AN EXPLORATION INTO THE DEGREE OF CONGRUENCE OF THE PERSPECTIVES HELD BY TEACHERS AND THEIR ADOLESCENT STUDENTS REGARDING THEIR ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

A Research Proposal

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Overview of the Project

This project is a narrative of the perspectives and beliefs held by a group of teachers and adolescent students from a particular school, concerning their roles and relationships, as they exist specifically in the classroom. It is based on the expressions of those perspectives and beliefs held by the candidates themselves and on the interpretations of the former by the researcher, whose own reflections on the subject matter, have been interwoven throughout. The candidates' views and beliefs on the purpose of education, how they saw each other with regard to that purpose and how their perceptions have influenced their behaviours, were among the primary issues raised.

One of the methods of data collection employed in the project was that of self analysis. (Bogden and Bilken, 1998). In the purpose statement it was asserted that teachers must include the social and emotional aspects of learning, when interacting with their students. However, before that or any other paradigm shift occurs, there is a need for deep and concerted reflection by teachers and students alike. That self regulative knowledge is extremely vital, if we are to stop the headlong flight into a future that we are not quite sure that we want or the journey that we are taking to get there. "To spell out the obvious is to cal it into question" (Yero, 2010 ,p.150) and if I could encapsulate in one sentence, what this project has meant for me, it would be that one.

The candidates' views were first solicited through the use of self inventories (Appendices-I and J) issued to them, followed by interviews structured upon the responses. These inventories were quite extensive and gave great insights into the participants' concepts and

views as to the purpose of education, knowledge, teaching, learning, and the curriculum to name a few. It is when we, in this instance teachers and student, verbalize and identify what our beliefs and values are, that we can reconcile what we actually do with what we say we want to do or think that we are in fact doing. It is the beginning of self analysis, and when done honestly, the beginning of change and development.

There are five chapters to the project: The Introduction, which includes a brief history of the institution, the background and statement of the issue and the purpose statement. The Literature Review, done in two parts- Adolescence and schooling and The Teacher/Student Relationship in context. Chapter three the Methodology, which includes the research design of the study, the method of data collection and method of data analysis. Chapter four- the actual analysis of the data collected as well as the findings and results and chapter five- The Recommendations and Conclusions. Also included are several appendices to support the content provided in the body of the work. While these chapters are clearly defined, there are aspects of the literature reviewed throughout the document as well as in the specific chapter allotted for that purpose.

When I began the study, I thought I knew what I was about and how I came to be there. But it was by sharing my perspectives with others in an honest and therefore meaningful way that new layers of understanding developed. New frames of reference which added depth and breadth to my understanding, not only of the beliefs and feelings of my colleagues and students, but also of myself individually and as part of the whole. I hope the discourse which follows gives the reader a window into the relationships that exist, and that it challenges them

to look inward at their own belief system and how that system has influenced positively or

negatively, their personal and professional development.

Chapter one

Introduction

Background and Statement of the Problem

The school about which the following research is based is located along the east-west corridor and is a government-assisted secondary school. The intake of students here comprises of those students who have performed at the 90th percentile and above at the S.E.A. examinations and generally this correlates to the students coming from high functioning families, not merely from a socio-economic perspective but from supportive and nurturing family structures and environments. The student population numbers approximately eight hundred of which two or three percent are female and are enrolled at sixth form. The campus is relatively small, consisting of two main areas where the students gather to "lime" and talk- the small dining area and the promenade as it is familiarly referred to, located at the front of the building. The playing field at the northern end of the campus is the scene of many inter-class cricket and football competitions. The staff is equal in the proportion of male to female members, with most teaching throughout the school that is from the lowest to the highest forms. The school setting to which the study relates is one which has been traditionally referred to as a prestige one or what was formerly referred to as a grammar school, and its academic history has been characterized by tremendous successes by some of its alumnae at national, regional and world governing examination bodies. In its 55 year history, additional and open scholarships awarded to students, at the former GCE and current CAPE examinations have been many, with some gaining top places in the world ranking. These accolades however, belong to the few, and belie a growing problem of student failure and underperformance at the wider level. This decline in overall academic performance has also been accompanied by a decline in conduct and behavior as evidenced by the increased incidents of fights, vandalism of school property, disrespect to teachers and other similar events, which in the not too

distant past, were aberrations of the norm. Why do students who were the best and the brightest at their primary schools, begin and continue to decline.

The students now seem unable to cope with the demands of traditional schooling which has been and continues to be defined by curriculum which is content laden and matched by delivery which is teacher centered and content driven (Yero , 2010). The ultimate goal is to complete the syllabus on time and to bring the students to a state of examination readiness. This mode of operation is no longer working. The teacher /student dynamic appears to have changed, in that the consensus of both parties as to what the desired outcomes are, no longer seems to exist or are not being achieved. It is not just about successful examination results and winning scholarships. This myopic pursuit of academic excellence in its current form seems to be the very reason for its decline and along with it, student engagement and commitment and desired behaviours (O'Regan,2003). We can no longer fill them and drill them . Society and the life experiences of our youth today are far different from what they were twenty years ago. There is now increased economic and social pressure on the family, which has eroded the traditional role of the latter as the means by which children acquired the social and emotional understanding of respect for self and others, and those other valuable lessons for success in life (Foreman and Davies, 2003). This has also been exacerbated by the easier access of our young people, to media that often encourage health damaging behavior. The time has therefore come for a reframing of our thinking as to what we-teacher and student-need to address and achieve (Manz, 2007). A new consensus must now be reached, one which is mutually satisfying and relevant to both.

Given the reality of the above, the school must now find a way to prepare students not only to pass examinations at school but also to pass those tests for life and as science and the evidence have shown, the successful outcome of both cannot be achieved separately (Greensberg et al, 2003). The research has shown that social and emotional competence and academic achievement are interwoven

and that "integrated, coordinated instruction in both areas maximizes students' potential to succeed in school and throughout their lives" (Elias & Zins, 2011, p.1). This approach is supported by the research of Wang, haertel and Walberg cited in (Elias & Zins, 2011), which concluded that directly addressing the psychological determinants of learning, would have the greatest impact on that outcome. Social and emotional learning has been defined as the" capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively and establish positive relations with others" (p.1). These competences are necessary for all students but especially more so for the adolescent student, who does not only face those issues mentioned above, but is also now dealing with their own intimate and personal struggles, related to that stage of the life span development.

In Erikson's theory of psycho-social development, he places adolescence at stage five of eight, of the life span of the human being and as that crucial transitional stage bridging the gap between childhood and adulthood (Santrock , 2008). It is a stage characterized by the resolution of the conflict of identity formation and identity diffusion or dissonance, and where the individual places great emphasis on establishing their independence and developing their personal attractiveness (Haralambos, 2008; Cramer, 2009). It is during this period that the individual attempts to define their identity as he/she negotiates major changes in physical, social and emotional growth and development. It is the very tumultuous nature of this stage of life that makes the education and educating of the secondary school student all the more challenging. It is at this juncture, that the latter is faced with so many life choices and challenges, each vying for attention and commitment from an individual, who is ill-equipped to address them without adequate emotional and social support (Santrock, 2008; Garbarino,2009). The student is also now faced with academic career decisions, a situation which until now, was essentially limited to success at the SEA examinations and gaining access to a "good" school or their "first choice". This support which is so essential, must come from the adults in their lives, most significantly from the teacher, who is perfectly situated to bring more to the table than just academic content and support

(Kottler & Kottler,2000; Egan, 1998).The purpose of the study is to explore how we as teachers can use our time interacting with our students, in a manner which recognizes and facilitates their emotional and social growth, during the normal course of our duties. This is based on the premise that if learning is holistic then to effect a similar outcome, the learning experience must address the needs of the student on all levels-emotional, social and academic (Weare, 2004).

The Purpose Statement

The central tenet of the study is the social and emotional aspects of learning and the teacher's role in ensuring that these aspects play a much greater part in how they interact with their student, than hither to have been the case. This first requires a general reframing of how we view each other in the teacher/learner dynamic. We as teachers can no longer see ourselves as experts with absolute truths which we need to impart to empty vessels or at best- and this is relevant here, the expert and the willing intellectualized being/person devoid of social and emotional dimensions (Manz, 2007) Traditionally, emotion and cognition have been viewed as polar opposites, a view which has been incorporated into many learning theories , such as the behaviourist theories which still define the teacher/ student dynamic (O'Regan, 2003). The perspective to be examined in this study is one which seeks to explore the relationship between emotion and cognition and emotion and learning and to examine whether that traditional view contradicts what the evidence and research are now showing. The traditional view of the two concepts as espoused by philosophers such as Plato, Descartes and Kant, regards emotions as being "erratic and untrustworthy and that for sanity to prevail, rationality and intellect must function unfettered by the vagaries of emotion" (p.78). It is this belief which largely informs the teaching/learning dynamic at the higher levels of learning and as students proceed upward along their educational path, the focus shifts more to cognition and content and away from considerations of affect and emotion.

Skills in the affective domain analyze and address the way people react emotionally and their ability to feel each others' pain and joy. It promotes growth and awareness of each others' attitudes, emotions and feelings and it is by creating positive attitudes, emotions and feelings towards each other, that students and teachers can work together more effectively (Paige and Paige, 2003). Bloom's taxonomy divides educational objectives into the affective, cognitive and the psychomotor, and the

traditional abandonment of the affective, essentially in favour of the cognitive, ignores the social and emotional dimensions of the student. This failure to address and nurture these aspects of the student's growth and development has critical consequences for the adolescent student. An integration of the affective and the cognitive, must be pursued in order to produce a more holistic and realistic framework for instructional design and for the teacher/learner interactive process as a whole (Norman, 2002; Elias and Zins, 2011).

The incorporation of social and emotional learning into the curriculum in a tangible way, challenges schools to re-conceptualize their responsibility as solely promoting academic achievement to one of promoting social, emotional and academic development (Manz, 2007). As mentioned earlier, the time has come for a reframing of our thinking as to what we perceive the desired outcome of education now entails. Support for this approach to education which places emotion as a significant part of the learning process can also be found in the discipline of the natural sciences in addition to those of psychology and sociology, namely in the field of neurobiology. The latter does not consider emotions as either a psychological state or social phenomenon but rather in terms of their brain function (O'Regan, 2003). Studies of the brain have identified emotions as being associated with complex biological processes, in which neurological, biochemical and socio-cultural factors all play a part. It is asserted from the research that emotions " retain a primacy that subtly pervades our mental life and have a say on how the rest of the brain and cognition go about their business" (p.79).

This latter discovery has come after work on the significance of the emotions, by writers such as Gardner and Goleman, which includes the former's theory of multiple intelligences namely the inter and intra personal intelligences, and the latter's contribution of the concept of emotional intelligence. Thus the centrality of emotion in many cognitive processes is now being acknowledged, this to the extent that it is viewed in some quarters as a "biological thermostat which activates attention and which

ultimately leads to a rich set of problem-solving and response systems" (p.89). The need to focus on holistic learning is in the writer's view an urgent one as the roles of the teacher and student can no longer be in response to the myopic pursuit of academic achievement. The latter or any other competence will not be adequately achieved if we continue to pursue them separate from each other emotionally and socially. As Gore and Love (1996) asserts when each focuses on a part of the whole teacher/student dynamic, the education of the latter becomes only the sum of its parts when it can be so much more.

As I reflect on the context of the learning process at the school in question, there is a need to cultivate more fertile grounds for learning (Jones, Jones & Vermette, 2009; Manz, 2007). Too many of our students are disengaged and under-performing and I fear that barring serious atypical physical, psychological/emotional problems, the reason may lie with the reality that we treat with only the intellect and not the social and emotional aspects of the person as we ought to. Research reveals that the diversity of the social, economic, ethnic and cultural landscape of the school population has not changed significantly within the last twenty years. The implication here is that external pressures and forces are coming to bear on the processes or institution, which no doubt have been exacerbated by larger class sizes and physical and human resources which have not kept pace with the growth in population (School's Strategic Plan, 2006-2011). What then are these external forces.

In a previous section it was stated that society and the life experiences of our youth today, were far different than it was years ago. There is now increased economic and social pressure on the family, worsened by easier access of our young people to media that often encourage health damaging behaviour. It is these conditions which require that all stakeholders rethink and reshape the mission, priorities and climate of the school in a manner which equips our students with the skills necessary to negotiate life's challenges as well as succeed at the traditional demands of schooling. How this is

accomplished given the added constraints of time, expanding curricula, excessive external standardized testing and restrictive assessment techniques, will undoubtedly require the collective efforts of all stakeholders-student, teacher, home, school, principal/leadership and community- and the interrelationships between and among them. The focus of this study however, is to explore how the teacher and student can effectively negotiate those constraints in a manner which promotes the development of the whole person, thus providing them with all those skills necessary for success at school and life after that.

Chapter Two
(Part One)
Literature Review
Adolescence and Schooling

"Whether it be the result of deliberate planning or historical drift and inertia, the content of our educational system is determined by what people have thought to be the purpose of education and those purposes can never be socially or politically neutral"(Arblaster,1972,p.5). Because of our colonial past, the education system in Trinidad and Tobago demonstrates a definite bias toward academic achievement and this bias is entrenched in the traditional grammar schools, which have evolved into what is now the "prestige" school (Harper,2005). The school in question has evolved from this tradition, and to date this myopic pursuit of academic achievement largely informs the mission of the school despite all the buzzwords and phrases about the pursuit of the holistic development of the student. While this may have been sufficient in the past, it is clearly deficient now as is evidenced by the underachieving, under performance and increased inappropriate behaviors referred to in the opening paragraphs of the background statement.

This trend of increased failure rates and deviant behavior is not specific to this institution alone as is evident by the many reports local and foreign which highlight what appears to be a global descent. In the United States of America as reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), there are high rates of high school dropouts and incompletion rates. In Jamaica, as reported by the2007 labour survey, 56.5% of all first time job seekers had no formal educational qualifications and right here in Trinidad and Tobago, the release by the Ministry of Education of the CSEC results for 2009, show below 50% pass rates in the

foundation areas of Mathematics and English Language. These kinds of statistics are also echoed in the many incidents of deviant behavior engaged by high school students here and abroad. In Trinidad, almost on a daily basis, student on student violence is reported, and this for infractions and arguments that should not produce such volatile reactions.

Many reasons, as mentioned in the introduction have been put forward in an effort to explain and address these troubling trends in high failure rates and self destructive behaviour of our young people at school. These include: number of students in class/school, number of less experienced or less qualified teachers, lack of access to small group settings with individual attention, home life factors and the list goes on. This study seeks to explore the nature of adolescence and the influence of one of these factors, namely the teacher-student dynamic as defined by how the parties see each other in that dynamic, in their particular setting. The goal is to examine and explore the dynamic of this relationship which will nurture and support the demands of this specific period of growth and development.

Adolescence has been described as that transitional period, linking childhood to adulthood and as a development stage characterized by great change, biologically, cognitively and on a socio-emotional level. It is as Erikson says, that stage where the young person is seeking independence and is attempting to form their own identity. Conflicts often arise with parents and teachers as the adolescent tries to figure out where he/she fits in and questions about his/her future and purpose in life arise. These marked changes in all spheres of this developmental stage can be tumultuous, confusing and difficult and a problematic transition can have significant negative implications for the emerging adult (Coleman, 1979). Like the

developmental stage before it biological, cognitive and social factors in adolescence interact with each other. That is, each changes individually and contextually. Thus physical changes in height, weight and sexual maturation impact on socio- emotional development as individuals grapple with their physical and emotional changes both individually and socially. While puberty is common to all in the group, variations in the timing occurs which often brings with it, added stresses that compound already existing issues of body image, as individuals are at different stages of the process (Santrock, 2008). There is a marked vulnerability of the personality traits due to puberty and there can be maladaptive behaviours, which stem from the adolescent's inability to cope with the upsurge of changes both physical and emotional (Coleman, 1979). There are also changes on the socio-emotional level as the adolescent seeks to make sense not only of his/her rapidly changing feelings and emotions about self but also of their perceptions of how others see them (Paige and Paige, 2003).

Sociological theory talks about socialization and the assumption of roles and that it is during adolescence that the relationship between the two is most problematic.   For the younger child roles are more or less ascribed, however the adolescent is now faced with choices of roles and the decision as to how these are to be interpreted. Thus as different roles make different demands, it is the adaptability of the individual to meet these demands which may lead to difficulties. The concepts of role incongruence and role discontinuity are offered here as occurring when there is no "bridge or ordered sequence" in this most important transitional stage of childhood to adulthood.

Erik Erikson, in his stages of psychosocial development theory, highlights the concept of the identity as central to the understanding of adolescent development. It is this development of identity, which is seen as the key factor enabling the adolescent to bridge the gap between childhood security and adult autonomy. This identity clearly defined how the individual saw him/her self in terms of career, beliefs, intellect , sexual orientation, body image ,likes and dislikes and where he or she fitted in the scheme of things. There for not having a definitive sense of self or being in a state of identity diffusion as described by Erikson would often lead to feelings of isolation or conversely to losing one's identity in the crowd. Douvan and Adelson, 1996 (as cited in Coleman ,1980) asserts that the normal adolescent has two conceptions of himself, his present self and his future self and that it is the way in which he integrates the two which will indicate his current adolescent adjustment potential.

Youth development is the process through which adolescents acquire the cognitive, social and emotional skills necessary to successfully make the transition from childhood to adulthood that is, the process whereby they try to make connections between their future and present self, and the main social institutions through which this process occurs are the family, school and religion/culture. These skills which are acquired are there for patterned by the relationships formed in each of these institutions, and if we are to understand and make sense of youth and their behavior we must investigate and examine critically, the interactions of the individual with these institutions and the institutions themselves.

The influence of the family is of special import as it is the primary social institution of the individual and is a key factor in any analysis of identity and the adolescent. It is primarily within

the family that this transitional period takes place and the relationships which prevail there

impact upon the creation of a positive and whole identity. Cooper et al (cited in Santrock,

2008) talks about the balance between individuality and connectedness where by the

adolescent has a voice separate to but respected and acknowledged by the family ,but who in

turn is connected to and respectful of their views. It is the primary function of the family to

provide continuity, cohesiveness and stability for children (Foreman & Davies,2003) and failure

to do so on any level or at any time has negative effects on the developmental capacity of the

child. Thus family stability is important not only in itself but also because of the impact it has on

the individual's ability to adjust in other environments such as the school.

It is generally assumed that friends and peers also play a very significant role during

adolescence, Sullivan (cited in Santrock, 2008), and it is within the school setting that many of

these relationships are made. As mentioned earlier adolescence is fraught with so many

developmental issues, physically, emotionally and socially and it is within this setting that

friends assume such a pivotal role. As adolescents seek to find their own place and to develop

their own sense of self, friends fill the gap in the individuality/connectedness dynamic and

provide the necessary support system to negotiate the potential storms of their journey to

adulthood.

As mentioned previously the influence of the family is especially important as it is the

primary medium through which the individual is socialized. However, the reality is, much of

what the family did with respect to teaching children how to be part of a society in terms of

respect for others and how to be good citizens has been eroded by the added external

constraints placed on the family, and it has fallen on the school to provide these important life lessons. The school however, also faces its own added external constraints in the form of expansive curricula and standardized testing, which pull their focus toward meeting the demands of academic achievement in the form of high student pass rates. The result is a myopic pursuit of academic achievement, usually at the expense of the development of the whole person as well as negating the very reason for that type of pursuit.

As indicated earlier, this study seeks to look primarily at the relationship between the adolescent student and the teacher. The relationship does not exist in a vacuum and each will no doubt be different as each student brings to it different family, emotional and social backgrounds. Thus on the one hand, while there is recognition that diversity exists within the age group, traditional schooling over-emphasizes conformity and consensus and neglects to adequately address the inequalities that exist (Haralambos, 2008).There are no simple causes or solutions, regarding the issues of student learning and behavior, as the influences on any aspect of these are many and interconnected. These include, the way the school is managed, its ethos and the quality of the relationships of all the stockholders, to name a few. The research suggests that a holistic approach in redefining these, in terms of examining settings and environments rather than individuals, will yield a better result if change is to be effected (Weare, 2004). The idea here however, is to start with this all important relationship, which is itself a key factor in determining the quality of that environment and setting. It is the writer's view that the teacher is still in a position to ensure that each student feels uniquely known, recognized, nurtured and valued, and is allowed to experience success and reward, by the

learning experiences provided in the classroom. How we as teachers interact with our students is still largely up to us.

Literature Review

Part 2

The Teacher-Student relationship in context

Hirst and Peters (as cited in Hamm, 2003) describe two broadly conceived types of relationships, the Role relationship and the Personal relationship. It is in this spectrum of possible extremes that the ideal or most workable interaction will lie in any given context and at any given time. Thus the ideal is not static but rather a dynamic one, based on the demands of the particular situation. These extremes are analogous to the tenets of Socrates and the Sophists (Yero, 2010), where like the teacher who follows the personal model, followers of Socrates see education as a means of drawing out the student and encouraging the latter to construct meanings, beginning from their points of reference. For those teachers who follow the role model, the goal here is for students to demonstrate their knowledge in a particular way and like the Sophists, the teacher is seen as an "autonomous dispenser of facts, rules and beliefs" (p.179).

There are advantages and disadvantages to each as asserted above as each has its usefulness in specific contexts. In the role relationship, the teacher is the person in authority and has authority, has well defined, limited and specific rights and duties, and the interaction between the parties is limited to the essential contacts required for the performance of classroom duties-the teaching and learning of content. This type of education is typically

performance driven and teacher-oriented and learning is thought to be, primarily a consequence of direct instruction. Here this is little regard for the student as an individual, and it is the presumed age and stage of the group that matters (Haralambos, 2008; Haan, 1962).

In the personal model however, there is reciprocal engagement of the parties involved and the skills in the affective domain come into play, which considers the impact that emotions have on cognition and learning. Goleman (1996) asserts, that emotional intelligence is more influential than conventional intelligence for all kinds on success, be it personal, career or academic. It is in this type of relationship, that positive attitudes, emotions and feelings are created, which enable both teachers and students to work together more effectively (Paige & Paige, 2003). Thus the learner gathers information through all the senses. Here the role of the teacher is one of facilitator, where there is interaction and exchange of ideas between teacher and student. This allows the latter to implement higher order thinking skills, rather than being empty vessels to be filled with knowledge imparted by the expert teacher. Each type has implications for the type of classroom climate and the outcomes which follow. The relationship does not exist in a vacuum but is itself dependent upon factors such as school policy, school culture, the administration and mission of the school, as well as individual teacher belief and values. Other significant influences on the teacher-student relationship are the burgeoning curriculum imposed on teachers and students, coupled with expansive standardized testing at all grade levels (Henderson, 1974). These factors often exert pressure on teachers to behave in ways which contradict not only what the research says about student learning and engagement, but what innately, teachers know themselves.

As described earlier, in the role model type of teacher-student relationship, education is performance driven and teacher centred, where learning is primarily a consequence of direct instruction by the teacher and there was also as a consequence, little regard for the individual differences that different students will present. In the personal model however, a more humanistic approach is employed, where the focus is on "a democratic climate of self-determination for students" (yero , 2010, p.217). This type of interaction where the ideas and views of the students are encouraged, validated and treated with respect, is necessary to produce the kind of citizen that is necessary for a vibrant democracy and must be modeled in the classroom (Marri, 2003). Yero also upholds that it is this type of interaction which encourages students to work to the limits of their ability. The emotional support provided by such a teacher is in keeping with Goleman's assertion that emotional intelligence and understanding, is far more influential for all kinds of success, than the pure promotion of conventional facts as knowledge.

Bereiter (as cited in yero, 2010) suggests that there are two parts to any skill- a cognitive part or the knowing how and a second part, the mastery of the skill, obtained through practice and experience. Given the fact of ever widening curriculum and expansive standardized testing, how do we avoid the common pitfalls of focussing on the first part at the expense of the second? How do we avoid treating the student like a machine whose task it is to associate inputs and outputs? In the opening paragraph of the introduction, reference was made to the fact that traditional schooling tended to focus on the cognitive at the expense of the affective and this to the detriment of the overall development potential of the student (O'regan, 2003). Within the context in question, education here appears to be "a

merchandisable product or an investment in a monetary sense", where its use, is as a means to the end result of getting a good job and the attaining of prestige, success and huge pay (Hamm, 2003, P.51). This focus clearly causes an imbalance, since its pursuit fails to address and develop the whole person and it is this view of education which has largely defined the dynamic of the teacher/student relationship. Most high achieving students are also encouraged to pursue the sciences by the administration and by their parents, as the students who do these subjects are thought of as being "bright" and so they opt for these areas whether there is any real desire to do so or not. This perception is also held by the students who do not wish to be perceived as being "weak" by pursuing the "softer" subjects and this notion still permeates the thinking of most of the stakeholders.

Being steeped in such a culture and climate has led some students away from recognizing and exploring their other talents and options and actually failing at school as they pursue an academic career to which they have no real commitment. The context of schooling is now totally different. The school community is no longer an isolated entity and such a myopic pursuit of education is no longer workable as the demands, pressures and options faced by our students are multidirectional and varied. The problem here is not primarily limited curricula but the emphasis placed not only on the delivery of content but on a particular kind of content. This according to Dewey (cited in Hamm, 2003), takes the focus away from the learner and does so by infringing upon "the wittingness and voluntariness on the part of the learner or achiever" (p.38).The official curricula offered at the school as outlined in its strategic plan 2005-2011, is vast and varied, however what is delivered and how, are not. The lack of free and fair choice as

to what the student pursues adds yet another dimension of the negative effects which result from the myopic pursuit of academic achievement to the exclusion of all else.

Peters cited (in Hamm, 2003) defines education as "the achievement of a desirable state of mind characterized by knowledge and understanding in breadth and depth with cognitive perspective and by corresponding appropriate emotions and attitudes, brought about in a manner which does not infringe upon the learner's voluntariness"(p.39). Hoffer describes its central task as "implanting a will and facility of learning, which should produce not learned but learning people" (Yero. 2010, p.175). What obtains here however does not support such a state of affairs. Given the reality of imposed extensive testing, ever expanding syllabi and a restrictive school culture, the one variable which in the writer's view we do have some measure of control over, is the way in which we as teachers interact with our students. Hargreaves and Fullan assert that it is what teachers think, what they believe and what they do at the level of the classroom that ultimately shapes the kind of learning that our students get. Weigngartner & Postman (1969) also support this when they say that the medium is the message. This learned or hidden curriculum consists of those unspecified lessons hidden in the classroom environment and is dependent upon what the teacher models. Thus the student learns how to process information, when to ask questions, how to act attentively, how and when to show respect, how on the whole to interact and behave towards each other. The significance of this curriculum must be uppermost in our minds and must assume greater significance in our interactions with our students, as a positive outcome here often determines an equally positive one at the traditional demands of schooling.

Chapter Three

The Methodology

Research Design and Type of Study

The issue of interest is the degree of congruence of the perceptions teachers and students have,

regarding each and the other's roles, and how that congruence or lack thereof, might influence the type

and effectiveness of their working relationship. It is a human and social one, and the philosophical

perspective which informs its examination, is an interactionist or constructivist one. This perspective

upholds the position that all the structures found in society are human creations, developed through

communication and negotiation (Creswell, 1998). The study is an exploration of the interaction of the

two groups of individuals in their everyday activities and the fundamental assumption is that the

interaction is a dynamic one where change is a natural consequence of interaction between individuals.

This dynamic is the process by which individuals and groups negotiate patterns of social interaction, and

thus the reality of those involved is socially constructed. The study is an attempt to understand and

describe this reality through the meanings that subjects assign to their various experiences (Creswell,

1998; Johnson & Christensen, 2005).

"Qualitative research produces an interpretation of reality that is useful in understanding the

human condition" (Bogdan & Biklen,1998, p.25) and is the approach employed here. The goal of

demonstrating reality through the meanings ascribed by individuals is effected through such an

approach. If meaning is to be truly understood, then individuals interacting in their natural setting, is the

first direct source of data. In this approach there is concern for context. The issue also calls for the kind

of data that is descriptive in nature and this takes the form of words rather than numbers, and is derived

from sources such as interviews, documents, memos and fieldnotes, which are rich in narrative and

texture. It is through this type of data that meanings ascribed by the source/informant are not lost in analysis.

The methodology is also concerned with process as well as meaning and the issue at hand, which is a human and social one, requires such an examination. The data will be analyzed inductively in the hope that a picture or themes will emerge from the interconnectedness of the pieces of data collected. The specific approach used is the case study, and involves the participation of four teachers and four students, of the particular school. This particular tradition was selected, since the focus is on the issue as it exists specifically, in its entirety and in its real life context. The study seeks to take an in depth look at how each group sees the other, and the possible implications these may have on their relationship. It spotlights a "bounded system as it examines a set of interactive elements that form an organized whole" (Johnson & Christensen, 2005, p.376.). In this collective case study, the researcher is investigating the degree of congruence of the perspectives held by teachers and students, in order to highlight any possible correlations between the level of congruence and the type of relationship which followed. This type of study, unlike those that are informed by the positivist approach, acknowledges that reality is what the participants perceive it to be and as such is particularistic. Thus "truth" is subjective and unlike the positivist approach, does not exist "out there" on its own to be discovered. Also in keeping with the methodology, the researcher is the key instrument of data collection, whose own views and perspectives often colour what that "truth" may be, since his/her involvement is generally that of a participant observer (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998).

The case study is non experimental as no intervention or treatment is employed, there is no pre or post test involved. It is an exploration of perspectives held by individuals who share space, time and purpose with a view to enhancing the understandings and meanings of the interactions shared there.

The over arching question of the research is:

What is the degree of congruence of the perspectives held by teachers and students regarding each other's roles and relationships? And the sub-questions are-

(a) What do you think is the purpose of education?

(b) What do you think is the role of the teacher and

(c) What do you think is the role of the student?

Data Collection Strategies

As a participant observer, the techniques of data collection employed included observation, document analysis-the self inventories, respondent interviewing and participation with self analysis (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998). The method of participant observation allowed me to participate as a member of the group, while observing it as an "outsider". As the main research instrument of the study, the immediate task was to make unfamiliar the research arena, with which I was very familiar, in order to observe the relationships and activities from outside, while still being a part of it (Smith. 2005). This was the rationale for choosing the two students whom I sought to do the follow-up interviews with. While there was a degree of familiarity my interaction with that year group was essentially limited.

As a reflective practitioner, I was also able to observe the behavior of the students and teachers alike in the field, to get a sense of the dynamics of their interaction with each other. As is required by the type of research issue, the candidates were selected because they fulfilled the sample criteria of being adolescent students and their teachers engaging in their everyday activities. Direct observation in the classroom essentially involved my interactions with my own students. One of the two teachers who

were interviewed, did not wish to be observed and I was only able to observe the other for one session, I did not think that one session could adequately or fairly add dimension to my impressions, so that any references to direct classroom observations are essentially those based on my own experiences.

Each student and teacher was given a self-inventory to be done independently of each other (Appendices I/J). This exercise took each candidate on average, two days to a week before they were returned. This was followed by the face to face interviews after the researcher had read and re-read the responses and analyzed them to get a true sense of the candidates' perceptions of themselves. I chose to allow the candidates, time to reflect and explore their feelings and opinions, and to write them down before discussion, to give them the opportunity to voice these freely and as clearly as possible. This approach allowed each to explain and clarify their position and to elaborate further if they chose to do so and was possible since the group/case was small.

The interviews which followed were structured upon the responses of the candidates. These were taped, transcribed and analyzed in similar fashion as the inventories to refine the themes and categories in line with the objectives of the study (Appendices- A and B). The face to face interviews were the major source of information as the exchanges between the candidates and the researcher were free and easy, because of the rapport shared, yet guided by the responses of the inventories which made the exercise very fruitful.

Data Analysis

As mentioned above in the data collection strategies, the major sources of information were the self inventories and the interviews which followed. These were analyzed as follows. The self inventories were read in their entirety to get a true sense of the candidates, regarding their beliefs and the metaphors they used to describe themselves, their work and the student/teacher relationship (Yero, 2010). The analysis or interpretation of this document followed the guidelines set out by its creator as well as the insights of the researcher. Once the interpretation of each was completed, they were collectively analyzed to highlight any themes and categories which may have emerged from the text. The ultimate goal of the analysis was to produce biographies of the candidates and to discover the ethos or culture of the staff. This exercise had a second purpose and that was to lend a degree of trustworthiness in the researcher's ability to interpret the meanings of the contributions made by the respondents, which would become apparent during the interviews.   (Appendices I and J).

The face to face interviews which followed the self-inventory exercise were therefore semi-structured as the biography was the starting point of the discussion. The aim was to allow the respondents to comment on its accuracy and to address those issues which they felt merited correction, mentioning or elaboration. These interviews were taped and the transcripts derived were again analyzed for themes and categories to arrive at a more refined set of these in line with the objectives of the study. (Appendices A and B) Reflective notes on the entire process and interactions between the researcher and the candidates were also made and included in the report, to add another dimension to the personalities in the study.

The above approach to analysis is generally inductive and is useful as it allows extensive amounts of text data to be condensed in summary form, while assigning meaning and texture to the data gathered. As stated previously, the research is qualitative and the nature of the information gathered, consisted of words which require a "thick description" to result from its analysis, and so uses the inductive approach to allow themes and categories to emerge from the text. The goal was not to accept or reject any hypothesis, but to allow the participants to make their own sense of what was said where the realities of each are intertwined in the process of making meaning.

This self inventory consisted of four sections, A to D, which were analyzed as follows**. Sections A to C** were read separately for each candidate, in order to **highlight the belief and value systems** of **the teacher**, and how these have affected their choices of content and teaching methods. **Section D,** which contained the open ended questions of the inventory, **dealt with the world views** of both the teachers and students, **regarding the purpose of education** and how each saw themselves and the other in that world. The general guidelines used to interpret the data were those suggested by the creator of the inventory as well as my own impressions and reflections. After reading sections A to C individually for each, each was summarized and analyzed collectively for similarities/themes, to determine if there was a staff culture or ethos.   (Appendix G)

In section D, each question was analyzed simultaneously, for all four teaching candidates, that is question by question. The process was long but I felt themes would emerge more clearly for the group as well as individually. The contribution of each was read again separately in its

entirety, to produce the mini biographies which formed the basis of the face to face interview (Appendix C) .The researcher's reflections and impressions of the group/individuals were stated, to help in guiding the interviews. (Appendix G)

The students' self inventories were also read and analyzed in a manner similar to that used for the teachers. Like the reasoning offered previously, this was done to determine the existence of a student culture/ethos, and to produce biographies for the interviews (Appendices-F and D).

Finally a preliminary comparative analysis was also done prior to the interviews, to better enable the researcher to relate the information gathered here with the objectives of the study.   (Appendix E)

The themes and categories which emerged are revealed and highlighted on the relevant documents in the appendix.

The Participants

The study began with eight candidates, four teachers and four students. This non random

sample was purposively selected as well as convenient. As is the case for this type of sampling,

the size of the sample is less important than the criteria for selection, which in this case

required adolescent students and their teachers, interacting in their everyday activities. There

was a thirty plus age difference between the eldest and the youngest teacher, but neither of

the two had received formal teacher training. What separated them was their years of

experience on the job. The other two teacher candidates, with ages and experience between

the former pair, were both formally trained-both had their Diploma in Education.(Appendix C)

Of the four students, two were from upper six and two were from fourth form. The two sixth

form students were both business students and had been students of mine since they were in

fourth form. The two fourth formers were relatively new to me- one was a business student

and the other, essentially science. (Appendix D) These individuals were also chosen, in an

attempt to span as wide a perspective as possible based on age and experience in the case of

the students, and age, experience and training in the case of the teachers. An attempt was also

made to get the perspectives of both males and females in both groups.

As mentioned in the section on data collection strategies, self inventories were used to

gather the initial information, which was then followed by interviews based on those

responses. For the interviews however only four of the candidates were used. This was not

only in the interest of time but after reading the inventories of all, I thought that in the case of

the teachers, the inexperience of the youngest was clear as the responses seemed not to be

grounded in any real experience but in rhetoric and was nebulous. The eldest teacher, clearly a traditionalist was also not interviewed, not because I am against tradition but because there was nothing new there and he was for all intents and purposes on his way out of the system. I have however included all the answered self inventories in the relevant appendix.

For the students, only the two fourth formers were used. Again in the interest of maintaining depth of the study, I decided to go with only two. However these two were chosen because I felt there was a newness that they could bring to the analysis as I was not as close to them as I was to the other two. Their self inventories like the other teachers who were not interviewed, are also included in the relevant appendix.

However, all of the contributions made by the candidates, in whatever form have been considered and included in the final analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research are the principles of right and wrong that a group accepts at a particular point in time (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998). The relevant concerns in qualitative research are broadly that of consent and the protection of the individuals involved, regarding their dignity and welfare. As a participant observer, the methods of data collection as mentioned previously included observation, the use of a self inventory, interviews and self analysis. The first three of these required the consent of the participants, which was acquired informally, that is there was no formal consent form. With the exception of the two youngest candidates all the participants were over eighteen and there was a pre-existing relationship with all either in my capacity as colleague or teacher. The consent was acquired however, by first assuring the candidates that they were free to decline at any given point and that they were free to read the findings of the report, as well as the conclusions drawn. Confidentiality was also not an issue for any however initials and first names only were used. I recognize the huge issue of trust placed upon me by the lack of confidentiality and the openness which characterized the tone of the interactions. I believe however that I have been true to the findings.

There were no inducements as all the candidates entered voluntarily and were informed about the nature and purpose of the study. This was evident in the questions which made up the inventory and which would inform the interview to follow. Each subject had a say as to the degree of their participation, as was evident when one of the teachers declined to be observed directly in the classroom, which I respected.

Included in the report are my reflections and self analysis, which have been woven throughout the discourse. The intention is to give the reader a sense of who I am in terms of my background, experience, and beliefs so that there is an appreciation that what is written comes from a particular position (Smith, 1997). By highlighting my own perspectives the hope is that the reader will recognize the "voices" of the other participants, thus lending authenticity to the meanings and interpretation ascribed to their contributions.

Finally, it has been mentioned, that the subjects of research gain very little for their participation and seem to give but receive nothing in return. I am truly grateful to my colleagues and students for giving their time and themselves to make this study possible. In return it is my hope, that their own reflection will take them father along their journey of becoming even more than they are for themselves and the other.

Limitations

The goal of qualitative research is to better understand human behavior and experience, to grasp the processes by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are (Creswell, 1998). The case study which is the tradition used here does not allow for generalizations to be made based on the findings, in the traditional way that the word implies. Qualitative research, in its quest to understand processes and meaning, is particularly suited for the exploration of the issue under consideration here. The hoped for outcome of this type of study would be to answer the question as to which other setting and subjects, the findings might shed light on (Bogdad & Bilken, 1998).

The issue of researcher bias is also relevant here as research is usually predicated upon issues of interest to the researcher, and this instance is no exception. I have made every effort however to be mindful of those prejudices in reflective notes and memos. This bias is however a salient consideration in light of researcher inexperience. The impact of the researcher as observer may also influence the behavior of the subjects, however with no direct observation of the candidates, this will be somewhat limited.

Delimitations

The boundary of the study is limited as only one school was used. This was in the interest of expedience while gathering as much depth and breadth of information as possible with the single case.

Chapter Four

Analysis of Data-The Findings

The ultimate goal of the study was to examine and explore the dynamic of the teacher/student relationship which would or could nurture and support the adolescent, in meeting the demands placed on them as they go through this complex stage of growth and development. As a participant observer of the setting in question, and based on my own experience of the subject matter, the research was an eye opener and forced me to reevaluate the position I held, which in hindsight, was clearly taken from a self-absorbed and superficial view of the situation.

Hoffer is quoted in Yero (2010), where he says that "to spell out the obvious is to call it in question" (p.150). When I began the study, my firm belief was that the personal relationship was the type which would be better suited to this particular stage of development, and that teachers often brought out the worst side of students, because of the way they treated with them, that is as machines who were required to learn and who were essentially devoid of social and emotional dimensions. Because the personal touch worked for me, I expected that it could or should work for others, and like a hat they could throw off the old paradigm and put on the new one. In my eagerness to affirm my beliefs, it was pointed out to me that my change of hats took twenty years and was accompanied by other developments in my competences as a teacher. Ransford (2009) supports this correlation between teacher efficacy, experience and training and the teacher's willingness to implement a social and emotional learning curriculum as an equally significant part of their class or learning experience offered. Included in his analysis was the link which also existed between the support of administration and the

willingness of teachers. While the rhetoric is always present at staff meetings and assemblies about the need for the holistic development of the student, what is even more apparent is the high priority placed on examination results which are analyzed statistically for percentage pass rates and number of distinctions, and this is done on a class by class and subject by subject basis. This exercise is done under the scrutiny of all and brings tremendous pressure on the teacher to deliver. And so as asserted by Yero and others, what gets measured gets done.

In the opening paragraphs of the introduction, mention was made of the fact that there was underperformance and underachievement by the students in addition to increased incidents of maladaptive behaviours. One day, during the period that I was writing this report, I was taking my own children to school, when there was a report on the radio which mentioned that to date in Trinidad, eleven thousand students were or had been on suspension from school. Coincidentally enough, the day before that, four of my own students were suspended for horse playing that involved throwing chairs around at the back of the building. When I made the observation earlier, of the increased incidents of troubling behavior from the students, I did so with no knowledge of the students or the circumstances, but merely on the evidence of the destruction. This time I knew the boys and to my mind they were and still are, among the more well behaved and well adjusted young men in the school. My knowledge was no longer separate from the source, it was subjective and contextual and was therefore whole (Yero, 2010). On investigation, I discovered that there was no malice or intent of violence towards each other in their actions. These chairs were broken and discarded furniture which idle hands found time to further destroy. They made a bad decision, which resulted in a foolish act of vandalism. The incident taught me that to view the result of the decision separately from the

source, is to only have part of the fact or truth or knowledge of the situation and it has further

highlighted the need for the deliberate inclusion of the teaching of the skills necessary for social

and emotional literacy (Weare, 2004). In an earlier research project with another group of

students, which involved a needs assessment exercise, the latter had revealed an exaggerated

feeling of boredom and the propensity to express this in inappropriate ways such as vandalism.

A mini intervention program had been designed and implemented to help the boys understand,

monitor and discriminate between their feelings and emotions and to use this information to

guide their thinking and actions in appropriate ways. The effects of that program on the

students and on me, was to foster closeness and a deeper understanding of each other as

people, which has stayed with us.

The concept of knowledge was one of the parameters which informed the discussion with

the candidates. Its use in their responses came up many times in the self inventories and as

such merited further discussion and reflection on the part of the users. The word was used by

both teachers and students, most specifically regarding its transmission by the teacher and its

acquisition by the student. (Appendices-I and J) Common to both groups was the conduit

metaphor which could be ascribed to their understanding of this important concept and how it

influenced their relationship (Yero, 2010). Another important commonality was what this

knowledge entailed and why. When the teachers were asked to give their definition of the

purpose of education and how they saw their role as teachers, the transmission of knowledge

was prominent in all their responses. This was also the case with the students, who also saw the

purpose of education and the role of the teacher, as the means by which they would get or

source knowledge. There was therefore a high degree of congruence with regard to these two

issues. As to what this knowledge entailed, there was also very little disparity between the two

groups. Uppermost in the minds of both, was the curriculum content and the coverage of the

latter for examination success. In a society conditioned to believe that academic excellence was

superior to all other forms of education, this shared perspective is hardly surprising, given the

school's history as one of the so called prestige schools (Harper,2005). While the rhetoric of the

development of the whole person was evident, complete with spiritual, moral and ethical

training, teachers generally felt pressured to rely heavily on the content of their subject. This

tended to inform the interaction with their students, in a manner designed to facilitate

coverage of content, at times at the expense of allowing the student to think independently, to

doubt and to question which is necessary to facilitate true understanding (Arblaster, 1972). The

ultimate goal was to prepare students to answer examination questions which usually followed

a prescribed formula. "There is usually a fixed approach to teaching, defined by the need to get

them ready for exams."(Appendix A) This was the contribution made by one of the candidates,

so that while teachers were aware of the concepts of differentiated instruction and that

students have different learning styles, the result was often a race to the finish line of "content

coverage and exam readiness" (Henderson, 1974). The other teacher interviewed spoke of

knowledge as being "common sense, based on the child's experience as well as the prescribed

content." Bereiter as(cited in Yero, 2010) categorizes knowledge as being statable- that which

can be passed on, implicit- that perception or innate knowing, episodic- that based on memory

and experience, impressionistic- that related to the affect or emotion, skill- the knowing how to

and its mastery through practice and regulative or the process of self reflection. He suggests

that part of the problem in schools, is that they place the greatest emphasis on statable

knowledge and the "knowing how to" part of the skill, while essentially ignoring the other aspects. Both teacher candidates interviewed, have indicated their awareness of the different kinds of knowledge whether formally or not, but feel constrained to rely on subject content and the how to, in order to complete the syllabus on time. What propels this fixed approach and what impact does it have on the dynamic of the teacher/student relationship?

Both the students and teachers expressed that the curriculum was too large and that its delivery is done not only primarily by the teacher, but in a manner which does not take into consideration, the duplication of effort which results from the un-integrated approach taken (Fogarty & Stoehr,2008). Here again was another point of congruence, which again has not gone beyond its recognition. One student remarked that he wished teachers would talk to each other more, about what they were asking them to do. He shared with me that he almost had a break down, as he felt so overwhelmed by the demands placed on him collectively by his teachers. He also went on to say that at one time, his chemistry teacher did ask them about their workload before giving a further assignment, in terms of volume and time given to complete. That however was the only time. As teachers we are often passionate about our subject and fail to recognize that there are eight or nine more like us, making similar demands on the same students.

Apart from the possible influence on the teacher/student relationship, with regard to the mode of transmission, the curriculum also had negative implications, directly for the student. I asked one of the teachers, if she felt there was joy in the classroom about learning, as the

students got older. Her response was that the curriculum "killed" it. I then asked what she

thought was the purpose of such a curriculum, to which she responded:-

"To weed out who can and who can't make it. It appears to be fair because of the odd

bright spots. If it was fair more would make it, more would be crossing that bar with ease. It's a

curriculum to separate not educate. The system is class oriented. The curriculum does not allow

you to learn who you are."(Appendix A) This was in keeping with the Correspondence Principle

proffered by Bowles and Gintis (1976) over thirty years ago and apparently it is still very

relevant today. In a democratic society, which is what we profess to have or want as outlined in

the Education Policy Paper (1993-2003) the task of education is not to "serve business,

government and the economy but to examine, investigate and analyze them" (Arblaster, 1972,

p.39). How relevant is that assertion here? And what must it be like to feel so strongly about

the negative aspects of a curriculum and still feel pressured to implement it or else. As she said-

you tow the line. I also asked one of the students, who was highly motivated and traditionally

successful at school, what he thought happened to those who couldn't cope or keep up. He said

they would eventually drop the subject/s they felt they couldn't cope with, but then when they

tried to focus on the rest, they would discover that they were behind there too, at which time

they may give up entirely and do nothing. Incidentally, this was the student who admitted to

almost having a breakdown, trying to keep up.

In the self inventory, when the students were asked to define their roles, the following

themes emerged: Students should be diligent however they need structure, discipline, guidance

and support. They too felt it was about acquiring the content of the curriculum as well as those

other skills necessary for their social development and to take their place in society. What struck me was the belief they all had in the teacher as expert, where they differed was in the dynamic of the exchange between them. The older students wanted a degree of freedom and autonomy, but they too looked to their teacher for guidance and expertise. The younger ones however, preferred a more disciplined and structured classroom environment, where the exchange was mainly defined by the curriculum content. They wanted discipline but not oppression and essentially preferred to be told how things were done-that is, to be" given the steps." (Appendices F and H) It appeared to me that the more traditional role of the teacher was preferred by the younger students, while the personal role was preferred by the older ones. Thus issues of class control, teacher-centeredness or student-centeredness, seemed to be related to the age of the students. They also seemed to share the teacher's perspective on what their-the student's role, was. Both parties expected that the student be willing, attentive, ask questions and be active participants-a partnership as one student suggested. There seems to be a large measure of congruence, of the perspectives held by both parties as to the purpose of education, their respective roles in the classroom, the curriculum, their expectations of each other, their concept of knowledge and the manner in which the transmission of the latter occurs-that is, from teacher as expert to student as willing and able (Appendix E). Yet, despite the fact or appearance that they share so many beliefs, there has been a failure to produce or be the best that they can be, to and for each other. There is still so much frustration and dissatisfaction felt by both teachers and students alike.

When I began this study, my experience had led me to believe, that the setting and environment, which would foster the development of the whole student, that is socially,

emotionally and academically, rested significantly on the type of teacher-student relationship, where by the former was much more than a conduit of curriculum content, and I still hold that belief. However, what has changed is my perspective that the personal type relationship, was essentially the way to accomplish this. My interaction with the candidates showed me that there was no quick fix or formula regarding our relationship with each other, in order to deal with the issues of underachievement, deviant bahaviours or any other unanswered needs that occur in our classrooms. The interviews with the two teacher candidates were very different, as mentioned in the opening paragraph of the transcript of the interview of M.C.F (Appendix A). The issue of concern to me was one of control, and given my preference for the personal type relationship for the teacher and student, I wondered at the questions it raised for me. I mentioned to the candidate -(M.C.F.), that I found their styles of interaction to be vastly different, where one was more traditional in their approach, while the other-hers, could be likened to the personal and more student-centered approach. What struck me was that I learned so much of what they had to share, despite their opposite styles, as each interacted in the manner that was authentic for them. I shared this observation with her as well as the feeling I had, that with her I felt I was in control, as she allowed me to take over the interview. With the other candidate, he definitely had control, and he too had a willing and captive audience. There was a quiet strength and confidence which emanated and I felt that I could trust in what he was saying. It was her view however that when students have control, they feel empowered, and that we should have conversation with them, to begin to learn about them. This she believed is best done by allowing them to have a voice. The interaction with both candidates was extremely enlightening, and it made me question my definition of participation

as to what it entails. Does it have to be immediately observable for it to be happening? If a student does not ask a question, is he bored, does he not understand, or is it possible that what was said has resonated with him and has in fact engaged his mind? And what of the issue of control, how does it translate in the two types of teacher-student relationship. Is this issue necessarily a dichotomy in terms of the type of relationship? It is clear that for the more traditional of the two candidates, he had a custodial outlook of the students, unlike the other who truly espoused the perspective of the student-centered model.

In their self inventories, all the teachers expressed a desire to have control of the class, however of the two interviewed, the more traditional of the two said he wanted complete control, while the other was willing to relinquish some of it to the students. In his responses it was clear who was in charge, but he also said that he was not an autocrat as the lesson was not set in stone. He said when students voiced their opinions or challenges, these had to be supported by the empirical evidence. He essentially held an objectivist approach to the concept of knowledge as did all the candidates, and I suspect the rightness or wrongness of knowledge was also part of the issue of control. This issue of control was also relevant for the students. While the older students preferred a degree of autonomy, the younger ones felt the need for structure and discipline, and cited class control as one of the attributes of the teacher. This appears to be in keeping with Haralambos, Erikson and Coleman, who all attest to the balance of connectedness and individuality, sought by the adolescent. The younger students needed the safety of the parent figure/disciplinarian to guide and make decisions for them. They were not ready for the responsibility of choice and autonomy.

After pointing out to the students who were interviewed, that the research had revealed similarities in the expectations that both teachers and students had of them, I asked them why did they often not live up to their own concept of themselves. B.L. named the following as possible reasons. The distraction from friends in class where you go off topic, teachers don't break it down enough, bullying, no revision, lack of supervision from teachers, when they feel like the teacher only "cuts them off" when they are trying to explain something or when the teacher is not interested in their opinion, and when they feel persecuted or picked on by the teacher. The reasons put forward by the other student was that- sometimes people came to school for the wrong reasons, to talk, look cool, bow to peer pressure, or are simply not focused. They may also feel overwhelmed and lack the necessary family support. And finally, the competition in a setting such as this while a motivator for some, as it was for him, may well be a deterrent for others. (Appendix B)

One teacher's response to that same question contained the following.

"Children are proud people and will tolerate or not say anything to make them appear different, so some may be hungry or come from unhappy homes. There may be much going on with the child than what meets the eye." (Appendix A)

He also went on to say that students often engage in attention seeking behavior when they feel ignored at home, and acknowledged that adolescence is a difficult time, and that not enough is done to address the emotional and academic pressures that they face. Finally the relevance of external distractions was also acknowledged and the fact that options now existed for second chances, should failure at traditional schooling occur. The response of the other teacher as to

why students fail or do not live up to their full potential, cited the unavailability of parents where by the adolescent did not have the kind of emotional support that they needed. Thus like her colleague, the reason laid with a lack of emotional as well as academic support. Both teachers and students had bought into the rhetoric of what each should do for a successful outcome, but the reality for both, is that what really matters is getting the passes, moving on to university and/or getting a job as high paying as possible.

There appeared to be congruence on many of the perspectives held by both groups, which should have translated into the kind of consensus that produces outcomes desirable to both. Both agree on what the ideal teacher and student should look like, that the constraints of time, curricula and the assessment of the latter are working against those ideals, but they also share the belief that they are unable to change the course of their destiny. The result is also a common sense of frustration and dissatisfaction, which no doubt will have contributed to the undesirable behaviours exhibited by some of our students and also by some of our teachers. In the given context, the locus of control appears to be external to the parties, where they believe that the content coverage, syllabi, time and examinations are responsible for how they behave and act. Taking back responsibility is not easy, but it is very necessary (Yero, 2010).

In the first interview with M.C.F. (Appendix A) I remarked that how I interacted with my students was more important to me than the official content that I came to teach, and that I thought it had a positive impact in the classroom. Her response was that I was able to do that, because I had already satisfied the requirement in that I had a proven track record for high passes, that I had a good reputation and the experience. I reiterated that this shift in paradigm

had made me a better teacher, and that this was also reflected in the desired increased pass rates that the administration looked for. But as was mentioned earlier, my change of hats came with development in my other competencies as a teacher. My subject content was second nature to me, I knew I was articulate, had gained confidence and could communicate the lesson effectively and in response to the reference point of the student. And so with the insights gained from my teacher training, I felt empowered to implement what I had learned about human nature and the importance of fostering relationships (Corey, 2009). For me, it is the relationships with my students, which remove the sameness and monotony of the job and which gives me the emotional support and morale to do the job with enthusiasm, confidence and affect. And as if that was not enough, I see it mirrored back in the faces of my students.

The interaction with my colleagues revealed that there was a genuine love for their students, a desire to know them and treat with them in the capacities of mentor, parent, friend, guide, counselor as well as teacher. This was the sentiment expressed by all the teachers and it was also what the students said they wanted from them. However, both were occupied with getting the passes and excelling at examinations, to the extent that they neglected to meet each other's emotional and social needs. For the adolescent student, the outcome of that neglect is potentially very harmful and by extension the society which he/she becomes a part of. The students are often torn between doing what they are socialized to believe is the traditional or formal purpose of education, and doing what comes naturally to them, at this stage of their development. That state of affairs is for the most part matched by the dichotomous thinking of the teacher that the work can go on, or the mindful, planned and implemented development, of those other skills, necessary for social and emotional literacy.

They are however two sides of the same coin, and until and unless we are not only mindful but dedicated to the development of both, we will continue to be frustrated and dissatisfied (Elias & Zins, 2011).

My own similar thinking had also led me to believe that the preferred type of teacher role is essentially one or the other, but the experience with the candidates showed how simplistic such a perspective was. Not all adolescent students, wanted the personal type role, some did prefer the more traditional type teacher as they themselves were traditional in their outlook. As one student pointed out the personalities of the teacher and student should mesh. With forty odd students in a class the likelihood of that is very improbable. The response to this therefore, must be a deliberate attempt on our part to teach and model the skills and behaviours to effect tolerance, acceptance, understanding and appreciation of the differences in us all. So for now we continue to work side by side but not together, explicitly towards the common goal of examination readiness and high pass rates, while we implicitly but in similar fashion, deny each other that equally common desire of emotional and social fulfillment.

Chapter Five

Recommendations and Conclusions

This study was an exploration of the degree of congruence between the adolescent student and the teacher, regarding their perspectives of each other's roles and relationships. In the opening paragraphs of the introduction, mention was made of the increased incidents of maladaptive behaviours of our students, coupled with notably more student underachievement and underperformance academically. Having been a member of staff at the institution in question for almost twenty years and observing firsthand the decline in behavior and academic achievement, I could only wonder, why what we had been doing seemed no longer to be working. When I began my teacher training six years ago, my first foray into the non-traditional non teacher- centered classroom occurred. Back then I thought it was my job to get the "kids" ready for May/June XX and I diligently proceeded to throw my fishing net and pull everyone in front of me, to the shores of examination readiness. For some reason however, as the years went by, it seemed I could not pull hard enough, or that the net started to break as more of my catch seemed to get away. So I began to share the work load and tried to encourage and allow them to swim to shore on their own steam. I had to get my feet wet but it was so worth it and I have never looked back.

The purpose of the study was to also highlight the significance of the social and emotional aspects of learning, and the teacher's role in ensuring that those aspects played a much greater part in how they interacted with their students. The statement went on to say, that as teachers we could no longer solely play the role of expert, imparting knowledge or

absolute truths to our students, treating with them as if they were intellectual beings, devoid of social and emotional dimensions. The study sought to examine the perspectives and expectations that the two groups had of each other, in terms of their roles and relationships with the hope of shedding some light as to how the nature of these affected the productivity of their interactions. While the findings made essentially supported my belief, that we do not treat with each other with the affect and sensitivity, that the social and human condition ultimately require, it came as a bit of a surprise, that that state of affairs, did exist deliberately, not because there was a lack of awareness on the part of both parties, but because they both essentially felt pressured to interact the way that they did. The locus of control was external to the parties or so they believed and they therefore allowed the external variables of examination deadlines, content coverage and high academic pass rates to dominate their thinking and as a result their actions.

The findings also revealed that while students did look for acceptance, love and respect from their teachers, that in fact they did want an expert first and foremost, as well as a disciplinarian but not an oppressor. Two of the teachers wrote in their self inventories, that they would like students to know that they made mistakes too, and that they were not perfect. It appeared that finding your teacher to be wrong about something, was cause for mistrust or ridicule. I too had experienced the gleefulness of students, when they discovered I had been wrong about something I had said. What this shows, is that they too had de-personalized the teacher, who had now become a dispenser of facts, truth and knowledge, devoid of the human capacity to make a mistake. How then do we treat with each other as human beings who share

the same space, time and purpose, and who need each other to bring about that purpose to its greatest fruition.

"The environment determines the behaviours necessary for survival and the structure of the organism" (Yero, 2010,p.206) and an enriched environment is essential if we are to thrive and accomplish what we need to, in order to survive and adapt to this ever changing world. The environment of the school must include the emotional involvement of the teacher and student. In the opening paragraphs of the purpose statement, it was mentioned that skills in the affective domain, analyze and address the way people react emotionally, and enable us to feel each others' pain and joy. It is by promoting awareness of each other's attitudes and feelings, that we learn tolerance, acceptance, understanding and appreciation of each other's differences, which will allow us to work more effectively with each other (Paige & Paige, 2003). Reference was also made earlier, to the implementation of an intervention program for that purpose by the researcher and the lasting positive effects made on all the participants. It is hardly enough however to implement one off exercises and hope to see the kind of universal and sustained changes that are needed. Accomplishing that outcome first requires a paradigm shift in our thinking as teachers and then our students. One statement that resonated with me, was when Canidate M.C.F. said that " the curriculum does not allow you to learn who you are."(Appendix A) I thought it was such a profound statement, and it is I suspect, the root of the lack of direction, that our adolescents seem to display in some of their actions. A state of being that Erikson describes in the adolescent, as identity dissonance or diffusion.

There is no denying the reality of overcrowded classrooms, expansive curricula and standardized assessment, and limited time in which to respond to the demands of each (Henderson, 1974). But we need to take back the responsibility for what goes on in our classrooms. All the teachers who participated in the research possessed a high sense of efficacy and confidence and I believe that we need to trust in that to start. Teacher experience in the classroom is also a factor, in terms of developing mindfulness and sensitivity to all the dimensions of the student and ourselves and to bring all to bear on the quality of the classroom experience. Research shows that the student's emotional attachment to the school and the teacher, is important for academic success and that conversely the teacher's attachment to the school is equally important for professional commitment and success (Weare,2004). It is therefore the emotions which attach value to experience. And finally teacher training or professional development. Of the four teachers who participated, two had training and two did not. Three had years of experience and one was a beginning teacher. While the more experienced ones expressed a belief in their efficacy and competence, all saw their role as including that of parent, counselor and guide. The needs of the student outside the traditional fare of the classroom was apparent to all. In my own experience, the enlightenment brought by the training received, was the starting point for me, to try to respond to those needs. The experience in the classroom made me a better communicator of information, but it became clear that more was required. The paradigm shift has to begin with the teacher, if we are to begin the work of educating our students holistically, despite those forces which threaten to deter us from this mission.

George Leonard describes this type of education as one where children begin to "learn delight, not aggression; sharing, not eager acquisition; uniqueness, not narrow competition. Where there is heightened awareness and emotional control and through these, increased empathy for the other" (cited in Yero,2010,p.162). It is I believe, this vision of education and not the narrow perspective we currently pursue, willingly or not, that should inform our interactions with our students. But,

"To bring about change you have to do something differently. To move along your journey to the kind of classroom you want, to become the kind of teacher you wish to be, require you to do something to make it happen. This may well mean taking a risk, leaving your comfort zone and on many occasions getting it wrong. Students do not expect teachers to be perfect, they expect them to be human, to be fallible and to be able to deal with them honestly and with humility. (source-Creating a winning classroom)

We need to treat each other as human beings who share time, space and purpose, and if we are to fulfill that purpose meaningfully, we must connect on all levels-intellectually, emotionally and socially.

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