and on their sense of self, and form a major part of how the self is configured (Kostelnik et al., 2012; Shaffer and Kipp, 2014). Relationships thus provide experience through which individuals evaluate the environment (Christodoulous, 2013; De Young, 2014; Enfield, 2013) and it is within this environment that self-configuration takes place.

The school environment, where relationships are formed with peers as well as with teachers (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2009), is a place where learners not only gain cognitive knowledge, but are also exposed to opportunities in which social dynamics are experienced (Kostelnik et al., 2012; Santrock, 2009; Zullig, Koopman, Patton, and Ubbes, 2010). Zullig et al. (2010) go further by stating that the school climate, which includes teacher-learner relationships, not only affects learners' academic and social development, but also their emotional development.

Relationships with teachers form a vital part of the learners' school career, as learners spend many hours in interaction with teachers. Supportive relationships between learners and teachers enhance learners' healthy adjustment to the school environment (Adebanji, Phatudi, and Hartell, 2014; Shen, McCaughtry, Martin, Fahlman, and Garn, 2012). A positive teacher-learner relationship furthermore facilitates a sense of belonging in learners (Asanova, 2005), which means that learners feel like they are an important part of the school environment.

When individuals feel connected with others, a sense of relatedness develops. Through this relatedness, individuals evaluate the social world around them, and also gain insight into themselves (Shen et al., 2012). As individuals gain insight of themselves through relationships, a sense of self starts to develop.

The sense of self refers to the question “who am I?”, and incorporates an individual’s personality traits, characteristics and roles. The sense of self develops as individuals make sense of and organise the world around them (West, 2007). This happens as a continuous process of observation, exploration, and adjustment (Kostelnik et al., 2012). This is consistent with the postmodern social constructionist views which claim that the self is a social construct and is formed in relation to the environment (West, 2007). “Others” are critical in individuals’ sense of self development, as interactions with “others” play a significant role in how individuals perceive themselves and their world (West, 2007). Adolescents especially, become more focussed on relationships as they form a more important element of how individuals feel about themselves (McConville, 2013; Tassoni, 2007). The sense of self develops as adolescents become more aware of their uniqueness and/or similarities to others, and through evaluation of themselves within the social environment (Shaffer and Kipp, 2014).

Positive, strong, supportive relationships lay a firm foundation for exploring new environments and the development of a healthy sense of self (Christodoulous, 2013; Van Niekerk, Fradgley, and Van Niekerk, 2010). The way in which teachers treat learners has an enormous effect on how learners evaluate themselves (Kostelnik et al., 2012).

According to Kostelnik et al. (2012), one of the vital roles teachers should play, is to help learners see themselves in a positive light. Supportive teacher-learner relationships lead to confident learners who make good choices and have a healthy, positive sense of self,

whereas negative teacher-learner relationships lead to learners with lower motivation levels and a weaker sense of self (Santrock, 2009).

Many studies have focussed on the relationships in the school environment (Froiland and Davison, 2014; Marsh, McGee, and Williams, 2014; Wang, Wang, Gu, Zhan, Yang, and Barnard, 2014), and have found that supportive teacher-learner relationships have a positive effect on learners' academic achievements and on their self-perspectives, but no studies (that the researcher is aware of) have focussed on the learners' self-configuration experiences from the learners' point of view.

For Grade 7 learners strong teacher-learner relationships are very important as these learners are in the pre-adolescent phase which is a development stage characterised by many uncertainties. The start of adolescence is called the "transition age" by Formichov and Formichov (2014), because it is considered a period of numerous conflicts. During adolescence, adolescents come to realise that they are not the same in all contexts, and that their actions and characteristics change in varying situations (Rosen and Patterson, 2011). Adolescents spend more time thinking about who they are becoming, and about what their role in the world is (McConville, 2013). It is a time in which a significant amount of self-reflection and self-evaluation takes place.

This transitional phase for Grade 7 learners becomes more of a challenge, as they need to prepare themselves for the transition from primary school to high school. In high school a much larger and more complex society exists, and the teacher-learner relationship is not as personal as it was in primary school (Santrock, 2009). Moving from a well-known, relatively safe environment, to the unknown is daunting, but for learners with a strong sense of self, the adjustment will most probably be smoother. Positive teacher-learner relationships could contribute to an easier transition (Jindal-Snape and Miller, 2008). In order to explore the current experiences of Grade 7 learners regarding their self-configuration, the following

research question was asked: How do Grade 7 learners experience self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship?

In order to answer the research question and as basis for the research, three theoretical frameworks serve as philosophical underpinnings for the research process, namely the field theory, bioecological theory of Bronfenbrenner and the dialogical theory of self.

The field theory proposes that individuals cannot be regarded in isolation, without considering all the elements surrounding them. The settings and interactions encompassing individuals play a role in their development and self-configuration. The environment in which individuals function, have an impact on them, and they in turn have an impact on the environment. This continuous reciprocal relationship between individual and field (environment) is essential in the development of individuals, and on how they perceive themselves (McConville, 2013; Reynolds, Turner, Branscombe, Mavor, Bizumic, and Subasic, 2010).

This means that individuals form part of a multifaceted environment, which includes immediate surroundings, neighbourhood, school settings as well as interactions with other individuals (Holden, Vittrup, and Rosen, 2011). People are in constant interaction with their environment, through which they gain experience, perceptions and knowledge. Phillipson (2009) proposes that there is no “self” without “other”, and that self-development occurs through constant interaction and comparison with others, which supports the concept of the field theory as well as the dialogical theory of self, which is discussed below.

The bioecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) similarly proposes that the environment in which individuals function, plays a role in how they develop, and in the way they evaluate themselves. Bronfenbrenner identified systems within which individuals exist, and these systems influence one another as well as the individual. Any changes in one system result in changes in all the other systems, and vice versa.

William James (2010), father of the dialogical theory of self, is another classical theorist who stated that individuals and environment cannot be examined as separate entities, and that the self develops through experience and relations with others. “The self is organised through socialization in a context of dialogue” (Van Niekerk, Fradgley, and Van Niekerk, 2010, 400). Therefore, the self is configured through relationships and communication with others.

The abovementioned theories emphasised the significance of self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship. These relationships form part of the environment in which learners function, and everything that happens in the environment influences the learner. All relationships, interactions and experiences help to form and shape the individual and to configure the self.

Methodology

Research approach and context of the study

The study was approved by the North-West University under the ethical code NWU-00060-12-A1.

Qualitative research allows the researcher to gain insight into the participants’ personal experiences and perceptions (Saldaña, 2011), and therefore this approach was used in this study. The researcher specifically wanted to gain a deeper understanding of how learners experienced self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship. Due to individuals all being unique, it was important to delve into each one’s personal experiences. The researcher made use of the case study method for the design of the research, because it allows for a deeper insight into participants’ thoughts and ideas within a single setting (Saldaña, 2011). The research took place in only one school, with a small number of

participants, and therefore the case study method was ideal.

The research site was an ex-Model C school, which is located in an urban suburb south of Johannesburg. There were approximately one thousand two hundred learners in the school from Grade 1 to Grade 7. The school has learners from both genders who are from a variety of cultures and racial groups.

There are approximately 50 teachers and 16 administrative staff members working at the school. Some teachers are employed by the Gauteng Education Department, but the school also employs teachers paid by the School Governing Body. The learners have access to a modern library, computer centres and a variety of extramural activities. The school is well maintained with sufficient facilities for the learners to use and enjoy. In Grade 7 there are 153 learners in four classes. Each subject is taught by a subject specialist, which means that for every subject there is only one teacher, and each teacher only teaches one subject.

Participants

The population consisted of the Grade 7 learners who voluntarily participated. Convenience and purposive sampling was used, because the participants were easily accessible to the researcher, as the researcher was an educator at the school in which the research took place. Any learner in Grade 7 was allowed to participate in the research, regardless of their age or gender. The only criteria was that they had to get consent from their parents, and that they had not been previously taught by the researcher. It was also made clear participants would not be forced into participating in the research project. All learners who showed an interest in taking part in the research were given a consent letter to be signed by their parents.

Twelve learners, consisting of eight girls and four boys returned their signed consent letters, and all twelve were used as participants. The participants each signed an assent form.

Consent was also obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education, the school principal and the parents of the participants.

Data gathering

During the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to draw a mind map, showing themselves and how their teachers had made an impact on who they were. The mind map was not primarily used as a data-gathering method, but rather to provide the participants with the opportunity to get their thoughts flowing. It was used as a discussion point from which to talk about how participants had experienced self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship.

The interviews were casual and relaxed, giving participants the opportunity to be comfortable and reflect on their experiences with teachers. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Parents and participants were aware that interviews would be recorded in advance, and gave permission for this by signing the consent and assent forms. Names were not included in the transcriptions in order to assure anonymity, and a number was allocated to each participant.

After the completion of the individual interviews, two group discussions were held, consisting of six participants each. These were the same participants that took part in the individual interviews. Before the group discussions, the researcher worked through the data from the individual interviews, and identified the following broad questions that were put to the participants during the group discussions:

- How do you experience relationships with teachers?
- What do teachers with whom you have a teacher-learner relationship mean in your life?

- What have you learned about yourself in this teacher-learner relationship?

The group discussions were informal and spontaneous, giving the participants an opportunity to voice their opinions and experiences in a comfortable, safe setting. The group interviews were also recorded and transcribed verbatim, using the same participant codes as in the individual interviews. After transcribing all the data, the researcher had further discussions with some of the participants, in order to clarify any uncertainties that had arisen from the data. The goal of these “member checking” interviews was to assure that the researcher was clear about what the participant had wanted to bring across. The group discussions, as well as the “member checking” interviews with some of the participants, contributed to the trustworthiness of the data. These interviews were also transcribed and added to the data.

Data Analysis

The transcribed data was read, and re-read in order for the researcher to become familiar with the content. Thematic analyses (Braun and Clark, 2013) were used to organise the data into possible themes and sub-themes. This was done by highlighting emergent topics relating to the research question, and grouping them into possible categories. Possible emergent themes (Schurink, Fouché and de Vos, 2011) and sub-themes were plotted out in a table drawn up by the researcher, with the corresponding data placed under each heading. Initially, many broad themes were identified, which overlapped each other, but this was part of the process of sifting through and organising the data. All data that was relevant to the research question was placed into themes. This process is called complete coding (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This process was done over and over, until the researcher felt satisfied that the themes and sub-themes that emerged were representative of the participants’ experiences.

Findings and discussion

After completing the data analysis, three themes with subthemes were identified, relating to the learners' self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship. These themes and their subthemes will be presented below.

Theme 1: Learners' experiences of teachers within the teacher-learner relationship

All learners are in contact with teachers every day, throughout their schooling careers, and the relationships that form with teachers play a role in the sense of self development of the learners (Amini and Amini, 2012; Dupont, Galand, Nils, and Hospel, 2014; Rosen and Patterson, 2011; Wentzel and Brophy, 2014). Some relationships are positive, some are negative, and with some teachers there is no depth or connection.

All the participants had positive experiences within the teacher-learner relationship, but most of the participants also reported negative experiences with some of their teachers. Firstly, the negative experiences will be discussed, after which the positive experiences will be looked at.

Sub-theme 1.1: Negative experiences within the teacher-learner relationship

The negative experiences within the teacher-learner relationship were characterised by learners feeling that teachers didn't like them, and did not want to get to know them on a deeper level. Participants reported that some teachers did not want to talk to them, or did not even notice them in the classroom; that teachers were disinterested in learners and that they kept learners at a distance. Learners felt uncomfortable or afraid around these teachers, and did not have the confidence to ask them for help or guidance. One participant stated that:

If you don't really know a teacher, and then you wouldn't really ask her to help you and then 'cause you don't know how she might react. (P1, Group 2)

A learner should not be afraid of the teacher ... You don't, like sometimes you don't even concentrate in that class, then you fail that subject. (P6)

Most of the participants also spoke about teachers having mood swings, being unpredictable, and taking their bad moods out on the learners. This happened when teachers would just shout at learners or hit them without reason, or blame them for things that they were not responsible for.

You don't feel like you would want to listen to the teacher after she's hit you for, for some reason you don't even know ... you could be accused of doing something you didn't do, then she hits you, then you, you have, you have that anger and you feel like you don't want to listen to that teacher anymore. (P9, Group 2)

This unpredictability of teachers made the participants dislike the teachers, not care about what the teachers said, and become bored and disinterested in their school work. It was reported that learners don't do well in subjects taught by teachers who they don't like.

If you don't like a teacher, you don't do well in her subject. (P11)

Participants perceived some teachers as being false. Learners who felt disrespected by teachers felt that they did not have to respect the teachers either.

... so I used to disrespect her also, and because she used to disrespect me. (P3)

Teachers who insulted or embarrassed learners were also a problem for the participants, and they did not like it when their teachers treated them in this way. Participants felt that these teachers did not want their learners to succeed, or wish the best for their learners.

She used to shout at me in front of the class and tell me that I'm going to fail Grade 1, because you, you don't do your work, you don't do this, you don't do that. (P3, Member Checking Interview)

People last year in our grade hated T5 because she insulted all of us, we were all fine, she had some problems with a few people, then she insulted all of us, and called us bums which I totally ... Ma'am, I just had a problem, then everyone, everyone turned their backs against her, and was ... Yes, ma'am, then everyone just turned their backs against her and there was war against her. (P10, Group 2)

Another issue for the participants was unfair treatment by teachers. Participants reported that some teachers showed favouritism towards certain learners, and that these learners were treated with more respect and good fortune than other learners.

I think that some teachers don't, don't, uh, give other kids a chance, and they, their favouritism, uh, towards other learners, 'cause their work is much better than ours, so I think it's not fair ... (P7)

They never used to talk to us, like maybe they would say, I'm not marking your book today, because you didn't do this and this, your handwriting is ugly and stuff. So that's how they used to like push us away. And, um, the child that they're used to, they would accept the way she is, and used to like her, like mark the books and stuff. (P3)

There were three participants who reported severe negative experiences within their relationships with teachers. The first participant experienced a teacher who turned against her and blamed her for doing things that she had not done. This teacher also turned other teachers against her, and this had an influence on the participant's whole sense of self. She did not want to come to school, she withdrew from her friends, she became disinterested in school, and she spent a lot of time feeling sad and crying.

I was helpless because, um, she had so much power, in telling, in telling all the teachers what I've done. And you know, the teachers just kept on coming on me, and it feels very sad. It makes a person feel weak, and unwanted and sad and lonely and stuff. Because people start disliking you after that. (P10)

The second participant was disappointed by a teacher, whom he thought he could go to for comfort and advice, because his friends were teasing him. This teacher crushed his expectations when she also started making fun of him and laughing at him as his classmates were doing.

My, my peers used to tease me, so I actually thought telling my teacher would actually help, but she actually turned against me, and she also teased me. (P7)

The third participant experienced unstable relationships with her peers in Grade 4, which had a negative impact on her relationships with her teachers as well.

I just used to cry because I knew that maybe I would fail this exam because she didn't mark this section and when I asked her again she would tell, she would shout at me and say why didn't you come to me. And then if I tried to explain to her that she didn't mark my book because of this and that she used to shout at me more, so I used to like cry a lot ... I didn't like school at all. (P3)

In previous studies it was also found that negative teacher-learner relationships lead to learners who are disinterested in learning, and who have a higher chance of presenting with behavioural difficulties (Brendgen, Wanner, and Vitaro, 2006). When learners are afraid of teachers or when they don't like a teacher, it affects their behaviour and performance in that class (Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, and Kindermann, 2008). Conflict within the teacher-learner relationship may lead to problems on a social and emotional level, which could further develop into self-regulatory issues and poor adaptation at school (Baker, Grant, and Morlock,

2008). Negative interactions with teachers could have a lowered self-esteem as a result, as well as lower confidence levels in academic and behavioural skills. This could further result in poor interpersonal relations, poor academic results and severe behaviour problems (Brendgen, Wanner, Vitaro, Bukowski, and Tremblay, 2007). Learners who do not feel cared for, or connected with their teachers may tend to be demotivated and disinterested in the classroom (Shen et al., 2012).

Sub-theme 1.2: Positive experiences within the teacher-learner relationship

All participants reported experiencing positive relationships with their teachers, which made them experience feelings of happiness, pride and significance. Participants said they look up to teachers with whom they have good relationships.

Participants described having a sense of belonging when they were in a positive relationship with their teachers. They felt recognised, acknowledged, cared for and loved. They experienced the teachers being interested in them as people, and not only in their school work and behaviour. They also conveyed that teachers made time to get to know them, to have conversations about life in general, and to help them with school work or other problems. When teachers treated learners well, in a nurturing, positive manner, learners felt happy and secure. Participants also felt positively about teachers who treated everyone as equal.

Furthermore, participants reported that they felt comfortable around teachers with whom they had good connections, and that they felt free to approach these teachers and to talk to them about their problems, ask them for advice or for help with their school work. They experienced that the teachers were always there for them. Participants further stated that they were more open to changing their work or behaviour due to teachers with whom they had stronger connections.

It made me feel better when she ... ma'am ... I used to cry a lot, then she told me not to cry, it made me feel better to know that there's a teacher who cares and loves me. (P7)

Um, she was always there for me, when I had a problem I used to go to her, I wasn't afraid of what the results that she would ... what the results that would come back to me would be like, negative results or any bad influence. I would always look up to her because she was a good teacher to me. That's how I feel. (P12)

Participants described feeling good about themselves within their relationships with teachers when teachers complimented them, their work, or their behaviour. Some participants stated that what teachers said to them, and how teachers treated them had an impact on their sense of self, by making them feel more valuable.

They've influenced me to have, to be, to have a good image. Yes, some tell me that I'm smart ... and some tell me I'm beautiful and all this ma'am. (P2)

Participants further reported that these teachers never gave up on them, had faith in them, and that they were encouraged and motivated by these teachers.

and if like you ... your work is good and stuff, they compliment you, they don't just leave you, and if they see a change in you they still compliment you and stuff. So I think it's a good ... (P3)

The Field and Bioecological theories are reinforced in this section, because participants felt that having a good relationship with a teacher was beneficial in the classroom, but also in other areas of their lives. One participant noted that her positive relationships with teachers made her less shy and gave her the courage to do things she would not normally do in front of others. Some of the other participants confirmed this, and also mentioned that they could apply lessons learned from teachers to sporting activities as well.

They are there for other knowledges as well ... Success is not only in the class, in the classroom. There are always opportunities out there ... Whether it's at sports, mentally or physically. (P11)

Then sometimes it's also about your self-esteem and how you feel about yourself. 'Cause some of them, they encourage you about more, like issues outside of school, like, ja, your work and stuff, they also can influence you about how to be a person ... a better person out, outside of school. (P3, Group 1)

Dupont et al. (2014) claim that the social context in a school, consisting of teachers and peers, play a role in the fulfilment of basic needs (i.e. feeling competent, autonomy and a sense of relatedness) of the individual. In a study done by Shen et al. (2012), it was found that learners' relatedness to their teachers was a strong predictor of learners' behaviour, as well as their level of involvement in the classroom (Skinner et al., 2008).

Findings in a study by Yang, Bear, Chen, Zhang, Blank, and Huang (2013) suggest that positive teacher-learner relationships are important to promote positive learner behaviour and academic achievement. Dupont et al. (2014) state that learners' need for relatedness is fulfilled when they feel that the teacher is affectionate and concerned about them. Learners who feel valued by their teachers have more confidence, because they feel like they are important and meaningful (Wentzel and Brophy, 2014).

When the participants were asked about what teachers mean to them, most of them had positive responses about how they felt about teachers in general. There were many participants who referred to their teachers as their parents at school, and who compared their relationships with teachers to a relationship between a child and a parent. They reported that they felt that they could rely on their teachers to be there for them, to support them and to guide them.

They mean the world to me, I don't think if I didn't have them I'd be here right now ... Maybe smoking weed outside or ... Or, or, or being a rebel to my parents, or disrespecting my parents, or not focussing on my school work ... (P12)

They mean everything to me, like, they're like my family, my parents, everything, 'cause they're always there for me. And help me with everything, like if I fall and they all have a hand to lift me up. (P8)

In a study by Tot (2013) learners placed importance on the following characteristics of teachers in order to promote supportive teacher-learner relationships: fairness, positive mood, helpfulness, warm relationship and social support, which support the findings from this study.

Theme 2: Learners' experiences of themselves within the teacher-learner relationship

In terms of learners' experiences of themselves within the teacher-learner relationship, they reported both negative and positive experiences that led to a wide variety of emotions.

Sub-theme 2.1: Negative experiences

From the data it seems as if negative interactions with teachers do have a negative impact on learners' sense of self. Examples of negative interactions that were highlighted during the interviews are teachers shouting at learners, chasing learners out of class, teachers insulting learners, teachers teasing learners and teachers hitting learners. Participants reported the following negative emotions due to negative interactions with their teachers: Feeling sad, down or miserable; feeling lonely and disliked; feeling guilty and ashamed; feeling like a bad person; feeling like a nobody; feeling useless, weak, helpless, unwanted and unimportant; disrespect for self and not liking oneself; not feeling good enough; having low self-esteem and self-doubt; not feeling motivated to work or come to school and not caring about school

work, or teachers. Feelings of disrespect, anger, and irritation were also reported towards teachers.

Some of the participants reported incidents where they no longer felt like coming to school. In these instances, learners had been teased by teachers, or held liable by teachers for actions that the learners were not responsible for. They reported that these events had an impact on their whole being and on how they felt about themselves.

I didn't like myself. Because people didn't accept me for who I was. (P7)

Like it felt like I didn't want to be there at times because like, I felt like I'm going to cry and stuff, because teachers used to think that about me, and they used to call me names and stuff so I used to think that I shouldn't be where I am. (P3, Member Checking Interview)

This, however, did not only impact the participants' sense of self, but also relationships with peers. This is consistent with the field theory and the bioecological theory, which both state that the environment and the people with whom individuals interact, have an influence on how they function (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McConville, 2013). No aspect can be seen in isolation, as each part of the environment has a reciprocal influence on all the other parts. From the quotes of the participants, the ripple effect of behaviour seems evident, showing that events in one area of individuals' lives have an effect on other areas in their lives.

It would actually also turn, turn my friends against me, because I would be angry and I wanted to start a fight because of they were laughing at me, so for my most of my friends, they ... we're not actually friends anymore. (P7)

It affects my whole day because also my friends they tell me that it's just not right because I take out my stress on them. (P4)

The level of teacher support has a direct impact on learners' sense of self (Wang et al., 2014). In other studies, it was found that learners who view their relationships with their teachers as negative, also have negative perceptions of their own abilities, and had poorer social skills (Wu, Hughes, and Kwok, 2010). Wang et al. (2014) state that negative emotions are non-beneficial to learners' sense of self, and that teachers should attempt to change negative feelings within their learners. This can be achieved through close, supportive and caring teacher-learner relationships.

Sub-theme 2.2: Positive experiences

In contrast to negative experiences, learners who had positive experiences of relationships with teachers, reported more positive emotions and feelings about themselves. Most of the participants who reported a poor sense of self due to interactions with teachers, also reported that there were teachers who had supported and encouraged them, and that this had helped them to develop a more positive sense of self.

Having a connection with teachers, and being noticed by teachers, gave learners confidence in themselves and their behaviour. Learners felt intelligent, strong and comfortable about themselves, and they were not afraid to try new things or take on new challenges. Most learners reported feeling good about themselves and they also reported feeling happy. Learners felt proud of themselves when they got things right, after being encouraged by their teachers. Learners used words like feeling special, valuable and important to describe their positive sentiments within the teacher-learner relationship, especially when they experienced teachers being kind and caring. Participants reported that strong, positive relationships with teachers boosted their self-esteem.

As a young child I was criticised a lot, and that made me have a bad image on myself, but this time my teachers showed me who I really am ... and, yes ma'am. I've realised what are my good qualities in life and to use them to feel good about myself. (P2)

... It boosts my self-esteem because, um, sometimes I could like sit alone and think about the things that I've done or the things I haven't done, and then I could do those things I couldn't have done because of that teacher. (P4, Member Checking Interview)

Learners' perceptions of positive teacher-learner relationships are related to higher academic confidence and a healthy sense of self (Wu, Hughes, and Kwok, 2010). Supportive teacher-learner relationships have been found to have a positive impact on learners' feelings of contentment and fulfilment (Wang et al., 2014).

Amini and Amini (2012) state that the traditional picture of the teacher being authoritarian and purely bringing knowledge to the learner is no longer valid, but that the whole process of interaction and relationship between teacher and learner plays a major role in the teaching process and leads to the success or failure of teaching. Furthermore, the "whole person" of the learner must be addressed during the teaching and learning process, which includes physical, social and emotional aspects.

In relation to the above, participants reported on certain life lessons that they had learned from teachers, and that these lessons would be carried with them to help them in future experiences. Participants stated that teachers were there to show them the way, to show them wrong from right, and to guide them into making healthy life choices. This guidance helps learners to become successful, well-functioning individuals (Wu, Hughes, and Kwok, 2010) who will be able to cope with what life has to offer.

Some of the life lessons that the participants in this study learned from their teachers included to "look smart, think smart and be smart"; to keep going and not to give up; to believe in yourself; to think carefully about the choices you make; to be determined; to try

your best; and to focus on the positives instead of on the negatives.

My maths teacher, ma'am, he was male and he was always wearing suits and always looking like, you know, carrying his briefcase and, yes and that ... he looked good and he did good. He was a nice teacher, I liked him ma'am. So he did influence me today ... he is the one that said if you don't look the part ... if you don't look the part ... you, you, people will think you are not able to do those kinds of things. (P5)

To start off, they help me learn new things. They help me learn about the world. They help ... they also teach me that how, how to solve things. How to express my emotions. They show me that if, if I don't do things, if I don't do things in this way, it could end up being bad in the future. (P9)

These life lessons that learners have learned from their teachers could add to their resilience in dealing with the challenges of life in general. Resilience refers to individuals' abilities to cope in times of stress and difficulty, and positive teacher-learner relationships can enhance learners resilience (Jindal-Snape and Miller, 2008), and thus their ability to cope with the challenges and experiences that life brings.

Learners further reported that they gained self-awareness through their relationships with their teachers and that this had an impact on their self-confidence. They learned to believe in themselves, that they should stand up for themselves, and that they should always give their best in everything that they do. The learners reported that they felt they could conquer anything, and overcome all obstacles if they had self-belief, and never gave up.

I have learnt that, um, no matter what anyone ever says to me that I should always believe in myself and have faith because I can make it out there, I can become what I want to be in future. That I should never give up in what I want to do and what I want to be. (P12, Group 1)

They always told me to always believe in myself. Things that I haven't done, I could always do if I did believe in myself. To always treat others with respect, cause if I like if I don't, I'd also end up not having friends. They would hate me for, for how I have treated them in the past, in the past. So, my life kind of depends on my teachers, my friends and my family. (P9)

Participants showed a good sense of self-knowledge during the interviews. They reported that through their relationships with teachers, they had learned about who they were, what qualities and characteristics they possessed, and had developed an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.

I learn my strengths and weakness, then I ... so that I know that when I am not good at some things, I can always, uh, improve at the thing that I'm good at. Like, I can try to improve the things that I am not good at. (P11)

I learn, what I learn about myself is that I should, I should be wise with the choices that I make and I should be careful to what I do and what I say to other people. (P12)

Mmm, to never, um, listen to anyone's bad opinion, um, always focus on your issues and not on other people's issues. And um, believe in yourself. And love yourself more than anyone. Love yourself first. That's all. (P10)

Hermans (2008) stated that others play a vital role in individual's self-configuration. The self is constantly being moulded and re-moulded through relational experiences with others (Salgado, Cunha, and Bento, 2013), and individuals learn to get to know themselves through their interactions with others and their environments. The dialogical self allows individuals to learn from each other, through the expressions of others. The self configures by reflecting on experiences with others, and through approval or disapproval of what is experienced, the self develops its own opinions, ideas and beliefs (Hermans, 2013).

Therefore, the teacher-learner relationship must play a significant role in the self-configuration of learners.

Participants further felt that with the help of their teachers and through education, they could set and achieve goals for their future. They conveyed that their education is the key to their success later in life, and these goals would steer them in the right directions in order to achieve these goals.

I've learnt that if I try my best I could, I can accomplish more. Because, at most times if, if I don't try my best things will end up going, won't go the right way, they'll go the ... they will always go the wrong way. Because if I, if, if I don't listen to my teachers, and don't care, and, and act like I don't care about what they say, and not listen when, when they're teaching and things like that, it, it actually affects me because if, if I actually do listen and try my best to understand, to understand what they're basically talking about and ask if I don't understand, it could actually help improve my marks and it could help me in the future. Ma'am, I could end up doing what I really want to do in the future. (P9, Group 2)

Knowing what your interests are, and knowing what you like, forms part of self-configuration, as it allows individuals to self-regulate by searching for opportunities in their line of interest. Self-regulation takes place when the individual adapts to the circumstances of the environment (Grouzet, Sokol, and Müller, 2013), by assimilating what is needed or wanted from the environment, and rejecting that which is unwanted (Yontef, 1993).

From the findings in this section, it is clear that relationships between learners and teachers can have a significant effect on the learners' sense of self, which in turns plays a role in self-configuration.

Theme 3: Learners' self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship

Self-configuration refers to individuals' sense of who they are and where they belong in the world (Polster, 2005; West, 2007). Significant people in individuals' lives, play a vital role in self-configuration, either in a positive or negative manner (Hermans, 2013). Self-configuration takes place as the sense of self develops, through experiences and a continuous interaction between individual and field (Reynolds et al., 2010). Every experience and interaction builds up to configure the self, which is used to evaluate future experiences.

Sub-theme 3.1: Learners are motivated through disapproval from teachers

Motivation refers to the reason for making a choice or for behaving in a certain way (Wentzel and Brophy, 2014). Motivation is a response to the question, "will this make me happy?" or, "will this make me feel good?" (Formichov and Formichov, 2014). Learners are thus motivated to behave in certain ways in order to achieve a sense of "feeling good" which can be obtained by reaching a certain goal.

Some of the participants reported that they felt motivated to change, or to work harder when teachers reprimanded them, or pointed out that they were not doing the best that they could. Some participants felt that they wanted to prove the teachers wrong, by doing the opposite of what teachers were saying about them, and that this made them stronger within their selves. Two of the participants even said, that negative comments are needed in order to be motivated to do better.

But, ma'am, sometimes we do need a little negativity in our lives so that we can ... to motivate our self to do better. (P11, Group 1)

'Cause ma'am when, when, when you're only getting positive comments, you're going to feel like you, you're doing your best, you can't improve that, that's all ... you settle with that but,

but if, if there's a little bit of negativity, you'll always want to improve and do better. (P5, Member Checking Interview)

Participants said that at first they changed their behaviour just to please the teacher, but that they realised in time that they were improving themselves by these changes.

Like a teacher like hates it when you don't do the right things. When you do all the wrong things they like punish ... you get punished and things like that. So you don't like punishment, you don't want to get punished. So you, you try do the right thing to not get punished ... at first it's because you don't want her picking on you, but then you see that it is helping you. (P5)

An interesting topic that arose in discussions with all the participants, had to do with teachers shouting at them. Most participants felt that it was acceptable when teachers shouted for a reason, because they felt that teachers did this to motivate and encourage them. Participants accepted responsibility when they knew that teachers were shouting at them because they had not done homework, or misbehaved. They felt that teachers used this strategy to get learners to realise that they were on the wrong track.

It can be a compliment even though she's shouting at you. When a teacher shouts at you she'll ... she wants you to do better and knows what you're capable of, and wants you to stop doing what you're doing at that moment and strive to do better. That's the reason why she's shouting. (P7, Group 2)

Disruptiveness in the classroom is not conducive to a positive teaching and learning environment (Kraft, 2010), and this may be the reason why teachers shout at learners when they are not behaving. Teachers who shout have a negative effect on student commitment and yelling at learners intensifies power struggles between learners and teachers. Shouting, threatening and insulting learners is a sign of ineffective classroom management, and does not enhance respect or positive relations between teacher and learner, and could lead to

further discipline problems (Kayıkçı, 2011). However, in the current study the opposite was also true, i.e. that the shouting behaviour of the teachers motivated learners to perform better.

Learners' experiences of controlling teachers who shout may vary depending on learners' personalities. Learners who experience a strong sense of relatedness to teachers, may not experience the shouting as negative, whereas others may experience it as an intrusion of their self, and become disinterested and defiant (De Meyer, Tallir, Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Aelterman, Van den Berghe, Speleers, and Haarens, 2014). Disapproval from teachers, therefore, can have a motivational effect on learners, which makes them want to improve their behaviour or work, in order to stay out of trouble, or to prove the teacher wrong. These interactions with teachers form part of the experiences through which the learner evaluates and anticipates future experiences, and which contribute to self-configuration.

Sub-theme 3.2: Learners are motivated through compliments, recognition or encouragement from teachers

Wentzel and Brophy (2014) propose that learners who perceive their relationships with their teachers as being caring and supportive, will put more effort into achieving academic and social goals set by their teachers, thus being more motivated to do well. This is consistent with a study done by Shen et al. (2012), who found that caring relationships promote learners' motivation to learn.

Most of the participants spoke about feeling motivated to work harder, to give their best, and to change unacceptable behaviour due to encouragement and recognition from teachers. When teachers told learners that they could do better, they started to believe that they could, and they actually did work harder, which led to an improvement in marks. Participants reported feeling more confident, and even closer to those teachers.

It makes me, um, feel confident. And, uh, I feel determined and motivated to do other things as well. (P11)

I felt good because I kept on getting good comments, and I achieved more. (P10)

In cases where teachers encouraged learners to behave more suitably, learners felt motivated to do so. This in turn led to better behaviour, making new friends and an overall positive impact in sense of self. The more recognised they were, the more they wanted to change and improve, because they felt that they were being noticed. Participants said that these improvements and changes had a positive impact on their whole being. As one thing improved, so did all other aspects. Once again, the field theory and bioecological theory are supportive of this observation in that changes in one area of the field or environment lead to changes in other areas as well.

I changed my behaviour because, um, I wanted to be a better person, a person that studies hard, a person that, a person that gets awarded ... I wanted to make myself happy, and at, and the same time I wanted to show T12 that I've changed and thank you for showing me the right way. (P10)

It actually made me think ... it made me think I, that not everyone thinks bad things about me, and that there are people who think I'm valuable and there are people who, who think I'm very special. And just ... I, I realised that I just ... sometimes I just need someone to tell me, to push me to do better. That's all ... that's all I realised. (P7)

When a teacher gives learners compliments, recognition and encouragement, it motivates the learners to work harder and achieve more on a personal and academic level, because they want more of the encouragement. Formichov and Formichov (2014) refer to this as "endurability", which means that the learner wants to repeat good experiences. In time, the behaviour is internalised and the learner self-regulates so that the behaviour becomes more

natural.

Teachers are not merely there to provide learners with endless academic tasks, but they have the goal of developing and enabling learners by providing opportunities in which learners' awareness, abilities, values and perceptions are enhanced (Brophy, 2010), which contributes to the self-configuration of learners. Teacher feedback is one way in which teachers achieve this goal (Van den Bergh, Ros, and Beijaard, 2013), and when learners reflect on teacher feedback, it contributes to self-configuration.

Sub-theme 3.3: Learners' self-regulation within the teacher-learner relationship

Individuals are not born with all the skills necessary to survive and function in the world, and initially parents and care-givers stand in to regulate babies and toddlers' behaviour. As individuals become older and gain more experience, they start to self-regulate their own behaviour (West, 2007). These experiences allow individuals to observe, explore, experience and adapt to their environments, by accepting or rejecting certain perceptions and/or behaviours (Kostelnik et al., 2012). If an experience was positive, individuals may adapt and try to experience similar situations, but if an experience was negative, the individual will try to stay away from those experiences in the future (Formichov and Formichov, 2014).

Self-regulation, therefore, refers to individuals' ability to adapt and change their behaviour. This allows individuals to grow and to learn from previous experiences. By self-regulating, individuals can evaluate situations, through the emotions they experience. If they experience positive feelings, they will look for similar situations, but in cases where discomfort or negative feelings are experienced individuals will try to avoid similar circumstances in future.

The data gathered in this study showed that participants use self-regulatory functions to adapt to their environments, by changing certain behaviours, or learning from past experiences. Most of the participants reflected on life lessons that they had learned from their teachers. This is significant in self-configuration, as these are the lessons that individuals integrate and carry with them throughout their lives. It is these pieces of advice that individuals fall back on when they are facing challenges.

Teachers are important because they don't teach work, they teach us other things as well, like you can't always get what you want, the lessons in life, how to care for my peers, and a whole bunch of other things. (P1, Member Checking Interview)

Participants said that they would remember lessons taught by their teachers, and carry these lessons with them into the future to help them cope. Through these life lessons, learners have been able to change and adapt their thoughts, behaviour and sense of self, which in turn leads to self-configuration.

I feel like I have to start working hard and change my negatives into positives, and be the best that I can be. (P11)

On the inside I told myself that I could do anything, besides, besides doing things I didn't want to do. I first started off by thinking that, uh, I can't ... I can't play soccer, but then I believed in myself and I ended up playing soccer. I ended up being in the, in the, in the A team. So, it, it actually helped me believe that I could also do good in, with my school work. (P9)

To act in a manner, that is, that's in a responsible manner, not behaving in a certain way when there are people around you, and actually behaving all the time. Even though there's no one around you. (P7)

It makes me learn that, um, the next time I see her and she gives us homework I must do it and no matter what happens I must do it. That even if you don't want to do it, you need to do it because like it's your future that you're talking about. (P4)

I ... opened up, I think to, to people's advices, and I also opened up to my teachers' advices because they would always used to tell me you are a very good person ... you can do this, you can do that, and I always used to listen to them. At some cases ... at first I didn't want to, but then when I really thought about it, and I really opened up because like I also realised that what they were telling me was really true. (P3)

Chen, Huang, Chang, Wang, and Li, (2010) state that positive adult-child relationships lead to effective self-regulation within the learner. This means that there is a reciprocal effect between the teacher-learner relationship and self-regulation. The self is configured through interactions and experiences, which help individuals to assess and navigate the world around them. Relationships and interactions with teachers are evaluated through current perceptions that learners have of themselves. Experiences that are consistent with learners' existing ideas of who they are, help to strengthen the self, and new experiences serve to develop further extensions of the self (Polster, 2005). When a drop of food colouring is added to a glass of water, the colour of the water will change. All interactions and experiences, which include relationships with teachers, have a similar effect on the self-configurational experiences of learners.

It is, however, important to consider, that each individual self-regulates in their own unique way (De Meyer et al., 2014). Some individuals will thrive in stressful situations, and will find motivation and energy from the pressure. Others will panic and shut down in similar situations. Therefore, self-regulation is a personal process, and these findings can therefore not be generalised to all individuals.

Conclusion and recommendations

From the data it was found that learners' experiences of their relationships with teachers were both positive and negative. Negative experiences are characterised by disinterested teachers, or teachers that treat learners unfairly and with disrespect and these negative experiences affect learners' sense of self negatively. The effects of these relationships are not only limited to the teacher-learner relationship, but as seen from the data, other areas in learners' environments are also influenced by insecure relationships with teachers. All these interactions and experiences play a role in how the self is configured.

In contrast, participants also reported positive experiences within the teacher-learner relationship, which were characterised by a caring and supportive bond between teacher and learner. These experiences have a positive influence on learners' sense of self, and make constructive contributions to learners' self-configuration. Positive relationships with teachers also expand to positive experiences in other areas of individuals environments.

In terms of self-regulation, what is interesting is that learners felt motivated by disapproval as well as encouragement from teachers. Disapproval by means of reprimanding or criticism make learners want to improve themselves or prove their teachers wrong. Encouragement serves as motivation in terms of wanting to do even better, and wanting to get more positive reinforcement. Encouragement leads to higher levels of confidence and even closer teacher-learner relationships. Learners show self-regulatory skills through lessons they learn from teachers, and through learning from past experiences.

From the discussions it becomes clear that learners place significant value on their relationships with teachers, and that these relationships certainly play a role in the way in which the learners experience themselves. Teacher-learner relationships, therefore is an issue that could and should be further investigated. The researcher is of the opinion that teacher-

learner relationships can play a role in “making” or “breaking” a learner, and that a greater deal of importance should be placed on this issue during teacher training and development.

In terms of the transitional phase in which grade 7 learners are in, it would be interesting to determine whether the teacher-learner relationship has an impact on how smooth the transition from primary school to high school could be. It can be assumed that positive primary teacher-learner relationships could lead to positive expectations for high school teacher-learner relationships, and vice versa. An extension of this study could possibly be done to get a clearer picture of the above assumption.

A limitation of the study was that the sample was small, which limits the expanse of the findings. Although it is not the purpose of a qualitative study to generalize data, transferability is limited.

A further limitation is that the study is one-sided in terms of investigating the learners’ experiences, without taking learners’ personalities, behaviour, work ethic, family dynamics, or peer relations into account.

It is recommended that further studies delve deeper into the findings of this study, looking at participants from a greater age range, and across a variety of cultures. Studies of this nature could give greater insight into the importance of teacher-learner relationships. More studies could also be done in order to look at the obstacles that prevent the development of secure, caring relationships between teachers and learners.

References

- Adebanji, O. P., N. C. Phatudi, and C. G. Hartell. 2014. "Factors facilitating the adjustment of immigrant children from Zimbabwe in the foundation phase in South African schools." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5 (3): 512-522. DOI: 10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n3p512.
- Amini, D. and M. Amini. 2012. "Teacher and learner in humanistic language teaching." *Language in India* 12 (7): 100-112.
- Asanova, J. 2005. "Educational experiences of immigrant students from the former Soviet Union: A case study of an ethnic school in Toronto." *Educational Studies* 31 (2): 181-195. DOI: 10.1080/03055690500095589.
- Baker, J., S. Grant, and L. Morlock. 2008. "The teacher–student relationship as a developmental context for children with internalizing or externalizing behavior problems." *School Psychology Quarterly* 23 (1), 3-15.
- Braun, V. and V. Clarke. 2013. *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage.
- Brendgen, M., B. Wanner, and F. Vitaro. 2006. "Verbal abuse by the teacher and child adjustment from Kindergarten through Grade 6." *Pediatrics* 117, 1585-1598.
- Brendgen, M., B. Wanner, F. Vitaro, W. Bukowski, and R. Tremblay. 2007. "Verbal abuse by the teacher during childhood and academic, behavioral, and emotional adjustment in young adulthood." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 99 (1): 26-38.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. 1979. *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Brophy, J. 2010. "Motivating students in classrooms." In *Social and emotional aspects of learning*, edited by J. Sanna, 50-56. Oxford: Elsevier. Available from: eBook Collection (EBSCOhost).
- Chen, X., X. Huang, L. Chang, L. Wang, and D. Li. 2010. "Aggression, social competence, and academic achievement in Chinese Children: A 5-year longitudinal study." *Development and Psychopathology*, 22: 583-592. doi: 10.1017/S0954579410000295.
- Christodoulous, N. 2013. *The impact of guided reflected practice on the teaching of English as a foreign language in higher education in Cyprus*. (Doctoral Thesis). Retrieved from http://etheses.nottingham.ac.uk/3635/1/Thesis-Niki_Christodoulou.pdf
- Cozolino, L. 2010. *The neuroscience of psychotherapy: Building and rebuilding the human brain*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- De Meyer, J., I. B. Tallir, B. Soenens, M. Vansteenkiste, N. Aelterman, L. van den Berghe, L. Speleers, and L. Haarens. 2014. "Does observed controlling teaching behaviour relate to students' motivation in physical education?" *Journal of Educational Psychology* 106 (2): 541-554.
- De Young, P. 2014. *Relational psychotherapy: A primer*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dupont, S., B. Galand, F. Nils, and V. Hospel. 2014. "Social context, self-perceptions and student engagement: A SEM investigation of the self-system model of motivational development." *Electronic Journal of Research in Education* 12 (1): 5-32.
- Enfield, N. J. 2013. *Relationship thinking: Agency, enchrony and human sociality*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Formichov, V. A., and O. S. Formichov. 2014. "An imperative of a poorly recognized existential risk: Early socialization of smart young generation in information society." *Informatica* 38: 59-70.
- Froiland, J. M., and M. L. Davison, 2014. "Parental expectations and school relationships as contributors to adolescents' positive outcomes." *Social Psychology of Education* 17 (1): 1-17. DOI: 10.1007/s11218-013-9237-3.
- Goldstein, E.G., D. Miehl, and S. Ringel. 2009. *Advanced clinical social work practice: Relational principles and techniques*. West Sussex, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Grouzet, F. M. E., B. W. Sokol, and U. Müller. 2013. "Self-regulation and autonomy: An introduction." Chap. 1 in *Self-regulation and autonomy*, edited by B. W. Sokol, F. M. E. Grouzet, and U. Müller, 1-18. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Hermans, H. J. M. 2008. "How to perform research on the basis of dialogical self theory? Introduction to the special issue." *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 21: 185-199. doi: 10.1080/10720530802070684.
- Hermans, H. J. M. 2013. "The dialogical self in education: Introduction." *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 26 (2): 81-89. doi: 10.1080/10720537.2013.759018.
- Holden, G. W., B. Vittrup, and L. H. Rosen. 2011. "Families, parenting and discipline." In *Social development: Relationships in infancy, childhood and adolescence*, edited by Underwood, M. K., and L. H. Rosen, 127-152. New York, NY: Guilford.
- James, W. 2010. *The principles of psychology: Volume 2 of 2*. Digireads.com Publishing.
- Jindal-Snape, D., and D. J. Miller. 2008. "A challenge of living? Understanding the psycho-social processes of the child during primary-secondary transition through resilience and

self-esteem theories.” *Educational Psychology Review* 20: 217-236.

doi:10.1007/s10648-008-9074-7.

- Kayıkçı, K. 2011. “Classroom discipline: Discipline strategies, preventing student misbehaviors and research on student misbehaviors in the classroom.” In *Classrooms: Management, effectiveness and challenges*, edited by R. J. Newley, 187-219. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science. Available from: eBook Collection (EBSCOhost).
- Kostelnik, M., K. Gregory, A. Soderman, and A. P. Whiren. 2012. *Guiding children’s social development and learning*. 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Kraft, M. A. 2010. “10 simple techniques can turn an unruly class into a productive one: Students deserve teachers who are encouraging conductors of learning rather than domineering ringmasters focused on maintaining order.” *Phi Delta Kappan* 7: 44. Expanded Academic ASAP, EBSCOhost (accessed September 7, 2014).
- Marsh, L., R. McGee, and S. Williams, 2014. “School climate and aggression among New Zealand high school students.” *New Zealand Journal of Psychology* 43 (1): 28-37.
- McConville, M. 2013. *Adolescence: Psychotherapy and the emergent self*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. 2009. *Young children develop in an environment of relationships*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
- Phillipson, P. 2009. *The emergent self: An existential-Gestalt approach*. London: Karnac.
- Polster, E. 2005. *A population of selves*. Gouldsboro, ME: The Gestalt Journal Press.

- Reynolds, K. J., J. C. Turner, N. R. Branscombe, K. I. Mavor, B. Bizumic, and E. Subasic. 2010. "Interactionism in personality and social psychology: An integrated approach to understanding the mind and behaviour." *European Journal of Personality* 24: 458-482. DOI: 10.1002/per.782.
- Rosen, L.H., and M. M. Patterson. 2011. "The self and identity." In *Social development: Relationships in infancy, childhood and adolescence*, edited by Underwood, M. K., and L. H. Rosen, 73-100. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Saldaña, J. 2011. *Fundamentals of qualitative research: Understanding qualitative research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Salgado, J., C. Cunha, and T. Bento. 2013. "Positioning microanalysis: Studying the self through the exploration of the dialogical process." *Integrative Psychological and Behavioural Science* 47: 325-353. doi: 10.1007/s12124-013-9238-y.
- Santrock, J. W. 2009. *Educational psychology*. 4th ed. Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Schurink, W., C. B. Fouché, and A. S. de Vos. 2011. "Qualitative data analysis and interpretation." In *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human service professions (4th ed.)*, edited by A. S. de Vos, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouché, and C. S. L. Delpont, 397-424. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Shaffer, D. D. R., and K. Kipp. 2014. *Developmental psychology: Childhood and adolescence*. 9th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

- Shen, B., N. McCaughtry, J. J. Martin, M. Fahlman, and A. C. Garn. 2012. "Urban high-school girls' sense of relatedness and their engagement in physical education." *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 31: 231-245.
- Skinner, E., C. Furrer, G. Marchand, and T. Kindermann. 2008. "Engagement and disaffection in the classroom: Part of a larger motivational dynamic?" *Journal of Educational Psychology* 100 (4): 765-781.
- Tassoni, P. 2007. *Child development: 6-16 years*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Tot, D. 2013. "Evaluation of learners, teachers and school management boards with regards to the indicators of contemporary teacher competences." *Croatian Journal of Education* 15 (3): 801-821.
- Van den Bergh, L., A. Ros, and D. Beijaard. 2013. "Teacher feedback during active learning: Current practices in primary schools." *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 83: 341-362.
- Van Niekerk, P. J. M., R. A. Fradgley, and R. L. van Niekerk. 2010. "The influence of social components in marriage counselling." *TD – The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 6 (2): 395-410.
- Wang, L., W. Wang, H. Gu, P. Zhan, X. Yang, and J. Barnard. 2014. "Relationships among teacher support, peer conflict resolution, and school emotional experiences in adolescents from Shanghai." *Social Behaviour and Personality* 42 (1): 99-114.
- Wentzel, K. R., and J. E. Brophy. 2014. *Motivating students to learn*. 4th ed. New York, NY: Routledge.

- West, M. 2007. *Feeling, being and the sense of self: A new perspective on identity, affect, and narcissistic disorders*. London: Karnac.
- Wu, J., J. N. Hughes, and O. Kwok. 2010. "Teacher student relationship quality in elementary grades: Effects on trajectories for achievement and engagement." *Journal of School Psychology* 48 (5): 357-387. doi: 10.1016/j.jsp.2010.06.004.
- Yang, C., G. G. Bear, F. F. Chen, W. Zhang, J. C. Blank, and X. Huang. 2013. "Student's perceptions of school climate in the U.S. and China." *School Psychology Quarterly* 28 (1): 7-24.
- Yontef, G. M. (1993). *Awareness dialogue & process: Essays on Gestalt therapy*.
Gouldsboro, ME: The Gestalt Journal Press.
- Zullig, K. J., T. M. Koopman, J. M. Patton, and V. A. Ubbes. 2010. "School climate: Historical review, instrument development, and school assessment." *Journal of psychoeducational assessment* 28 (2): 139-152.

SECTION C: CRITICAL REFLECTION

1. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the study, and give a critical reflection on how the aims and objectives of the study have been met in terms of the research question. Furthermore, the research process is discussed critically and a summary of how the research was conducted, is given. Lastly, the experience of the researcher is described and limitations and recommendations are discussed. The contributions of the research are also mentioned.

2. Research problem

As discussed in section A the problem on which this research study was based, was identified around Grade 7 learners and their self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship. Grade 7 learners are at the beginning of the adolescent stage of development, which is characterised by many changes and uncertainties. These changes include physical changes (such as hormonal fluctuations, pubertal development), emotional changes (higher sensitivity, more severe emotional experiences and mood fluctuation), changes in relationships (more focus on peer relationships and more conflict with parents or caregivers) as well as a looming transition to high school. The self configures through relationships and experiences, and positive connections assist with positive self-configuration. Healthy self-configuration contributes to positive adjustments to the changes adolescents are facing, and the researcher was interested in how Grade 7 learners experience self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship.

3. Research question and aim

The research question, *How do Grade 7 learners experience self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship?* was formulated with the research problem in mind. The aim of the study, therefore, was to explore how Grade 7 learners experience self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship. Data was collected through individual interviews, which provided participants the opportunity to reflect on their experiences of teacher-learner relationships, with specific focus on self-configuration. Participants were given further opportunities to reflect on their experiences in group discussions. The study was qualitative in nature, and followed the case study method which made provision for obtaining subjective experiences of the participants. The interviews were all casual and relaxed, which made it easier for the participants to feel comfortable and talk honestly about their experiences.

4. Research procedures

In order to attain the aim of the research, the researcher made use of qualitative data collection methods, which included individual semi-structured interviews and group discussions. Visual mapping was also used in the individual interviews, which assisted to provide participants the opportunity to get their thoughts flowing in terms of how relationships with teachers contributed to self-configuration. The visual maps also helped to put the participants at ease and provided excellent discussion points around which the interview could take place.

Interviews were conducted with 12 participants from Grade 7 in one school. Each interview was recorded on video and voice recorders. Photos were taken of the visual maps of each participant. After the individual interviews had all taken place, two group interviews were scheduled consisting of 6 participants in each group. The researcher transcribed all the

interviews and some participants were asked to participate in a “member checking” interview, in which the researcher clarified any uncertainties that arose from the individual or group interviews. This also served as a way of ensuring trustworthiness in the study. It was not necessary to do “member checking” interviews with all the participants.

After completion of the “member checking” interviews, they were also transcribed and added to the data. The researcher then made use of thematic data analyses to analyse data and place participant quotes into themes. This was an extensive and challenging process, as themes were formulated and re-formulated until the researcher felt satisfied that the themes and subthemes were truly reflective of the perceptions of the participants. The research question was integrated in the final themes, namely learners’ experience of *teachers*, learners’ experience of *self*, and *self-configuration* of learners within the teacher-learner relationship. The researcher feels that the data collection methods used were effective, because learners were open and honest and shared their experiences with the researcher. Rich and valuable data was collected.

The following procedures were followed to ensure trustworthiness of the data and findings.

- Truthfulness: All interviews were recorded and the researcher transcribed all data herself. No information was changed, adapted or manipulated.
- Consistency: Many participants gave similar responses and agreed with one another during group discussions. During “member checking” interviews, participants gave the same information as in the individual interviews. This contributes to the consistency of the data.
- Researcher bias: The researcher did not contaminate data with her own opinions, preconceptions or perspectives. In cases where the researcher was uncertain of what

the participant was trying to get across, “member checking” interviews were held in order to ensure that the true perspective of the participant came across.

- Data collection methods: more than one method was used, which provided opportunity for data to be collected from more than one perspective.
- Validation of themes/codes: This was done through the research supervisor who validated and gave input to the validity of the themes.

5. Research summary

The data from this study shows that learners experience self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship. Participants reported having both negative as well as positive experiences within the teacher-learner relationship. Negative experiences were characterised by teachers insulting learners, teachers who seemed disinterested in learners, teachers who disliked learners, teachers who embarrassed learners, and unfair treatment by teachers. These negative interactions with teachers resulted in learners who experienced unfavourable feelings, which included discomfort, low confidence levels, helplessness and not wanting to go to school.

Positive interactions with teachers, on the other hand, led to more positive affect, which included feelings of happiness, recognition and acknowledgement. Positive teacher-learner relationships were characterised by teachers who were interested in their learners, who cared about their learners and who were available to help or give advice to learners.

One of the most interesting findings was that learners were motivated by disapproval, as well as encouragement from teachers. Disapproval served as motivation due to learners wanting to improve their work or behaviour, or wanting to prove teachers wrong. When teachers shouted at or reprimanded learners for doing something wrong, learners felt that this

was needed and justified, and they realised that they had done something that was unacceptable. When teachers reprimanded them in these instances, it helped learners to get “back on the right track”. Encouragement motivated learners to work even harder and enhanced feelings of recognition and acknowledgement. When a person is motivated to do certain things, self-regulation takes place. Past experiences and lessons learnt from teachers also served to promote self-regulation in learners.

The findings suggest that self-configuration of learners is experienced within the teacher-learner relationship in positive, as well as negative means.

6. Experience of the researcher

The researcher conducted an extensive literature review on the subject of teacher-learner relationship, and became interested in how this relationship impacts on self-configuration. Being a teacher, the researcher has always realised that relationships with learners are important, and wanted to find out more about how learners experienced the teacher-learner relationship.

The researcher was actively involved with the participants during the interview processes and felt that the participants were open and honest about their experiences of teacher-learner relationships. The discussions were comfortable and casual, and participants were free to express their true opinions. Two of the participants, however, were quite nervous and battled to delve deeper in to their self-configuration experiences. This also made the researcher feel uncomfortable, as she did not want to cause discomfort for the participants in any way. A few of the participants also became quite emotional during the interviews, which the researcher found interesting. However, they did not want to consult a therapist. The researcher checked in with the participants a few days after each interview, and the

participants showed no signs of discomfort. The researcher feels that being a teacher at the school where the research took place contributed to the positive relationship that was established between the participants and the researcher, because the researcher had a good understanding of the context and knew and understood what the participants were talking about.

During the group discussions, the atmosphere was informal, and participants openly spoke about their experiences. The researcher felt that there was a trusting relationship between researcher and participant, which enhanced the participants' confidence in relating their experiences. The researcher enjoyed these interactions with the participants and became aware of the participants' experiences. The researcher also experienced that most of the participants had enjoyed taking part in the research. One of the problems that were experienced, however, was that some participants were more open and spoke more than other participants, and that the more introverted participants had to be encouraged and asked directly to answer certain questions.

The transcription process was a long and timeous process. The researcher was extremely grateful for her typing skills, as this definitely helped to make the process a bit easier. The researcher was glad that she had done the transcriptions herself, as this allowed her to gain even more insight into the experiences of the participants. The researcher found the analyses difficult, and this had to be done and re-done in order to make sense of the data. In the final analysis, the researcher feels content that findings were reported in a comprehensible and logical manner, which truly reflects the experiences of the participants.

7. Limitations of the study

In this section, certain shortfalls of the study will be discussed.

- Size of the sample: This could be seen as a limitation because there were only 12 participants, from only one school and from one grade in this study. It would be interesting to see whether the findings are similar for learners from different schools and different grades.
- Learners' personality traits and temperament, family dynamics, peer relationships and other characteristics were not taken into account. The teacher-learner relationship could be impacted by these aspects.
- Teachers' perceptions were not taken into account, not giving a clear picture of why teachers relate to learners the way they do, and also not considering teachers' personalities, family dynamics and other factors that could play a role in the teacher-learner relationship.
- Teacher-learner relationships are not the only factors that play a role in the self-configuration of learners.
- It would be interesting to see what would be found if these participants were re-interviewed in a few years, and to compare the current and future findings with each other.

Further research incorporating the above limitations is thus recommended.

8. Recommendations

From the findings of this research project, it is clear that the teacher-learner relationship plays a vital role in learner self-configuration.

Therefore, it is suggested that teachers be informed, educated and trained in terms of developing positive, nurturing and caring relationships with their learners, in order to enhance healthy self-configuration experiences among the learners.

This, however, will not be an easy task, as there are many other factors that play a role in the teacher-learner relationship, and due to the uniqueness and nature of individuals, teachers may not develop the same quality relationships with all learners.

It would also be interesting to look at the various cultures in our country, and to determine whether these findings would be similar across different cultures. Class size and school type may also be a factor in determining the quality of the teacher-learner relationship and therefore, this research could be conducted across a variety of different school types to determine the self-configuration experiences within different kinds of schools.

It is also recommended that the current education policy in South Africa be scrutinised, in order to determine how the education system can make it easier for teachers to develop supportive and caring relationships with their learners.

9. Conclusion and contribution

The study succeeded in achieving its aim of exploring how Grade 7 learners experience self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship. The researcher managed to gain meaningful data through interviews and group discussions with participants and the data revealed that self-configuration is impacted by the teacher-learner relationship.

All learners have contact with teachers throughout their schooling careers, and it is imperative that teachers be made aware of the power they have in the self-configuration experiences of the learners they teach. If teachers are aware of the role that they play in their learners' lives, not just as learners in their classrooms, but in the entire being of the person they are teaching, they might focus on and invest more in the relationships that they develop with their learners, and attempt to get to know and understand the person within the learner

better. This could in turn lead to more positive self-configuration experiences, not only of learners, but most probably of teachers as well.

SECTION D

ADDENDA

ADDENDUM A: Letter of Consent – Department of Education



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY[®]
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS

Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies

Corner of East and College Street

Wellington

7655

Tel: 021 8643593
Fax: 021 8642654

25 Sparks Close
Randhart
1449

30 July 2013

Dear Sir

I am a Psychology Masters student at the North-West University. I am doing research in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree. The research falls under the broader project of Relational Well-being in Schools and the study has received University clearance under the ethical code: NWU-00060-12-A1. My research topic is:

Grade 7 learners' self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship.

The research is a qualitative study, looking at the learners' experiences of their relationships with their teachers, and specifically how their self is formed within these relationships. Learners will be asked to participate in this research on a voluntary basis. Consent will also be obtained from the Department of education and the parents. The learners themselves will be asked to sign an assent form.

I will ask the grade 7 learners to stay behind after an assembly, which will give me the chance to explain my study to them. Those who are interested in taking part will be given a consent form to take home for their parents to sign. The first twelve learners (representative of all four classes) will be used as participants. I will work individually with each participant (one interview of approximately one hour each), after which two group discussions will be held. This will take place in the third term.

All information and data will be confidential, and will be used solely for the purpose of this study. Participants will remain anonymous and their names will not be disclosed in the final results. The name of the school where the research is conducted will also not be disclosed.

There are no known risks for the participants involved, except possible emotional discomfort. However, should any concerns arise during the research, the researcher will ensure that they are addressed and/or that counselling is provided for participants by a registered counsellor named Sandra Roberts. All sessions will be voice and/or video recorded to ensure that the researcher does not miss valuable information. These recordings will be kept confidential. If the researcher makes use of a private person to do the transcriptions, this person will sign an agreement to confidentiality as well.

Feedback will be provided to all interested parties once the research has been completed.

Your consent for this research to take place in your school will be greatly appreciated. My research supervisor can be contacted if needed: Dr Herman Grobler (021 864 3593).

Regards

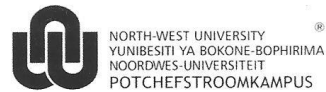
G. du Plessis
(Researcher)

I, JOHAN VAN GREUNE ^{CLUSTER LEADER} principal of MEREDALE PRIMARY, hereby give consent that I have been informed of the research project by G. du Plessis, and that I give permission for this research to take place.

Signature [Handwritten Signature]
GDE
JHB CENTRAL DISTRICT.

3 SEPTEMBER 2013.
Date

ADDENDUM B: Letter of Consent – School Principal



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS

Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies
Corner of East and College Street

Wellington

7655

Tel: 021 8643593
Fax: 021 8642654

25 Sparks Close
Randhart
1449

DATE

Dear Sir

I am a Psychology Masters student at the North-West University. I am doing research in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree. The research falls under the broader project of Relational Well-being in Schools and the study has received University clearance under the ethical code: NWU-00060-12-A1. My research topic is:

Grade 7 learners' self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship.

The research is a qualitative study, looking at the learners' experiences of their relationships with their teachers, and specifically how their self is formed within these relationships. Learners will be asked to participate in this research on a voluntary basis. Consent will also be obtained from the Department of education and the parents. The learners themselves will be asked to sign an assent form.

I will ask the grade 7 learners to stay behind after an assembly, which will give me the chance to explain my study to them. Those who are interested in taking part will be given a consent form to take home for their parents to sign. The first twelve learners (representative of all four classes) will be used as participants. I will work individually with each participant (one interview of approximately one hour each), after which two group discussions will be held. This will take place in the third term.

All information and data will be confidential, and will be used solely for the purpose of this study. Participants will remain anonymous and their names will not be disclosed in the final results. The name of the school where the research is conducted will also not be disclosed.

There are no known risks for the participants involved, except possible emotional discomfort. However, should any concerns arise during the research, the researcher will ensure that they are addressed and/or that counselling is provided for participants by a registered counsellor named Sandra Roberts. All sessions will be voice and/or video recorded to ensure that the researcher does not miss valuable information. These recordings will be kept confidential. If the researcher makes use of a private person to do the transcriptions, this person will sign an agreement to confidentiality as well.

Feedback will be provided to all interested parties once the research has been completed.

Your consent for this research to take place in your school will be greatly appreciated. My research supervisor can be contacted if needed: Dr Herman Grobler (021 864 3593).

Regards

G. du Plessis

(Researcher)

I, GRAHAM MURRAY principal of MEREDALE PRIMARY, hereby give consent that I have been informed of the research project by G. du Plessis, and that I give permission for this research to take place.

Signature

Date

2013-08-21

ADDENDUM C: Example of Letter of Consent – Parents’ of Participants



Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies

Corner of East and College Street

Wellington

7655

Tel: 021 8643593

Fax: 021 8642654

25 Sparks Close
Randhart
1449

21 August 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a Psychology Masters student at the North-West University. I am doing research in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree. The research falls under the broader project of Relational Well-being in Schools and the study has received University clearance under the ethical code: NWU-00060-12-A1. My research topic is:

Grade 7 learners’ self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship.

The research is a qualitative study, looking at the learners’ experiences of their relationships with their teachers, and specifically how their self is formed within these relationships. Learners will be asked to participate in this research on a voluntary basis. Consent will also be obtained from the Department of education and the parents. The learners themselves will be asked to sign an assent form.

I will ask the grade 7 learners to stay behind after an assembly, which will give me the chance to explain my study to them. Those who are interested in taking part will be given a consent form to take home for their parents to sign. The first twelve learners (representative of all four classes) will be used as participants. I will work individually with each participant (one interview of approximately one hour each), after which two group discussions will be held. This will take place in the third term.

All information and data will be confidential, and will be used solely for the purpose of this study. Participants will remain anonymous and their names will not be disclosed in the final results. The name of the school where the research is conducted will also not be disclosed.

There are no known risks for the participants involved, except possible emotional discomfort. However, should any concerns arise during the research, the researcher will ensure that they are addressed and/or that counselling is provided for participants by a registered counsellor named Sandra Roberts. All sessions will be voice and/or video recorded to ensure that the researcher does not miss valuable information. These recordings will be kept confidential. If the researcher makes use of a private person to do the transcriptions, this person will sign an agreement to confidentiality as well.

Feedback will be provided to all interested parties once the research has been completed.

Your consent for your child to take part in this research will be greatly appreciated. If you would like any further information before giving consent, I can be contacted on 083 381 1113.

Regards

G. du Plessis

(Researcher)

I, _____ parent of _____, hereby give consent that I have been informed of the research project by G. du Plessis, and that I give permission for this research to take place.

Signature

Date

ADDENDUM D: Example of Letter of Assent – Participants



Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies

Corner of East and College Street

Wellington

7655

Tel: 021 8643593

Fax: 021 8642654

Dear Participant:

I am a Psychology student at the North-West University. I am doing research to complete my degree. The research falls under the broader project of Relational Well-being in Schools. My research topic is:

Grade 7 learners' self-configuration experiences within the teacher-learner relationship.

I will be looking at how you experience your relationships with your teachers and how the relationships between teachers and learners influence the way you think about yourself.

It would be great if you would participate in the research. If you decide to participate I will ask you to take part in an individual session where you will be asked to make some drawings. You will also be asked to take part in a group discussion afterwards where we will talk about your relationships with your teachers. Each session will be approximately an hour long. Arrangements for time and place will be made with you when I receive your consent/assent forms back.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the project at any time. None of the information you give me, or what we talk about will be discussed with any of your teachers. The group members will be asked sign a contract in which they will undertake not to discuss what was said in the group with outsiders. In the final research article that I will be writing, your names will not be mentioned.

There are no known risks involved in this study, except maybe emotional discomfort. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you are welcome to speak to me about your discomfort and I will ensure that your feelings are addressed. A registered counsellor will be available if you would like to speak to someone about any issues that may arise during the discussions. You may also ask questions at any time. All sessions will be voice and/or video recorded to ensure that the researcher does not miss valuable information. These recordings will be kept confidential.

Possible benefits of the research could be that teacher-learner relationships are influenced positively in the future, due to your involvement.

If you are interested, I will make the results of the study available to you, and I will explain them to you.

Your willingness to participate in this research project is greatly appreciated.

I, _____ hereby understand that I am voluntarily taking part in the research project of G. du Plessis.

Signature of Participant

Date

ADDENDUM E: Example of Transcription of Individual Interview

Visual Mapping 7 – 2 October 2013

R = Researcher

Duration: 44:00

P7 = Participant 7

R	Ok, I'm just going to leave that there. Right. Good morning.
P7	Morning ma'am.
R	How are you doing?
P7	Fine
R	That's good. Ok, um, thank you very much for being will to take part in the research, and for helping me with my research. Ok, um, like I've explained to you before, the research is about your teachers, ok, any teachers that you've had, from nursery school, right through up to now, that have influenced you to be who you are today, ok. How teachers have made you feel about yourself, um, and how teachers have motivated you to do certain things, and about how they feel, um, just about how they've made you to be who you are. Ok. Um, before we start, I just want to tell you that whatever is said here, will stay here, ok. You don't have to worry that what you say is going to go out and I'm going to tell any of the other... the teachers what you said or anything like that, and the people who see my work, um, like my lecturers and things, they won't know what your name is who you are, so there's no ways that they can say "oh, this is the child that said that." Ok. I'll keep all your information confidential.
P7	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, um, the other thing that I want you to know is that, you tell me exactly what you think. There's nothing that's right or wrong. There's no wrong or right answers. Ok. You can say whatever you think. Alright. You don't have to worry about "oh no I can't say this because this might be wrong... a wrong answer, or this might be a right answer, or she wants to hear that..." You just say what is on your mind. Ok. Alright. Is there... are there any questions from your side so far?
P7	<i>Unclear. P7 shakes his head.</i>
R	Nothing. Ok. The other thing I would just like you to say, if you answer me, just say yes or no or, or when you're talking because it's important for me to able to hear it on, on this when I listen to what we've done. Ok. Alright. What you're going to do here, is I've got three different, uh, sizes of paper... you can choose one you want to use, and then I'm going to ask you to do a mind map for me. Ok, where you're going draw yourself in the middle of the mind map, and then around yourself, you're going to draw the teachers, or the experiences that you've had with the teachers that have influenced you to be this person that you are. Ok, do you understand? Alright, um, I'm going to give you about twenty minutes, ok, the reason that I give you a time limit is just so that we can still have enough time to talk afterwards. Ok. If you're finished before the twenty minutes, that's fine, then you can just tell me and then we can start talking sooner.
P7	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok. Are you ready? Ok, so there's the papers, there's the pencils... I'm going to move away from you to give you some space, and then when you're finished you can just tell me. Alright?
P7	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok.
P7	<i>Participant spends time on his mind map.</i>
R	22:15 Are you almost done?
P7	Yes ma'am.

R	Ok, will you tell me when you're done?
P7	22:50 Done ma'am.
R	Ok. Right, I'm going to come and sit here by you so that we can have a talk about it. Did you enjoy drawing that?
P7	Most of the time...
R	Most of the time? And the other times?
P7	It reminded me of... of, uh, bad moments.
R	Of bad moments?
P7	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok. I just want to make sure this thing is still recording, ok, we're going to talk about that now. Ok, would you like to tell me about the bad moments? You said it reminded you about the bad moments.
P7	Yes.
R	Ok.
P7	Uh, uh, in grade 4 when I was in T11's class, at the... my, my peers used to tease me, so I actually thought telling my teacher would actually help, but she actually turned against me, and she also teased me.
R	Ok.
P7	And called me small ears.
R	Ok. Alright.
P7	Which didn't feel nice.
R	Ok, and, and how did... you said it didn't feel nice... what did that do to you as a person?
P7	I didn't like myself.
R	Mmm, mmm.
P7	Because people didn't accept me for who I was.
R	Ok, and when you didn't like yourself, what kind of things did that make you do?
P7	I started disrespecting my parents, not doing my homework, not listening to teachers.
R	Ok, so do I understand correctly, that when you didn't feel right, um, it changed your behaviour?
P7	Yes.
R	Yes? Ok. And, and, then... what was the outcome of that?
P7	I actually told my mom, and then my mom said.... Wrote a letter, but the teacher didn't want to read the letter, because she said she was joking but she was continuously doing it, in front of my peers, to actually make uh... make a joke out of me. 25:00
R	Ok... and, and what did that do to you?
P7	It would actually also turn, turn my friends against me, because I would be angry and I wanted to start a fight because of they were laughing at me, so for my most of my friends, they... we're not actually friends anymore.
R	Ok.
P7	Cause we, we had fights cause of T2 who teased me, that made them laugh, so I got angry and got into fights, most of them turned against me.
R	Ok... so was there more than one teacher that teased you?
P7	No ma'am.
R	Ok. Because you mentioned T11, and you mentioned T2. So did they both tease you?
P7	No ma'am, T11 actually encouraged me to, to.. I was struggling in maths, she encouraged me to do better, and do my homework.
R	Ok, so was it T2 that was teasing you?
P7	Yes.
R	Ok, alright, so tell me more about T11. When she encouraged you to, to do your work and to

	try harder...
P7	She told me to do more sports which can make me relax. <i>Interruption</i>
R	I think this intercom works for this side and for that side... ok. Sorry about that...Um, T11, tell me again.
P7	She told me... she encouraged me to do sport which will make me relax and not think about bad stuff and she told me to, to find new friends
R	Ok.
P7	And not hang around with the, the... my old friends.
R	Ok, so do I understand correctly, that T11, um, was the one that helped you in this situation?
P7	Yes ma'am
R	Ok, and how did that make you feel about yourself?
P7	It made me feel better when she... ma'am.... I used to cry a lot, then she told me not to cry, it made me feel better to know that there's a teacher who cares and loves me.
R	Ok, and what did that do for you as a person? If you knew that there was a teacher who cared about you and a teacher who loved you.
P7	I changed in, uh, numerous ways because I even got, got into a better class, and met new friends, who encouraged me to do better, which now I, I give advice to them and they ask...
R	Ok...
P7	For advice.
R	So what kind of... in, in what kind of ways did you change?
P7	Uh, I started doing my homework, never getting into trouble, getting merits, um, doing better at maths.... A lot of stuff, but most of the time I still felt that there's a burden, that there's a burden in my life, about, about my small ears, because a lot of people still tease me now, but my mom tells me, uh, not to worry.
R	Ok. But when you, when you changed your, your behaviour, like doing your homework and getting merits, and getting into a better class and making new friends, how did that make you feel inside?
P7	It made me feel better because I knew I can do better, and I, and I will... I can achieve anything if I just put my mind and heart to it.
R	And how did you feel about yourself?
P7	I felt very happy, because I got recognised and went to prize giving for three years, which is a great thing.
R	Ok, and when you go to prize giving, and you stand up there and you receive an award, what does that do for you?
P7	It makes me, sometimes it makes me feel sad because I remember the things that happened during that year, and how I got to that.. to that stage, and I get, I get happy to see my parents chanting for me and screaming my name.
R	Ok, and then what does that make you want to do?
P7	It makes me want to do better, and not worry about what people say about me and just, and just think, and just uh, behaving properly and not like.. going into fights, or uh, misbehaving.
R	Ok. So I just want to get clarity about what we've spoken about so far. Um, you said that there was one teacher who teased you, ok, but there was another teacher who encouraged you, ok. Um, and would you say that that teacher that encouraged you, had an influence on the changes that you made?
P7	Yes ma'am
R	Yes.
P7	Because, because my, <i>unclear</i> , the other teachers told me that my blue book is not, is, doesn't have a... nice uh comments about me, when T11, when T11 actually encouraged me to do better, she told me that my blue book is changing, and that I can, I can get a better profile into

	going to, in going to high school.
R	Ok, so do I understand correctly, that when a teacher encourages you, it makes you want to become a better person?
P7	Yes.
R	Ok, is that how you have experienced it?
P7	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok. Right, are there any other things that you can think about, that have influenced you to be the person that you are?
P7	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok.
P7	Last year in grade 6, I was in T12's class. I actually, T13 actually hit me, then I told my mom because I was, I was, I was talking in class, which I was wrong. I told my mom, my mom came to school and then T13 and my mom had an argument to tell T13 not to hit me, but to just rather give me de-merits, because my, my parents are very over protective when I, even when I got hurt, uh, when I had a blue eye ma'am, I actually fell, and then my parents asked me who hit me, then I told them no-one hit me, I came to school, T9 told me "were you in a fight?", I, I, I told her no I wasn't, she asked me should she phone my parents, then she... then I was actually scared to say yes, because my parents would ask me who actually hit you, and no-one hit me ma'am.
R	Ok, so um, when T13 hit you, because you were talking in class, um, what do you think about that?
P7	I think that some teachers don't, don't, uh, give other kids a chance, and they, their favouritism, uh, towards other learners, cause their work is much better than ours, so I think it's not fair because I only spoke once, that day, and the rest of the class was actually speaking a lot, and she actually hit me.
R	Ok, and what did that do to you? Inside...
P7	Actually...
R	Sorry.
P7	It, uh, reminded me of not going back where I was in Grade 4 and actually going forward and uh, improving and, improving my behaviour. So I, I've improved and I'm no more talking a lot right now.
R	Ok, so even though you didn't like the fact that she hit you, um, do I understand that it made you think about what you were doing?
P7	Yes ma'am. It was, it was kind of a reminder that if, if you back chat or want, or hold a grudge against the teacher, you actually disrespecting a parent, who's like your mother or father to you at school, which means your life or future won't be as long as God wants it to be. So I realised that when she hit me she was actually disciplining me, so I, I never held a grudge or back chatted, I just kept quiet.
R	Ok, and, and what do you think about uh teachers disciplining children?
P7	I think it's right but most of, most of the time they do it over the limit, because some kids actually get hurt and come back with bruises...
R	Ok
P7	... When they get home
R	But what, what do you understand when I say disciplining?
P7	To act in a manner, that is, that's in a responsible manner, not behaving in a certain way when there are people around you, and actually behaving all the time. Even though there's no one around you. 35:00
R	Ok, and, do I... I just want to summarize again a little bit, so do I understand correctly that when a teacher disciplines you it makes you realise that you need to sort of get back into line, and move forward again?

P7	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, you also said that when you had the blue eye T9 came to you and said what happened, um, what do you think about that?
P7	That she cares about me and wants to know about more of her pupils not, not getting hurt in the school, because we're a great big family.
R	Ok. And what did that do to you as a person, when she cared about you?
P7	It actually made me feel a bit sad, because I, I also remembered the times that most of the teachers uh, when T2 was teasing me, I knew that there was another teacher who cared and loved me and who would like to know more about me.
R	Ok, and, and what, what means more to you? What makes a bigger impact to you, when a teacher is teasing you, or when a teacher is caring about you?
P7	When a teacher is caring about me, because it makes me feel special, and I know that I'm valuable in this world. Uh, and I know that uh, you can do better when you know that there are people who love you and care for you, other than people who are teasing you... they think you are more useless than valuable.
R	Ok, and when people are caring about you, and they think that you're valuable, what does that make you become?
P7	It makes me become a better person, because I do the same to other kids. I, I never tease other kids because I know how it feels to be teased.
R	Ok, alright. Um, if you think about your situation now, ok, you're almost ready to go to high school, you're almost finished with, with um, your primary school life, what do your teachers mean in your life at the moment?
P7	For me they mean a lot, because they've also went through this time, they're giving us, they're giving us advice to choose better friends as we're leaving primary, and not forget where we come from. And we should always remember to respect our parents because it, it's through all of them that we are here right now.
R	Ok, tell me a little bit about who you are as a person.
P7	I'm P7. I'm very helpful person, who, who has courage and determination. Um, I have... I'm a very short tempered person, but has learned not to get into fights. Uh, I'm a... sometimes, I'm a sometimes stubborn person, but sometimes loving, and, and I'm a determined learner. When I strive to what I put my goals uh through, if I, if I want to actually achieve something, I actually, uh, concentrate on that particular goal.
R	Ok, and how have teachers been involved in making you that person that you've just told me about?
P7	A lot because uh, T1 and my dad are friends, and T1 told my dad to put me into a soccer club, cause he noticed my talent, and right now I play for the Gauteng team, the U13 Gauteng team for soccer, which will be going to Sweden, and, and he's been uh, encouraging me to do better. When I go to tournaments, T1 tells me he wants me to win all the awards there.
R	Ok, how does that make you feel?
P7	It makes me feel happy because I've been recognised for the talent that God gave me and I'm using it in a useful way.
R	So when you are being recognised, what do you think about that?
P7	I think that my future is actually getting better because I can get many opportunities as I grow up. I can actually expand my, my name in the world, with my talent.
R	So, so do I need to get your autograph now?
P7	Yes ma'am.
R	So that I can frame it, and put it up and always remember....
P7	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, and, and how do you feel as a person inside, when you are being encouraged to become better and to um, broaden your talent and to practice more and...

P7	I feel very excited because I can't wait to be, to be a grown up so that I can, I can, I could uh, what's ... uh, expand my talent which will be known by the whole world. I would like to play soccer like my role model Lionel Messi, he encourage, he uh encourages me a lot through watching all his videos, since he was uh a child which means he was also being teased uh a lot by his peers but he never gave up and continued to do his best.
R	Ok, so um, just to summarise what we've spoken about, ok, the last question that I would like to ask you is how have teachers influenced you to be the you that you are?
P7	They've influenced me a lot because writing in my blue book, to... writing in my blue book to show what kind of learner I am, and being friends with my parents to tell them what kind of talent I have because my, my dad didn't know that I could play soccer until last year, so it shows that, it shows that you have to be grateful for, for the, for the people around you, not for your parents only, because the teachers at school are also your parents. When you are at school they have to take care of you while your parents are at work.
R	Ok, and what do you think about teachers in general?
P7	I think teachers are, are great people because they sacrifice their time and if anything goes wrong with uh, someone's children they could be in trouble because they are supposed to be the guardian at that moment which makes them great people because they always care about most children. Not often, but realise that uh they are, uh the learners at school are actually their kids while they're at school.
R	Ok. Alright. I think we've had a very interesting conversation.
P7	Yes ma'am.
R	And I'd like to thank you again for your time and for being open and honest with me, and for, um showing me who you are and what you think. Is there anything else that you would like to add or say?
P7	No.
R	No. Ok. I would also like to tell you that if you are uncomfortable afterwards, or you have any questions, my door is open for you and you are welcome to come to me any time. If you feel... don't walk around with feelings of uncomf... discomfort. Um, come and talk to me so that we can sort it out. Ok. Um, I might come back to you again to ask you some more questions when I look at what we've spoken about?
P7	Yes ma'am.
R	Is that ok? Alright, and then um, hopefully we will also get together in a group to just talk about one or two questions.
P7	Yes ma'am
R	Is that alright with you? Ok, thank you very, very much.
P7	Yes ma'am.

ADDENDUM F: Example of Transcription of Group Interview

Group 1 – 21 October 2013

Duration: 53:26

R = Researcher

P2 = Participant 2

P6 = Participant 6

P3 = Participant 3

P11 = Participant 11

P5 = Participant 5

P12 = Participant 12

R	When you talk, talk nice and loudly, and please talk clearly so that I can get the recording, ok. And, um, let's try and keep it to one at a time, ok, because it's very difficult ... <i>one more participant comes in...</i> Thank you very much, hello... it will be very...
P3	... please tell T3... Please get me the worksheets from Mrs Booyesen's class. Thank you.
R	It will be, um, very difficult for me to hear afterwards if you don't speak clearly and loudly please, ok, alright. Ok, so you guys were all here for individual interviews with me, ok. Um, and then I just want to say thank you again for being here with me again today, and for being willing to come and talk in a group with some of your classmates, or your grade mates. Ok, um, the most important thing I would like to say here, I told you all about the confidentiality thing, and I will ensure once again that none of this information will go out of this room, ok, and like I said, if the lecturers see it, they won't know what your names are, so they won't be able to link you to any of it. Ok. Um, the other thing that I would like to ask please, um, is that whatever we say here today, um, you guys also need to keep confidential. Is that ok with you guys?
6/6	Yes ma'am, nodding. <i>All Participants agree.</i>
R	Ok, so let's respect each other and let's just keep what was said here today, here. Ok, because I'm sure, um, you wouldn't like it if somebody went and said what you told in the group. Ok, are you all happy with that?
6/6	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok. Alright. How did you guys feel after the individual interviews that we did?
P5	Normal <i>laughter from other Participants</i>
R	Normal? Ok, normal... did it have any effect on you?
P5	No

P12	Yes.
R	Ok, you said yes, what, what kind of effect did it have on you?
P12	It changed a lot to my appearance into what I see in other teachers.
R	Ok, like how?
P12	Um, I didn't mention some teachers.
R	Ok
P12	And the teachers that I didn't mention, um, I took a brighter look at them, and it made me change ...
R	It made...
P12	What I see
R	Ok
P12	In them
R	Ok, so what do you see now in them that you didn't see before?
P12	A lot of, uh, respect and motivation... more motivation than what they used to give me
R	Ok, so they're giving you more motivation?
P12	Yes.
R	Ok, and is the respect coming from them, or is it coming from you?
P12	Both.
R	Ok, so it's, it's... they respect you and you respect them.
P12	Yes.
R	Alright, ok, any of the others that have had any similar, similar experiences? Or any changes that you saw, anything that you noticed, different...
P3	Kind of...
R	Kind of?
P3	Yes ma'am
R	Like?
P3	It was also how I see the teachers now, like, ever since the interview I used to like observe like, and think about what I said and see the change that...
R	Ok, so, so would you, would you say that the interview almost sort of opened your eyes in a sense, that you went back and you saw things a little bit differently?
P3	Yes.
R	Do you guys also experience that, did you guys also experience that a little bit?
P5	Yes ma'am
R	And you guys?
P6	Yes

P11	Yes ma'am. <i>Laughter from other P's.</i>
R	<i>Laughing.</i> Ok, is that a convincing yes?
P11	Yes.
R	Ok, alright, um, I've got three questions for you, ok, and I would just like us to discuss it. Um, the first question is, how do you experience relationships with teachers?
P12	Can you please be a little bit more specific?
R	Um, the interaction that you have with teachers, ok, the everyday interaction that you have, um, how do you experience that? Is it a relationship, or is it just, uh, this is my teacher and I'm a pupil and we only... that's it, or is there more depth to that?
P12	Some teachers there's more depth, some it's just teacher, learner.
R	Ok, and the ones with the more, with the depth, with the relationship, how do you experience that? <i>Long silence.....</i> What's different between teacher, learner, just teacher just learner, to a, a teacher that, that gives a little bit more, that... what's, what's different?
P3	Teacher, learner it's like, more like a teacher's just there for her job and that's all, and then the one that has more depth is like when a teacher's more open to you and asks you.... I can't say personal questions... what do I say... questions that like involve you most the time and ja. That's more...
R	Ok
P3	Where you feel comfortable. Sometimes.
R	Ok
P12	Like having a closer bond.
R	Ok. So, so the normal teacher-learner is just, normal, I'm here to do my job, and the others, um, are more interested in you.
3/6	Yes.
R	Not just as the person who's doing work, but as...
P3	... an individual.
R	As an individual actually... they don't just, they're not just interested in the work you give them, but they're also interested in you as a person.
2/6	Yes.
R	How do you experience that?
P6	Actually, I think it's more of a teacher-learner with all my teachers. <i>Laughing...</i> There's no teacher that I have like, a connection with if I can say that.
R	Ok, and, and are those your teachers at the moment or have you had teachers in the past where you've had a better connection with?
P6	No.
R	Ok. How do you experience that?

P11	Uh, I always have a close relationship with some teachers, where no matter which grade I'm in.
R	Ok, so if you have a close relationship with the teachers, how was it, how, how is that relationship?
P11	Just that, um, when I have problems I can go the teacher and tell them I have got problems, then she tries and suggests solutions, or...
R	Ok. So, so, do I understand correctly that you're saying that you can speak to the teacher about more than just academics?
P11	Yes ma'am.
R	Yes ma'am, and do they, are they interested in what you say to them?
P11	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, alright. How do you experience it?
P5	Ma'am there's mostly no connection.
R	Ok.
P5	With my teachers...
R	And in the past?
P5	Ja, maybe. Might have forgotten.
R	Can you remember any relationships where there was a connection?
P5	No.
R	Ok.
P2	Ma'am, not really.
R	No connection?.
P2	No ma'am.
R	So some of you experience a connection with the teachers, where there's a bit more than teacher, just teacher-learner, and some of you just experience... this is the teacher, she's teaching and I'm the learner, I'm learning
2/6	Yes.
R	Ok, alright. Um, those of you that don't experience the, the deeper connection, would you like to experience a deeper connection?
P5	Yes.
P2	Yes.
R	Can you tell me more? Why would you like to experience a deeper connection? <i>Long silence</i> What would it do to you if you experienced, if you had a better relationship with a teacher? <i>Long silence</i> ... Would any of you guys like to give an opinion on that?
P6	I think for some people, that if they, if they experienced like, that if they, if they have a better relationship with their teachers, it can actually improve their marks, and stuff.
R	Ok, and is it only about marks?

2/6	No
P3	Um, in my point of view, I think P6 about marks, but then sometimes it's also about your self-esteem and how you feel about yourself. 'Cause some of them, they encourage you about more, like issues outside of school, either than...
P12	... inside school...
P3	Ja, like, ja, your work and stuff, they also can influence you about how to be a person... a better person out, outside of school.
R	Ok, so you're saying that teachers could have an influence on your self-esteem?
P3	Mmm.
R	Do you all experience that?
P12	Yes.
P11	Yes ma'am.
P12	I do.
R	Do you agree with that, that they could influence your self-esteem?
P6	Yeah
P5	Yes mam.
P2	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, um, and, and, is it true, can they influence the self-esteem in a positive way? And in a negative way?
All	Yes. Very overwhelming YES from all participants
R	Or only in a positive way.
P12	Both negative and positive.
P5	Some teachers both ma'am
P12	Some, not all of them.
P2	Ja, some teachers.
R	Ok, now I had a big overwhelming yes there, now I think that you all agree on that ok. Tell me about when a teacher influences your self-esteem in a negative way.
P5	Ma'am, it's going to make you like hate coming to school, like if you know that the teachers always ...
P12	Nagging...
P5	Yes ma'am
R	If a teacher's always..
P12	Nagging and telling you that you're always talking even though you're not always talking and, you failing because you're always talking even though you're not always talking, you're just sometimes a slower developer in schoolwork.

R	Ok, and have any of you guys experienced that? That you don't want to come to school?
5/6	Yes.
R	And then how do you feel about yourself?
P12	It sort of makes you feel alone, like if you're going to school and no-one will ever be there for you, because you can't always count on your friends, because your friends will just stand there and laugh at you in some cases...
R	Ok, ok. Have you ever experienced that? Not wanting to come to school?
P6	No... <i>laughing</i>
R	Ok. Have you experienced that?
P11	Yes ma'am
R	Ok, can you tell us a little bit more about that?
P11	Uh, I felt miserable ma'am, but then I had to find the motivation, that school is fun.
R	Ok, and was it a teacher that made you feel miserable?
P11	Yes, ma'am.
R	How did the teacher make you feel miserable?
P11	Uh, ma'am, she said uh, things I that know... I, negative stuff ma'am, that I know I do, but not in our class. Then uh, she also said some things, I don't quite remember what she said, but then I didn't feel good afterward.
R	Ok, alright, and, and, how, how, that made you feel miserable?
P11	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, and, and <i>interruption from intercom</i>Ok, so can you remember one thing that she perhaps said to you, or what was it about?
P2	Behaviour
P11	My behaviour.
R	Ok. And, and, how has that influenced you as who you are today?
P11	Um, I always try to improve it, when I'm in her class, and also in other classes.
R	Ok, so let me just get clear on this, so, she said negative things to you about your behaviour?
P11	Yes ma'am.
R	It made you feel miserable.
P11	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, but how has it influenced you to be the person that you are today?
P11	Ma'am I try to change the negative things that she said to me, into positive things.
R	Ok, and what happens when you do that?
P11	Ma'am I feel happier, I feel proud of myself.

R	Ok, so, did you learn something from that teacher that was horrible to you?
P11	Yes.
R	Ok. Ok, so, even though the teachers sometimes say negative things and we don't always like it, it makes you think about it sort of? Am I right?
4/6	Yes.
R	Ok, alright. Um, the teachers with who you guys have a connection, a relationship, what do they mean in your lives? Do they mean something?
P12	Yes
P5	Yes
P12	They do.
R	They do... tell me more.
P11	Ma'am, uh, ma'am sometimes ma'am, you just have to put yourself in their shoes and imagine what they have to go through every day with children who are constantly misbehaving, children who are not working, and that... stuff like that.
R	Feel sorry for them...?
P11	Yes ma'am.
R	<i>Laughing...</i> Ok, alright and if you think about that, if you think about what these teachers are going through, they've got children constantly that they've got to fight with, they've got children that aren't doing their work, they've got children that aren't behaving, how do you think it is for those teachers?
P11	Uh ma'am, it kind of makes it impossible for them to come to school every day, to come and teach, but then, they have to because it's their job, that's what they studied for at university.
P12	And, because they want the best for us, but some people don't actually see that. They're actually taking the chance to actually be here and teach us.
R	Ok, the teachers want the best for you?
5/6	Yes.
R	Um, do you guys feel that all the teachers want the best for you?
P5	Yes
4/6	Yes
R	Even the ones that are horrible sometimes?
6/6	Yes..... <i>Laughing</i>
R	Ok, do we all agree on that?
6/6	Yes
R	So, so teachers aren't here to, even if they are miserable and they are cross and whatever, um, they still want the best for you at the end of the day.
P3	Can I just say something?

R	Of course.
P3	Um, I think some teachers... I don't think if I'm right, but some teachers, I think they're very picky, sometimes, I don't think they really want everybody to succeed sometimes, I think. 'Cause they will, they could call you like, yoh, some horrible names and you'd, you really think that they don't want the best for you. So I'm not sure if like all teachers want the best for you, but then I think some, because you'll think that you want to be something and the teacher will just tell you that you'll be... like for instance you want to be a doctor and then the teacher will call you a street sweeper... so I don't really think sometimes they really want the best for you because you're constantly doing wrong things.
R	Ok.
P3	I'm not sure.
R	Ok, um, you had a big reaction when she said that, so tell me about what, what were you thinking?
P2	Ma'am, um what she was saying is trying is true.
R	Ok.
P2	Unclear...
R	Sorry?
P2	Ma'am I don't have anything else to add on, she said it all.
R	Ok, so, so sometimes teachers um, what's the word...um, "diss" you...
P5	Mmmm.
R	or, or, um,
P12	Discourage
R	Discourage you?
P?	Unclear...
R	Or say bad things about you...
P?	Yip.
R	And then, how do you feel about yourself?
P12	I, I don't know... I think because I'm different, I don't actually listen to what, to the negative things that people say to me. I try change that negativity into something positive. Um, if, for instance a teacher tells me that I can't be a doctor because my maths isn't that good at this stage, um, I feel it, I feel that it's a bit offending because I still have high school and I can still change my maths marks. So I find it a bit...
P11	Offensive..
P12	Thank you... a bit offensive, yes.
R	Ok, but does it then motivate you to work a harder in maths for example?
P12	Yes.
P5	Mmmm.

R	So, how many of you feel that if a teacher is discouraging you, um, about your work.... how many of you actually use that as motivation to show them... I'll show you...?
P6	I do...
P12	I do...
P?	Mmm, mmm.
P3	But then if...
P11	I do
R	You do?
P5	Yes
P2	Sometimes.
R	You do?
P11	Every day.
R	Ok, so, so, the.... I don't want to..., I don't want to sound as though I'm, I'm um, I'm defending these teachers, um and I, uh I also don't want to sound like I'm saying that when teachers are negative to you or when they are um, offensive that what they're doing is necessarily right, but what I do get the idea from you guys, that, if they are offensive it does motivate you guys in a way?
2/6	Yes.
P11	Always.
R	Because... because I don't get the idea that any of you actually um, and, and, tell me if I'm wrong, please, actually let it get you down... It might make you feel down for a second, but then, I get the feeling that you all sort of think about it and then get up and show them?
4/6	Yes.
R	Do you all do that?
3/6	Yes.
P11	Every day ma'am.
R	Every day?
P11	Yes ma'am.
R	Well that's wonderful. That is absolutely fantastic. And one day when you're doing that job that they say you can't do, you're going to come in here with your fancy car, and you're going to come and show them...
P's	<i>Laughing.</i>
R	Am I right? Are you going to do that?
P11	Yes ma'am.
P5	Mmm, mmm!
R	Good for you!

P3	But sometimes I think, um, you take it as it... who is saying it, I think most of the time you look at it in that way... um, for instance, like you're saying maybe um, if P2 says it, I will definitely be like that, but if P12 says it, I'll show her.... That it depends how... like sometimes people take it that...
R	Ok.
P3	Who is saying it, like who is mocking me, who is saying all these bad things to me.
R	Ok. So then are you saying that it's not necessarily, some teachers can say it, and you can say right, I'll show you, and some teachers can say it and it will actually have an effect on you.
3/6	Yes.
R	Ok, so if some teachers say it, does it hurt sometimes?
5/6	Yes
P3	Yes it hurts, and you always... unclear.
P12 20	You actually think about what if she's right, or...
P3	But there's some teachers, ja, what if she's right, but then there's some teachers like, ah, I don't care... like she said it, she said it, it's fine.
P12	There's nothing else you can do about it.
R	Ok, but let's get back to the relationship, because the teachers that you don't care about, or the teachers when they say something, and you think ag, I don't care... are those the teachers that you have a connection with?
2/6	No
P11	Sometimes
P12	Sometimes?
2/6	Unclear ...
P3	The reason I'm saying no is because that when you say that it's the teachers that you have a relationship with, like a good relationship with, is that it means that like you don't really take them as the t..., can I just say, if you're saying yes it's the teachers that you have a relationship with, it's you have like, she's changing you to becoming a better person, and you actually want to change. But if you're saying, um, it's, no it's not, it means that it's like those teachers where you just get in her class, you do the work and you're just don't care, you come out, it's fine, your marks are bad, your marks are good, you don't care. But...
R	Because there's no connection...?
P12	Yes
P3	Yes, but if it's yes, you change that so that she, the teacher, can be proud of you at the end of the day, instead of saying ... because you have a connection with her, unlike no.

R	Ok, so I just want to... sorry... say what you want to say?
P11	But ma'am, sometimes we do need a little negativity in our lives so that we can... to motivate our self to do better.
R	Ok, that's very true... sometimes, he says sometimes you do need a little bit of negativity in your life to motivate you.
P12	Mmm.
R	What do you think of that?
P5	It's true.
R	It's true? What do you think?
P2	Ma'am?
R	P2, what do you think of that... you need some negativity in your life?
P2	Yes ma'am.
R	What does it do to you when you get some negativity in your life?
P2	You do want to make it... you want to turn it into a positive.
R	Ok. Do you also experience that?
P6	Yes, sometimes I do.
R	Ok. Are you cold?
P2	Yes.
R	Do you want to close that window behind you?
P2	Yes.
R	Maybe you'll feel better and if it's still cold maybe you should come and sit on this side, and then you won't be so cold. Um, ok now I wanted to say something and I've completely forgotten what I said... Ok, what I, the idea that I'm getting, and please tell me if I'm wrong, is that it has to do a little bit with the connection with the teacher. Ok. If there's a connection with the teacher, you can take what the teacher says to you, whether it be positive or negative, and you can make something from it.
2/6	Mmm, mmm.
R	Ok, you can go and try and change the negative to a positive. Or, if it's a positive it will motivate you to do even better, ok, or you will feel proud of yourself
P?	Mmm, mmm.
R	when that teacher with the connection gives you things... I don't want to give all the answers, you guys must please tell me if I'm wrong here.
P?	Mmm.
R	OK
P?	You're right.
R	...but with a teacher where there's no connection, where you just walk in, she's the teacher, I'm the child, I'm just doing the job...there's no

	connection, it doesn't really matter what they say...?
P?	Mmm.
R	Is that...
P12	I think it depends on what they say.
R	Ok...
P12	It depends
P11	On and how they say it ma'am.
R	Ok.
P11	Cause ma'am they might be saying that, uh, she's not doing well, but I'm saying in kind of a joke, then she says it like seriously, then obviously she's going to take that uh personally.
R	Ok.
P11	Then she's going to think that she offended her.
R	Ok
P11	Of course she'll know that I was joking with her.
R	Ok.
P11	So ma'am, there's a resemblance of how they say
R	Ok.
P11	and who says it.
R	Ok.
P12	And what they say.
R	Ok, so it's important who it comes from and how it is said that has an influence on your self-esteem, or your personality.
P12	Yes.
P3	Yeah
R	Ok. Alright, um, and this last question, I really would like you guys to think about it a bit, and I would like an answer from each of you. Ok, um, if you think about the teacher-learner relationships that you've had throughout your life so far, ok, um, what have you guys learnt about yourselves from teachers, or within the relationship that you've had with teachers? So let me rephrase that again, what have you learnt about yourself in your relationships with teachers?
P5	Ma'am it's like, with teachers like there's always space for improvement, like every time, even if you're one of those who get 80 percents there, you can, you can still push yourself to get, to be better.
R	Ok, so, so would you say that that is what an important thing about yourself that you've learnt from teachers, that even though you might be good, or wherever you are..
P5	Yes
R	...there is always room for improvement? Ok.

P3	I learnt that I am capable of doing more than what I think I can do.
R	Ok, alright, ok.
P3	Yes.
P12	I have learnt that, um, no matter what anyone ever says to me that I should always believe in myself and have faith because I can make it out there, I can become what I want to be in future. That I should never give up in what I want to do and what I want to be.
R	Ok
P11	I've learnt to be myself and love myself for who I am, and not try to change to just to impress other people, but just to be myself.
P6	I've learnt that I'm actually a better person than I think I am.
P2	Ma'am, I, I've realised the new myself ma'am.
R	The what in yourself?
P2	My new... my, my new self, ma'am, sorry ma'am.
R	Ok, your new self?
P2	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, how is your new self different to your old self?
P2	Uh ma'am, my life is more filled with positivity and more of a happy person. Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, so you have become ...
P2	I'm more light.
R	... a more positive person,
P2	Yes ma'am
R	Uh, than a negative person? Ok. Alright guys, I um, I want you to tell me anything that's on your mind about teachers. Anything that comes to mind. Good, bad, negative, happy, sad, anything.
P11	They are the foundation of success.
P?	Mmmmmm.
R	Teachers are the foundation of success? What do you guys think about that?
P?	Yes.
P5	It's, yes, he's right.
R	Ok, so is the teacher going to make you a successful person?
2/6	No.
P3	No, but she's going to influence....
3/6	<i>All talking at the same time – unclear</i>
P12	Into like... into doing the right thing, into...
P3	...choosing the right path. Yes.
R	Ok, so the teacher's not going to make you into a successful person, but

	she is the foundation of success, or he, because they influence you?
P3	Yes.
R	And, at the end of the day, when they influence you....? Who needs to make the...
P3	Choices....
5/6	Me, yourself, me....
R	<i>Laughter</i> Ok, so we all need to make our own choices at the end of the day?
3/6	Yes.
R	Ok. Um, so do you think that teachers also teach you about choices? About... do they force you and say you will sit here now and you will become a doctor...?
P3	No.
P12	No, I think they just encourage you into making your... into choosing, try choosing the right choices, choose your choices wisely, um, even though sometimes you might make mistakes but they try and lead, try lead you the right way.
R	Ok
P3	For me it's fifty-fifty, sometimes your parents can do that.
R	A-ha.
P3	And sometimes your teachers can do that, 'cause not so many people are given the opportunities to have like parents who like are there to guide them, and make... to guide them into the right choices, but the teachers are also there, so it's fifty-fifty.
R	Ok, so teachers aren't the only people who can influence you into the person that you become.
4/6	Yes.
R	Ok, there are also other people that influence you, for example parents?
P12	Yes.
R	Ok, alright, that's important, but, but do you guys feel... and I think that from what you've told me already that I've got the answer... do you guys feel that teachers are important in your lives.
5/6	Yes.
R	Ok.
P3	Yes... yes ma'am they are.
R	Alright, ok, is there anybody else that would like to say anything about, about teachers... about your experiences that you've had with teachers? About what you think of teachers.
P11	I think of teachers as an army of success, because every teacher has, has a unique way of teaching you things.

R	Mmm, mmm.
P11	That you didn't know, and they all have different methods of teaching, so just, it's up to you which one, which one you choose that makes it simple for you to understand.
R	Ok
P11	What they're trying to teach.
R	Ok, so they teach you something and then they also give you choices?
P11	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok.
P6	Ma'am, I think teachers can be good or bad, it depends on how you treat them.
R	On how you treat them?
P6	Yes.
R	Ok, let's talk about that. Um, in terms of how I treat teachers, what do you guys think of that. Should I be, as the learner, should I be the one to treat the teacher with respect first?
4/6	Yes.
2/6	Mmmmmmm? <i>Not agreeing with the yesses from the other participants.</i>
R	Ok, I like this reaction. What do, what do you say?
P12	It's a really tricky thing to answer.
P3	Some teachers, ok, eish, some teachers are silly. <i>Laughter from other participants. Unclear words.</i>
R	Ok, that's fine. Why?
P3	... but they are.... because, you'll find some learners they really want the teachers attention and they want to buy chocolates for teachers and stuff, and the teacher will end up liking that child, and you would work hard and sometimes you'll, you'll think that that child is like a slow learner, but then when you look at some other things, the learner will get more marks than you and maybe sometimes you'll think that you are, not like more intelligent, but you are more hard working than that learner and you will see because some teachers they, it's how you treat them that they like you, that's why I'm saying that some teachers are silly.
R	Ok, so are you saying that some teachers, um, have favourites?
5/6	Yes.
P11	Some teachers are racist ma'am. <i>Laughter from other participants.</i>
R	Some teachers are racist? Tell me about that.
P11	Because ma'am, uh, let's take ma'am, let's say T1 is my maths teacher, then 'cause he's black ma'am, he's going to like black children, and let's say like, uh, he's hard working than me, and I'm not that hard working, and he's white, he's going to like me more than him, because I'm, we are the

	same skin type, same skin colour.
P?	Mmmm.
P?	Yes.
R	Ok, have you guys experienced that?
P's	<i>Some agree, and some don't.</i>
P12	Not exactly.
P6	Can I add something? Um, ma'am, the other day one of our grade 7 teachers, she was handing out our SS exams then some of the children didn't say thank you when she handed them out, so she said is it a black thing not to say thank you.
P?	Oh.
P?	Ouch.
R	Ok, and how do you feel when a teacher says that?
P11	I know who's that. <i>Laughter from the other participants.</i>
R	Ok, we don't want to know who that is (<i>laughing</i>)... but how do you feel when a teacher says that, if I come to you and I say, you didn't say thank you to me, is it a black thing? How does it make you feel? What do you think about yourself?
P12	Uh...
P11	Ma'am I think it's kind of rude ma'am.
R	You think it's kind of rude, from the teacher,
P11	No.
R	or, or is it kind of rude not to say thank you?
P11	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, but...
P11	The teacher has every right.
P6	But you can't say that.
2/6	<i>Talking at the same time... unclear.</i>
P3	Can I just say something... you can't say, as a teacher, you can't say.. is it a black thing, because it starts at home, every, it, respect starts at home, so you can't say is it a black thing because, ja, I, some people don't have respect from home, I won't deny that, but then I think the reason why she's says is it a black thing because she thinks that some black people are rude, so she's asking is it a black, a black thing because, ja, black people some of them are rude.
P11	That's not true.
P?	<i>Unclear.</i>
R	But do you think white people all have manners?
5/6	No.

P3	That's why I'm saying some.
R	Exactly, so.
P3	You can't say that.
P11	But ma'am, majority of the people ma'am, are black people, that's why...
R	Of the people here at school.
P5	Everywhere, in the world.
R	Or of..
P11	Generally.
R	In generally.
P3	Even school, like when you can look at it.
P3	There's more, how can I say, there's more African people in school than white people.
P11	Ma'am... unclear.
P12	Or coloured Africans.
P3	or coloured, white African people I can say. There's more of us, than more of you.
	<i>Throughout the last few phrases, some of the participants are talking amongst each other, but it is difficult to hear what they are actually saying.</i>
P11	Ma'am it's the same thing as the taxi users, the majority of African people ma'am
P12	Black Africans...
P3	Most of them...
P11	they use taxi's.
R	Ok.
P11	And you guys probably use busses, trains, and unclear.
P3	So that's why they...
P?	<i>Unclear – talking over each other.</i>
P3	'Cause they think....
R	Ok, but does that make me... ok, let me not say what I want to say now. How do you feel if I come to you and I say to you, you don't say thank you, is it a black thing... how will it make you feel?
P5	Ma'am, I'd think you're racist.
R	Ok, who else would think I'm racist? If I said that to you, is it a black thing. Ok, um, and, and when you think a teacher is racist... I'm a white teacher and you guys are black and you think I'm racist ok, how does it affect the relationship between us?
P3	Most of the time, you will start not liking the teacher's period for sure, and you will not listen in her class, you will start disrespecting and you would look at negative things more than positive things because you will start

	doing negative things because you will say this teacher said I'm racist so I won't do her homework, I won't care what she says, I won't listen and stuff, that's what will happen.
R	Ok, how do you....
P5	Ma'am, she put it right.
R	She put it right... so you agree, you agree with her?
P5	Ja.
R	Ok, what do you think about that?
P11	Ma'am, I think that um....
R	Talk to us, you're talking to them, and then I can't hear what you say... <i>laughing</i> . And I would love to hear your opinion as well.
P11	Ma'am, I just think that uh, ma'am when a teacher does say that ma'am, you kind of feel like, but why is she, why is she being racist because I'm the only person who said no... who didn't say thank you. So, in general I do, I do think that she's racist and I start uh, disrespecting her then... that is when the negativity comes in.
R	Ok, so, so what I also heard there from you is that when a teacher says something that you don't like or that maybe um, influences you in a negative way, your behaviour towards the teacher, and even towards the subject might also change.
P12	Mmmmm.
P11	Suddenly ma'am, it changes.
R	So now you don't... you're not liking the teacher, you're not doing her homework, you're not respecting her.
P3	It always does change....
P11	And then....
P3	It does change all the time.
P12	In most cases I don't think the teacher actually means that, uh, is it a black thing, thing. I think it's because she's just up to here with these children, like you're disrespecting me, so I just, it just came out, I don't think she actually means it, in most cases.
R	Ok.
P11	But ma'am, isn't there, ma'am, a saying that says if you don't like the teacher you don't do well in their subject ma'am?
R	Well, is it true? Is that saying true? If you don't like the teacher, you don't do well in that subject?
P11	No.
R	Is that true?
P11	No.
P3	Ma'am, can I just say something? Most of... can I just say.. most of us, like

	learners these days, we like using like these big words... sometimes we don't even know what they mean... like a teacher will say something and you're like, um, you also say, that was being racist, that was being what-what, because you're always offended when you can just look at some cases, always these learners, we're always offended, but then, we don't really know sometimes what, what context the teacher was saying it in, because like, we like just jumping into conclusion again. 'Cause that's why everything is just like that.
R	Ok.
P3	Yes.
P12	Um, what did you just say, what did you say?
P11	If you don't like a teacher, you don't do well in the subject.
P12	Um, I don't think that's true. I think it's... it comes with the type of person you are, um, if you're confident, you won't listen, you'll just be like, ok, um, but if you have a very low self-esteem, it will actually get to you very, very, very hard. I think it depends on the person you are.
P11	I'm not saying...
P12	... the type of person you are.
P11	I'm not saying that it is true, but...
P12	I'm... I'm just...
P11	It's just that some people just make it sound true.
P3	But sometimes it is... sometimes I just think...
P12	No, yeah, some...
P3	In most cases there, it is true, because for instance you will say I don't like going to the Social Science class, because the certain teacher is there and it changes your attitude, so I think in most cases it does... sometimes it doesn't... but you know, I love Social Science and then, but then, when I look at the teacher who teaches it, I just, my mind just switches off, like I can't... I nothing gets in, so when the exam comes I mostly go blank, because like, because of the teacher.
R	Ok, so the teacher is influencing how you do in that subject.
P3	Yes.
R	Ok, because when you go to... even though you like the subject, when you go to the class you don't like the teacher so you're not listening.
P12	Yes
P3	Yes.
R	Do you guys also experience that?
P11	Ma'am, I do, but I do listen ma'am.
R	Ok, so you don't like the teacher, but you still listen.
P11	Yes ma'am.

R	How do you experience that? If it's a teacher that you really don't like?
P6	I don't think there's a teacher that I don't like. <i>Laughing.</i> There's no teacher that I don't like.
R	Ok, how do you guys experience that?
P5	Yes ma'am, if you, if you don't like her, you, you, you won't do as well in her subject than other.
P2	But ma'am, I will just do my work.
R	You'll still carry on doing her work?
P2	Yes ma'am.
R	Ok, so, so what happens if, for example maths, which we all know is an important subject, ok... <i>sighs and laughter from 3 participants...</i> let's just use it an example, or English, is a subject that you have to have until matric, ok, so let's say for example you don't like the English teacher, alright. And um, so now, you don't like the English teacher so you decide that you aren't doing her work, who are you um, disadvantaging at the end of the day?
4/6	Yourself.
R	So, if you don't like a teacher, should you still do her work?
3/6	Yes.
P12	Whether you like it or not.
P11	But ma'am, some teachers ma'am have mood swings.
R	Some teachers?
P11	Have mood swings ma'am.
R	Ok, and what happens if they have the mood swings?
P11	Ma'am, uh, for instance ma'am, let's say like she's my teacher ma'am, today we are... we have a good relationship ma'am, then maybe two days later, we are, she's angry at me, she has a... she's throwing... she's angry at everyone, she's throwing tantrums, then the next day she's ok, she's happy with everyone...
R	So how does that make you feel about the teacher then?
P11	Ma'am it starts to make you wonder ma'am, whether you like her or not.
R	Ok, and how do you feel about yourself then?
P11	Ma'am, you're kind of like in the middle ma'am... fifty-fifty...
R	About yourself?
P11	Yes ma'am, it's kind of like, uh, you're happy and you're angry.
R	You're happy and you're angry?
P11	At the same time.
R	Ok, alright, it's like a lucky packet... you walk in and you don't know what you're expecting.
P3	<i>Laughing...</i> Yes

R	<i>Laughing...</i> Is it going to be a good day, or is it going to be a bad day? Um...
P3	That irritates me....
R	It irritates you?
P3	Yes ma'am, because all of a sudden, yesterday you were talking properly, you were laughing with this person, you even bought her a chocolate, it's nice, you guys were eating chocolates, and then all of a sudden the next day you get in the class, you greet her properly, she looks at you with that cold look, and then.... It irritates me.
P11	But then sometimes ma'am, you just have to prepare yourself for the worst.
R	And then, if you prepare yourself for the worst?
P11	Who knows ma'am? Maybe she, her mood will change ma'am.
R	Ok... talking about that and I think it also um, influences that, is if you have, are having issues at home...
P?	Mmm, mmm.
R	Ok, and you come to school and maybe you aren't concentrating today or something... do you think that also has influence on teachers?
P3	On teachers ma'am?
R	Like, like if, like I'm saying, you guys have issues at home, um, for example, uh, mom and dad were fighting last night, or something, I don't know whatever... um, the stressors, the normal stressful things that happen in life... do you think that things like that also influence teachers?
P12	Yes
P11	Yes ma'am.
P3	Influence teachers in what way ma'am? Sorry I'm lost.
R	Like, like I'm not saying, like I'm saying if the teachers have stress factors at home..
P3	Oh teachers.... Oh yes, yes. Sorry, yes.
P6	Oh teachers....
P11	Ma'am, isn't it that children can pick up when adults have stress ma'am, so ma'am.
R	Can you?
4/6	Yes!
R	Can you pick it up when adults have stress?
3/6	Yes.
P11	Ma'am, I can even sense when uh, someone's not well ma'am, by the tone when I greet them.
R	Like how?
P11	Like ma'am, when I say hi, she says "hello" then I ask her "how are you?" then she says quickly "I'm fine"... in her body language ma'am.

R	Ok.
P11	Yes ma'am, it tells me that she's not fine.
P12	Like she's just blowing you off, or he's blowing you off, like "just leave me alone", like in that type of tone.
P11	So ma'am
P12	Just talk so that we can get this over and done with, so I can move on, and just stop talking to you.
P11	So ma'am I annoy them ma'am.
R	So what do you guys think the things are that influence teachers to be in bad moods? Or to be moody? Those two there are very quiet. I'd love to hear something from you two.
P11	Ma'am, some of the things ma'am, they happen in the staffroom.
	<i>Laughter...</i>
R	Like what?
P11	In a meeting ma'am, teachers have a fight ma'am, then teacher comes to class angry ma'am, then they meet outside...
R	Do you think the teachers fight in the staffroom?
P12	You never know...
P6	They gossip... they gossip about other teachers.
P3	Can I just say something.... From my experience.
R	They gossip about other teachers?
2/6	Yes!
P6	My teachers gossip...
P3	My experience from last year like, ok, can I just say, this thing happens to mostly new teachers, you just... all of a sudden they come in class and they're angry... like from my experience last year.. when... every time when our class like, most of the time used to see a certain teacher after break, most of the time, and every time we used to see her after break, she never used to be like happy, like she is in the morning... like in the morning, you most of the time you are happy because it's a new day, but then most of the time after maybe half past ten... from half past ten to five to eleven, people change moods because of what happens at breaks, but it's true... even teachers. It is true, because some teachers they gossip, they don't like each other... it doesn't only happen here, like it doesn't only happen to learners like that learners hate each other... some teachers also hate each other which makes teachers hypocrite because they will tell you not to do this... to like, to like each other, but they also hate each other, so..
P11	Ma'am, they're good at pretending ma'am, that they like each other.
P6	Yes, poker face.
R	They're good at pretending that they like each other.

4/6	Yes.
P11	Ma'am, let's say a certain teacher ma'am, that we see last period, uh, in the morning ma'am, she is happy the whole day, but when we go to see her ma'am, all of a sudden she is angry, cause uh, she went to see her friend.... They had a fight. <i>Interruption from intercom</i> ... then ma'am she comes back to class and takes her anger out on you.
R	Ok, so, I don't want to go into the teachers relationships with each other, but what I want to go in about, is you see the teacher before break, she's in a good mood, she's happy, she's nice to you guys, you're having a nice time in her class, then you see her after break and she's this... she's miserable,
P11	Monster....
R	she's a monster. Ok, how does that affect you?
P5	Ma'am, that's why they say, first impressions last. Ma'am, if it's the first time you see someone and they, they're not kind, they're disrespectful, you'll think they, they that type of person.
R	Ok, and then if she's friendly the next day?
P3	She's pretending... you'll think she's pretending because like, you'll remember what like she was yesterday, because there's some people... people pretend, so you'll think like she's pretending because like before yesterday, like the whole day she was like this, then all of sudden today when she sees you she's smiling... you'll think she's pretending.
R	Ok, so do you all experience that, that when the first time you see a teacher, those first impressions that that teacher makes on you are the ones that stick with you.
4/6	Yes.
P11	Because ma'am, isn't it uh... first impressions, they last.
R	Mmm, mmm.
P11	So now ma'am she... <i>unclear</i>
	<i>Interruption from one of the office ladies.</i>
R	Sorry guys, um, ok we were saying first impressions last. So the impression that a teacher makes on you the first time you see her, um, that lasts. But then how does it affect your relationship with that teacher? If you like the teacher the first time that you see her, will you always like her?
P3	No.
R	Ok
P11	Isn't it first impression last ma'am, so when you want to make an impression ma'am, you always try to impress... when it's the first time that you meet, you always try to impress that person... so that maybe three months later she'll remember me, cause uh, first impressions last. Yes ma'am.

P3	Can I just answer, like when you, when you just asked the question of would you like her forever... I don't think it's true, because most of the time, for instance let's say it's a new year, and like it's your first time to meet your register teacher...
R	Talk a little bit louder for the noise please...
P3	Sorry, and it's your first time seeing that teacher, then she's also kind because like it's the first day of school, then 3 months later, or 1 month later, she will start like having that class that she doesn't like, or she'll start having like a specific person who irritates her, and stuff, so I don't think people will always last because sometimes it doesn't last.
P11	People change.
P3	Yes.
R	People do change.
P3	Yes.
R	So then, that thing about first impressions last, is that
P3	I don't think it's true.
P12	I don't
R	Ok, guys thank you very, very much, ok, for being open, for being honest... um, are you unhappy that the time's over.
3/6	Yes.
R	Ok, um, like I've also said to you guys in the past, if you feel uncomfortable if you have any questions or discomfort, please come and talk to me about it. Don't walk around with uncomfortable feelings. Ok.
P11	Yes ma'am.
R	But before I let you go, I would like each of you to give me one sentence about just summing up something that you have taken from we've spoken about. Who would like to start?
P5	Ma'am....
R	Talk loudly, ok, cause they're making a big noise outside.
P5	Ma'am, there will always be people who will discourage you, even negative things, and not only teachers, in life, then you have to learn to turn negative into positive.
R	Ok.
P5	Make the best of the worst.
R	Ok.
P12	Always be yourself, never let anyone change you.
R	Ok. And how have teachers influenced that thought?
P12	Uh, I've seen myself as a different person, I don't and to impress other people for what I have, for what they have, for the things I do, or for the things that they do, I always try be myself and if you don't like me for who I

	am, then sorry, tough, I will find someone else who'll appreciate me for who I am.
P11	Ma'am, we're out of words.
R	Are you out of words?
P11	Yes.
P6	Yes
R	P6, is there anything you would like to say?
P6	Ma'am, teachers are awesome.
R	Teachers are awesome? Who agrees with that? One.
P12	Not all of them ma'am.
P3	I've learnt that people are always people, <i>unclear due to noise outside</i> people will always be people and you must never like expect a teacher to be forever the way you expect them to be, like... you mustn't have too, you mustn't have high expectations for anyone, because people will always change.
R	So, so are you saying that teachers are actually also just human.
5/6	Yes.
P3	They make mistakes, they're like us.
R	Ok, is there anybody else that would like to add anything?
P11	No ma'am.
R	Guys, thank you very, very much.
P12	You're welcome.
R	You may go, thank you so much for helping me.
P3	Ma'am can we do it again?

ADDENDUM G: Example of Transcription of Member Checking Interview

Member Checking Interview Participant 3

Date: 25 November 2013

Duration: 15:22

R = Researcher

P3 = Participant 3

R	Ok, It's recording. Alright, ok. There's just a few questions, I was reading through the um, interview that we had,
P3	Yes ma'am.
R	and also with the group thing, so there were just a few questions that I wanted to ask um, in terms of um, what we spoke about there and just a few things that I want to double check with you. Ok?
P3	Yes ma'am.
R	Um, in the in the... individual interview you spoke about friends at one stage. You said that you had friends that told the teacher bad things about you.
P3	Yes.
R	Ok, and that... you then said that the teacher believed those bad things about you.
P3	Yes.
R	Ok. Um, what I wanted to know was how did that affect what you think about yourself or what you thought about yourself?
P3	Um, I thought that I think sometimes I used to think that I was a bad person, in a way... ja I think... because if teachers and kids see that in me, so I also thought that I should change because of that. They made me feel like a bad person so I thought that I should change and stuff.
R	Ok, so they made you feel like you were a bad person?
P3	Yes.
R	Ok, and when you felt that you were a bad person how did it make you act in situations?
P3	In what kind of situations?
R	Like, every day, at school, when you saw them and when you saw the teachers?
P3	It made me feel really.... Like it felt like I didn't want to be there at times because like, I felt like I'm going to cry and stuff, because teachers used to think that about me, and they used to call me names and stuff so I used to think that I shouldn't be where I am.
R	Ok, so the teachers used to call you names.
P3	Yes, sometimes, because of what they heard about me.
R	Ok, so you didn't really want to be there...
P3	Yes.
R	... and you felt like a bad person?
P3	Yes.
R	Ok, alright, now when you have a good relationship with teachers because things have changed for you and, and you now do have good relationships with teachers, how does that affect what you think about yourself?
P3	It makes me feel good, it makes me feel, like I'm wanted in a place. It makes me change my emotions sometimes when like for instance, maybe I'm sad, and then when I walk up in a room everyone starts laughing and smiling, it makes me feel good, it makes me feel like I'm a wanted person. It makes me feel like I am where I am supposed to be.
R	Ok, alright, and then you also um, spoke about when you were in grade 4 you had a very difficult time with the friends and the teachers.

P3	Yes.
R	Ok, um, I think I've actually asked you this already, um, how did that affect what you thought about yourself, what did you think about yourself in that time.
P3	I had a bad self-esteem and I was very quiet, and everything that hurt me, I used to cry all the time. I never used to speak about it, cause I felt like there was no one to help, and I used to think like the people around me would do the same thing, other than being... like changing my like, I used to think that everyone will do the same thing to me like the people... my friends that I had that time.
R	Ok, alright, and, and how did that affect your relationships with the teachers and your friends?
P3	It made me ... with the teachers, sometimes I never used to do their work, I never used to um... it had a bad effect with the teachers because I used to... more than anything, I used to hurt myself because like my marks would drop and everything would be bad because of what a teacher is doing, and not what I think... I, I used to think that it will make me feel better but it actually didn't it made me feel...
R	You used to think what would make you feel better?
P3	If like the, if like I don't do the teacher's work because the teacher hurt me in some way, I used to think it will make me feel better.
R	Ok.
P3	But it became worse because my marks used to drop and everything.
R	Ok. So you thought that the teacher didn't like you, so you stopped doing her work.
P3	Yes.
R	And then it just made the whole situation worse?
P3	Worse.
R	And with friends?
P3	I never... I used to hang around alone, and because I used to think like if I leave my friends... the ones that I had that time... and go to a new group they will also do the same thing. So I used to hang around alone. I used to go to the library, read books alone. I used to do everything alone.
R	So was it almost like you didn't trust...
P3	Anyone
R	People?
P3	Yes.
R	Ok, alright, ok, and but from then until now, I mean you've really changed a lot.
P3	Yes I did.
R	And can you explain to me how you've changed. What are... what's different now to then?
P3	Now I think I have good friends, friends who accept me the way I am and I've learnt to trust other people also. I've learnt to interact with other people, I've learnt to grow in some situations if like something... even with teachers, it's the same thing.. I've learnt to grow in their classes like sometimes if this is happening, I don't take it seriously anymore because like I think that everyone has their moods and if today is not your day, obviously there's something that you'll do to hurt a people... to hurt a person and you didn't really mean it, so I think I've learnt to grow in some situations. 5:34
R	And, and how has what you think about yourself changed?
P3	I have a good self-esteem now, and I think interacting with people, makes me feel good at times, ja.. I think so.
R	Ok. Um, ok, in... when we got into the group interview you said that um, after the individual interview you saw things a bit differently with teachers..
P3	Yes.
R	Can you explain that a little bit to me?

P3	Um, in the interview... when I was doing the individual interview I said some teachers that I... even this year there's some teachers I don't like and things, but then after the group and the individual interview, I think I've learnt to like some other teachers because I saw how other people look at... like in the group interview I saw how different people look at the teacher, and I've learnt to also look at her positive side, not the negative side that I used to look at. So I've changed and looked at the positive side of the teacher instead of the negative side.
R	And how has that influenced you as a person?
P3	It, it, made me feel better because now I know that I mustn't look at people only in one side that I, that I normally do, so I've learnt to like have two sides, and, and see what other people think about the same situation, because we all have our different opinions about one thing. So I've learnt to do that.
R	Ok.
P3	... to see.
R	Ok, alright, um, you also... in the group you said that when you have a connection with a teacher they can encourage you to be a better person outside of school.
P3	Yes.
R	Ok, um, can you explain that to me in a little bit more detail?
P3	That, like normally when you're a person, then a person teaches you a certain thing, you won't only look at it like at that certain place, for instance, it a teacher tells me this at school how to behave, I won't only look at it here... I'll also go, maybe at a mall or something and I'll take what the teacher has taught me, and apply it also wherever I go, instead of here at home. If my parents teach me respect, I'll also do it school, so it's something I carry on and think about it always.
R	Ok, so, and, and that's not just your parents, but also the teachers.
P3	.. the teachers, yes.
R	So if they teach you manners at school, you can apply those same manners...
P3	At home and...
R	In an outside situation?
P3	Yes.
R	Ok, alright, so it's not always just like the academics?
P3	Mmm, it's not, always...
R	Ok, and how does that affect you as a person?
P3	Because normally people would um, say to me, you have good manners. Whoever taught you to be like this is a very, uh, good person or something like that. It makes me feel good and makes me think about that the same... the teachers who do this are really good people, if they can teach someone who's not their child how to behave and how to say please and thank you. It makes me feel like they are really brave and to do their job and stuff. Ja.
R	Ok, and the we spoke about that there are some teachers that you have a connection with, and there are some teachers that you don't have a connection with... what is the difference between the two?
P3	The teachers you have a connection with are the teachers you can talk about... not anything, but you can talk about even the things that you do outside of school, you don't have to talk about work, work always, like the classwork and everything. And teachers that you don't have a connection with, it's normally about school work. You ask them one thing, they tell you what to do, and that's it. It's not... you don't really have to talk about um, your outside life because you feel that it's not important for them to know, so that's the difference.
R	Ok, and then the teachers that you have a connection with, how does that affect what you think of yourself?
P3	They also have an impact in my life, so I think it makes me also feel good as a person, because you know that even if my mother is not here, I have another mother at school, who will teach

	me this. Even if I'm feeling down I don't always have to run to my mother, there is another mother at school to help me. 10:06
R	Ok, and the teachers that you don't have a connection with, how does that affect what you think about yourself?
P3	It makes me feel as if... I, I don't know how to say this... I don't know.
R	Does it affect what you think about yourself... those teachers?
P3	No. Because it's like teachers you don't care about I think, in a way. It's, it's teachers you just go to the class, you learn, read, whatever you do and come out. It's not like something that is really close to you or something like that.
R	Ok, so it doesn't really have an influence on...
P3	Yes.
R	What you think about yourself.
P3	Yes.
R	Ok, alright, and then um, we also spoke about teachers who treat some learners unfairly.
P3	Yes.
R	Ok, and that have favourites.
P3	Yes.
R	What does that make you... how does that affect you?
P3	If you're one of the favourites, it will make you feel good, because you know that there is a teacher who actually cares about me, and if you're not, it will make you feel like you're nobody in that class. You, you feel like you're unwanted in that class, and you feel like there's certain people that this teacher wants to be with and there's certain people that this teacher doesn't want to be with.
R	And does that have an influence on what you think about yourself?
P3	Ja I think so because sometimes you'll ask yourself what's wrong with me... what, what is it that that child has that I don't have. Sometimes it will have a very, a bad reflection...
R	Ok, have you experienced that?
P3	Not really...
R	Not really?
P3	No.
R	Ok, so, you haven't had that experience where it's actually influenced your self-image in a...
P3	Bad way...
R	In a bad way.
P3	No.
R	Ok, alright, but you're just saying it in general how you think that other people
P3	Ja.
R	... perceive that. Ok, um, when there is a teacher that you don't like, what are some of the reasons for not liking that teacher?
P3	Sometimes I think it's what the teacher says to you. Most importantly, because there's some teachers, you'll just go in the class and all of a sudden the teacher is saying bad things to you. You don't even know why. I think even if your marks are bad, like if your marks are bad or something and the teacher will say, you're failing and stuff, you don't do your work this way and this way, so I think that's one of the reasons why you won't like a teacher, because of the certain things that she picks up in you that you can't see.
R	Like what kind of things do they say?
P3	Like if, for instance if you have bad marks, they'll tell you like, you're failing, you don't even do your work, who do you think you are coming in my class doing this. And they will say really bad things, like, get out of my class, because you didn't do your work, because you're going to fail this year, and you really have a low self-esteem if that happens.

R	Ok, so if they like um, insult you...
P3	Yes, in front of the class..
R	Have you had experiences like that?
P3	Only once.
R	Ok,
P3	Yes.
R	can you tell me what happened.
P3	Like, I was in Grade 1, and like I was a really slow learner that time... like I never used to pick up things really quickly, so I needed time to think about it and the teacher used to like really be fast like I used to slow down all the time and she used to shout at me in front of the class and tell me that I'm going to fail grade 1, because you, you don't do your work, you don't do this, you don't do that. So that....
R	And what did that do for your self?
P3	I felt really bad because it would be my first time I think failing, because I was grade 1 and I wasn't used to the environment as yet. So I think it was really hurt.. It hurt me.
R	Ok, and then um, the last thing is when we spoke about the teachers moods, um, you said one minute she's friendly and the next she's in a bad mood.
P3	Yes.
R	And then when she's like that you uh, like the one day she's horrible and the next day she's like Oh, hello, how are you?
P3	Yes ma'am.
R	And then you think that she's pretending.
P3	Yes.
R	Um, how does that make you feel when you think this teacher's pretending?
P3	It makes me feel like the teacher is a bad person in, in some ways, because you'll think that if... why is she like this today, because some people don't understand other people's needs, because you have your moods and I don't know them. So one day I'll be like wanting to talk to you, and then you, you just push me away. Then the next day I want to talk to you, then you're also friendly with me. So I think it will make me feel like you're a bad teacher because one day you want me, one day you don't. So...
R	And what does it make you think about yourself?
P3	To me it doesn't make me feel any how because I know that some people have their moods, so it doesn't really have a bad impact in me.
R	Ok. Is there anything else that you want to say?
P3	No.
R	Ok, thank you very much, again, for your time. And I appreciate that you're open and honest and willing to talk.
P3	Pleasure ma'am.
R	Thanks very much.
P3	You're welcome.

ADDENDUM H: Example of Analyses

This needs to be completed!!!

Please note: The example below shows the last round of analyses. The analyses was a process. Themes were identified and re-identified until the researcher felt that the final themes and sub-themes were fully representative of the perspectives of the participants.

Themes and sub-themes

1.1 Theme 1: Learners' experiences of teachers within the teacher-learner relationship

Theme 1.1: Negative experiences within the teacher-learner relationship

Theme 1.2: Positive experiences within the teacher-learner relationship

Theme 1.3: Additional experiences within the teacher-learner relationship

1.2 Theme 2: Learners' experiences of themselves within the teacher-learner relationship

Theme 2.1: Negative experiences

Theme 2.2 Positive Experiences

1.3 Theme 3: Learners self-configuration within the teacher-learner relationship

3.1 Learners are motivated through disapproval from teachers

3.2 Learners are motivated through compliments, recognition or encouragement from teachers

3.3 Learners' self-regulation within the teacher-learner relationship

