

**THE ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION OF THREE FORM THREE
STUDENTS OF AN ASSISTED SECONDARY GIRLS' SCHOOL IN
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

(IT IS NOT A CASE OF WHAT IS, IT IS A CASE OF WHAT IS PERCEIVED TO BE)

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

Achievement orientation of three form three students of an assisted secondary girls' school in Trinidad and Tobago

(It is not a case of what is, it is a case of what is perceived to be)

Janice Bernadine Fournillier

Trinidad and Tobago's stratified system of secondary education has contributed to the perceptions and expectations of the parents, teachers and the students who attend the assisted secondary schools. Research showed that students of the assisted secondary schools were high in achievement motivation. This study took a qualitative approach and did an in-depth study of three adolescent students who were at the critical stage in their educational career and in their growth and development. Form three is the time when important academic choices are about to be made. This stage is therefore viewed as a critical aspect of the students' self-development.

The study looked at the students' perspective, which is accepted as most important to the understanding of how students learn or are motivated to learn. Their cognitive beliefs, values, goals and aspirations are considered by researchers as crucial to their academic behaviour and achievement motivation.

The researcher spent a year in the field collecting interview data, and observing the students in the classroom. This allowed for understanding of the students and their interactions in the learning environment. In addition, students' essays and sociodemographic data were used to gather information on the students' background, their expectations and feelings. The voice-centred relational method was used to analyse the data.

The findings revealed that the students' achievement orientations were influenced by the microsystem. This involved the total quality of the home environment, the social and psychological environment and the perceptions the students have of themselves. These perceptions were influenced by the interpersonal relationships at home and at school. The students then became over the period of time success oriented, mastery or task oriented, ego/performance oriented, learned helpless/helpful and or failure avoidant.

Keywords: Janice Bernadine Fournillier; achievement orientation/motivation; voice-centred relational method; success oriented; mastery or task oriented; performance oriented; failure avoidant.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to:

The glory of the Supreme Being

In loving memory of:

My natural mother Daphne Noel who taught me by example

that you are never too old to learn.

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CHAPTER 1

The prologue

The chorus:

We probably know far more about our students before they enter and after they leave than we do while they are with us.... This [is] shortsighted, for if we are to manage education better it is with the process of education itself we must begin. (Attinasi, 1991, p.1 quoted Van Manen, 1988, p.6).

Camera, lights, players on stage and the action is about to begin. The actors are anxious to perform and want to be heard. In the audience there are educators, examiners, teachers, post-graduate students, in-service and pre-service practitioners and friends of the family. The members of the audience all have different motives for being here and the director sets out to facilitate them as well as achieve her objective which is to present the perceptions of the actors on stage. The members of the audience are important. This performance requires their presence. It is hoped that the audience will share in the actors' experiences and gain a greater understanding of them as individuals who have needs, goals and aspirations which influence their achievement beliefs and attainment values.

Introduction

(The backdrop)

Act I Sc. I

The socio-historical context

This description of the socio-historical context places the problem within a framework and has been done to provide members of the audience with a background picture of the educational system. The writer/researcher viewed this as important since the problem being researched is not isolated from the entire educational system and may have been influenced by the nature and the structure of the system itself. The entire system was not the focus of the study. However, the researcher was aware of the importance of the macrosystem in the study of one of its component parts.

Archer (1981, p.260) defines a state educational system as:

A nationwide and differentiated collection of institutions devoted to formal education, whose overall control and supervision is at least partly governmental, and whose component parts and processes are related to one another.

Archer (1981) argues for a link between the origins and operations of educational systems in any study of education concerns. Additionally, Archer opines, "Some of the causes of continuation are inscribed in the origins of educational systems, whose structure created and perpetuates vested interests in its maintenance." (1981, p 281). This theory influenced the researcher's decision to locate the secondary system and the problem being researched within the educational system as defined above.

A brief overview of the nature and origin of the educational system in Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious society. There is a relatively comprehensive formal system of education, which encompasses the primary to the tertiary level. At both the primary and secondary level there is a dual system of government and assisted schools. This system was adopted in 1870 and is still present. The government schools are fully owned and maintained by the government and the assisted schools are owned and maintained by the denominational groups with assistance from the government who also pays the salaries of the teachers of these schools. The secondary schools, which were in existence prior to 1968, are referred to as 'traditional'. These traditional schools are of either seven-year or five year duration and are further sub-divided into government and government assisted.

Most of the changes that led to this situation took place in the middle of the twentieth century with the coming into being of Adult Suffrage, the introduction of a Ministerial system of Government and the economic policies of the Peoples' National Movement (PNM) the ruling party. The then Prime Minister, Dr. Eric Williams believed that after emancipation "a race had been freed but a society had not been formed." (1964, p.196). In order to train the people for self-government Williams believed that education had an important role to play.

Miller (1996) makes reference to this "independence era" to refer to the period from about 1950 to 1985 and states that:

Broadly speaking it seems accurate to say that in this independence period education and the school systems were mobilized to serve the cause of representative democracy. Adult suffrage and representative government placed political power in the hands of those representing the marginal majority in the various countries.... Education was therefore responding more to the prerogatives of full internal self-government than to the changed external relations manifest in sovereignty. (Miller, 1996, p.4).

At the same time, Human Capital theorists were also making the claim that human capital was worth investing in and international agencies were lending money for educational development. Psacharopoulos (1985) claimed that one of the principal reasons for the shift in thinking was the growing interest during the 1960s in the economic value of education that was described by Bowman (1966) as the 'human investment revolution in economic thought'. According to Psacharopoulos, (1985), economists were trying to measure the contribution of education to economic growth. This activity, Psacharopoulos (1985) suggested influenced governments, planners, international agencies and educators throughout the world and eventually led to World Bank policy, which reflected this recognition that education was a productive investment in human capital.

This activity finds support in the citations by Jules and Kutnick in which they state:

"In the 1960s and 1970s, many developing countries based their hope for economic growth returns on the level of their investment of the national income in education. This investment usually resulted in the quantitative expansion of their education system." (1990, p. 218).

This investment was also to have an 'equalization impact on educational opportunities. At the local level the policy planners had assumed that there would be equalization of opportunity and in so doing there would be a democratization

of secondary education. "The expansion of the secondary sector was intended, among other things, 'to equalize educational opportunities... and to achieve 'the democratization of secondary education.'" (Jules and Kutnick, 1994 quoted, Draft Plan, 1968-1983, p.3 and p.5, Ministry of Education, 1985).

In an attempt to expand access to secondary education a number of new schools were built after the country's independence in 1962. Harvey (1988) found that this did not in fact alter the stratified structure of the post colonial school system. Instead it simply added on to the existing system. Junior and Senior secondary schools, (which are referred to as "new sector" schools), were constructed so that by 1975, 67.1% of the population now had access to secondary schooling.

The Centre for Ethnic Studies (1994) describes this addition to the system as one, which was significant in terms of increased numbers of both students and buildings. Moreover, the report states that:

With the widening of the access the population aspired to the perceived most prestigious part of the system, that which offered the best reach to further education and the longest tenure, the seven year schools. (Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1994, p. 2)

It is this sector of the system, which is termed 'prestigious' by many, that interests the researcher. It is indeed an important part of the system that has not been widely researched on its own because of the belief that all is well because of the overall success rate in final examination. This, to the man in the street and maybe to some researchers implies that there are no problems to be addressed. However, the researcher's experience in the various sections of the system led her to believe that it was important to gain empirical knowledge about this sector of

the system and the students in particular. If the students were achieving what was being termed success there was need to understand the achievement orientation /motivations of one of the major stake holders - the students as individuals who were believed to be successful based on examination results.

There has always been and continues to be an interest in motivation. However it was being suggested that motivation in education needed to be looked at as Ames (1984,p.535) states, as “a qualitative variable that represents different value or goal orientations, different ways of processing and attending to information and different cognitions about one’s performance.” (Ames, 1984, p.535). This type of study focused on how students thought and included perceptions, interpretations, and patterns of self-regulation. This experiential knowledge the researcher hoped would be valuable to, not only teachers in the sector, but also the many parents who were considering this sector as a choice. Results have shown (Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1994) that this sector is the one most chosen by parents when they make decisions about which secondary school they want their sons/daughters to attend. There needs to be a greater understanding and awareness of what takes place within this sector and how it impacts on student learning.

Miller (1996) points to the three definitions of secondary education and the contradictions of universal secondary education

Secondary education is defined as a standard of education in preparation for further education or work, a type of education that distinguishes the middle classes, and a marker of a stage of human development. However, secondary education cannot be all three at the same time. The first emphasizes its cognitive nature, the second its social stratification connections and the third its affective relationships. (Miller, 1996, p.13).

This comment by Miller (1996) may have captured the major source of the problems in the education system in Trinidad and Tobago. There was the question of what definitions informed the policy makers and how they influenced the public's understanding and expectations of the system. Miller (1996) also raised the important question of whether all can be expected to become middle class. The problems in the secondary school are wide and varied but the literature seems to suggest that the origin and design of the system and the definitions as Miller pointed out contribute to the problems faced in the classroom.

This sector is indeed part of what some call a 'stratified system'. It is believed that this stratification has in some way contributed to the problems faced in the system today. The Centre for Ethnic Studies confirms that,

The stratification exists in people's perceptions as evidenced by the choice levels ascribed to schools by type. Seven-year traditional schools were at the top of the hierarchy and P.M. shift schools of the Junior Secondary at the bottom). There continues to be the stigma attached to the students who are allocated to the new sector schools as not being as 'bright' as the students in the other secondary schools. (1994, p.436).

Durojaiye (1994, p. 3) also comments on the school differences and points to the findings of (Kutnick & Jules, 1988, 1990), which suggest:

This stratification has been found to influence achievement in Science at classroom level and to affect overall end of -term scores and scores in language arts, social studies, science and mathematics.

These are the core subject areas and so are very important to the end result on which schools continue to be judged by the public. It seems clear that the stratified education system is viewed as less than desirable in a country which has

"equality of opportunity and high quality school programmes" (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.2) as one of its goals. However although it seems difficult to change this system we need to understand it and to note the effect it has had on the other sectors and the people, in this case, the students within the secondary school sector.

The secondary school system in Trinidad and Tobago

In Trinidad and Tobago there are 101 government secondary schools, which provide for a total of 97,434 students between the ages of 12 and 17. (Ministry of Education, 1994, p.50). In addition, there are private secondary schools where fees are charged and the private owners of the institutions pay the teachers. A secondary school caters for the students who have attained the age of eleven and have completed six to seven years of primary schooling. Placement in schools at the secondary level is based on the results of the Common Entrance Examination, which was originally intended as a system, which would select those who could best benefit from secondary education. The Ministry of Education states in its Education Policy Paper that:

Transition from primary to secondary school has, since the introduction of free secondary education in 1961, been determined by performance at the Common Entrance Examination. This examination was originally intended as a selection examination to identify pupils most likely to succeed at secondary education in its traditional form. (1994, p. 52).

This exam replaced the Exhibition exam, which prior to 1961 allowed a few students to attend secondary school free. Those who could afford it sat the assisted schools' entrance examination and if successful they attended by paying.

Educators are now pressing for the removal of the Common Entrance examination which it is widely believed is the source of most of the problems in education in Trinidad and Tobago. One of the proposals made in the Education Policy Paper is the transformation of the Common Entrance into a national attainment test. This is viewed as:

A necessity to ensure smooth transition within the primary system and from it to the secondary level through adequate diagnostic, remedial and developmental practices and assessment modalities that are formative. (Ministry of Education, 1994, p. xii).

The Common Entrance Examination was supposed to remove the barrier and allow for greater access to secondary education. However thirty two years after its inception the Centre for Ethnic Studies reports:

Historical patterns and practices led the population to perceive education and particularly secondary education as a desired social good. Trinidad and Tobago as a colony had inherited an education system in which social exclusivism was a central point. This practice had been so faithfully adopted that the population came to believe that secondary schooling was reserved for the elite. (Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1994, pp.3-4)

In spite of this many more students were still aspiring to attain secondary level education. There was need for more school places and money was being loaned for development of the human capital. The new sector schools were therefore built in the 70s and 80s in order to meet the growing demand for secondary school education.

New sector schools.

The twenty-four Junior Secondary, three Secondary Comprehensive, sixteen Senior Comprehensives and nine Composite schools are referred to as the 'new sector' schools. In some of the 'new sector' schools (the Junior Secondary

and Senior Secondary and Comprehensive) there is a two-tiered programme in two separate institutions. The first three years are spent at the Junior Secondary school and then students are allocated to Senior Comprehensive schools for the following two years. In the other secondary schools students spend between five and seven years. The years are divided into levels termed forms. A student in the first year is therefore allocated to a class called form one. It is important to note that the new sector schools provide education for "66.3% of all students" receiving secondary education. (Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1994, p. 24).

The curriculum.

The curriculum in the new sector school is a mixture of technical/vocational and craft subjects with some traditional academic subjects.

A programme that is oriented towards the technical/vocational skills areas and one which provides on a smaller scale the more traditional academic programme for those so inclined. (Ministry of Education, 1994, p.50).

Many students view this as an indication that they are of lower ability and are unable to achieve academically. This has created problems and as a result many parents do not make these schools the first choice for their children.

Indeed, the reform policy document (Ministry of Education, 1994) has acknowledged problems in the new sector schools and has made recommendations for steps to be taken to improve the quality of education students receive. The perceived failure of these schools has led the populace to opt for the more traditional secondary schools as their first choice.

Traditional secondary schools.

There are forty-nine traditional secondary schools, nineteen of which are government, and thirty assisted. The traditional seven year schools are those in

which there is a sixth form which prepares the students for the General Certificate Examination (G.C.E.) Advanced level examination at the end of two years and provides them with entry qualification for the University. At the end of the five years students are expected to write the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) certification examinations in at least five subject areas. English Language and Mathematics are compulsory subjects since the employers and the university matriculations demand these as basic requirements.

At the traditional schools, (5 and 7 year) an essentially academic programme is offered in order to prepare graduates for further education and for employment at the clerical level in traditional work places. The policy document describes the programme as:

An essentially academic programme designed to prepare graduates for further education or employment at the clerical level in traditional work places. Market driven, ad hoc introduction of technical/vocational courses has been taking place in the traditional 5 and 7-year schools. (Ministry of Education, 1994, p.50).

The traditional schools are further subdivided into government and assisted with the latter being the one chosen by most parents.

Assisted Secondary Schools.

Eighty percent of the students who have been allocated to the assisted secondary schools are considered to be the top fifteen percent in terms of academic ability. Harris-Martin (1997) suggested that students have been rewarded for their academic ability by being sent to the five-year government secondary schools and the five-year and seven-year traditional schools. This is indeed the perception of many students who attain places in these schools and

members of the public. Students' academic self-concept and the expectations of the students themselves, their parents and the society at large are all influenced by these perceptions.

The secondary schools are judged by the public on the basis of the results of the Caribbean Examination (CXC) and the General Certificate of Education Advanced level exams, which students write at the end of five and seven years of secondary education. These examination results and the number of scholarships gained by the respective schools influence the attitude and perceptions that the public has of the institution. As a result some schools are viewed as 'prestige' and are the ones most parents choose for their children when they write the Common Entrance examination.

The Centre of Ethnic Studies (1994, p.389) reports that, "Seven year denominational schools were generally first choice schools and selection into any of these was highly regarded." On the other hand, students who do not attain a place in these 'prestige' schools sometimes consider themselves 'failures' even before they attend the school. The report also notes, "the worth of a secondary school place was clearly dependent on the institution to which the student was assigned." (Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1994, p.5).

Different types of schools still continue to exist within the educational system and the members of the public continue to make judgements of the system based on examination results. Thomas & Goldstein (1995) point to the limitations of attempts to provide public accountability using exam and test results. These results tend to reflect according to these two associate directors of the

International School Effectiveness and Improvement Centre, the attainment at entry and thus comparisons made on this basis are unfair. Instead Thomas and Goldstein (1995) suggest that there is need for an understanding of the subtle interactions between student progress and the process of schooling. This therefore led the researcher to focus the study on the individual student's achievement orientation at the third form level and to explore the process of schooling and the impact on individual student's perception. In addition, the researcher's experience in the system has led her to believe that there is need for research into not just the new sector schools as have been done by so many.

Insights and understanding of all the varying sectors of the system including the assisted schools in particular that have been judged to be producing 'quality education' because of their examination results were needed. Development projects were moving from "bricks and mortar" emphasis to quality education. Pscharopoulos (1985) found that there has been a shift from 'bricks and mortar' and hardware to improvement in quality through curriculum development or provision of textbooks. He also makes reference to the work of Behrman and Birdstall (1983) who found that there was growing concern in developing countries about qualitative as well as quantitative issues. (Pscharopoulos, 1985, p.315).

The introduction and development of the research section of the Ministry of Education seem to suggest that there is a need for not only task forces to discover the problems but for ongoing both quantitative and qualitative research into all aspects of the system. Indeed the Policy document states:

To date in Trinidad and Tobago, we have been relatively strong on philosophical orientations or judgements about education, but weak on the use of empirical evidence. (Ministry of Education, 1994, p. 29).

The planners in their identification of the terms of reference of this department were cognizant of the need to make basic statistics on the system available to researchers/evaluators. This appeared to be a step in the right direction and an indication of the importance of the research process in curriculum development and implementation.

Summary.

Trinidad and Tobago is a former colonial society with its unique and distinct culture that differentiates it from the rest of the world. The country is not isolated from the rest of the world. The Human Capital theory as described by Pscharapoulos (1985) has influenced the growth and expansion of the educational system. The school population is as a result very varied and diverse. The quality of the educational system continues to be a source of concern to both the international lending agencies and the local authorities. The goal of "universal secondary education - 2001" has not been consistent with the definitions of secondary education. The system therefore continues to be stratified and to seemingly meet the needs of a few.

This study contends that the education system itself has contributed to the attitudes that the society has to the different types of secondary school. The expectations of the parents, teachers and the students themselves have all contributed to the problems that the system encounters. These expectations in

turn influenced the students' attitudes, their achievement-values, their self-efficacy beliefs and the academic and social goals.

According to Lyn Mulkey, (1993, p. 6) "We don't live in a world as individuals *alongside* others as much as we are individuals because of *others*." So that the patterned expectations which is referred to by Mulkey (1993) as the 'social structure', "direct the interactions of persons in all human societies although the exact character or the relations among them varies from one society to another." (1993, p.12). There was the need to understand at least the first layer of the web of systems, which according to Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological theory of development impacts on self-development. There was need therefore to understand the process that created the products of the system. It is against this backdrop that the researcher/writer placed the particular problem that she believed needed exploration. There was need for a study which gave the students of the 90s an opportunity to give voice to their perceptions about their achievement orientations within a system that sees them as academically highly achievement oriented.

Background to the Problem

(Act I Sc. II)

Chorus:

The beginning of Wisdom

Is

Knowing who you are.

Draw near and listen.

(Swahili Proverb)

Declaring my site

Qualitative research stresses the importance of declaring one's site as a means of uncovering the meanings, which serve to sensitize the researcher. "The best cure for biases is to be aware of how they slant and shape what we hear, how we interface with our reproduction of the speaker's reality, and how they transfigure truth into falsity." (Merriam 1988, quoted Guba & Lincoln, 1988, p. 140). It is with this in mind that the following story was written by the researcher. The researcher was very aware that the observations and analyses would be filtered through her worldview and this short story was used to deal with the issue of trustworthiness. In addition, the story served to assist in providing some of the background to the problem.

A Lonely Struggle

Mary Jane had achieved her goal. She had been selected to attend the seven-year secondary school of her dreams. This allocation had said to her that she had the potential to do well and was one of the 'top' students in the country. She was ecstatic and so were her parents. The examination results of this school were always outstanding and therefore the parents were sure that their daughter would also do well and would go on to become an outstanding student. Studies had suggested that there was some predictive validity in the Common Entrance examination. The students with higher ability were rewarded by being placed in certain schools that are described as 'prestige' by the population.

The actual experience of the Mary Jane over the seven-year period caused both the parents and the student herself to have many anxious moments. Her marks were just about average and she had serious doubts about her ability to achieve a high standard of performance in the academic subjects. She continued to be involved in extra curricular activities, which seemed to interest her more than the academic subjects.

Teachers assessed her as a student who could do much better but who was not giving the academic subjects her best.

The last term of Form Three was a most crucial one because the decision would be made concerning what subjects would be written at the CXC (Caribbean Examination Council) in two years time. Her performance over the three years, the end of term exams (teacher-made tests), and her choice of career, would all be taken into consideration as the decision was made.

Alas! Mary Jane did not obtain the subjects she wanted to do in order to pursue the career of her choice. She was depressed and spent the August vacation pining and sad and angry at a system, which she judged, was unfair. Some strange coincidences made it possible for Mary Jane to finally enter a group which allowed her to study the subjects she felt she really wanted at the time.

Her anxious parents, wanting to ensure that she was successful, sought help for her in the areas in which she seemed to be struggling. Private lessons seemed to be the answer. Mary Jane continued to enjoy her extra curricular activities and used these lessons as opportunities to make friends and socialize with students from other schools. Mary Jane was concerned about the fact that she had never obtained an award and was never on the Principal's list. She just 'was not good enough' she felt.

The rest is history. She passed the subjects at CXC gaining distinctions in all the areas and was awarded at the school's ceremony for the first time. Her academic self-concept was in no way boosted by this achievement since her parents realized that she doubted whether or not she was really successful and wondered whether CXC had not made a mistake.

This story is true and is a representation of the researcher's understandings of the situation both as parent and as a teacher. This perspective was one reality. The researcher was not able to discover the 'essence' of the meaning Mary Jane was making of the experience of being a student in a "prestige" school (which is how the traditional assisted schools are referred to) and all that went with it in terms of academic achievements. Since the writer was Mary Jane's mother, Mary Jane did not divulge some things because according to her it was unethical. *"Mummy, I won't say anything, they are your friends."* Mary Jane felt that as a teacher the mother thought like the other teachers and could not understand the student's perspective.

In addition, the researcher's years of experience had allowed her to come into contact with many other girls who expressed the same anxieties like the character in the story. Although eighty percent of the students had similar academic attainment levels in form one, some students seemed determined to succeed and others seemed to lose interest and increasingly felt that they did not have the capability to achieve their goals. These students then each began having poor academic self-concept. In order to subvert what was happening in the classroom, they found other interests. Their ends of term academic marks were 'poor'.

Teachers complained and blamed it on a host of factors from parental and home environment to laziness on the part of the students.

Teachers were of the perception that the students could do much better and were not achieving their full potential. Parents then began sending their children

for extra lessons in order to improve their grades in the subjects in which they were not performing well. There was therefore for all those involved (the student, the teacher and the parent) both a gut and a realized feeling that the students could do better academically. Students had gained a mark that had placed them in a school with a history of excellent external (CXC) examination results and was considered to be “prestige” by the populace. The possibility of gaining a scholarship was greater in this school than in a new sector school.

Nicholls et al (1985) asserted that the students’ theories were just as or may be even more powerful than the views of the other stakeholders. These theories were also a source of relevant and important information to the classroom teacher and the policy makers. Moreover, Duffield (1998) found that the pupils’ views had been discounted and strategies for improvement had taken little regard of how pupils themselves construed their school experiences and how they saw themselves as learners. Duffield (1998) also cited Macdonald et al (1998) who pointed out that literature on strategies for raising achievement consistently recommends establishing pupils’ perceptions and giving them a sense that their views matter in the life of the school. There was need to gain an understanding from the students’ perspective of their experiences and how and if they influenced their achievement behaviors. Thorkildsen and Nicholls (1998) posited that there have been positively worded inferences about the value of exploring students’ experiences in a lot of the literature on the study of motivational experiences. In addition, Thorkildsen and Nicholls (1998) claim that their review found the researchers of achievement motivation have “all

presumed that psychologists should theorize not about what is but about what is perceived to be.”(p.179).

The decision was taken to focus the study on not what is but what, the students’ perceive, accounts for the tendencies they have and the factors that contribute to their development. The researcher realized that if any understanding was to be gained there was the need to be an ‘insider-outsider’ and to gain the trust of the students. The researcher could not be a teacher in the situation or be viewed entirely as an ‘insider’. The researcher then made the decision to move away from being a teacher and become a full time student and a part time research assistant. This allowed her to gain experience as a researcher, to have the time to spend on the site in order to collect the data, and to come to know the actors who were going to be placed on stage later on. The researcher was firm in the belief that this was a significant problem.

Significance of the Problem

Researcher's experience

The researcher’s thirty years of service in the system and in particular her nine years in the assisted secondary school system led to the belief that it was necessary to follow up on the students who were placed in the ‘prestige school. Ellis (1992, p.11) who in the list of research areas cites that “follow up on top students in Common Entrance and on performance through secondary schools” was needed to meet national and regional needs, confirmed the researcher’s belief.

Characteristics of the students

The three students were purposively chosen from the top, middle and lower range of the class of 43 students based on the classroom test. They were at the same stage in their school career as Mary Jane in the story. They were about to make important choices about the subjects in the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) exam, which they write at the end of the fifth year in secondary school. In addition, these students in form three were at the adolescent stage, which has been characterized over the centuries "as a special phase of life, one of storm and stress." (Head, 1997, p.1).

Adolescence

Adolescence is a phase, which has been generally described as one of crisis. Head (1997) believes that there has been little historical evidence of this. According to Head (1997), a more balanced view is that adolescents have to cope with a set of developmental tasks in moving from childhood into adulthood. These tasks include achieving a sense of personal identity and achieving the autonomy necessary to become adults, which demand a change in the relationship with parents and teachers. Head argues that, "the loosening of the ties with adult authority figures is compensated for by increased importance of relations with peers." (1997, p.5). This is further complicated by the need to establish sexual relationships. Santrock (1998) also disagrees with this belief that adolescence is a period of crisis and suggests that, "Adolescence is not a time of rebellion, crisis, pathology and deviance. It is a time of evaluation, of decision making, of

commitment, of carving out one's place in the world." (p. 7). Given this agenda, Head (1997, p.5) agreed with the view of (Murray and Dawson, 1983; Davis, 1990) that it was surprising that adolescents coped so well.

Santrock (1998) in his book on adolescence explored the four major theories of adolescent development: psychoanalytic, cognitive, behavioral and social learning, and ecological and advocated an eclectic theoretical approach to the study of adolescence since one theory alone could not adequately meet the needs of the researcher. . He pointed to the understandings of the adolescent's complexity that can be gained from the various theories but at the same time the challenge it presented to the researcher.

Santrock (1998) defines Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory as a socio-cultural view of development. "It consists of five environmental systems...The five systems in Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory are the micro system, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem." (Santrock, 1997, p. 51, quoted Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1986, 1995, 1997).

The researcher viewed the three students who were sampled as in a stage in which:

Individuals move beyond the world of actual, concrete experience and think in abstract and more logical terms. As part of thinking more abstractly, adolescents develop images of ideal circumstances...In solving problems, formal operational thinkers are more systematic developing hypotheses about why something is happening the way it is, then testing these hypotheses in a deductive fashion (Santrock, 1998, p.46).

It is on this premise that the researcher was able to accept that the students were capable of assessing the situation in which they found themselves and could come up with reasoned explanations for their achievement behaviours.

Santrock (1998) identifies the social learning theory as one in which the focus is on the process that explains development - the socio-emotional and cognitive factors that influence what we are like as people. (p.51). Some of the current studies on achievement orientation have adopted a social learning theory since they have begun to view the process as one that is affected by the social motivational processes. (Wentzel, 1999)

Kohlberg (1981) according to Head (1997) applied Piaget's (1932) model and developed a model of cognitive-developmental perspective to make sense of many aspects of psychological development. Head (1997) purported that Kohlberg produced a hierarchy of values that paralleled Piaget's (1932) description of cognitive development. However, Head (1997) pointed to the fact that Kohlberg (1981) believed that a higher level of cognitive development was necessary but not sufficient to exercise moral judgement. Head (1997) stated that doubts have surfaced recently about these notions. In addition, Head (1997) referred to the study by Shayer and Adey (1981) which suggested that only a minority of adolescents, about 30% reached the stage of operational thinking.

Gilligan (1992) also disagrees with Kohlberg's theory, which she critiques as 'trying to fashion women out of masculine thought'. (1982, p.6). Gilligan in her research found that 'women were experiencing moral conflicts that simply could not be understood within Kohlberg's framework. (Gilligan, 1982, p. 68). There is some disagreement among the theorists about what really takes place in this stage of development of the adolescent. Hence the decision was taken to refrain from focusing on any one theory.

Statement of the Problem

These form three students are at the stage when they are about to make self defining choices. They can be said to be in the stage of development that presents a challenge to researchers because of the various theories that have been advanced in order to explain their growth and development. Increasingly there has been a strong environmental emphasis by the ecological and the social learning theorists and a biological-environmental interaction has been the focus of cognitive theory. The adolescents, who are in form three in Trinidad and Tobago, like Mary Jane, are about to make important decisions that will influence their entire academic career. This is a very critical stage in their growth and self-development and an important point at which to study secondary students.

These three adolescent girls are individuals with distinct personalities, which the ecological theory of development suggested are shaped by their homes, their experiences of schooling; and by their relationships with their teachers, their families and their peers. The society views them as being more privileged because they have passed for the school of their first choice. Consequently they are perceived as being the “top set”. It is expected that they will perform well and will be the high achievers. It is believed that this places some measure of stress and anxiety on the students in the “prestige” school. The expectations and expectancies it is also believed affect their orientations and their achievement behaviours.

Boaler, (1997) opined in her study that ‘top-set’ students are assumed, implicitly or explicitly in much of the literature, to be in some way advantaged by

their setting experience. Indeed Boaler (1997) suggested that the undoubted beliefs might have served to stultify research into their credibility and perpetuate a notion that Boaler believes does not fit easily with the experience of top set students.

The study was therefore undertaken on the premise that this was the stage of students' educational career when the choices and decisions they made would probably have a profound effect on their adult life and career opportunities. They were therefore at one of the important crossroads in their life. The students were aware of the decisions that were to be made at the end of the form three-year based on their performances in the academics subjects. The students were motivated to understand the causes of their own and others' behaviour because of their stage of development. As a result their achievement orientations were more intense and therefore they were more cued in and as formal operation thinkers would be able to present reasoned explanations for their behaviours.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at discovering from three adolescent students their perceptions about their achievement orientations. One of the objectives of the study was to represent the experience of the student as fully as possible and in so doing allow the reader to experience and gain a deeper understanding of how the students viewed themselves and the factors which motivated their achievement behaviours.

Research Questions

How do the students define themselves?

What has influenced the definitions they have of themselves as students?

Where are the students at now?

What accounts for their achievement orientations?

What are their perceptions of the causes of their success/failure?

CHAPTER 2

(Act 2 Sc.I)

Chorus:

How can I dialogue...
 if I start from the premise
 that naming the world is the task of an elite,
 and the presence of the people in history
 is a sign of deterioration which is to be avoided?
 How can I dialogue...
 if I am closed to - and even offended by -
 the contribution of others?

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
 (tr. Myra B. Ramos)

Literature Review

Depending on your interest you may be wondering when the actual action will begin and may as a result become very anxious. This is very important to the members of the audience who need to understand the action in terms of what has been done and said previously and to what extent the theory has influenced the design and content of the script.

This section of the study explores some of the work that has been done locally and internationally and looks at how they are related to the problem in the study. It will pay particular attention to the methodology used and the range of theoretical perspectives that have influenced the studies done in this area. The concept itself, achievement orientation, will be explored in terms of the problems of definition and the evolution of the theories that have been used in order to explain the concept. However, the literature review was an ongoing process in this

study, which began with only a limited understanding of the problem in terms of the theory.

Achievement orientation

Klonsky (1989) pointed to the problem of definition of this psychological construct but made the salient point that the terms achievement behaviour and achievement motivation were used interchangeably to refer to achievement orientation. Mc.Donald (1985) claimed that the terms achievement orientation and achievement motivation were used interchangeably since the latter provided the internal impetus to excel in situations involving standards of excellence.

The concept was originally defined by McClelland in 1949 as: "Preoccupation with the long-term problem of bringing oneself closer to ideal goals of personal development in academic or careers, such as making outstanding discoveries." (Woodruff & Wicklund, 1985, p. 16). At this point Woodruff & Wicklund (1985) claimed it (the definition) was still without detailed theoretical clarification.

Mc.Donald (1985, p. 34) in her search found that Rosen (1959) suggested that there are three components of achievement orientation: Achievement motivation, value orientation and educational -vocational aspiration levels. Mc.Donald therefore, in her study of Correlates of Achievement Orientation among teacher trainees referred to the construct in terms of an individual's psychological and cultural orientation towards achievement.

This definition was based on Rosen's (1959) elaboration of the term as:

The individual's psychological need to excel, his desire to enter the competitive race for social status and his initial possession of or willingness to adopt the valuation placed upon personal achievement and success. (p.48).

This concept Klonsky (1989) opined may have been defined differently by investigators, but theorists have agreed that the kind of situations which evoke achievement orientation and in which achievement behaviours exist are those in which competence of performance is emphasized. So that what is important is not so much the outcomes of themselves but the individual's attitude to success.

The school context the study will assume is a situation in which competence of performance is emphasized; is one that evokes achievement orientation; and is one in which achievement motivation is high. Indeed Kutnick's (1994) research found this was true of traditional assisted secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. On the other hand Farmer et al (1991) contend that the student from a lower socio-economic group will be at a disadvantage if the study focuses on only one achievement context. The study's focus could not be expanded to facilitate more than one achievement context but this limitation was taken into consideration.

More importantly for this research was the fact that achievement motivation is believed to be linked to psychological processes that override actual ability. The study focused on three students who have been assessed based on Common Entrance Examination results as having high ability levels. The focus

was not on the outcomes in terms of results but on the psychological processes and the impact on the students' achievement orientation.

Klonsky (1989) in his discussion pointed to the significance of theory and research concerning achievement orientation for educational practice. According to Klonsky, the information gained from research in this area can (a) make teachers and parents more sensitive to the individual and group needs of students; (b) assist parents and teachers in the creation of educational systems which nurture achievement orientation and diminish fear of failure. These may appear idealistic but the researcher hopes that when the students give voice to their perceptions members of the audience will indeed listen and become more sensitive to the individual needs of the students. These students are individuals but may very well represent others from the group of which they are a part and others like them in similar situations. The policy makers who are members of the audience can therefore gain useful knowledge from the experiences of the students.

Thorkildsen and Nicholls (1998) admitted that achievement motivation was difficult to characterize and improving descriptions of it has required the use of multiple theoretical approaches and measurement tools.

The multiple theoretical perspectives

Additionally, there has been a wide range of scientifically accepted principles advanced to explain the phenomenon of achievement orientation. This section of the study attempts to explore the varying perspectives, their relationship to each other and relevance to the study. An understanding of these perspectives

was relevant to the study since they could determine and influence the lenses through which the data were analyzed and which provided access to the deeper dimensions of the perceptions of the individual students. The researcher was also aware of the fact that the body of theory is historically and culturally constructed and so they were not accepted as absolute.

The current interest in achievement motivation is said by Geen et al (1984) to have begun with the work of McClelland and his colleagues, who in the late 1940s formulated a theory of achievement as part of a more general theory of motives. The major constructs in this theory are the motive to achieve success and the motive to avoid failure.

Graham (1994) claimed that historically the study of achievement motivation as a personality trait began with Murray's (1938) observation that individuals vary in their tendency to do things well and to compete against a standard of excellence. However Graham (1994) cited (McClelland et al, 1953) as the first psychologists to study Nach (need for achievement) experimentally.

Klonsky (1989) in his review of the theoretical perspectives on achievement orientation claimed that McClelland focused on the role of an underlying achievement motive (need for achievement) and that McClelland was stimulated by Murray's work on the need theory of personality. This need for achievement was viewed as a conscious attitude and orientation that could be learned.

McDonald (1985) cited McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell (1953) as the ones who suggest that:

When the selective and evaluative factors of an individual's behaviour develop and become enduring personal qualities that impel him to strive for some degree of success in certain activities evaluable against a standard of excellence, this condition is referred to as an achievement orientation or the need to achieve. (1985, p. 35).

This theory Klonsky (1989) claimed stimulated much research, which focused on individual differences in achievement orientation, and the role of parental practices in such development. Klonsky assessed McClelland's major contribution as his adoption of Murray's projective instrument which was devised to assess needs. According to Klonsky, McClelland and Atkinson (1953) adopted the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) as their measure of assessing motives. It has indeed been widely used in research on achievement motivation. Graham (1994) in his narrative literature review pointed to the criticisms that have been made of this measure by (Entwistle, 1972) for its poor psychometric properties. Researchers, according to Graham (1994) have questioned the possibility that as a measure of motive strength the technique might be culturally biased. Graham (1984) found that the racial data on the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) were not as biased as the arguments implied.

Mc. Donald (1985) reported that numerous studies have used the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) as a method of measuring achievement orientation and have found that achievement orientation and success in learning (in school and higher education) are positively related to each other. Other measures have since been developed and researched.

Although the Need for Achievement theory has a behavioral perspective it was of interest to the study since it suggested that depending on past history, cues

related to evaluation can elicit both achievement motivation and fear of failure. The researcher in discovering where the students were at needed to understand how the past experiences would cue the students to behave in certain ways. The open ended questions in the interview would have to be designed in order to allow the students to tell the story of their past experiences in Forms one and two and at the primary level.

The present study did not use any of the projective measures since its focus was on understanding the individual students' perspectives. However, it looked at the differences in achievement orientation and was conscious that according to this theory parents could play a role in students' achievement orientation.

Expectancy-value theory.

Pintrich and Schunk (1996) claim that the most dominant approach to achievement behavior and goal setting has been that of Atkinson (1957, 1964) and his associates who have based their theory on the person's expectancy of attaining a goal and the value of that goal to the person. Pintrich and Schunk describe Atkinson et al as having attempted to combine the constructs of needs, expectancies and value into a comprehensive theory. The model defined behavior as a function of motives, probability of success and incentive value.

The concept of expectancy according to Pintrich and Schunk (1996) represents the key idea that most individuals will not choose to do a task or continue to engage in a task when they expect to fail. Self-efficacy refers to the

perceptions individuals have about their own competence or the cognitive appraisals or beliefs they have about themselves.

The expectancy construct is viewed as one of the most important mediators of achievement behavior. The move from a behavioral perspective to a cognitive one in the area of motivational psychology was made based on the early findings of researchers on expectancy constructs. The concern was for the individual who was now being viewed as an active rational decision-maker. The learner's thoughts and beliefs were considered by researchers and practitioners, who from a cognitive perspective, saw these as the elements most central to the study of motivation. Motivation study was now taking a phenomenological slant. The present study also focused on the learners' thoughts and beliefs and noted the importance of the expectancies and self-efficacy beliefs of the three students being studied.

Atkinson (1957) incorporated the concept of achievement motive of McClelland into a larger theory of achievement motivation. Atkinson's model of achievement orientation incorporated the constructs of needs, expectancy and value. This theory has come to be known as expectancy-value theory. According to Spence (1983) the theory specifies that the strength of the achievement motive (which has also been called the tendency to achieve) which is actually aroused in any achievement oriented situation is determined by the sum of two opposing tendencies with opposing signs. These are identified as (a) the tendency to achieve success (T_s) which is manifested by engaging in achievement-oriented activities; (b) the tendency to avoid failure (T_{AF}) which is manifested by not

engaging in these activities. Additionally, the strength of these two opposing motives or tendencies is determined by three other variables. (1) The motive to approach success (M_S) or the motive to avoid failure (M_F); (2) The expectancy (probability) that an achievement oriented act will result in success (P_S) or that it will result in failure (P_F); (3) The incentive value of success (I_S) or the incentive value of failure (I_F).

The tendency to achieve has therefore been represented algebraically as:

$$T_A = (M_S - M_F) [(P_S \times (1 - P_S))]$$

The studies according to Spence (1983) that tested this theory were experimental and done in laboratory and involved the manipulation of such variables as task success and failure. Spence cited Crockett (1962) as an example of one of the studies that involved achievement-related behaviors in real world settings. Pintrich and Schunk (1996) cite Covington & Roberts as having used Atkinson's original model to develop their own model, which characterized four different types of students and ways of approaching tasks. The students were classified as success-oriented, failure-avoiders, overstrivers and failure accepters.

Spence (1983) in her overview pointed to elaborations of the theory by Horner (1968, 1969, 1970) who added the concept of motive to avoid success and future orientation. The tendency to seek rewards was added by Atkinson (1974) whom Spence (1983) claimed, recognized the deficiencies in the model. This theory has served according to Spence as the springboard for still further theoretical developments.

Social-cognitive expectancy value model.

Current research programs that are based on classroom academic achievements in classroom settings have adapted the expectancy-value model. Pintrich (1996) cited the model developed by Eccles and Wigfield and their colleagues (Eccles, 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 1992) as 'a direct descendant from Atkinson's expectancy -value model'. This model played an important role in the researcher's development of a conceptual framework, which guided the research design. (Appendix II). Eccles's model was based on the assumption that it is not reality itself (i.e., past successes and failures) that most directly determines children's expectancies, values and behavior, but rather the interpretation of that reality. (Eccles, 1983, p. 80-81). Since the researcher was concerned with the students' interpretation of their experiences and not the accuracy of the reality itself, this seemed an appropriate model to guide the design at the time. An emergent design was created using this model.

Self-perception of competence.

The research on perception of competence although very similar to research on expectancy-value has a more developmental perspective. The focus is more on the development of the self and personal identity, in contrast to the focus on motivation in expectancy-value models. The concern is not so much about how the individuals feel about themselves generally but about cognitive evaluation of ability in a particular domain. This theoretical perspective focuses on change in cognitive processing ability and changes in educational environment.

Stipek's (1992) summary of the basic concepts that guide the theory clarifies the focus of this perspective. "Age related-changes in children's definition of competence, self-ratings of ability and predictions of success are to some degree a consequence of systematic shifts in the organizational, instructional and evaluational practices that children are exposed to in school." (Stipek, 1992, p. 586). These definitions then affect students' self-esteem, which is strongly associated with their perceptions of competence and their expectations of success. However, Pintrich and Schunk (1996) warn that self-perceptions of competence need to be specified at least at the level of general subject areas if it is to be helpful to educators who may be tempted to use it as an assessment of students' self-concept.

Self-efficacy theory.

This is another theory, which examines students' perceptions of competence. This theory looks at self-efficacy, which is defined as: "People's judgement of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances." (Pintrich and Schunk, 1996, p. 88 quoted Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy is distinguished from both self-concept and self-competence in that it is used in reference to some type of goal and includes the behavioral and cognitive skills that are necessary for competent performance. So it is not just a matter of a person's belief that he or she is good at some thing but the person's belief that he or she is capable of performing a task. It is therefore a confidence judgement about being able to do what is being asked. The research in self-efficacy according to Seifert (1996) has resulted in some

straightforward claims that students who believe themselves to be capable are more likely to be motivated than those who believe themselves to be incapable. Seifert (1996) finds these explanations unsatisfactory in that perception of incapability may not necessarily hinder students' motivation. Seifert (1996) therefore asserts that the concept of self-worth has been applied and repeated for Covington's (1984) view of motivation as an attempt to protect self-worth. In this theory who you are and your value as a person becomes inherently connected to one's ability to do something well. If the students cannot perform well they will seek to find ways to seem as though they could have succeeded. They feel the need to protect perceptions of competence in order to maintain some sense of worth and dignity.

Seifert (1996) has pointed to agency as another important construct in contemporary motivational theory. Seifert (1996) refers to agency as a sense of control and autonomy. The basic premise in this theory is that when students believe that they are the agents they are more likely to be motivated than people who are passive. Seifert (1996) emphasized that agency was not just a matter of believing that one was in control but was an essential part of the human condition that stemmed from an innate human desire to behave in an autonomous manner. The idea of agency seems to have some connection with the attribution theory, which has had worldwide appeal and acceptance.

Attribution theory.

This theory has been proposed by Pintrich and Schunk ((1996, p.145) as one that offers teachers a specific theoretical model of how students' perceptions

of the reasons for their success or failure (attributions) can influence their expectancy for success, their self-efficacy and their actual achievement behaviour. In addition the researchers claim that it has been empirically validated in both laboratory and field studies and has important implications for teacher practice. Baker (1989 p.16) asserts that: "The theory has been applied and repeated on countless groups of students throughout America, England, Australia, Israel, Singapore and now for the first time in Trinidad and Tobago is further evidence of its world-wide appeal and acceptance." The theory has also been identified by Graham (1994) as one which provided a logical arena for the study of achievement-related thoughts of African- Americans. This was in part due to its theoretical and historical roots, which could be traced back to need for achievement and locus of control research. The main aim of attribution theory and research according to Baker (1989) is to identify and define means by which individuals understand and explain their behaviour. The development of this theory has been widely discussed in the literature. The review therefore will not go into this again but notes the importance of the notion of causal attribution to the understanding of achievement motivation.

Weiner's (1979) contribution to the development of this theory is most note worthy. Weiner (1979) is cited in the literature as the one who was able to formulate a theory of motivation based on research done on Rotter's theory of locus of control that was useful for studying classrooms. As a result, the principles of attribution theory have been used to explain achievement in the academic domain.

Pintrich and Schunk (1996) have identified attributional processes as one of the most important influences of students' expectancy and beliefs. In pointing to the importance of this theory for the teacher Pintrich and Schunk assert that:

The assumption on which this model has been based is that individuals are motivated to understand and master their world and the outcome of this goal is that individuals try to determine the causes and events. In an achievement context the most important event therefore is success and failure, and attribution theory proposes that individuals' perceptions of the causes of their success or failures (their attributions) will have important consequences for the formation of their expectancy beliefs and their behavior. (1996, p 108).

Goals and Goal orientation theory.

Current research has recast needs as goals according to Pintrich and Schunk (1996). According to Pintrich and Schunk the need theories of Murray (1938) and Maslow (1954) have been found to have conceptual and theoretical problems since they were more global and encompassing theories of motivation and not ideally suited to explain the achievement behaviour of students in the classroom. Goal orientation is the one that has been identified as having the most direct application to classrooms and student motivation.

It has been proposed that there are two broad orientations: mastery and performance (also called task and ego). There is now the argument that there is need to move beyond the two-goal theory of motivation and recognize the importance of social goals in the students' achievement orientation (Urdan and Maehr, 1995). Proponents of the goal theory in the research on student achievement behaviour are also making the claim that the social motivational processes and socialization processes play a critical role in students' academic

success (Wentzel, 1997, 1999). There is also the criticism that the goal theory, which assesses the student in terms of two approach goals: developing ability or demonstrating ability did not pay attention to the important aspect of avoiding the demonstration of lack of ability (Middleton and Midgley, 1997). This was the current theory and therefore of importance to the study which may use multiple methods in the analysis of the findings. These multiple perspectives have been applied to research in different ways locally and internationally

Achievement at the secondary school level

There has always been interest in the secondary sector of the education system and in particular in the academic achievement of the students. Rubin and Zavalloni, (1969) expressed interest in the students' perspectives and looked at the students' point of view in terms of their aspirations. Harvey (1981) focused on the practitioner's perspective whereas other studies looked at the students. Prime's (1988) study focused on the modifiability of cognitive style and its relationship to achievement in Biology. In addition, non-commissioned studies have investigated the relationship of cognitive, environmental and motivational variables to academic achievement. Osugi's (1992) macro-study examined the relationship between the school environment and academic achievement. Layne's (1992) study of Barbadian secondary school students revealed that there was a significant relationship between home environment and mathematics achievement. Gender differences in the academic achievement of students was the focus of the Jules and Kutnick (1997) study.

Many of the studies have been done based on the students' performance at the external exams done at the fifth form level and on the performance in classroom tests. In addition, The Ministry of Education (1984) used the results of the regional (CXC) examinations to make their assessment of the expansion of the education system. The fact that less than 40% of the graduates of the secondary school were unable to obtain one or more passes in any academic year in the combined curriculum was an indication to the officials that the quantitative expansion of seventies was not being matched by qualitative improvements in performance. Kutnick (1994) referred to the marked and disproportionate variation in school success particularly at the fifth form level that has been found by researchers (Jules & Kutnick, 1990; Osuji, 1989) According to Kutnick, "It has been found that overwhelming examination failure and low motivation characterize government run senior comprehensive schools. On the other hand, high examination success characterizes church-managed schools (assisted schools), traditional schools." (Kutnick, 1994,p.18).

Much has been done in the new sector schools since it is believed that this system is and has been in trouble from its inception in 1972. Mohammed's (1996) study of the career aspirations and expectations of fifth form students at a senior comprehensive school also pointed to the problems those students in this sector face. One of the more current studies, Harris Martin (1997) has focused on the problem of achievement at the new sector schools since it is perceived that the major problems of the system are those which are being experienced by this sector. This study by Harris-Martin (1997) confirmed the view of so many that

the problems have not been remedied but have worsened and indeed there is cause for concern.

Achievement orientation in Trinidad and Tobago

From as far back as 1961, there was a focus on achievement motivation in particular. Kutnick (1994) cited in his study the presence of a study done in a still colonial Trinidad by Mischel (1961) who found achievement motivation significantly and positively correlated to delay of gratification and occupational aspiration. These findings, according to Kutnick, were in keeping with those generated in the United States at that time.

These studies which have been done on achievement orientation /motivation have been correlational field studies which have used large sample, surveys and tests to measure the findings. The three studies that have looked specifically at achievement motivation have used a normative approach. Baker's (1989) correlation study researched the relationship between students' sex, ability, self-concept and their causal attribution of success and failure in Trinidad and Tobago. This study focused on the personal and social factors that explain the varied occurrence of achievement motivation. On the other hand, Subnaik-Deyal's (1991) study was more subject-content specific and looked at perceived student motivation and academic achievement in English and the part played by achievement motivation in such achievement. Kutnick (1994) however, tested for the distribution of achievement motivation among particular students (from five population) in relation to their backgrounds, their position in within- classroom success and placement in a stratified educational system.

Caribbean Studies of Achievement Orientation

Literature review of the Caribbean Studies revealed that adolescents have been the focus of most of the studies done on achievement motivation and the need for achievement of students in the Caribbean. (Ragbir (1975); Jackson (1974); Revathi (1994); Garzarelli (1989); Molfie (1982); Baker (1989); Kutnick (1994). Mason (1989) drew from the 8-10 age group whereas Mc. Donald (1985) used the year two student teacher in her look at the correlates of achievement orientation.

The International Scene

Achievement orientation has assumed much prominence in the research on student and indeed adolescent motivation and achievement.

Santrock (1998) points to the importance of achievement orientation in the life of the Americans and states that:

American adolescents live in an achievement-oriented world with standards that tell them success is important. The standards suggest that success requires a competitive spirit, a motivation to do well, and the wherewithal to cope with adversity and persist until obstacles are overcome. (1998, p. 438).

This may account for the large number of studies on achievement motivation cited by Graham (1994) in her narrative literature review, which focused on African American students. There has also been a special concern in the achievement motivation patterns of different ethnic groups and psychologists have shown a special interest in cross-cultural groups.

The studies that were done on the international scene have chosen a wide range of ages in their sample. Jordan (1980) and Lewis (1991) although operating

out of two international universities were also interested in the achievement motivation of students ages 8 and 10 in the Bahamas and Caribbean students in colleges on the Eastern seaboard of the US. However, the adolescent stage seemed to be a priority for the researchers of the study of achievement orientation.

This may be because according to Santrock (1998, p.439):

Adolescence is a critical juncture in achievement. New social and academic pressures force adolescents toward different roles, roles that often involve more responsibility. Whether or not an adolescent effectively adapts to these new academic and social pressures is determined, in part, by psychological and motivational factors.

This area of research is indeed one of great interest to a large number of educational and personality psychologists who have used a range of methodologies and have been influenced by or contributed to the creation of the multiple perspectives on the topic.

Methodologies

Researchers, according to Pintrich and Schunk (1996), have used a wide range of research paradigms to explore achievement orientation /motivation. There have been experimental, correlational, qualitative, laboratory and field studies. There are advantages and disadvantages of each paradigm but the choice of paradigm depends on the objectives of the study. Pintrich & Schunk (1996) cite Erickson (1986) who advocate that:

Interpretive research is especially useful when researchers are interested in the structure of events rather than their overall distributions; when the meanings and perspectives of individuals are important; when actual experiments are impractical or unethical; and when there is a desire to search for new potential causal linkages that have not been unearthed by experimental methods. (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996, p. 11).

This study is interested in the meanings and perspectives of individuals so that although most of the studies done in this area have utilized more positivistic methods the interpretive approach will be employed.

Summary.

This review has established achievement orientation as a very important area of study that has its conceptual difficulties but that has developed over time. There are multiple perspectives that have been used to explain the construct and varying theories, which have evolved over the years. The theories that emerge as of interest to the researcher in this study are the attributional, goal orientation, expectancy-value and self-worth theory. The various theories therefore served moreover as grounded theory and assisted the researcher in the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Much of the work has been large scale and longitudinal. Experimental and positivistic methodologies have been utilized. There is need for in-depth understanding of what accounts for the achievement orientation and motivational processes of the adolescent student in Trinidad and Tobago who is considered to be "top-set". The decision to focus and limit the study to the students' perceptions and to the commitment to personal understandings of the problem influenced the research process and the choices made by the researcher as the design emerged.

CHAPTER 3

(Act. III Sc. I)

The Research Process

At this point the researcher presents the audience with an insight into some of the 'moments' of the action that takes place off stage. In creating the design the researcher made certain decisions of which the reader needs to be aware since these influence the process and the final product.

Choice of methods

In this chapter the researcher will attempt to describe and analyze the methods/approaches used in the research process. This will entail an explication of the choice of methods or approaches and an analysis of the goodness of fit with the focus of the study. Methods or approaches will be used to refer to the techniques and procedures used during the data-gathering process. Cohen and Manion (1994) in an attempt to differentiate between methods and methodology refer to Kaplan (1973) who explained that, "the aim of methodology is to describe and analyse these methods, throwing light on their limitations and resources, clarifying their presuppositions and consequences, relating their potentialities to the twilight zone at the frontier of knowledge." (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.39 quoted Kaplan, 1973). The literature is replete with information on the various data gathering techniques and procedures used by the two dominant approaches, the quantitative and the qualitative. These approaches are also titled differently and widely from natural science, positive and normative to interpretive,

naturalistic, and ethnography. This therefore served as a guide to the researcher and assisted her in making the decision about which techniques should be chosen for the research process. (S, 1998, p.179)

The focus of the study is the achievement orientation of three adolescent students and the objective was to describe and interpret what the students believed account for their achievement behaviour. It was hoped that when the understanding was gained the researcher would be able to say something about the experience of schooling of three 'top set' students. Belok and Haggerson (1982) have posited that efforts to produce change in the schools have failed to do so, despite a desire for change. This they claimed is because the major way in which change occurs has been rejected. They challenged the belief that formal generalizations conceptual knowledge is the essential ingredient of improved practice. Instead they advocated that practice was guided largely by tacit knowings, by naturalistic generalizations gained from experiencing, often implicit. The approach chosen therefore needed to be able to allow for depth study of the complex issue of achievement orientation/motivation/behaviour and which allowed the experience of the students to take priority. The decision was taken to do a study that was holistic and looked at the problem as not merely one of a psychological nature but one in which the social framework and educational context were important. (S, 1998, p.179)

about Thorkildsen and Nicholls (1998) argue that some of the problems in research on achievement motivation have stemmed from the emphasis placed on either social psychology or personality psychology. "To force educational

psychologists to choose between social and personality psychology is to invent dualism that masks essential parts of exploring students' experiences." (Thorkildsen and Nicholls, 1998, p.179).

In their literature review, Thorkildsen and Nicholls use a historical context to highlight the development of the field of achievement motivation and to explore what they termed "confounds in the way researchers have studied students' motivational orientations and perceptions of schooling." (1998, p.182). One of the major points made that was of interest to this study was the suggestion that "educational psychologists need not place limitations on their inquiry as are found in social and personality research. They added that: "To illuminate individuals' experiences within educational contexts, educational psychologists coordinate concerns with social systems and individuals' identities." Thorkildsen and Nicholls (1998) have also advocated the use of practical utility as a guide for inquiry and revealed that they made sure that their science of the learner did not isolate students from the learning context. Because their purpose was to provide a rich description of students' motivational experience they relied only on students' reports of those experiences. They claimed that "by pushing the boundaries of personality research to accommodate social psychologists' concern for group dynamics, we offered empirical support for the position that researchers should use students' experience rather than disciplinary boundaries to guide decisions about what is worthwhile to know." (p.182). Their research was large scale and used questionnaires and measurement scales to analyze the data. The studies

done by these researchers and most others that have been found in the literature have relied heavily on the quantitative approach.

Henwood (1992) suggests that: "Unlike other disciplines in the human sciences, psychology has undervalued the role of qualitative research methods in scientific inquiry." This, Henwood (1992) claims "has done a disservice to psychology, depriving its practitioners of skills which can simultaneously liberate and discipline the theoretical imagination." (1992, p.97). Henwood (1992) also opines that one of the advantages of qualitative research is that theory is generated which is contextually sensitive, persuasive and relevant. However, according to Henwood, (1992, p.10) "strategies adopted by qualitative researchers on the ground of developing good theory have not been reflected to any significant extent at a general methodological level in psychology." The researcher was then left with the choice of which approach best suited the study given its aims and objectives and the focus.

Qualitative or quantitative.

The focus of this study was the individual student and her perception of the experience of schooling and the impact it has had on her achievement orientation. The researcher was cognizant of the effect that group dynamics and the learning environment may have had on the individual's perceptions but chose to focus on an in-depth study of the individual's perception. The researcher recognised the need for further work on the other areas that impact on the learner's achievement behaviour. However limitations of space and time necessitated a narrowing of the focus if in-depth study was to be done. This was

necessary since although students' perceptions have been considered valuable in research, it was difficult to find work done on the students' perceptions in an area in psychology such as achievement behaviour.

The assumption on which this study was based was that the world exists but different people construe it in very different ways. This is distinct from the natural science assumption that the world exists and is known as it really is. The quantitative approach assumes a realist ontology in which reality consists of a world of objectively defined facts. It therefore sets out to prove hypotheses and the ideal strategy is the experimental control of subsets of variables in order to test the theory, which was decided on before hand. This study hoped to arrive at new knowledge and contribute to the theory that exists. This does not mean that theories or theoretical frameworks have not inspired the researcher, who opted for the alternative qualitative approach. However, the researcher is not burdened by 'preconceived ideas'. Alasutari (1992) is clear that the different theoretical and methodological perspectives present the researcher with opportunities to open their eyes to all kinds of observations instead of narrowing their vision. Alasutari (1996) in support of the importance of these frameworks refers to Malinowski (1922/1961,p.9) who emphasizes:

If a man sets out on an expedition, determined to prove certain hypothesis, if he is incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under pressure of evidence needless to say his work will be worthless.

The qualitative approach also allowed for the flexibility that was needed in a study of this nature. At the same time there was a systematic procedure for inquiry that would serve as a guide and not a master of the research process.

Creswell's definition of qualitative research helped the researcher to make the decision concerning the approach, which seemed to fit the focus of the study.

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (1998, p.15)

There was the objective-methodology fit present and the decision was made to adopt a qualitative approach.

Rationale.

It is within a field of study as broad as has been described by Thorkildsen and Nicholls (1998) that the researcher attempted to place a study, which moved away from the surveys and macro studies and focused on three individuals in a manner which had not been done previously. Interpretive/qualitative studies according to Cohen and Manion (1981) are concerned with how individual pupils perceive, interpret or give meaning to an experience. Cohen and Manion (1981) made a case for interpretive studies, which allow researchers to build up a corpus of data that, can be of value to the practising teacher and the teacher in training.

There was indeed need for this at the local level. Rubin and Zavalloni's (1969) study, which was in a different era, did take into consideration the views of the students. Kutnick & Jules' (1993) review of the literature on studies exploring

students' perceptions also found that the majority of work done on students' experience of schooling had adopted a normative/quantitative mode. Kutnick & Jules (1993) opined that there was a need for a valid and relevant strategy that would allow pupils to articulate their view freely without the limitations of the normative mode. Jules' (1998) longitudinal study of students over the period of forms one to three adopted an interpretive perspective and looked at the issue of the students' schooling experiences.

The decision was taken by the researcher to use a qualitative/interpretive approach to study the phenomenon although there were claims of not only promises but also perils. (Eisner, 1997). It would take an entire study to deal with the perils encountered in the process. These perils assisted the researcher in the decisions taken along the journey. The researcher was motivated by the desire to "secure more authentic information" about the achievement behaviour of three form three students who were considered to be of high ability on the basis of the CE examination results.

Summary

Increasingly it has been found that students have their own value systems. At the same time, the researcher believed that not enough attention was being paid to what students were saying or what they were feeling. Therefore we have been left with the consequences of their actions. This study was designed with the aim of providing an insight into the meaning that three form three students made of their experiences of success and failure within a specific school environment. In so doing it was hoped that new knowledge could be gained since this type of data

was not available in the region. There was also the hope that the information could serve to sensitize educators to students' rationalizations and perceptions. According to Fetterman, "The most significant reality or sets of reality is found in the subjective realities of human perception. People believe what they perceive and they act on what they believe. More importantly there are real consequences to their action." (1988, p.18). The objective, according to Creswell (op. cit.) was to compile bits and pieces of evidence in order to formulate a 'compelling whole'. A qualitative approach seems to fit the nature of the project and the objective of the study. Eisner (1997) commented on the trend for the choice of a particular paradigm, (defined in the literature as a world view- a way of viewing reality) to be based more on personality disposition than on methodological consideration. Eisner (1997) suggested that the method should suit the disposition of the researcher but moreover fit the nature of the project and the objectives of the study. This study the researcher believed had met these criteria and was therefore ideally suited to a qualitative approach.

Design Decisions

(Act 3 Sc. II)

Drayton (1995) in her review of relevant Caribbean studies identified the need for case studies of individual schools in order to identify the organizational practices routines and the classroom processes (the hidden curriculum) which contribute to achievement and failure. Drayton (1995) also pointed to the use that Lawton and Gintis, in England and America respectively, were making of linking the findings of macro studies to micro studies in the hope that it would help policy makers to develop guidelines to improve school and classroom processes. If in-depth knowledge had to be gained the design needed to be one which would allow for detailed information to be obtained.

Case Study

A case study is defined in this project as “an exploration of a “bounded system” or multiple cases over time through detailed, in -depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context”. (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). It is necessary to define the generic term ‘case study’, which is also used as a choice of object to be studied and not a methodological choice. (Sturman, 1994, p. 236). Case study is being viewed as one of the qualitative traditions of inquiry identified by Creswell (1998). The study is being done in one classroom of one school, over a period of one year and looks at the case of three individual students in order to explain the issue of achievement behaviour. This may be defined therefore as an instrumental case study in which the case is used instrumentally to

illustrate the issue. This type of case study as distinct from the intrinsic or collective case study was considered most promising and most useful.

Identifying the Sample

At first the researcher had planned on using the class-room group as the case and began collecting data on the entire group. The researcher because of inexperience had little idea of the amount of data that the data collection would yield. During the second phase of the study the amount of data and the limitation of time and finance forced the researcher to make the prudential decision to narrow the focus. This therefore led to the use of purposeful sampling to allow for maximum variation.

Miles and Huberman (1994) in their typology of purposeful sampling strategies in qualitative inquiry list maximum variation as one type of sampling which can be used in order to allow the researcher to document variations and identify common patterns. Creswell (1998) identified this strategy as one that could be used in a case study and one which would allow the researcher to fully display multiple perspectives about the case.

The individuals were chosen from the class of 43 from three students and the three levels of performance in in-class achievement tests. The three students were therefore purposefully chosen from the top middle and lower performance groups based on classroom test results in the third term of the second year and the first term of the third year. The researcher bore in mind the advice of Creswell (1997) who suggested that no more than four cases should be chosen since the more cases an individual chose the greater the lack of depth in any single case.

These three students were among the group of students in the class who had agreed to be interviewed and to be a part of the study. The entire class had been assured of anonymity at the start of the study. The three students belonged to one of three groups of students, who had been randomly placed in the form three classes at the beginning of the form one-year and had worked together for the past two years. They were three of the students in the eighty- percent group. These three students were then purposefully chosen and used as the case to illustrate the issue of students' perception of achievement orientation as it related to students in a traditional assisted secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago.

The classroom tests had revealed that the students could be divided into high, middle and low performance groups. The data collected was very useful and allowed for the class participation in the study and the promise of further study at a later date. In addition, the researcher had the opportunity to interact with most of the members of the class in the site and gain an understanding of the context in which the study was done from the students' perspective. The anonymity of the final three was therefore assured since they were not aware that the focus was on them in particular. The final in-depth interviews were done with the three students but all the other data gathering activities involved the members of the entire group. The researcher did not want to dilute the overall analysis and wanted to have enough information to give an in-depth picture of the case. There was need for rich, thick data that made for clear description of the situation in which these girls found themselves and the approaches they took in order to cope.

Data Collection Strategies

The multiple sources of data included observations, interviews, students' protocol writing, questionnaire survey, end of term exam results and teacher assessment. The researcher had made the decision to use multiple sources of data in order to gather as much information as possible in order to allow for triangulation. The concept of triangulation according to Sturman (1997) quoted (Tawney, 1975) is central to achieving credibility. Stake (1994,p. 241) also cited (Flick, 1992) who acknowledged that no observations or interpretations are repeatable, but triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen."

Analysing the Data

The problem is indeed a complex one and therefore needs to be looked at intently and in depth. However, the researcher was concerned about the design of the study, which she believed had to be such that it allowed the individual voices of the students to be heard.

There was also the need for a strategy/procedure, which would allow for the interdisciplinary nature of the study. This study wanted to take into consideration the psychological, educational and sociological issues at stake in the research. There has been the suggestion by Pintrich that studies that used open-ended and more inclusive methodologies generated more potential causes of achievement success or failure but also included the traditional causes.

Voice-centred Relational Method

A review of the literature pointed the researcher to the voice-centred relational method, which had grown out of extensive developmental psychology and educational research and clinical practice with women and girls across race and class, by Brown and Gilligan. (Brown and Gilligan, 1992) The interdisciplinary nature on which this methodology was founded was ideal for the study.

Moreover, Parson's (1983) notes that, "For some years experimental studies of achievement motivation in the Atkinson-McClelland tradition employed male subjects exclusively." (p.31.). There was also the suspicion that because of the inconsistencies in the findings when the TAT measure was used on females, that achievement motivation as it operated in men might not have an exact counterpart in women. According to Parsons (op.cit.) who quotes McClelland (1966, p.481): " Clearly we need a differential psychology of motivation for men and women."

Gilligan and Brown (1992), who were responsible for the development of this method of data analysis had claimed that girls and boys identify different kinds of academic struggles. There was need for studies on the females and their interpretation of their academic struggles and the effect it has on their orientations. Since this study was focussed on three female adolescent students this method seemed ideal. The assumptions about the nature of the individual and the nature of knowledge; the clinical and literary approaches; its flexibility;

reflexivity; rigorous and systematic nature all made for the kind of methodology needed in this study.

Nature of knowledge.

Knowledge and understanding according to the voice-centred relational methodology is gained from the relationship between our subject matter and with the respondents. Knowledge is also gained from the intellectual and emotional response of the reader. Moreover, production of this knowledge must come from a systematic exploration and explanation of our beliefs, biases and social location.

In addition, the reflexive nature of the process in that it goes back and forth, allowed for many, and varied reading of and listening to the texts and facilitated the rigor so necessary in the analysis of qualitative data.

The key concern of voice-centred relational method was the processes of reflection and decision making. Since process oriented values and ways of being were emphasized in this study, the method seemed appropriate. Doucet & Mauthner differentiate grounded theory from the voice-centred relational method and cite Ribbens and Edwards (1997) who claim that:

It may be that in researching areas of 'private' life where process-oriented values and ways of being are emphasized rather than the more 'public' goal-oriented values and ways of being, the voice-centred relational method has been instrumental in shedding light on meanings, processes and contradictions, which are central to domestic life. (Doucet & Mauthner, 1998,p.130).

Relational ontology.

This voice-centred relational method of data analysis is based on the relational ontology that posits the notion of people as relational beings, with interdependent selves. The method, according to Doucet and Mauthner (1998), attempts to translate relational ontology into methodology and into concrete methods of data analysis by exploring narrative accounts in terms of relationships to the people around them and to the broader cultural, social and structural contexts. This seemed ideal to the analysis of the research interviews, which Pintrich (1996) claimed were better if researchers were interested in exploring feelings and beliefs in depth.

In addition, the method of data analysis allowed the tension, which it is believed, exists between the perspectives of those being researched and the interpretations of the researcher who is creating the product, to be dealt with in certain ways. The assumption is that:

By trying to name how we are socially, emotionally and intellectually located in relation to our respondents we can retain some grasp of the blurred boundary between their narratives and our interpretations of those narratives.” (Doucet, Mauthner, 1998, p.127).

Flexibility.

The flexibility of the methodology allowed the researcher to adapt the method to suit the needs of the research and the issues involved. Doucet and Mauthner (1998), although trained in the methodology by their association with

Brown and Gilligan (1992) who were the developers, admitted that they were able to adapt its use to their individual disciplines. There was also a fit between this method of data analysis and the ethnographic case study. It was therefore taken to be ideally suited to the study that was being undertaken. The philosophical assumptions were also quite similar to those of the qualitative approach, which the researcher had decided to utilize in the study.

Hearing the voices - the clinical and literary approaches.

The voice-centred relational method is based on clinical and literary approaches, and interpretive and hermeneutic traditions. (Doucet and Mauthner, 1998). It seemed appropriate for a study, which attempted to hear the voices of the three girls as individuals. At the same time it takes account of the voice of the researcher in the creation of the product. This also assisted in the issue of trustworthiness, which is essential in a study, which uses a qualitative approach. Borman et al (1986) suggest the need for recursive analysis in order to deal with the issue of subjectivity in qualitative research studies. The reader-response that the voice-centred relational method advocated was therefore taken as an opportunity for the 'honesty and introspection' as prescribed by Borman et al (1986.) who attempted to deal with solutions to the problems that qualitative researchers face.

Phases of the Process

The procedure to be taken was influenced by the inspiration from the literature in terms of what was done and the theories and data analysis methodologies that had been used previously. The researcher was constantly aware of the cultural differences between the sample in the current research and those in the literature and the objectives of the other researchers.

Inspiration from the literature and in particular the general expectancy-value development model of Eccles et al (1983) and the researcher's experience in the education system of Trinidad and Tobago had informed the initial conceptual framework. This framework which had been amended guided the decision making process about data collection methods and strategies and the type of information to be collected. This theory which was discussed in the literature influenced the decision to seek information on the students' goals and aspirations and the teachers' assessment of the students' academic ability.

Most of the research and definition of the situation in the literature seemed to have utilized a normative structure and sampled large numbers of young children and adolescents. This study was concerned with the experiences of form three students in the type of secondary school where according to Jules (1990) the results showed a consistent bias to success of female students, from middle class home, in all subject areas except Social Studies.

Research had shown that Kutnick (1994) used the Smith questionnaire instead of the best known measure of achievement motivation Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) of McClelland and Atkinson (1953). This test (TAT)

has been used in many research studies and has been found to often bear a positive relation to achievement outcomes. This test which focuses on the motive to achieve success has also been found to suffer from problems of low reliability and its correlation with other achievement measures was not always strong. (Pintrich quoted Weiner 1985B and Sprangler, 1992). There is still the belief that TAT will continue to play an important role in the assessment of achievement motivation. On the other hand, the motive to avoid failure has been measured using the Test Anxiety Questionnaire (Mandler & Sarason, 1952) which it is believed is a more objective self-report measurement. The use of Smith's (1992) objective measure of the need for achievement continues to be one of those being developed and researched. The area of research like so many others was filled with complexities and contradictions and the researcher had to decide on the best procedure for this study.

The results of this Smith (1992) test as used by Kutnick (1994) revealed that students who scored highest on achievement motivation attended the traditional, church-managed schools and studied arts and science subjects. Kutnick found that achievement motivation was high in this type of school, the assisted secondary, which is the context of the present study. In addition, the effect of parental occupation on student attitudes toward motivation was found to have disappeared when students entered these elite schools. The researcher did not use any of these tests since the concern was more for the students' perspectives. However these tests could be of value to a study which made use of a larger sample and was interested in specific variables.

This study took as a given that achievement motivation was high but was more concerned with what students perceived accounted for the kinds of orientation that students had and the thought patterns that governed their behaviours. It took a more interactionist approach and did not allow any one theoretical perspective to govern the understanding of the phenomenon. .

Pintrich and Schunk (1996) in their review of the attributional theory of motivation also advocated the use of more open-ended methodologies. Pintrich and Schunk (1996) in their research found that they were able to generate more potential causes of achievement success or failure and at the same time included those that have been traditionally stated.

The case study according to Creswell (1997) involves the widest array of data collection as the researcher attempts to build an in-depth picture of the case. The decision about which strategies of data collection should be used was then based on the review of what was done previously, the various methods used, a comparison with what the researcher hoped to achieve and the wide theoretical framework that was influencing the design.

Phase I

Student essays.

At the start of the project, (Phase 1) - November - December '98, students were asked to describe in detail what they hoped to achieve during the year and how they planned to achieve it/them. They were asked to note the difficulties they thought they might encounter and say how they thought they could overcome

them and to identify the persons who could be of assistance to them over the year. (Appendix I).

Students were assigned numbers in order to allow for anonymity and to assure the privacy of the material. The focus was on their descriptions, feelings and thoughts.

Cohen and Manion (1981) noted that the study that used the interpretive perspective acquired data through natural conversation, open discussion and freely composed material on the pupils' part – essays or accounts. Jules (1993) and Payne (1987) both used the essay-based strategy. Kutnick & Jules (1993) describe the essay-based strategy as being able to elicit the widest range of pupil concepts because it allowed the child to reflect on experience before responding and did not inhibit various articulations within the face-to-face interaction between child and adult interviewer or teacher.

Teacher assessment.

Subject teachers in the areas of Science, Geography, Spanish, French, English and Mathematics were asked in the eighth week of the first term to make assessment of the students' capability and potential in the varying subject areas. (Appendix II) These core subject areas were the ones that would be important to students' choices at the end of the year. This decision was influenced by Parson's model (1983). Parson (Eccles) had found in her review of the achievement literature that the teachers' expectations and attitudes played an important role in shaping students' self-concepts and general expectancies of success. Parson's (1983) found those studies investigating the relationship between these variables

had yielded consistent results. The major finding was that students for whom teachers had high expectations also had high expectations for themselves and in fact did better in their course work.

The data collected during this phase was subjected to an initial thematic analysis to give the researcher a feel of the students and to gain initial insights into their values, goals and aspirations. In addition it alerted the researcher to some of the issues which were arising out of the students writing and the subject teachers assessment of the students' abilities and potential. The researcher had begun to be aware of the nature of the research and was gaining an understanding of the case. Some commonalties were arising and these were noted. A first report was submitted to the thesis supervisor. (Appendix III). This analysis made the researcher aware of the members of the class and their interests and attitudes to school and life in general. It gave the researcher a feel for the site. It was easy to relate to the students in the next phase when she was able to put a face to the names which she had come to know because of the thematic analysis of the data - both the students' writing and the teacher assessment. The form teacher had shared with the researcher the students' response to a similar question that they were given at the start of the term. This helped the researcher to triangulate the findings. The responses given then and those in the students' writing were consistent.

Phase II

This phase of the research began in January 1999 and ended in March 1999. During this period the researcher sat in on classroom sessions on alternate

weeks and moved from an outsider to an insider who was observing interactions and making field notes. The researcher also attended school assembly sessions at the start of the day. At the start the emphasis was on observations and the researcher made field notes during the class sessions when she sat at the back as an observer. (Appendix IV)

Classroom observations were scheduled for specific periods every other week for five weeks. The objective of this exercise was to note the classroom interactions between student and student, and teachers and students. Field notes were taken and one session was audiotaped. Students were also observed during lunch and break periods, before school started on mornings and at a School Carnival celebration. "Ethnographic work," as Janesick (1995, p.103) states, "demands that the researcher stay in the setting over time". It also, "requires the researcher to become the research instrument. This requires the ability to observe behavior and sharpen the skills necessary for observation and face to face interview." (Janesick, 1995, p. 103). The researcher was also gaining experience and training as a research assistant in the faculty in which she was a post graduate student. This therefore gave her the necessary skills and training for the role and research instrument.

These notes were written on a special form on which there were two columns. On one side were the notes and the other comments. (Appendix V). These notes were transcribed at the end of the day and shared with the thesis supervisor who alerted the researcher to her biases that were coming out in the field notes. The researcher picked up issues that arose during the class sessions

and used these as stimulus for the informal conversations with the students during the lunch and break periods or in the morning sessions before school.

The trust and confidentiality that were needed began to grow during this time and students gradually became accustomed to the researcher's presence in the classroom.

The researcher was then able to interview individual students during lunch times, at the start of the day or whenever it was convenient. Her presence during the day allowed her to locate the students when there was a "free" time available. These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher. (Appendix VI).

All of the interviews were semi-structured, open-ended, audio-taped, and transcribed by the researcher. Creswell (1997) suggested that one-on-one interviewing needed individuals who were not hesitant to speak and share ideas. Where this did not seem the case the researcher used a focus group interview which was judged by Creswell (1997) to be advantageous when time to collect information was limited and when interaction among the interviewees would likely yield the best information. The type of interviewing most used was "depth interviewing" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). These interviews were guided by the research interest the achievement orientation of the three students. The issues, which seemed important to the respondents and which appeared to be affecting their behaviours were the ones which guided the researcher. The aim was to get the students to talk about their schooling experiences and to get the meaning they were making of them. In addition, it was an attempt to get the students to tell

their stories of their experiences over the past years. The researcher needed to know how they saw themselves and how they identified themselves in this context.

The initial interviews asked general questions about their life at school and how they were coping with being students. The issues that arose were followed through during the interviews.

Data analysis began during this period when the researcher was transcribing the data and interpreting the events and designing the stages of the study based on what was emerging from the data. It was at this stage that the researcher realized it was impossible to use the class of 43 as the sample and made the decision to focus on a sample of three.

Questionnaire survey.

A questionnaire which had been piloted and tested (Jules, 1994) was adapted and used to gain current biographical information on the students. It was felt that the data in the school files might not be current but based on the information collected when they entered the school in 1996. Since then there might have been changes in family structure and parent occupation over the three years.

The items on the questionnaire sought information relative to the following data: (a) age, (b); race (self-declared); (c) religion; (d) whom they live with; (e) parents' occupation; (f) where they live and the distance from school; (g) primary school attended and if they had "passed for" this secondary school; and (h) transfer information if applicable. In addition, they were asked to list in order

of preference those they would like most to work with in the class and those with whom they would least like to work. They were then given an open-ended question in which they were asked to describe their best friend and say why the person was their best friend. (Appendix VII).

Klonsky (1989) in his review pointed to the impact of demographic factors, like sex, social class, culture and race on the development of achievement orientation. In addition researchers who have used a more developmental perspective in their studies of achievement motivation have found that the interpersonal relationships were related to academic outcomes and influenced student achievement behaviours. This influenced the decision to acquire data on student friendship classroom patterns. Social encounters and experiences were found to have influenced motivation at school. This data proved useful to the researcher during the stage of data analysis. It allowed the researcher to have a more holistic picture of the individuals and proved to be invaluable. It also helped in corroboration of information that was gained either in the interviews or the writings of the three students.

Phase III

This phase of the study spanned the period May 1999 to July 1999. Arrangements were made for one focus group interview to be done during one of the class sessions and three in-depth interviews with the three cases.

During this period the researcher obtained the second protocol writing from the students. (Appendix VII). During the week of the third term before preparation for end of term exams began they were given the second protocol.

They were asked to describe in detail experiences of success and or failures over the three years. They were asked to describe their thoughts and feelings and to give details about any incident/s. In addition, they were asked about those who were involved, how it affected both them and the others involved, and what they did after the incident occurred. (Appendix VIII).

Data analysis.

The researcher transcribed the interviews and analyzed the scripts using the four steps of the voice-centred relational method of Brown and Gilligan (1992). She was guided by the adapted version of Doucet and Mauthner (1998). The researcher adapted it to suit the needs of her research topic. The researcher therefore focused on student identity and the kinds of relationships that were important to them at this stage of their lives. In addition the researcher listened to how they felt about their relationships with their peers, members of their family and their teachers in particular. Their assessment of themselves as students and their goals and aspirations and their definitions of success and what accounted for it were issues that the researcher listened for in the interview in the material and looked for in the written data.

The researcher had begun responding to the interview data during the transcription process and these comments were added to the interview transcripts concurrently. It can be said then that response to the interview data began even before the "official" first reading of the interview transcripts. In one instance this allowed the researcher to create the pseudonym for one of the students.

During the first reading the audio-taped recordings were listened to at the same time. The researcher then created the text of the findings. The transcript and the findings were shared with the thesis supervisor who acted as an independent judge. The final draft of the findings was shared with three fellow postgraduate students.

Borman & Compte (1985) state that:

Qualitative researchers may also seek commentary from other researchers, mentors, and colleagues as aid in clarifying concepts, developing and refining questions, and regaining insight into phenomena with which the investigators have grown too familiar. (p. 44).

The ethnographic case study report that was created was however also influenced by the data from the field notes and the other data sources. The researcher's initial responses were then combined with the response to the official first reading/listening.

The second reading was then done in order to gain a sense of how the students saw themselves and their thoughts and feelings about whom they were. This was followed by the third reading which was done to ascertain how the student felt about the different relationships both in and out of school which were affecting how they were oriented to achieve. Finally the fourth reading allowed the researcher to place the student within a social and cultural context and the impact it was having on their achievement motivation.

This analysis gave the researcher the outlines, which were interpreted by the researcher and used to make comparisons with the other cases in order to determine similarities and differences and arrive at conclusions. The process however was iterative since the researcher went back and forward on the

interview transcripts and the field notes and questionnaire surveys in order to triangulate the evidence in the interviews and to write the stories from the students' perspective.

There was always the tension between how the researcher was interpreting the data and presenting for the audience and what the voices actually said.

The findings were then used to draw out the themes and to make interpretations and assertions, which formed the material for the final chapter of the study. The continuous searching of the literature even after the data were collected gave the researcher new insights into the phenomena and assisted the researcher in the assertions that were made in the conclusions.

Standards of Quality and Verification

The researcher adopted Creswell's (1998) definition of verification as the process that occurs throughout the data collection, analysis and report writing of a study and standards as criteria imposed by the researcher and others after the study is completed. The terminology used were those of Lincoln and Guba (1995) who suggested that in the verification procedure terms like "credibility", "transferability", "dependability" and "confirmability" be used to establish "trustworthiness". The researcher has referred throughout the study to steps that were being taken in order to establish trustworthiness but will use this section of the study to bring them all together

Credibility

A period of eight months was spent doing the research and the second and third term of the school year was spent on the site. This allowed for persistent observation in the field and the opportunity to build trust with the participants, learning the culture.

In the field the researcher was able to make decisions about what was salient to the study, relevant to the research and the purpose of the study. According to Creswell (1998, p.201) who quoted Fetterman (1989) "working with people day in day out for long periods of time is what gives ethnographic research its validity and vitality." The persistent observation at various times of the day and at activities other than classroom sessions also assisted the researcher in her quest to establish credibility.

Triangulation of data sources was also used in the quest to establish credibility. The researcher was able to corroborate evidence, which was different from the transcribed interview data and the students' protocol writings to shed light on themes, which arose during the analysis of the data.

The researcher used the opportunity afforded to interview the student a second time as a member check with one serving to check the other. In one instance the researcher used the data from an exercise that was done by the class teacher to check what was written when the researcher did a similar activity

The voice-centred relational method of data analysis was one of the major tools used by the researcher to establish credibility. The method of listening to the voices and distinguishing the reader/listener response from the participant's voice allowed the researcher to establish credibility.

The researcher declared her site at the start of the study and used the short story to deal with her biases that may affect her interpretation of the issues. In addition the thesis supervisor acted as an independent judge throughout the study as she read the transcripts and made comments on the findings.

Transferability

According to Creswell (1998, p.203) who quotes (Richardson et al, 1993; & Lincoln & Guba, 1985) "Rich thick description allows the reader to make decisions regarding transferability."

Indeed the method of data analysis and reporting of the findings allowed the researcher to present rich thick descriptions of the setting, the participants and the findings on the issue from the perspective of the participants. The reader can therefore judge from this whether or not the findings can be transferred because of "shared characteristics".

Declaration

Because of the confidential nature of the material the tapes and the transcriptions will be lodged in the Faculty of Education office and can be subjected to scrutiny by the relevant authorities in order to confirm the existence and authenticity. This was chosen instead of placing it in the thesis' appendix in order to take into consideration the ethics of the research procedure and to protect the participants who had agreed based on the assurance that what they said and wrote would be kept confidential.

Summary.

The research process is indeed a complex and complicated one which benefits from reflection and ideally a journal will assist the researcher as she journeys. Lessons are also learnt along the way and the benefits of extra backup material will be one that the researcher will never forget. The process involves action, observation, reflection and action again. This spiral movement continues throughout the process as the project develops. Choices and prudential decisions had to be made as the project developed. The researcher then set the scene and placed the props in place that allowed the players to be as comfortable as possible when they took the stage.

CHAPTER 4

(Act 3 Sc. III)

Life is a stage
And we are the actors
Each one have a part to play
Is the honourable this and honourable that
And honourable so and so.
Is a part we all playing ah want you to know
Valentino (Calypsonian)

The players took centre stage. They had come to tell their stories and to give the readers/listeners an insight into their experiences over the past three years. The voices of the players therefore took precedence over everything else. However, the researcher also played a role in weaving the webs of their perceptions and used the opportunity to present her responses and her interpretations of the events as they unfolded on the stage and to link them with the findings from the literature. There is therefore the constant juxtaposition between discoveries and interpretation.

Discoveries

The interview transcripts were read and listened to four times, as described above. The students' life stories, their descriptions of themselves and their experiences in and sometimes out of school were drawn out and written up using their voices as far as possible. The intention of the researcher was to make the 'data star' as was suggested by Chenail (1998) in his discussion on presenting the findings in qualitative research. As the students told their stories they revealed their definitions of themselves; their need for achievement, the achievement values and beliefs that they held.

The voice-relational method of analysis of the interview data, the field notes from the classroom observations, the students' essays and the demographic data were used to create this section of the report. For the purpose of the study the school was called L'ecole Normale and the students, were named Lucky, Macy and Francine.

The stage

L'ecole Normale: the learning environment

The context of the study is a school, which is situated in an urban area and is at the same time far away from the noise and traffic of the streets. The building itself is old with some recent additions to the structure. The classroom is situated to the northern side of the building and is surrounded by a tree and greenery and the sound of birds and barking dogs from the neighbouring house. The room itself is not very spacious and houses forty-three girls. There is little room for much movement in and around the class. There is a chalk-board and the teacher's desk at the front and a cupboard in which there are library books. The screen at the back of the class is used as a display board for students' work. Students leave the room for subjects like Music, Home Economics, Art, and Science Laboratories. The assembly hall is also used for English Language and English Literature classes and morning assembly.

According to classroom research done by students of the school in context: "The attitude of the government in the early twentieth century was that private citizens and churches would have to endow the female secondary school." (Unpublished Social Studies school project, 1998).

These assisted secondary girls' schools have moved from a weak start with the Oxford and Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examination in the early 1930's to winning the President's Medal Scholarships. This has led many persons to make this type of school the first choice for their daughters' secondary education schooling.

It is within this school setting which it is believed affects achievement motivation directly and indirectly that the events of the three students' stories unfolded. Waxman et al (1997) cite studies done by Eccles and Midgley, 1989; Eccles et al, 1993; and Oldfather and McLaughlin, 1993, that have found that school and classroom environments affect students' motivation. Waxman (1997) pointed to the need for studies which used the learning environment indicators which according to him, "are generally measured at a classroom level, making them a more proximal measure of what actually occurs in the classrooms." Waxman et al also make a claim for studies which focus on students' (and in this case they were referring to African American students), perceptions of certain aspects of the learning environment. Waxman et al (1997) cite studies done by (Fraser, 1986a; 1989, 1994; Fraser & Fisher, 1982; Fraser, Walberg et al, 1987;) which have all found that students' perceptions of their instructional and learning environments explain a significant amount of variance in students' cognition and affective outcomes. Additionally, Waxman et al suggested (1997) that ethnographic observation could be used to explore the quality of teacher-student interactions and student engagement in the classroom. The researcher during the time spent with the students in the classroom was able to make note of various

aspects of the learning environment and the students' responses to it. At the same time when the researcher listened to the interviews and read the transcripts, she found that students' reactions to and perceptions of the learning environment emerged as an issue and seemed to have played a major role in the students definition of self.

During the class room observations the researcher noted that the teachers regularly asked the class to be quiet. The form teacher threatened to move the students around and the Mathematics teacher actually moved the students around during her teaching period. The Mathematics teacher during one class session asked the students to be quiet since others wanted to get on with it and then urged them to stop performing. There was always insistence by the subject teachers that there should be quiet. When the teachers were not in class the researcher noted that the class prefect found great difficulty keeping the class quiet. The girls used this as an opportunity to move around and talk to each other and give jokes or get information for the following class. However, during the time when the teacher was present a girl spoke to the friend next to her or sent notes around the class. The quiet the teachers seemed to desire was one in which students did not speak aloud unless they were being questioned by the teacher. Students seemed to enjoy group work that gave them the opportunity to talk to each other and to discuss things other than the task at hand. This group work however did not work for Macy who found that when she had to work on her own she still did not know what she should do. There was no one to ask for clarification when the exam was being done and this seemed to add to her anxiety.

The class to which the three girls belong is one of three forms three. This class was described by the administration as one that was creative, excited and anxious to perform but might not always produce. The perception of the administration was that the students in this class drained the teachers. Teachers were therefore given the opportunity to choose whether or not they wanted to teach this particular class. The belief of the administration and some teachers was that the students' personal problems were affecting their academic performance. There was no empirical evidence of this and this was not the focus of the study. However the researcher noted the administration's perceptions of the entire group.

Lucky's views on the classroom environment.

Lucky agrees that the class gets into trouble with the teachers.

Our class got into more trouble than usual at form three. We always seemed agitated and aggressive. But after being called the worse class to ever pass through our school, we still stick to each other in trouble. That is what I admire about my fellow classmates.

At the same Lucky describes the class as having "little cliques that have their problem." The major problem however is the behavior of this group.

*The thing that annoys me and irritates me most is you see... As you know already, I take my work seriously. During classes they would disrupt the entire class just for some stupid reason and the teacher would now have to stop teaching and attend to them and correct them. And then that throws off the entire schedule and the class is kept back because of them and that is not fair at all. Because it is not once or twice, ... **they** do it. It is like almost every day, **they** do this thing. If not with one teacher with another teacher. And it really really (student's emphasis) annoys me.*

However, in spite of that Lucky still likes how: "We always stick together. When in trouble all of we getting in trouble at the same time."

Macy's views on the classroom environment.

For Macy the behavior of the students in the class is a problem in as much as it affects her ability to do her work. However, she has accepted that she can do nothing about it. She describes the class as: "noisy and stuffy...And I don't know how to work around that. So you might find that I might just fall into their bad habits and end up talking too." Although Macy finds it easier to follow the group she is also critical of the attitude of her classmates:

Sometimes you really have to know where to draw the line. You have to know: ok a teacher in class, you have to shut up. You can't carry on all the time. They don't understand that. And is like every body in the class... you just have to try and ignore them sometimes.

Francine's views on the classroom environment.

Francine on the other hand, found the school to be one in which: "I didn't have anybody to be loud and boisterous with and I use to more lean towards the clique. I do not know what happened. I just end up not being there." She however suggested that they could be a sort of distraction. Francine writes in her essay on her goals for this year:

I am not going to allow them to distract me during classes because if it's one thing I realize, is that, I may laugh and talk as much as them, but my grades are not the same as theirs.

The First Reading - The Conflicts

Where were they at now?

The framework of the plot came out of the first reading of the transcript data. During this reading the researcher was able to identify the major issues that were emerging. These issues were confirmed by the supervisor who along with the other three fellow graduates acted as an independent judges.

The literature suggested that student's self-esteem or self-worth was a major factor in achievement motivation. Ames (1990, p.411) asserts that, "students self -worth is intricately tied to their self-concept of ability or self-efficacy has significant consequences for student achievement behavior." This self-esteem was affected and or influenced by their perceptions of their environment and their status either as members of the family or students in school. . This is according to Pintrich (1996) distinct from the self-efficacy concept. Pintrich (1996) noted that self esteem which he viewed as the popular name for self-worth is often confused with self-efficacy or students' self-perceptions of their competence in specific subject areas. The focus of the study was not competence in specific subject areas although the academic outcomes were taken into consideration in choosing the sample. However, this emerged as one of the factors that influenced and affected students' self-esteem. Pintrich (1996) claims that, "research done on self esteem usually suggested that self esteem is a more affective or emotional reaction to the self." (p.312). Pintrich (op.cit.) also pointed to the studies done by Covington (1992) who proposed a

model of self worth that is based on the attribution theory of motivation. The researcher noted that the students' self-worth was sometimes threatened when they believed that they were not succeeding in certain subject areas.

Studies on achievement orientation have also made the claim that Social and Economic Status (SES) appears to have an important influence on achievement orientation. However, there is disagreement about the way in which this works. McDonald (1985, p.57) pointed to Miller (1970) who made the point that it was not social class per se that accounted for the differences but the rather the characteristics of the person and his social environment. Ragbir (1975) found that a group of lower class students exhibiting high ability and high level of achievement showed a 'middle class' type of academic achievement motivation comparable to that of their middle class, high ability, high achieving counterparts. Other studies done in the Caribbean by Jackson (1979), Molife (1982) found that SES influenced achievement orientation. However it was left to the students in this study to reveal what they believed was responsible for their achievement orientations.

The Players on Stage

(Act 3 Sc. IV)

The three students all passed for L'ecole Normale which was their first choice of secondary school. The students were alphabetically placed into the form three classes. According to the Common Entrance results Lucky was at the top of the ranking, Macy was sixteenth and Francine was twelfth. Lucky and

Macy are fourteen years old and Francine is fifteen. At present Lucky is still at the top of the class ranking based on the teacher made tests, Francine is at the middle and Macy is at the bottom. Macy and Lucky attended the same government assisted primary school and Francine attended a government primary school.

Lucky's story.

Lucky describes herself in the questionnaire as an East Indian who lives with her only brother and her parents. She has what she calls "two sets of parents" and can be described as middle class based on their occupational status. "My dad is a meteorologist and my mother is a housewife. I kinda have two parents. And the other is an engineer and his wife is also a housewife.

In response to the researcher's request for an explanation Lucky replied:

My biological parents,... right my dad's brother,... he does not have any children.... They love my brother and myself very much. They have been there for us from birth. We do not feel comfortable calling them aunt and uncle so we call them mom and dad as well. They really stick out for they and give me as much support, as I need. They kind of save me from the world and I really love them.

They live in what she described as comfortable surroundings and she and her brother have access to two homes.

Our entire family gets along all six of us. Because it is six of us we live in two different houses. My biological father and mother live in one house and the other two live in another house right next to them. My brother and I live in any house we want to. We walk across to the next house go to the other one if we feel like it. So I think we have a different life style to everybody else.

Lucky's fathers and her brother all went to "prestige" secondary school and her brother is a high achiever and Lucky's role model.

I have one brother who is 18 and he has inspired me a lot. I look up to him because he got nine ones out of nine subjects. He got all distinctions and I really want to do that well. I try my best to follow in his footsteps because he is my idol right now.

Lucky is part of a family that is musical. "My father has a band. It is a family band and an Indian orchestra. I usually sing with the band." She has also been the Junior Calypso Monarch twice. When asked about her most memorable experience Lucky referred to the calypso competition.

I was crowned Junior Calypso Queen in my first year in L'ecole Normale. I can't decide if it was the first time or the second time. But both were memorable. The very first time I did it I was new to it. I did not think I was going to come first. I was just doing it for the fun out of it. The second time I was doing it for the fun but I was also doing it to defend my crown. I had my backups. And just having the audience cheer on at you and listen to everything they say and just having them supporting you that is enough to make anybody feel great. While you are up there and even though you don't win, you know I feel as though I have achieved something.

Macy's story.

Macy describes herself as a fourteen-year old of mixed descent. She lives with her mother and father, her three brothers, two nieces and sister-in-law. She states her religion as Roman Catholic and her parents as Spiritual Baptist. Her father is a Security Guard and her mother is a housewife. She therefore could be considered working class based on their occupational status.

Macy's description of her home environment is the opposite of Lucky's.

Macy describes her environment:

Well you see we don't exactly live alone. Right now we living with my brother girlfriend. Actually she is living with us. My brother girlfriend and my niece they give me like real thunder. I have to share my room with my brother and mother and it hot and sticky in there. So I can't study in there. I come home on an evening and they come and I can't go in my room because it is in a state.

Macy refers four times after this to her inability to concentrate under these conditions. Her brother's girlfriend she refers to as "wicked and she don't even tell the children anything." If according to Macy, "it was just me and my mother and they are grown-ups they will understand and they will keep quiet I wouldn't have noise in my head."

Macy thinks that her environment is unsatisfactory and more of a disadvantage to her. She therefore blames it for her lack of performance. "And I think I can't do it because of the circumstances I am under. I can't study at home."

In addition, Macy adds:

I have a horrid life. Is like my father he does really slack off sometimes. And I does wonder if he realise he is a father and he has responsibilities. Cause is like when is time to get books it the onliest time he will find to fall out with my mother.

The lack of finance Macy claims has affected her ability to "do better" since she was not always able to have the necessary resources needed.

You need the money to get the resources you need. I didn't have some of the books. And so that it was hard for me to be doing work when each class we have for the day, I have to go and borrow a book from somebody else in the other form.

She has had to rely on assistance from others or the school assistance programme. "Now the school has a kind of book assistance and I had the books for form three." Macy in describing her performance this year states: "I did better

because I had the books. Not really better better (Macy's emphasis) because the teachers and they...Macy pauses and goes on: "But I had the books." She insists that: "If my mother had money for it definitely wouldn't have been how it is."

Francine's story.

Francine lives with her mother and sister. She describes herself as mixed and her religion as Roman Catholic. Her mother is a housewife and her father who does not live with them is a taxi- driver. Francine also seemed unhappy with her present living conditions.

Francine related in the interview:

I live with my mummy. My mother and father separated when I was two. He (referring to her father) was a seismologist now he driving maxi-taxi. He gambled and drank, I don't know why on earth he left his job, and he resigned. He didn't even retire he resigned. How could you leave such a good job and you had six children. How could you do that? I think we could have been better off and he could have save us a lot of heartache and himself heartache if he did just stabilize himself.

In spite of that Francine cannot imagine what life would be like with them living together. "They are just incompatible. I don't want to imagine what life would be with both of them together..." My mother," according to Francine, "doesn't pay too much particular attention to my school work."

Students' Expectations, Goals and Aspirations, Definitions of Achievements and Feelings

This section of the study focuses on how the students define achievement and what has emerged from the data as their perceptions of how they are oriented to achieve.

The students were asked to describe themselves as students and to describe what life had been like for them over the past three years at the school. In addition they were asked questions about their definitions of achievement and were asked to write about their goals and aspirations and what could prevent them from achieving their goals. The choice of data to be used finally was based on the researcher's second readings of the transcripts using the voice-centred relational method and confirmation on the issues from the independent judge and the fellow graduates.

Expectations

Lucky.

Lucky had had certain expectations of the school.

I chose this school because I well I knew that it was really nice. It was really a prestigious school and I chose it thinking that maybe if I come to this school I will be able to better my standards my education standards, and I will live up to the dream of being a doctor.

In addition, there seems to be some pride as she is the first in her family to attend a school of this type. "I am only the first one in my family to come to a..."

(word deleted to maintain the promise of anonymity). Although Lucky was performing well at primary school she did not think she would do as well as she has been doing at the secondary level. Lucky sees the school and the effort she made as being responsible for her success.

I didn't really think that I would have topped the class in anything but I still tried and I must say it am made dreams that I didn't think would happen come true. So this school really it brought a lot for me in my life.

Macy.

Macy too knew that she had passed for what she called a "good secondary school". According to Macy her mother, "doesn't know anything about this school. All she knows is that it supposed to be a good school." Macy made it seem as though it was not really that important to her.

I didn't think I was going to pass, I didn't think I was going to fail. I just wasn't thinking about it at all. I know it was a test and I had to do it. I know it was going to say whether I would come to a good secondary school or whether I would ah come to a bad one. I was happy when I hear I pass. Sure then I realise ok it was something good but I didn't really study it before and the next day I really wasn't studying the next day. For the moment I was happy I was glad. Ok a pass big deal. End of story.

Lucky

"Think a little. Try a little. Achieve more than a little. Hold fast to your

dreams." This is Lucky's affirmation, which she appended to a note at the start of

Francine.

Francine thought her “ideals were wrong”. .”I think I use to think lower of myself because you know I didn’t think I would ah get in L’ecole Normale. I expected to pass for ...(type of school).” She was the only person from her primary school that had passed for this school

. I pass for this school and then I was loud and boisterous and when I came in here I didn’t have anybody to be loud and boisterous with because I didn’t have any friends from my primary school here.

Goals and Aspirations

Pintrich in his discussion of the role of goals and goal orientation points to the idea that, “people have different needs and goals and it is the search to satisfy these needs that motivates behaviour.” (Pintrich, 1996, p.201).

Goals as used in the goal orientation theory is described by Pintrich (op.cit.) as, ‘the current cognitive representations of a general ‘energy’ construct that has a long-standing history in psychology, especially motivational psychology.” (p.201). The interview data and the writings of the students were used to ascertain what were the goals of the girls and how it reflected their attainment values and affected their achievement behaviour.

Lucky

“Think a little. Try a little. Achieve more than a little. Hold fast to your dreams.” This is Lucky’s affirmation, which she appended to a note at the start of

the term when she wrote what her goals for the year were. It is very important for Lucky to “get all my choices of subjects in form three because I want to get into the field of medicine.” As she reflects on the last three years of school she states:

“I remember my first achievement very distinctly. I had gained the highest average in my studies the very first term in L’ecole Normale. It actually came to me as a shock, since I strongly believed that I came second or third.”

However, achievement for Lucky is: “...doing well in my studies. Because my family we have a very high standard of education”.

At the same time Lucky says:

Achievement does not necessarily have to be coming first all the time or doing well or getting a high or the highest average or anything. I think it has to do with knowing that your standard you made a higher percent than before. It doesn’t necessarily have to be the highest percent in the class. You know at least you achieved more and you gained more from what you learned. Something like that.

Lucky in her end of term essay quotes Oprah Winfrey in order to make a point about her lack of reference to failure. “Failure is not something bad, it is just God’s way of saying ‘Hello! I think you are going in the wrong direction.’”

Lucky however talks about her second year in school as one which “faced me with much disappointment”. According to Lucky, “I found myself in second and third place. Not once in that year did I reach first. Despite my failures academically...” It would seem therefore that not coming first was considered failure to Lucky.

Macy.

Macy is unhappy with her present achievements. In her end of term essay she writes:

I have been failing ever since form one. It started with being accustomed with end of term percentages of 85% and up and then 95% and up. But that was in primary school. When I started secondary school I just wasn't what I expected. I think that may have caused me to be kept back academically.

In the interview she adds, "I am just so fed up of failing at everything. I probably am the only child in the class that feels this way. Everything I set out to get I don't get through with it."

In spite of that Macy still states:

I am going to try my best to see if I can pass. If I can't pass all the subjects right now I trying to get like 72% and up. Ah mean I does always get like 68 or something but I don't find that good enough...I want to see 70 point something...I just good with that...as long as I get 70 point something in the subjects I want to do I going to feel good.

Macy however has the need to achieve and she has set goals for herself. At the start of the school year she wrote: "I dream of passing all exams to come and in doing this get a well deserved job. I will achieve this by studying hard and putting my best foot forward in everything." Failure for Macy is, "not accomplishing what I set out to do." And success is "obviously accomplishing it." Macy believes that, "If you achieve your goals and when you have done all this hard work and everything you know you will get a good life and you will have the rest of your life to just relax because you have something to go on."

Francine

Francine is mid-way in the ranking in the class. "What is important is enjoying myself and enjoying the subjects once I enjoy myself and I understand." Francine admits that she "hardly ever gets a high mark." Her achievements have been in the area of personal development. "I learned more about myself. I don't think I have achieved anything really except knowing how to do stuff like French and Spanish." Yet she insists that, "I don't think I have learnt how to speak French and Spanish." Achievement for Francine is "understanding". "If I do an exam bad but I understand I feel much better. That is achievement for me. Understanding. Once I understand I will be able to wove it into my life kind of way that is good for me."

Excelling for Francine means: "I have understood them (the subjects) and I can go through. Is not like I study for the exams and I cram for the exam and I pass the exam. So that she judges that she does well in History because: "In History I don't ever forget I always remember everything. So excelling to me is understanding all the way through for it to be able to stick. Like be part of my life."

On the other hand Francine claims: I could never excel in Maths because the teachers they never tell you why you doing it. They just say you do it. You know. I like to know why...I always like to know why.

Francine has had to struggle with Mathematics and has not been as successful as she would like because according to her: "Certain subjects like

Maths I do lack the confidence and that hinders my achievement.” Francine blames herself although she thinks the teacher is not suited to slow students.

I think she accustomed to faster students so she does just go speeding and it is like what is it she doing...I will admit that I don't practise maths at all. Because like I will have loads of French homework to do. By the time I do French homework I does just be so tired I just do whatever Maths I have to do and not spend extra time on it. Whereas in French I will spend extra time doing extra work. But Maths, I does put all the subjects in front of Maths.

Reading for the voice of the “I”

This is the second stage of the analysis process in the voice-centred relational method. At this stage of the analysis the researcher focused on how the students experience, feel and speak about themselves. The researcher read the transcripts and listened to the tapes while she underlined the subject pronouns used by the students in the interview data. Mauthner and Doucet (1998) based on their use of the method suggest:

This process centres our attention on the active ‘I’ which is telling the story; amplifies the terms in which the respondent sees and presents herself, highlights where the respondent might be emotionally or intellectually struggling to say something; and identifies those places between ‘I’, ‘you’ or ‘we’ signaling changes in how the respondent perceives and experiences herself. (p.128).

Of interest to the researcher was how these three students defined themselves and the influence this had on their achievement orientation.

Macy.

"I am a person that listens a little too much to what other people thinks."

The institution has had an influence on Macy's perceptions of herself. It is one in which according to Macy:

They make a big deal out of everything. The slightest little thing...If you fail one test, they tell you ok you can't do it. You not doing good and blah, blah blah. It makes me think I am not good. When they say I am not good at it that is what I think. I am not good. When they say those things I think that is when I begin to slack off. Or if somebody from the class say how it is you doing so good. What you doing. They will make these comments. And, although they mean it in a joke, I might say ok what is I really trying to do here and then I would slack off.... When I am not listening to what other people thinks, I am a little too candid about it and a little too frank...just too brave, just don't care...

Macy's story about her encounter and reaction to incidents in class reveal

what she describes as her candid, frank, brave, don't care attitude.

So when the test was over, I said Miss I don't think I do good, I think I fail. Because everybody was telling me I do stupidness. I was wondering how could I do stupidness when that is what I thought she was saying all the time. So I told her to explain it. She say next time I come in class, I will be sure to explain it, you don't have to remind me. I will explain it. So next time she come in class she just sitting down there and she just like watching me That should tell me even self you didn't remember when you watch me you should remember that I asked you something. And you told me not to remind you. So I think you just ignoring me and you don't want to explain it. So I say, ok fine. That's your attitude fine. So I get vexed. But that's what happen pretty much for the years that I have coming to this school.

Macy is very conscious of her emotions, which disorient her, prevent her from relating to the teachers, and affect her attitude towards them. However, she justifies her actions as she relates her experiences and how they affect her.

I snap at a lot of teachers. I think I quick-tempered. But only when you push me. Because is like you will be there and they will just be boring and going on and on and you trying your best to pay attention. And they will say you keeping noise and I will be like what are you talking about. Keeping noise. I just sitting down here trying not to fall asleep in your class. I trying to keep up. I trying to understand what you are saying because you are kind of boring and you telling me I am not paying attention. It is just annoying. So you would just tell me I not paying attention in your class and then you would call me. You would just put me in a bad mood. You just turn my whole day...I ain't perfect I can't have respect for every living thing all the time. I will forget is a teacher I talking to and I will answer you rough. I will say "What?" I didn't mean it but you just get me vexed and you come to call me to tell me something else again. What you think I will do I will snap. You know sometimes you kind of forget who you talking to and you lose a little respect but don't always mean it. But they are adults and if they show respect for me first then I won't have the cause to get me in a bad mood.

Macy does not see herself as having the ability to understand what is being taught. She needs others and seems helpless in the face of difficulty.

When I am not taking on what they say when I am not taking it on I don't know. It is just like they....Ah not independent enough, so I can't depend on myself to understand what the teacher says because is just too much for me to do. So I need somebody else to kind of explain it.

Her failures in the test she blames on the lack of understanding, the problems of group work and the lack of meaningfulness.

Sometimes I don't know that I didn't understand because like in some classes you will be allowed to work in groups. You could ask your friend to explain it. I didn't understand instead of asking the teacher I would ask the person next to me to explain it. I wouldn't realise that I really... I didn't understand. When they done explain it because they tell me what to do. When it come to the test I will sit down there like blank. I don't know what to do.

In spite to this she still thinks she tries hard. However since effort is not rewarded there is the feeling of futility and so she gives up easily.

Like in form one and two, it was horrible. You feel to cry because after you see, I use to work hard. I don't care what anybody say I think I use to work as hard as I could under the circumstances that I was under. I use to work hard I use to try. But it just wasn't good enough because I can't do good if I don't understand something. But I use to try and when you try so hard and you see that you ain't get one (a reward in the form of a testimonial) you does feel bad. Because although it is just a piece of paper because that is what it is. It shouldn't matter but it shows you how smart you really are. How your studying has really paid off. And when I see that I didn't get one I does feel like I was studying all this time for nothing. Because it didn't make a difference. I still come and ah still fail. Ah had was to fail because I ain't get any right so that means that I didn't get the required marks or I might have failed one subject. So I didn't get it.

A feeling of hopelessness and futility rings through as Macy describes how she feels about not being rewarded for her efforts and how she responds to the feeling of failure. The system of rewards makes her feel that she is a failure and that she does not have the ability to achieve. This feeling and the other emotions all serve to disorient her and add to her perception of her competence and her self-efficacy.

The other students tell her it is easy and that too contributes to her academic self-concept.

So if I am trying and I can't get it that should say that it is not easy. And they coming and they telling you it easy to do man, it real easy. It making you feel as if you stupid. Because if I am coming in front of your face and telling you something easy right and you thinking in your mind this ain't easy look how hard I think this is. Look how much trouble I getting just to work this out. And I telling you it easy. It makes you think/feel stupid. Because for you not to be able everybody else working it out everybody else thinks it easy but you sitting down there, catching your very tail to get it out and you can't get it out. It' hard. And it makes you feel bad. It makes you feel stupid.

Macy then begins to give up and blames herself for giving up.

The difficulty I have is that I think I am a person that likes to give up too easily. And as soon as I see I am not doing as good as I want to I get fed up, I get irritated, I give up. I think I don't know how to work around other people's behaviour and thoughts towards me.

Macy's description of herself seems to suggest that she has a poor self image and low self-esteem. She therefore finds herself unable to persist at tasks in the classroom and gives up easily. Macy in the questionnaire admits that she does not have any friends because there is no one in the class she feels she can trust. There is not that sense of belonging and relatedness. She does not see the environment as a benevolent and supportive place. Covington's (1992) research on self-worth has pointed to the influence of self-worth on motivation to achieve in academic domains. Macy's low self-worth is quite obvious in her descriptions of herself. This feeling may have been influenced in part by her low socio-economic status.

If my mother had money for one it definitely wouldn't have been how it is...I don't have the thing to get through with. I think in this school you need to have money for one. Because I can't go on what they give me in class only because I won't get anywhere. I need to have books and I need to have you don't really need a computer but a computer is helpful.

Macy makes social comparisons and points to the lack of understanding on the part of the other children in the class.

They don't understand because when they go home they have computer, they have everything to help them. I don't have anything. I don't even have encyclopedias. All I have is my brothers and they pass secondary school books and those books gone, they don't use that kind of work anymore. They have big computer in front of them, all they have to do is press it, and they get what they want. ...A computer can help you do anything. Anything you ask for it can come and it can explain anything and it so easy.

The differences in social status seem to be a source of concern and worry to her and she continuously refers to the other students' lack of understanding of her situation.

They have the thing to go home to and explain it and their mother and father is doctor this and mister this and my mother ain't notten. Ah mean she could help me in some things. Sure she could pick me up in my work. She could help me. She would go out of her way to get books for me to do the work. But things like French and Spanish she don't know nothing about that. She wouldn't be able to help me the way their parents would help them. Because their parents went to university and their parents studied all of that. But my mother she don't know anything about that. My father he doesn't know anything about that. My brother he might know a little bit but because of the circumstances he was under too he wouldn't know too much. So I wouldn't have any one to help me.

There are these accumulating deficits, which make the situation seem hopeless to Macy and account for her learned helplessness and what she perceives as her inability to achieve.

Macy therefore prefers to stay away or in fact displays avoidance behavior to prevent her from looking bad and feeling stupid.

Lucky.

Lucky on the other hand sees herself as a top student. "Most of the time I came first." This was her description of herself as a primary school student. At secondary school it seemed a bit different and she hesitates as she describes herself. "*Most of the times I usually, I come first sometimes.*" When she did not end up at the top she talks about having to "come back first." Her description of

her feelings on House Notes day also reveals her feelings about coming first and achievement.

"When I don't hear my name for highest average in class I get worried because usually, I am called for the highest average in class. And when I am called up usually is a first class testimonial unless the entire class does bad. If I have a second class I will be like next year or next term is going to be a first class."

In the mid term exam of the third term Lucky was beaten by point five. Lucky was just determined not to let this happen. "I was beaten by one point not even a whole mark by... Somehow the marks were kind of mixed up I was supposed to get an extra mark in Physics but I didn't query it or anything. I have to do well in all subjects in order to come back first. I am really working hard for that."

Effort is a key factor in Lucky's orientation. "I know I must work diligently and try my best not to be disturbed when studying or lose sight of my goals." Lucky says, "When I feel depressed I always remember my studies are going to need a lot of effort and hard work." Lucky uses one of the famous quotations to support her attitude to her studies. "The heights that great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight. For they while their companions slept were toiling through the night." This was put forward as her philosophy at the start of her third form year as she wrote her goals and aspirations for the year.

Lucky was also conscious of the fact that another student may be consciously trying to compete with her and was out to get her. "I am ready for her. I am trying my best." I tied with my main competitor once, but I plan to try my best to the only one at first place. In addition, she continually makes

reference to being at the top. "It feels great. You know you there feeling...I have the satisfaction in me that says 'you know, well, Lucky you did it. You there. You are at the top. I don't mean to sound bold or anything. It is just my pride. The feeling of being at the top of everyone else is remarkable".

The strong emotions that come out of her description of House Notes day when testimonials and honour cards are given out reveal how important being at the top is for Lucky. "So when I go up there now, I just wait to hear my name call and I feel really proud to know I have achieved a good mark yet another term. And I know my parents are proud of me. And they always behind me to study and all kind of thing. It is a whole set of mixed up feelings."

Lucky has mentioned this feeling of pride many times in the interview data and in her writings. In her writing about her goals she stated: "I expect to make my parents, my family, if possible my country my schools and last but not least myself proud." When she talks about her friends' reactions to her receiving honour cards in school she says: "Well my closest friends they seem happy. You know they seem proud that their friend actually achieve something." More than that Lucky thinks: "They (her parents) work so hard to give me the privilege to get a good education, I don't want to let them down! I think it is my duty to make my parents, my friends, my relatives, my teachers and if I can my country proud. When I can do that I'd make myself proud."

The successes in her academic work have brought some measure of unhappiness and anxiety about how others perceive her. Although Lucky says it does not matter to her, she makes many references to her lack of understanding

other students' attitude to her. She wants to be accepted by them and to be part of the group:

You know a particular child or group in the class have something against me and doesn't really like me probably because of my success...I get the impression that a.... They don't like me because I usually come first in test...Then again other people look at you like. Look at she nuh she real. She feel because she come first she is it.... I try not to let that get to me.... I don't know what they have against me but somehow some people just don't like other people.

Lucky is also concerned about the opinion others have about her and can't seem to understand why people think she is "snobbish". "I really don't understand why people think I am snobbish and pompous and really I don't know. They just think I am not a cool person so to speak."

This is a bother to Lucky who thinks she is "a nice, trustworthy person and a good friend." She is not snobbish as others think and she sees herself as having strong moral values and will not be forced to come down to the level of those who try to bring her down. "I think I am a really nice person to be around. I don't really know why people think I am so snobbish and pompous and really I don't know."

Although Lucky says she doesn't know why the students have these opinions of her, she still speculates and blames it on her moral values and the fact that they think she is not 'cool' since she does not have a boyfriend and does not do some of the things they do. "Just because I don't have a boyfriend and because you know I don't like some of the things that they do and I have my moral values. And stuff."

Although Lucky says that her not having a boyfriend may account for her unpopularity, she has spoken on two different occasions about boyfriends about whom she felt strongly. ‘...I don’t know. I close to him.... Anytime I see him I blush. Look I talking about him and I know I blushing. It is something he does to me...I don’t know”... She also talks about her interest in boys sometimes distracting her and points to it as one area in which she had hoped to be more disciplined this year. ‘Another distraction is boys...I find myself thinking about them when I should be studying. I have to give the subject of “boys” a little rest. It’s not going to be easy but I’ll try my best.”

Lucky has also assured the researcher that nothing bothers her or stands in the way of her studies. “I don’t let anything bother my schoolwork at all, at all, at all.”

There is some discrepancy here and the researcher begins to view this as something very important to Lucky’s image of herself. She is also very concerned about her physical size since it makes her look immature and makes her less attractive to the opposite sex.

When asked if she was concerned about putting on size. Her reply was: “Yes. I don’t know if you noticed I am always eating in class. My friends are like how come you always eating and you never getting fat. I don’t know ever since I hit thirteen I eating, eating, eating and never getting fat. I might get a little bigger put on a few pounds...”

Lucky insulted the girls when they started making fun of her size. “And they all started making fun of me because I was thin. But I really didn’t take them

on. But then again how much could I take? I have to say something at some point in time.... I know my maturity will come in time.... My development you know I will soon put on weight.”

On the other hand, her size allows her to be still cuddled by her father. “My dad is always petting me up...my fathers both of them and my friends say oh gosh you so cute you so babyish and you know they always hugging me and I love affection. So I kind of think it is cool being small.”. She accepts that it is hereditary since, “My mom is thin and my dad is really thin.” But she eats continuously hoping that she will put on some size.

Lucky also gives the impression that she is not always very certain about herself and what she can accomplish. Sometimes she even has doubts. “I really did not think I would have topped the class in anything but I still tried. I must say it am made my dreams that I didn’t really think would happen come true.” This is how she described herself as a new student to the school. Lady Lucky had the same feelings when she entered the calypso competition for the first time. “ The very first time I did it I was new to it and did not really think I was going to come first. Just having the audience support you ...even though you don’t win, you know I feel as though I have achieved something.”

This clarifies some things about Lucky. Her sense of achievement seems to be diminished by the lack of support she receives from some members of the class and their attitude to her success. So that achievement for her is on one level doing better than you did the last time. But in reality it is being first, being at the top, and being supported and acknowledged by everyone. That in a way accounts

for the great joy and happiness she feels on House Notes day when the Principal, teachers and her friends recognize her as having achieved. The need for achievement indeed comes out very strong in Lucky's accounts of her experiences and her protocol writings. These contradictions and strong feelings that come out of the interview data and protocol writings assist the researcher in understanding Lucky's achievement orientation and the things that drive her to want to excel, to attain high standards and to surpass others.

Francine.

Me. I would say I am a very confused person. All these swirling emotions just confuse me...I think I am a good friend...A lot of people confide in me so they think I can keep secrets. I think I can keep secrets too. I think I am a very emotional person because certain things disturb me that wouldn't disturb other people. I think I am deep. I look deeper into stuff. I find it very interesting to look at nature. I love to sit down and look at the trees and all that I love to do that. I just love to sit there.

This is Francine's description of herself.

Francine refers on a few occasions to her need to strive and to fight the battle so that she does not just concentrate on the subjects she enjoys. This is a trait, which she admits she has. "I hate sciences. I barely made it in form two with Integrated Science so I know Biology, Physics and Chemistry.... Spanish and French are no problems. And Geography... Well, I like Geography. To me it comes naturally. This year I am going to strive in sciences. I know myself and if I be myself I know I'll just ignore the sciences and concentrate on the subjects that I enjoy. But then I won't be trying and I'll be giving up the battle without a fight."

After struggling with the sciences and judging herself as having 'totally failed', Francine seemed to have reverted to being herself. "I know I totally failed sciences except for Physics." She still seemed interested in it for a while and admits that she likes "Chemistry more than Physics but I did bad in Chemistry because my sister was down here and I didn't have time to study and I did bad. I got 4." On the other hand Francine states in the focus group interview: Biology, Chemistry and Physics I don't see it in my future and I think it is so dumb that I have to do it. ...So I look towards my future and I see ok I will need x, y and z. I don't need a, b, c, and so I will slash a, b, c, and I will go with x, y and z. Because I think taking on a,b,c is just like adding on pressure to myself I don't need.... So that is my mentality so I just look forward to what I want to be.

Francine's goal is to:

Excel in French.... I must be able to speak many languages to fulfil my goal. I want to be the first woman to get the post of UN secretary general.... I really want to get into the UN. I think about the future and I do be like think about yourself as being one of the most important people in the UN. And then I do just look at my History book and say "Yes"...You need the languages too. I want to be able to communicate with people. I don't want to put a barrier on myself. That you could only speak English you could only relate to the English people. I want to be able to relate to real plenty people.

Francine admits that there is a difference between her attitude to people and to academic subjects. "People and subject are totally different things. I look at every single person in this class and whether your attitude might turn me off but yet I still think about people as an individual." This was in response to another student's criticism of her not giving all the subjects a chance. The student

had said to her: You know you shouldn't have a mentality where you would just give your half best to certain things, you should always give your best in life."

Francine recognizes what she has to do in order to fulfil her dreams and knows:

It is going to be really tough...As I look towards my hopes and aspirations I see problems rearing its head as an alligator in the beautiful water. I lack discipline. I will have to be strong. I have to make myself stay up and 'burn the midnight oil'. I have to take time to recognize that if I do a little bit every ten minutes feel I get at the end of the day I may achieve more than wasting that ten minutes talking...I need to fulfil these goals.

However, Francine over the years has developed what she calls a "don't care attitude". This happened when she realized that she was failing to succeed in specific subject areas like Mathematics and Sciences and when she was not able to achieve the school's reward for success - the honour card. "In form two if I don't understand something I use to fight, fight, fight, to try never to lag behind. I think by failing all the time. Yeah after a while of failing I just say you see this I just get fed up and say you see that hold that dey. Keep that away from me." Francine admits however that:

From form one to form three I change. I didn't care anymore. I use to look at the attitude of other forms. I use to be... how they so? Like doh care a damn. I didn't understand how they could be so loose and say, ok I get three in Maths and I really don't care. I use to hear students say, oh my gosh she don't care. And now I reach the other forms and I realise and I think I actually adopted the attitude too, that I don't care.

This attitude seemed to have become a part of Francine's modus operandi and was used to help her cope with the inability to be as successful as she felt she needed to be. Francine moved from crying when she did not get an honour card

to a don't care attitude. In her description of her feelings about House Notes day when the awards are given out she says:

I missed it (the award) by point something. I was discouraged. I was real vexed...I cried....Next time obviously the excitement died down for me. You know I didn't get one I experienced not getting none and I was like it wasn't the end of the world. That thought was creeping up on me. It wasn't the end of the world. Don't study it. And so then I didn't get one again and I was like ok I really don't care and is that I really don't care. ...By the second and third time I really didn't care. Honestly it didn't matter to me at all. I would stand up there and not get one and I would be like whatever I really don't care. And ah think that was just a consolation for me just to help me get through it. And it stick, just this mentality kind of stick on me. I really don't care you know and I went through like form two saying I really don't care. Form three I really start believing that you really don't care.

Francine's need for autonomy appears to be strong and she is adamant that she does not like to be controlled by anyone. "I don't want anyone to tell me what to do with my life....All I have to do is die....So don't tell me what I have to do...She was trying to explain what her response is like to her friends who try to give advice but in fact "want to force you to be what you are not." Francine stammers as she tries to make it quite clear that she will have none of it. "I am... I am not you and I don't have your life." She makes it quite clear to the others in the focus group that: "I work for myself. I don't have anybody to work for. I work for myself."

Freedom is very important to Francine.

Freedom I love. I hate to have my freedom curtailed in any which way. So like that is why I get vexed when somebody tells me I have to do it. I think it is a bad thing because then I don't want to conform and will just not do what I am supposed to do because you know I am free because I can do what ever I want. That I think can get me in trouble.

Francine seems the typical adolescent going through what Erickson terms identity crisis. She knows what she wants and who she wants to be and struggles with this and the goals she sets for herself. Francine however is influenced by the attitudes of those around her and adopts the behaviour patterns of the group in order to cope with the lack of success in areas, which she perceives she lacks competence. The loss of confidence in her ability to achieve in these areas forces her to give up and to justify her actions by saying that they are not important to her. She attributes her lack of success to her inability, this is a stable factor, and so she therefore continues to not succeed in the area of science. As a result, she does not receive the reward of an honour card which according to the rules if the ability game says something about her ability to excel.

The Third Reading of the Data

The voice relational method of data analysis pointed to the importance of listening for how the respondents spoke about their interpersonal relationships. This was done in the third readings described above. The writer/researcher used a pencil and physically traced their words as they spoke about these relationships social motivational processes have been found to be an important aspect of achievement. Orientation. Wentzel et al (1998) have suggested that the social goals and the relationships that students have with their parents and their peers are very important to the understanding of the motivational patterns of students.

Macy's relationships

Macy speaks of her relationships with her mother, her father, the teachers, her brother's girl friend, her niece, the students in the class and her varying responses to them. These relationships seem to influence her attitude to her self-worth, her attributions and in general her perceptions about why she is not able to achieve.

This metaphor summarizes the general feelings of Macy about her relationships.

I can't do anything about it. You trying and it is totally useless trying. And because you can't try is like it takes two hands to clap. And although is you that want to hear the clap I need two hands and I can't clap with one and somebody else need to help me and if they don't want to do it then I can't. I just can't do it and they just not willing.

Members of the family.

My brother girlfriend and my niece they give me like real thunder...They just torturing me and they will like take my book and is like I writing here and they will fling up the book in my face and you can't concentrate when it like that...Last week I told them to be quiet and their mother just explode on me and she just start to cuss me...

Me and my mother and my father we just don't like any confusion and so we just don't tell her anything. We just let her do what she wants and it is hard to study under that it is hard to do any work... It is hard to get through any thing with that...if it was just me and my mother...

Teachers.

Macy does not seem to think that teachers know her or care about her. Moreover, she sees them as unfair and she is very concerned about the impression

they have of her. Teachers are the ones she depends on to assist her in her achievements. Macy has her own opinion on what she expects of them and the role they should play in assisting her to achieve her goals.

She describes an experience at parents' day which got her so mad that the only reason she did not tell him anything was "because he is a ...(word deleted) and a teacher."

He gave my mother the wrong impression, make my mother think I am always wondering... She knows I can be pretty dense...so she will most likely think that is true... He had the nerve to tell my mother that I does be gazing in class. I wouldn't tell him anything ...you have to respect him....ah really itching to tell him something because he does not teach anything...I don't think he even knew my name...He would just sit down there and once in a while say be quiet girls....

Macy seem to believe that the lack of individual treatment and what seems to be an uncaring attitude of the teachers has had an effect on her and have served to disorient her and demotivate her.

I think they don't look at people as individuals. They think because the class is loud and raucous I will be like that too. They think you understand because they don't know each person...I sitting down there and they think I understand and I probably don't understand the last word they said...I don't know I didn't understand...When it come to the test I sit down there like blank...I don't know what to do...I think it is the way they bring it across...You hearing the words but it not registering.....

Macy is clear on what the role of the teacher should be. She remembers how the teachers in primary school treated her and how the teacher in secondary school teacher behaves and compares it with the other teachers whose subjects she experiences difficulty understanding.

In primary school you have you know if you don't do something you will get punishment. In secondary school you don't do it and the teachers don't bother.

When asked what got her through primary school her response was:

I think the teachers. Because they would explain it and they would push you. And the teachers would push...Like in Standard five I couldn't go for lessons. But Mr. F. he realize that I was trying but I didn't have the money. I didn't have some of the books and he let me come for lessons free. He give me a chance to do it. He didn't say ok she doesn't have the money and she can't try so I just won't bother about her. He pushed me a little harder ...And he did it and I pass.

Macy is also high in praise for the teachers in form two to whom she attributes the testimonial she received once. Macy is successful when the teachers explain so that she can understand, give work that is meaningful and test what they teach.

The teachers we had that year were the best. I find they were the most outstanding. They would break it down to your level. They understood that you wouldn't understand everything and they put it so that you could understand and I think that brought up my marks. They won't make you learn something that you won't need.

Macy relates the story of a totally different experience in which she perceived the teacher as putting her off intentionally and being the cause of her failure in the end of term exam.

In form one and form three it was one long set of drama. You have to go through all these things that not coming.....Why she (the teacher) making us learn all this set of long thing and making it seem like is the end of the world if you don't know it. And that throws me off. Because if you tell me why you learning that we not getting that you going to get something else then I will put away that book and go and learn what you tell me we going to get. And then when the test comes I see everything from...here. I don't know what it is to do because I put away that book, went and learn what you told me to do and we didn't get that...What am I suppose to do if that is the kind of help you getting from the teachers.

Where you want to get help if that is what the teachers doing to you...That is not nice. I wouldn't expect that from a teacher. You are supposed to be helping me not bringing me down.

Macy's relationship with the teachers is also influenced by what she terms the kinds of standard they set and their not showing an example to the students. "She doesn't dress to suit. I don't buy her clothes so I can't tell her what to put on. But ah mean oh gosh. And ah mean they does act so ignorant with you." This was an environment she thought would be "stricter" but students and even the teachers get away with things.

Classmates.

"Laugh and talk with everyone but remember you have no friends, because friends carry you and don't bring you back." These are the words of advice given to Macy by her mother. So Macy does not have a best friend in the class. "I don't have a good/best friend. There is no one in the class that has earned my trust. If I have to have a best friend she would need to respect me and so far no one has really done that." She is also afraid that, "No matter how much of a friend she claims to be somehow they always betray you. I am not speaking from experience."

Macy is infuriated by the behavior of those in the class who are insensitive to her struggles to achieve success.

She comes and she is happy and giggly and in front of you. And you just want to hold her and strangle her. Not strangle her because you are jealous of her but because of how she is acting. She is acting inconsiderate and she will do it and I will say ok. And they does be there irritating you and you trying your best not to cry for anybody to think you crying over a piece of paper.

Macy is just as upset by girls who go into a "state of hysteria" when they miss it (honor card) once or twice. But she cannot say anything so she just fumes inwardly.

She just miss it once or twice and she acted like if it was the end of the world. And I could have just hold her and strangle her because she does not know what it is to miss it every time when you don't get it every time...If you have to go through what I am going through then Lord knows what you will do.

Macy's response to the question which asks her to list in order of priority three persons with whom she would like to work most in this class was: "I prefer to work alone." She however does not "have a problem working with anyone in the class."

Macy's voice carries the sound of someone who is angry and hurt because of the situation in which she finds herself and over which she perceives she has no control. Her locus of control is external and so she depends totally on everyone else and circumstances for her success.

Lucky's relationships.

Members of the family.

Lucky's relationships and lack of relationships in some instances have been very integral to the understanding of what drives her to want to excel, achieve high standards and take pride in her accomplishments. The main relationships to which Lucky refers are those with the members of her family. Lucky never tires of talking about her parents and her brother who is her role model. Lucky is not only interested in doing well academically but also has dreams of becoming a musician like the other members of her family. "Another of

my goals is to become a better musician and singer...being the leader of the orchestra, my father sort of wants me to be a big part of the band...they are always behind me to play various instruments.” Her relationship with her father therefore crosses the bounds of just love and support in her schoolwork to assistance in her interest in singing calypsos for the school competition. Her dad assists her in her calypso compositions. “My dad he will come and say what you want to sing about this year. And I will say something about boys and he will say let’s sit down and we will do this together. He might come up with the first line help me and I will start you know.” This description of her relationship with her dad reveals a closeness and support for the goals and aspirations of Lucky by her parents. This has influenced Lucky and so she is willing to amend her career goals so that she can have a family life. Lucky asserts in her interview: “I want to do a career that is demanding then again I was thinking about neurosurgery but I want a family life as well and that will take up a lot of my time.” Lucky claims: “My family has the biggest influence on me because as I said my brother is my role model. At this point and I think he will always be my role model because I strive my best to be like my brother. And my parents as well. My mothers they both are loving caring and I would like to be like them you know to care for a family like that when I am older.”

Her brother assists her with her schoolwork and he is also an excellent musician. She too wants to be like him in that respect. “I have a lot of role models, but I think I look up to my brother the most. He seems to have no problem doing anything. He can apply himself to studies but at the same time

enjoys himself a little. He is always playing different instruments and not giving up when he has some difficulty.”

However, because she cannot talk to him about boys, she is forced to turn to her school friends who have therefore become her sounding board. “I can’t talk to my brother and I don’t really feel comfortable to talk to my parents- my mothers.so the only ones I have is my friends and I really turn to them and they give me a lot of support.”

Classmates.

“How important are friends to you as a student?” In response to this question Lucky replied: “Ok friends right now I tell them everything I need to tell them. You know we talk about anything we are not afraid to tell anybody anything.” Thus in spite of her claims that she tells her mother “everything or almost everything” and the family has an excellent relationship, Lucky still needs the support of the relationship with her peers.

“Form two was a hard year for me because my group was splitting up for various reasons.”

Lucky’s description of her best friend reveals the importance of the peer relationship in the development of the adolescent. It seems to supply the emotional support that is needed for the well being of the adolescent and which contributes to their self-esteem. The literature points to the importance of self-esteem in the academic achievement of the student. For Lucky her best friend is “Like a sister to me. She gives me comfort in my times of need and she is always there when I need a shoulder to cry on! We also share a lot of secrets and our life

styles are similar. We both are Hindus and our families share similar beliefs. She is trustworthy and just my best friend."

The friends are so important to Lucky that "they are like my life right now," she states, "I tell them everything well not everything but you know mostly what is going on. They will know about the boy I like right now." Her best friend is like "the sister I never had. And she looks out for me and when we have an argument so to speak it really bugs me. And I feel you know (sucks her teeth) something has to be done about it."

Although Lucky loves her family and idolizes her brother there are some things like the topic of boys that she cannot talk about with them. "My brother does not like to hear me talk about boys...I can't talk to my brother and I don't really feel comfortable talking to my parents- my mothers. My father is definitely out because he is very protective of me. So the only ones I have is my friends and I really turn to them and they really give me a lot of support."

The perceived social support of friends and their friendship therefore is important to the teenager and is an integral part of their developmental process. This seems to supply the connectedness, which contributes to the emotional well being and sense of belonging that Lucky seems to need. She gets it from her classmates and so she is a lot more contented and happy than Macy who has not been able to build and develop that trust with anyone.

Teachers.

Private lessons in Science and Mathematics form part of her schedule on weekdays and on Saturdays. If she didn't get this assistance she didn't think she would be able to do her work as good in school.

I think it is necessary for me.....I understand better when my teacher (in private lessons) explains.....I don't know why.....Probably because he spends individual time with me and gives me individual time and in school is a whole class.

Francine's relationships

Members of the family.

Francine admits that she loves her father but the separation has caused her a lot of pain and anguish. Life for her would be different had her parents not been separated. She tries to convince herself that he is not a part of her life although he pops in and out of her thoughts ever so often.

I don't know what to say about daddy. He just depresses me. Daddy is depressing. If he would help himself you wouldn't mind but he does just say like nobody care for me I would just die.....So that's it for daddy. You know I just lock him away in a closet until he comes back out.....Put him away from my mind....He wants me to come and spend a weekend with him....My sister say is like you not going to spend no weekend with him by yourself. Mummy is like do what you want is your father if you want to go...He does not play an active role in my life so even if he says blah blah it will last for five minutes.

Francine's admiration for her father's intelligence rings through as she describes him. "He is a very smart man. Smart academically because he has a whole lot of subjects and all that. He had everything going for him. And you just drop it like that! "

His interest in her is still there as he offers to provide assistance in the form of private lessons in Mathematics. "Daddy told me he was going to get me lessons."

Francine talks more about her father than her mother. When she does talk about her mother she makes it clear that she is non-existent in her academic life and allows Francine to make her own decisions. This can be seen from the comment above when Francine says her mother tells her, "do what you want is your father if you want to go".

Her brother and sister provide advice for her in terms of her attitude to authority and seem to care for her well being. "My brother and my sister always tell me you have to listen to authority because one of these days when you out of school you will have a job and you will have to listen to the boss. You will have to conform to the rules of the office or wherever." Their care and concern for Francine's well being and her ability to adjust to the rules of society seem obvious here. She does perceive of herself as having support from them unlike Macy whose experience of her brother and sister-in-law is quite the opposite. Francine's brother and sister have also been able to succeed at Mathematics because of the extra help they received from lessons. This has motivated Francine into believing that lessons can help her too in her quest to succeed at Mathematics. "My brother and sister wasn't good in Maths either and they went to him (Maths teacher) and he really helped them. My brother and sister pass." The situation therefore does not appear to be a hopeless one for Francine she has

learnt from her siblings that help in the form of extra lessons can contribute to your success at subjects in which you lack the skill.

Teachers.

Francine's relationships with teachers and the significant other adult in the school context have been very important in her development as a student. Francine has clear ideas about what is a good teacher and the role the teacher should play in her school life and in assisting her to achieve her goals. Francine one may say is mastery oriented or one may say she has a task orientation. This means that the focus of attention is on the task and not on some extrinsic reward. Therefore she is concerned with learning and understanding, solving problems and developing new skills as ends in themselves. So that even the private lessons teacher has to be somebody whom she "can ask questions". So that if she gets lessons she says "I will be spending more time with Maths and I think that should help. I hoping that he is a teacher that I could ask questions."

Francine's frustration comes when teachers do not recognize the individuality of students and do not take time to explain so that everyone can understand. The comments the teachers make and their general attitude to students who take more time than others to understand make her see them as uncaring. In addition she feels it is important that the teachers display a sense of justice and fair play, pay attention to individual students and take note of the efforts of students. A teacher can therefore orient or disorient Francine depending on his/her attitude and teaching skill.

I don't think Ms. X is a good teacher at all. She is horrible when the whole class didn't understand something it was like well it had a whole lot of people who didn't understand. And we all got the homework wrong and we all didn't understand. And she knew that and it was like I am not explaining this thing over sorry. You all have to think about it. You all don't think. You all just sit there and breathe off of other people.

Francine's response to this situation was:

In my mind I thinking what kind of teacher are you. Ah mean I sit down here and I think what I have to think. When she say something like that it just tarnish my thoughts about actually going to her to explain something to me. I will say well that is it I will not go to you to explain to me...Then she does tell me to come to her but when she say things like that what you expect me to do. Because when people go to her and she say she not explaining to think it over and think it over all you could and you don't understand. I don't think that is being a good teacher.

Francine is upset even further when she judges that the teacher thinks they are not thinking when in fact it is that students learn at different rates.

I don't think she thinks that we don't understand I think she thinks that we not thinking. I think that she thinks we being lazy because she don't understand that how some people could get it and some people don't. And my answer to that is some people catch on faster to some subjects than others. Some people see more trouble in some subjects than others.

Francine may be relating this to herself and the natural ability she has in some subjects like Geography and the extra effort it will take to understand a subject like Maths. However, she believes that she can get the skill if it is fully explained. Francine relates the story of how she came to learn something she will never forget.

And when I get it I get it and I understand. Like Mr. Y. we were doing the volume of a prism and he drill it in us. He drill he drill and I didn't understand the three times he explain it and he explained about ten times and by the tenth time I got it. I will never forget for life. Area of a parallel face by the distance. I will

never forget that multiply the distance between two parallel faces. Think I will become an old woman and I will never forget it. I think that it what I need sometimes I need a bit of drilling. I need people to go over and over again and then I will get the pattern. I will get it.

In the subject areas in which Francine is confident and at which she works hard she expects the teacher to recognize her effort and treat all students fairly and not display favoritism. Francine is resolute in her belief that: "Things like that," (referring to the teachers habit of calling the same students and not noticing her at all) "enrage me so much about teachers. Because is like appearances is what matters. Right and I find that is total crap. If my hand up there for that whole term and a half I find she should have called me at least a few times instead of calling her rounds of people. And she still calls her rounds of people is just that my hand is not up anymore." However Francine' appears to have a resilient nature allows her to find a way to deal with the situation.

At the beginning it did affect me. And then I say you see this stupidity I doing my...(name of the subject area)....I love ...and Ms. A is not ...(the subject area)...she is not ...she might be the size of it but she is not ... I am sorry I don't really like her. I am really angry at my average and that is it.

The teacher's interest in the student as an individual with the need to be recognized and rewarded adequately for the effort made has had an effect on Francine's achievement behaviour. So that if a teacher ignores her, she stops performing hoping to spite the teacher. She is aware that she is approaching the situation in an incorrect manner and hastily changes so that she can improve her grades.

If like a teacher like if I ask a specific question more than once not that it is really the same question but questions and she starts

ignoring me I will just start not performing to spite her. But I know behind the back of my mind that I not spiting her I know I am spiting myself. I know I am approaching the situation wrong. Maybe I should excel and then you know may be that might just spite her. But it doesn't work that way.

Francine is of the opinion that the teacher should be fair. Francine does not think she got the mark she deserved and judged that another student deserved a better mark than she got because she did not try as hard. Again Francine reiterates that effort should be noted and rewarded and not just given on the basis of the teacher's desire to make the student look good. "I see there is where prejudice comes in because you know I think she should look at the students who are trying Jessica does not try at all". One student in the focus group tries to explain to Francine that the teacher does not know whether you tried or not Francine's response was:

Well she should look more because when I use to be putting up my hand in the first term like every question she never called me. The second term I was like well fine I am just wasting my time. In the middle of second term I just put down and I stop putting up my hand.

At the same time Francine notices and is high in praise for the teacher who appreciates that she lacks confidence but has the ability to succeed at the subjects in which she is not performing at her best. This motivates her. Although she recognizes the effect the teacher's comment to her on Parent's Day (when the teachers make an assessment of their capabilities in the presence of the parent) she still does not seem to be aware of why the subject is now a priority to her. "Ms. K was the only one who motivated me. She was like review your work." This kind of self-talk from the teacher and the fellow students at the school's

morning assembly serve to motivate Francine even if for a while. “Like when for assembly somebody say everything is possible. It would be like maybe Maths is possible for me. I does go for a few days thinking that and then bam something hard will come up and I can’t get it out and I will be like oh it is impossible.”

Classmates.

I have many friends I consider to be close to me. Seven in fact. And I think all are relevant to my happiness. I can’t have one best friend.” At the same time Francine finds it difficult to assess the nature of her friendship with some of the girls and constantly tries to assess the relationship she has with some of them. “You ever have a friend but it is a kind of enemy in a way. I don’t understand their friendship. I still trying to understand why they are my friends because they just do things that just push my buttons you know. And I just feel like I does go home and say why why why do I have these people as my friends why...I keep asking myself why do I need them. I don’t even think I need them...I don’t know they really push me over the edge and at times I get real vexed.

In spite of the problems Francine has with the group of friends she insists:

I love them all each and every one of them. My relationship with each of them is different and special and treasured.

The need for connectedness and “sisterhood” forced Francine after the loss of a trusted member of the non-academic staff left to adopt one member of the group as her trusted friend. Francine described the staff member as:

She was an amazing friend and listener. No one understood how close we were. She know more about me and how I thought and felt, I think than I think anyone ever will.... She left at the

beginning of form three so I was left alone. ...I did not confide in any of my friends for reasons that I am yet to understand. It was then that my life and outlook on life changed. Marcia became closer and closer to me. She shared my views but was still completely different from me. The relationship I now had was one that I never knew existed...She was the only person in the world that I connected so well with. ...Marcia became blood related, she was no longer just a friend. This new found 'sisterhood' was apparent to everyone in class...She never raised an eye or looked at me as if I was 'weird' when I said or did something different.

Francine is affected by the judgements her friends make about her ability and this drives her to show them that they are wrong and that they don't know her. This is similar to what occurred in her relationship with the teacher whom she felt she should prove wrong in order to spite her. Francine relates the story of how she felt about what someone she thought was a 'good friend' said about her.

Yesterday I was absent and I heard somebody made a statement. I heard this from a good source. Somebody made a statement that I can never pass maths and I just sit down like a log whole day, ask questions and never try. Which I think is kind of unfair because the person who said it..

I don't think they know what, and me I do, and how I approach maths and all that. And I think that was an unfair statement. So after that I just feel this urge to pass just wishing I could pass that exam and show that person...Eh, you don't know me and you can't predict me like that....It affected me because I thought that person was my friend. I guess she really still my friend you know. I don't know I just got so angry when I heard that because I really didn't think she thought of me like that.

Francine's need for acceptance and belonging came from her friends and in particular this one friend. So that although she thinks she cannot have a best friend she does accept one of the girls in whom she has put her trust and confidence and views her as a sister. This intimacy and closeness is important to Francine since it has helped to: "develop a part of me that I needed....You know to relax me a lot." Francine has recognized her needs and is comfortable in the

environment when these needs are met. Happiness is important to her if she is to work at achieving her goals.

The three girls have painted a picture of the quality of life they have experienced at home and at school. Their responses seemed to suggest that their individuality was very important to them. At the same time the girls need to feel a sense of belonging and connectedness and they all had the need to achieve.

However they are restrained in some way by the cultural norms and values of the institution which they have embodied over the period of time or the norms and values of the peer group which they are unable to accept.

The learning environment as described earlier in the study, was not one that the girls always perceived to be 'friendly'. They perceived some level of hostility from both the teachers and their peers either because of social or cultural differences. The responses to the perceived differences in culture and at times values are different. The individual responses were influenced by the nature of the experiences the importance the students attached to what occurred, and how they perceived the experiences affected the achievement of their social and academic goals.

Macy

Of major concern to Macy was the difference between the language of the teacher and sometimes the text and her language and that of her mother. This is brought to light on more than one occasion as Macy describes her confusion at not

Placing the three students' accounts and experiences within cultural contexts and social structures

Brown & Gilligan, (1992) suggest that "the institutionalized restraints and cultural norms and values could become moral voices which silence voices and restrain the expression of feelings and thoughts and consequently narrow relationships, carrying explicit or implicit threats of exclusion, violation, and at the extreme, violence." (1992, p.29). The researcher therefore used the fourth reading of the interview data to identify the cultural contexts and social structures into which the girls were placing the accounts of their experiences over the past three years and to ascertain the effect they perceived these had on their achievement behaviors.

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Macy

Of major concern to Macy was the difference between the language of the teacher and sometimes the text and her language and that of her mother. This is brought to light on more than one occasion as Macy describes her confusion at not

being able to understand what is being taught especially since she perceives it as affecting her academic success. Her frustration is expressed in her story:

I don't know what to do. Why, because when you ask the teacher to do it they think you stupid and they say but I just said that. And when I am trying to tell you that I don't. Explain it. They say over exactly what they say and they don't make an effort to break it down to my level. Because not all the time I understand what they are saying. And they don't try to break it down for me to understand. And that's hard to understand every thing they say....Sometimes I sitting down there and is like they think I understand but I probably don't understand the last word they say. I mean a simple word like anything they say. I sit down there and like I know the word they say. I know what the word mean but I just don't understand what they mean by it. They don't know how I thinking they don't know I don't understand and they just move along and they forget that not everybody will understand.

Macy feels forced to just accept what she has to do even if it lacks the meaningfulness she needs in order to understand what is being taught and be able to successfully do the exam on which she is being assessed. This therefore seems to account for her inability to succeed and her continued failure in the exams.

Macy states:

They will use these big words that I won't understand. Like big words they use terms like sciences. I wont know sciences since it is the first time I coming across them and they will use terms things and they don't relate it to things so I would know what they are actually talking about. And if they say something that I don't and I ask them to explain they say exactly what they said before and so it doesn't help. And when I realise they just repeating what they say and they not helping me, I just say ok thanks and I sit down. Because if they can't explain it over who could. The person next to me certainly can't explain if they can't. So I just accept what they say and I try to learn it from the book and when it comes to put into practice I can't do that but at least I could write down what they said because that is all they doing for me.

Macy has given an account of an experience, which exemplifies what Robinson (1986) refers to as 'cultural capital'. Cultural capital is one of

Bourdieu's notions of the multiple forms of capital, which influence the academic success. The term "cultural capital", according to Hayes (1999, p.1) "represents the collection of non-economic forces such as family background, social class, varying investments in and commitments to education, different resources, etc. which influence academic success." Macy is in a situation which seems totally alien to her and with which she experiences difficulty coping and finds that the only way out is to do what they expect of you even if it does not make sense and is not meaningful. Macy needs to see the purpose in doing something and this is not the norm in the classroom situation. Macy perceives that they are being taught in order to pass exams. This is one of her goals but she expresses the need to understand the purpose and how what she is learning relates to her life. When there is no purpose, what is being taught appears meaningless and Macy finds difficulty reproducing answers in the exam. Macy states:

I need to know how to do this because I need to use it later on in life. Now we doing things and they not explaining the purpose of it... If even self they don't explain the purpose of it they not explaining the relevance of that in the topic. If I don't understand what I have to do I just doing it but I don't know what I really trying to do. I just doing what she write down on the board and when it comes to test now and there is nobody to turn to and ask what it is we have to do for this. What is it we doing here? Or go by miss and say miss what you say we have to do. Well I don't really do that eh. But if you can't do that when it comes to test so you just have to sit down there, try, and guess what to do. You have to guess what you are trying to work out. And in test you might guess something and it might be for a completely different subject but you doing in the wrong thing and you get it wrong. When it comes to test I will just sit down there and stare at it. I know we do it already but I can't remember anything but ah mean is like I watching at it and I know it looking familiar but I don't know anything else. That is all I know we do this already cause it in the paper and it looks familiar. But I don't know anything else about what we doing so I just sit down there and staring at it.

Then when I looking at it I will remember something else we did and I will just say this has to be it. Because everything is like when I starting to study I will.. just because I didn't understand it during the term, everything will just become one big mass confusion in my head. Everything will just be confusion in my head and I won't know what it is we really doing and I will remember something and I will swear that is what the sum ask me to do and it wasn't that. Because if I had understood it when I was doing it in class then I would ah know what to do. But because I cram for the exam, I have to call it cram because I didn't learn it before I now learning it you can't say I revising it so I now learning it so everything have to just full up in my head as quickly as possible. Everything just becomes confused. Because I don't know the purpose of it.

Macy seems to feel disempowered by the situation in which she does not understand the language of the teachers. In addition the lack of purpose makes the material meaningless and thus she is unable to reproduce it under exam conditions when the crutches of the teacher and student who may understand are removed from her. She becomes totally disoriented and is unable to achieve her goal of succeeding in the exam.

What may have seemed a simple thing to many as the meaning of a testimonial was a problem to both Macy and her mother who were not acquainted with that system of education. Macy describes her confusion:

As a matter of fact in form one I didn't even know what a testimonial was. It was when the first mid term came and I realise wait nuh why we going in the hall and why everybody going up for this. And I was just like what is that and they was just like this is a testimonial. And I was like ok. Because is like all the time I hearing the prefects saying you all better had behave if you want to get a testimonial. And I was like I going home and I asking my mother what is a testimonial. And she saying I thought testimonial was something you does do in church or when you in...because she wouldn't know because she not accustomed to testimonial she wouldn't know she doesn't know anything about this school.

The language code seems alien to Macy and this only serves to confuse and alienate her since she seems unable, despite the effort she makes, to achieve as much success as the other students. Macy needs to belong so she still strives to achieve the rewards that are given for excellence in the institution. However her ability to do so on so many occasions has led her to attribute her success to a mistake the one time she was able to attain an honor card. She becomes totally disoriented even to the point of being unable to walk. Macy wants to achieve the reward because she thinks it is important *"to try as best as possible to do good."* And Macy is clear that it is not because she *"wants to look bright in front of the rest of the school.... Just because I want to do good."*

Macy describes how she felt the day she received an honor card for the first time:

I got one and I didn't really believe I did really get one I thought it was some kind of mistake because they make mistakes sometimes they call the wrong name and they might have put the wrong person name from the class. I t might have been somebody else that was suppose to get it. So I was shaking my hand was shaking I couldn't believe it but my hand was shaking and I sort of forget how to walk because I was feeling funny walking. I don't know why. And well I went for it and it wasn't so bad. I was happy but I didn't want to act too happy to make the rest of the children feel bad because I know how it feels when you don't get one and you seeing all the rest of people around you.

Lucky

Lucky appears to be the most well-adjusted student. She seems comfortable with the norms of the institution and does not seem to have a problem understanding what is being taught. On the contrary, she is upset when the

students do not abide by the rules and norms of the institution. She dislikes students who have little moral values. Some things are just not done. Excellence in this setting is determined by the students' ability to gain a mark over 70 in all the subject areas. The student who achieves this is awarded publicly. Lucky has been able to achieve this award on almost every occasion. The ways of thought of the institution, the patterns of behaviour have become for Lucy the natural order of things. In addition, her parents who are professionals in their respective fields, have the "certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to power." (Hayes, 1999, p.1). This has contributed to the confidence that Lucky displays both in her academic and social cultural activities.

Lucky has realised that everybody loves a winner and that society values things like hard work and people with strong moral values. She seems determined to be the nice girl who will be accepted and will make a name for herself within the school and the larger community.

Francine

Francine prides herself on being different.

I totally different, my mother does not pay too much attention to me. You see my life is different from theirs...(her friends). Number one, I live the furthest away from school so I reach home later than them. Number two, I have got a lot more chores to do. Whereas they have so little, it's next to none at all. ...I am totally different from you all. I don't work for anyone...

In spite of her insistence on the differences between her friends and her very important to her. She admits that their prejudice is wrong as her moral voice and the inner conflict it creates, they are important to her and she loves them. It is

a battle because they like different music and have different values but somehow they all need each other. Francine gets angry with them and they at her but she is quick to add: "Yet still, they think I am their friend and I think they are my friends too. One of the questions that keep bugging me is why do I tolerate them." Francine is of the opinion that the group of friends is racial and prejudice but somehow she still likes them. She states clearly:

Ok like personally I think that they kind of racial. Racism gets me real angry real angry. Is more prejudiced. Is like they class people because of their colour. Because of their race. They will see a white person. Let's say Wendy was white, I know they wouldn't go down on Wendy Fitzwilliam. This is the Trinidad and Tobago contestant who won the Ms Universe title in 1998). I thought it was because she was black and they say it is not that Wendy is just ugly. And the night before the pageant the day before the pageant we fell out. Because I was saying Wendy is nice and you all saying that because she is black. And if she was white or if she was Indian they would never say that. And they were like excuse me you have me all wrong and dah dah dah...and I am like you know deep down in my mind I just knew. And then Miss Botswana came and won. I was saying that to them the day before. I would see beauty that they don't see.

Francine continually struggles with her friends who view rastafarians as "damn crazy" people. Francine defends them and makes it clear to her friends that: "It have some rastas (rastafarians) who are very holy people more holy than some of you."

Francine is at a stage in which friendship and sisterhood are very important to her, and so she suffers the anguish of her difference in order to maintain the friendships, which supply a need, which she cannot describe. However it does contribute to her goal of better understanding of people who are very important to her. She admits that their prejudice is wrong as her moral voice

states in the interview but she still wants to think, "No they are not like that." Although she has seen the 'symptoms' she claims that she "does like to brand people." She sees herself as having no other choice in the situation but to accept her friends with their faults.

Researcher / Reader-response

The researcher's choice of pseudonym for the respondent seems an indication of the reader's response and has demonstrated in some way the reader's response to the interview transcript. In this sense I agree with Mauthner and Doucet (1998) that the data analysis begins even before the first reading for the plot and the reader-response. The researcher's immediate response was that Lucky's parents were probably very correct to attribute their daughter's academic achievements to luck. Her story has indicated that she was indeed fortunate to have the kind of family support and love. However, she has also had many experiences of success academically and has achieved much more than she thought she was capable of and thus her academic self-concept has been boosted. I feel a bit guilty about not having included the issue of the boys in whom she is interested. I chose not to do so since it did not seem in any way to affect how she is oriented to achieve and I had my doubts about the validity of the stories. They seemed to be more like fantasies. However, these stories about the boys may also be part of Lucky's need to be equal to the others who have boy friends or to excel above even in this.

Lucky is also a talented singer and this has allowed her to gain a great deal of respect and the admiration of others. This accomplishment has also played a

part in her growth and development and contributed to the positive beliefs she has about herself. Although no research that I know of has been done in the area of the effect private lessons have on the achievement of students attending prestige schools, it is interesting to note that Lucky views this as accounting in part for her academic achievement. It is also noteworthy that the private lessons are in the area of Science and Mathematics which the students tend to find most difficult and which are stereotyped as the subjects that "bright" students are good at.

"The heights that great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, for they while their companions slept were toiling through the night".

This quote taken from Lucky's protocol writings seems a good representation of Lucky's value and personal incentive system. The internal dialogue present in this quotation represents Lucky's beliefs, attitudes and values.

The three years in L'ecole Normale have been successful ones in terms of schoolwork and extra-curricular activities for Lucky. She has been able to maintain an average of over 70 % and has topped the class on more than one occasion. Form three has been a productive year for Lucky although she lost the title of Junior Calypso monarch this year and missed placing first in mid-term exam by .5. This has spurred her to work even harder so that she can "come back first." Lucky plans to keep up the good work in form four and five and if it means doing an extra subject privately she will do it in order to be able to attain nine ones like her brother.

Lucky has clear academic and career goals and is determined to achieve them. She is willing to adjust them in order to incorporate her need to have a family like the one she now has.

Although Lucky does not define achievement as necessarily coming first, she still strives to come first and stay at the top and appears to be very competitive.

Francine:

"Me Myself and I. I am going to be selfish I am only going to concentrate on me, myself and I. I will have to be strong. I have to make myself stay up and 'burn the midnight oil'".

This is how Francine describes her plans to achieve success at attaining her goals for the academic year. "My goal: to excel in French. I must be able to speak many languages to fulfil my goal. I want to be the first woman to get the post of UN Secretary General." Francine is very clear what her goal is. Her academic achievements will assist her in achieving her career goals. Although it may seem as though she is totally dependent on herself Francine is in an environment whose mission is: "To provide quality education for total development rooted in religious values." Francine therefore does not hesitate to state in her essay: "I pray to the Almighty Father that he gives me the strength, discipline and ability I need to fulfil these goals."

Francine has a need to achieve and is motivated to succeed at all costs. To be successful she thinks she must be 'selfish', she must forget her friends and give her studies all the time she needs. She must not let them "pull me in every which

direction. I am not going to allow them to distract me.” She is determined to use her time wisely and so the midnight oil is necessary. Francine has realized the importance of time in her journey to success. She states “Just this morning I realized that every bit, every second of my time counts. Every fifteen minutes holds the power, ability, and allowance for achievement.... I have to take time and use it.... I have to recognize that if I do a little bit every ten minutes free I get at the end of the day I may achieve more than wasting that ten minutes talking.”

Herein lies the key to success for Francine. She is self-motivated and independent and takes things in her hands. She has been able to understand what it takes to make a successful student and has decided to struggle against all odds.

She is able to see things that are working against her and makes the conscious decision to put them aside. The reward system of the learning environment has frustrated her and made her feel inadequate. She has come to accept that this is not important and so made her goal instead one of mastery and not performance. She does not want to prove to any one else but she wants to master the tasks which are set in the school context and make sure she understands and never forgets them so that she can make use of them when the time is right.

Francine’s deep approach to learning seems to have contributed to her orientations. The value that she has placed on understanding and its relationship to achievement has allowed her to view failures differently and so she has come to a greater understanding of herself and how she operates in the school situation. Francine’s clear definition of her self, which she describes as confused and her

understanding of the social relationships and the effect they have on her has contributed to her achievement behavior.

Francine talks a lot about the battle and struggling and striving to succeed. Francine battles with the teachers, in her own way, with her friends and with herself. They may be prejudiced but they like her and she likes them and needs them even though she may not know why. The sisterhood allows for conceitedness and relational beings that we are she needs it. She seems to view success as overcoming obstacles and understanding exactly what you have to know and working hard at coming to know it. She wants to make the knowledge she gains from the different subject area her own and so it becomes meaningful and she never forgets and can then succeed at the exams.

Francine has a clear idea of where her strengths lie and attributes success to ability. However she believes that one can improve if one is well taught and the teachers answer the questions so that the student can gain a deeper understanding of the material. Assistance from teachers Francine values and sees it as a factor that can contribute to the students' development of skills in areas in which she may be experiencing difficulties. Her determination to succeed makes her angry and upset at others attitude towards her. However she uses it to advantage in that she sets out to be successful in order to prove them wrong. Although she may lack confidence in some subject areas (and she is quick to agree with the teacher's assessment), that does not prevent her from making that subject area a priority if it is important to her goal achievements.

Francine may be described as resilient. Francine is not afraid to describe herself as 'a deep person' and someone who 'sees more deeply into things than others'. This trait it seems allows Francine to pick herself up when she does not achieve success. This is evident in the subject areas that she may not like very much and knows are important to her. Francine has recognized the importance of Mathematics, which is a compulsory subject and is determined to get help from some other teacher. She intends to practice so that her friends can see that she is not dumb and that she is 'questioning all the time' as they claim because she wants to understand. She has already had the past experience of understanding something in Mathematics that was quite difficult but with excellent explanation from the teacher she 'got it' and will never forget it. She knows therefore that she has the ability and all she needs is a good teacher and hard work on her part. The expectations of others work in the opposite direction in the case of Francine. Francine clearly states: "They could think what they want about me but I don't know why maths all of a sudden became this. It became more on the top of my list. It wasn't on the top of my list at all."

Interest, the value of the subject to Francine in terms of her life goal and the teacher's pedagogy all contribute to the Francine's achievement behavior.

Francine claims:

History because I love it and I could relate to it and I think with the History when I learn about World War II I could match it to the Kosovo crisis I understand the Kosovo crisis better and all the reasons behind it and all that. And Miss S explained it and what I read on the newspaper I understand better and History makes me understand life better and how things go. Because some people will be going through the world... why did it have a world

war and I will be proud to know why it had a world war. Because I am interested in world affairs really."

Her interest and the value she places on the subject have contributed to her success in this area. In addition, the teacher whose skills Francine values, has assisted in making the subject comprehensive and interesting.

Francine's 'joie de vivre' counts a lot to her and may account for her lack of a fatalistic attitude in the face of the social problems in her home life. She seeks out the emotional support she needs from friends and develops inter personal relationships which help to enhance her personality and contribute to her understanding of people. Francine will not put any barriers on herself. "I will not put any barrier on myself," states Francine as she describes her need for knowledge of languages, which will allow her to communicate with all peoples.

Her home environment may not be perfect now but it once was and her father is an intelligent man. She has natural ability in some subject areas and her father is willing to give her support. She will therefore lock him away and not let him bother her too much. These things will not be barriers to her success. She will prove them wrong. Intelligence for her is incremental not an entity. Francine's high motive for success and her need to achieve orients her. In addition her efficacy beliefs in certain subject areas and the stable attributions all contribute to the measure of success she is having in her schoolwork and her self-concept as a result is high. Francine's perception of her mother as being non-existent in her life and her father's absence from the home has made Francine an independent individual who is to a large extent dependent on her ability and what she can do for herself. Francine has empowered herself and taken the knowledge

she gained from the subject areas, made it hers, and gained the satisfaction and joy she sees as important in life.

Macy

I can't do anything about it. You trying and it is totally useless trying. And because you can't try is like it takes two hands to clap. And although I is the one that want to hear the clap. I need two hands and I can't clap with one and somebody else need to help me and if they don't want to do it then I can't. I just can't do it and they just not willing.

This image of the two hands, the need for the sound and the inability to hear it because of the unwillingness of the other person to cooperate with you summarizes Macy's achievement orientation. The two hands represent the major players involved in the school achievement activity. Macy is one and brings with her certain goals and aspirations and certain personality characteristics and abilities. Macy admits that she has the need to achieve and dreams of passing all her subjects in form three so she will be able to write the subjects at CXC level and get a good job. She wants to hear the noise. But the other players: her father, and the financial situation, the members of her immediate family, the teachers, the students in school, the school system are not supportive and she therefore sees her efforts as futile and so she gives up.

None of the other players in the game is willing and to cooperate with her and so she does not have the will either because she does not think she can make it on her own. She needs everybody and everything else and they are unavailable. Her locus of control is external. She does not attribute her success in any way to her ability. It is either because the teachers pushed her or luck that could account for her success.

The system of rewards instead of motivating has caused her tremendous pain as She does not think that people value her, think highly, or even respect her and so her self-esteem is low. There is one person, her neighbor, who helps her. She is not willing to accept the help because she thinks she is taking up the girls' time and in the end she will not have her to depend on. Constant failure has made her adopt a higher motive to avoid failure than a motive to achieve success and so she feels the need to stay away from school and to avoid even doing the end of term tests so that there is the avoidance orientation. In this way she has not performed so that there is less judgement to be made of her ability. She does not look stupid in the eyes of others since she did not do the test and no assessment can be made.

Macy's frustration at not being able to understand what they are saying and being unable to succeed at the tests because of this comes over clearly. She resents the fact that all the others are finding it easy, she appears stupid, and it hurts. She values academic achievement because it will allow her a good life. However, she views her secondary school experiences, which have been negative in terms of her academic results and her relationships with the teachers generally as demotivating factors. She attributes to her lack of success to these experiences coupled with her personal domestic situation and her own lack of drive and persistence. Although she expressed the need to achieve, the constant failing at everything and all the circumstances she describes have affected her self-concept and she thinks she can't do it.

None in the class feels like she does or has had the same experiences and so they cannot understand what she is going through. What

The system of rewards instead of motivating has caused her tremendous pain and anguish and thus she has come to accept that it does not really matter anymore. She does not seem to expect to do well although she sets goals for herself and values achievement. Her perceptions of the teachers and her interpretations of their motives have resulted in loss of confidence in their ability to assist her. Macy does seem to think that she lacks the ability. She never attributes her failure to a lack of ability. She does not understand partly because of the way the material is delivered and the teacher's inability to break it down so that every one can understand. She is unable to be successful in the tests given because of lack of understanding.

The language of the teachers and their inability to make her see the utilitarian value in the subject or topics also contribute to her lack of understanding. Unlike primary school Macy is unable to see the value in the subject matter and the tasks given and so cannot relate to them. All of the experiences over the past three years with the exception of the one time she received a testimonial in form two have contributed to the negative beliefs she has about her ability to succeed and her desire to be a part of the class/school community. She does not even attribute her one moment of success to her efforts. It was the teachers in form two who allowed her to be able to gain the testimonial. Even then she doubted it and thought it was a mistake. She has not chosen anyone with whom she would like to work because no one in the class has gained her trust. She does not think anyone in the class feels like she does or has had the same experiences and so they cannot understand what she is going through. What

is heard is someone desperately in need of help and attention and who deep down inside wants to do well but is afraid that she is doomed to failure because of the circumstances.

Listening to Macy's story of her relationship with the members of her family and the teachers one can detect certain sensitivity about how people think about her and treat her. It reinforces her description of herself and the kind of person she sees herself as. She cares deeply for her mother and values her relationship with her and her mother's assessment of her. She is resentful towards most of the teachers and does not trust them. She is unafraid of the teachers and makes assessments of their character and ability to teach based on her experiences with them. However she gives them the respect they deserve. She wishes somehow that they could be more like the one teacher who demands the respect of the class and gets it but who breaks things down and relates it to what they know and so it is not boring and she understands it. This helps when she goes into the exam room.

Summary

The three girls may have had different family backgrounds but they all have the need: to achieve, to belong, to be connected with their peers, to be viewed as individuals and to become successful individuals in society later on. Their ability to articulate these needs vary but once given the opportunity they can give voice to them. Indeed this stage of their development is complex and complicated and forces them to adopt coping strategies, which assist them in the journey through adolescence.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The principal focus of this research was the achievement orientations of three female adolescent students in an assisted secondary school in Trinidad and Tobago. The narratives from the interviews and their writings were the major sources from which insights were gained and which the writer used in formulating an understanding of the students' theories on achievement orientation.

This literature review has made confirmed that there are multiple perspectives on achievement orientation but the focus of this study was on the students' perspectives, which could be similar to or different from the prevailing theories. The data analysis methodology that guided the research process can in some way be said to have accounted for the focus of the findings. Therefore the emphasis on listening to the voices in order to formulate the stories the students were telling about their lives as students and their identities as members of families emerged because of the methodology used. In addition the methodological focus on relationships and socio-cultural contexts assisted the writer in formulating the findings in a particular framework. One can conclude therefore that although the varying theoretical perspectives about achievement motivation and the researcher's objectives guided the research procedure and design and data collection, the voice-centred relational methodology of data analysis and the independent judges' comments were all determining factors in the findings that were reported. The findings revealed that the students

perceive that the microsystem has impacted on their sense of self and has played a major role in the development of their student identity within the particular context. The student then adopted different achievement orientations which have been influenced both by their identity framework and the impact the other elements in the microsystem has had on them with respect to these three students. The achievement orientation that one has is therefore based on one's perception of self and the impact that the microsystem has on the individual's growth and development as a learner.

The Microsystems and Achievement Orientations

The Home Environment

Santrock (1998) describes the microsystems as the setting in which the individual lives. His description is based on Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological theory in which the context included the person's family, peers, school and neighbourhood. It is within the microsystem that most of the direct interaction with social agents takes place. The study therefore although it was done in the school setting found that the girls in their narratives talked about their home environment also. The researcher may not have had the opportunity to visit the home but depended on the students' perceptions of it. According to Santrock (1998) "Bronfenbrenner points out that most of the research on sociocultural influences have focused on the microsystem." (p. 52). The study was looking at the school context but found the students focused on the home also and this allowed the researcher to gain

information on both settings and the students' perceptions of the influence on them.

The home environment of the students and the kinds of relationships that exist within the homes have emerged as a major factor in the understanding of the students' achievement orientation. Clarke (1983) has in his study of family life and achievement and why poor black children succeed or fail pointed to the importance of looking at more than just the socio-demographic variables. Instead Clarke suggests that:

To focus our attention exclusively on family sociodemographics is to miss the essential point: psychological process and social communication patterns of family life come closest to capturing the essence of human learning experiences in homes. (1983, p.3)

The three students may have identified the sociodemographic characteristics in the survey but the more informative data about their family life style came from their narratives in the interviews. They have all confirmed the findings of previous research that the home and the relationships therein contribute to the students' self-concept. The self-concept has been identified in much of the research done on achievement orientation as an important factor, which influences the individual and by extension her motivational patterns.

A pattern of relationships characterized the three students. The student who sees herself as successful and prides herself on performing well and being awarded by the school community appears to be performance oriented and has a positive self-concept. She describes a family life style in which there is communication, models of high achievers and a great deal of emotional and intellectual support.

The major thing that seems to be lacking in the other two students is 'support' or 'help' which has been identified as very important to a student's well being.

The other two students perceive of their home environments as places where the evidence of caring is lacking. The communication is limited and visible interest in the individual as a student is negligible. If the student can get this need met in the school community like Francine does then there is the possibility of becoming learned helpful (Durojaiye, 1990) and becoming resilient. However, if one has learnt not to trust others then one is unwilling to risk looking to others for the support needed. This then leads to the student becoming learned helpless and having an even more negative self-concept as she experiences failure many times over. Although the student may have the need to achieve and set herself goals the inability to become part of the group and to perform in what for the individual and the community is a successful manner continues to haunt the student. She then adopts what the literature has called self-handicapping strategies, which make things even worse for her and leads to failure avoidant behaviours.

School Environment

"Creation of a collaborative rather than a competitive learning environment." (USE - 2001, 1999, p.1) The Project Implementation Unit of the Supervisory Implementation Committee has identified this as one of the ways in which we need to transform our teaching. The narratives of the girls' who have viewed themselves as having failed over and over suggest that we need to take note and really work at creating different kinds of school environments.

Bronfenbrenner's (1989) identified the school environment as one of the important ecological systems in the development of the adolescent. The narratives of the girls pointed to three major factors within the environment, which they perceived as accounting for their achievement behaviours. They were the reward system, the teacher pupil relationships and their peer relationships. The award/reward system seems to be the one that stands out the most. It is on the basis of this system that the students have identified their successes or failures.

The individual's perception of self and the achievement orientations

The students' perceptions of the microsystem and their individual responses to it have influenced their self esteem in varying ways and have contributed to the self-development of these three students who are in the transition stage between childhood and adulthood. The achievement orientations of these three students differed generally and seemed to reflect the personality of the individual and her sense of self. The three former issues, which have been dealt with, have influenced the orientation of the individual student: the home and the quality of life; the psychosocial environment of the school and the individual personality of the student that has developed within these varying contexts. ...

Recommendations and Implications of the Findings

The semp that whistled in the birdcage outside my window as a girl is not the same one that has become the buzz word in education circles in Trinidad and Tobago. There is the promise of a Secondary Education Modernization

Programme. This is a "response to the many criticisms of the education of Trinidad and Tobago". (Ministry of Education, 1999, p.1). The findings of this study have revealed that there are difficulties for even the 'abilitied' student who came into a system that had assessed her as high ability. When we find students who are assessing themselves as failures and appearing to be 'at risk' we wonder what was responsible for this development. Or we ask ourselves the question, which will be left for another study: "How did they become like that?" There is cause for even greater concern when these students were considered the 'top set' in the system.

"Improper use of incentives can create a failure prone environment." (Covington, 1997, p. 6). This study only looked at three students and so cannot generalize about the entire environment. However, there is the possibility that there may be many more Macys and thankfully few Francines and Luckys. We have to work at allowing students to change their attributional patterns and to feel a greater sense of belonging. The competitive nature of the entire school system creates individuals who are always about being better than others and pay lip service to co-operation. As a nation we have as our watch words " Together we aspire: together we achieve". However, achievement tends to mean doing better than others do and gaining the prize. This is indeed paradoxical because there is little togetherness in the aspirations. We continue to applaud those who come first and pay little attention to effort and hard work. "An equity game involves rewarding the struggle for self-improvement, not winning over others; promoting effort; not aggrandizing ability; and encouraging creativity not fostering

compliance." (Covington, 1997, p. 8). There is no doubt that there are many obstacles in the way of changing the system. But when you read the findings of the thesis you cannot help but admit that it is worth a try so that we do not continue to contribute to the creation and development of more Macys in our assisted secondary schools.

There is still need for teachers to be trained in psychometric testing and evaluation. The time worn request, which was made by Ashby (1975) who found that many students in the assisted schools in the sample had poor self-concept, can be made again. Students need a school counselor whom they do not see as an outsider or an insider but a neutral person whom they can trust with their deep inner thoughts and feelings. They need significant adults who will provide emotional support that they may be lacking at home. It is not enough to say that they have problems at home and this accounts for their inability to perform. We need to put structures in place that can contribute to the well being of the adolescent who is struggling to cope with so many issues, without overburdening the already burdened classroom teacher.

Schooling has become 'the ability game' according to Covington (1997). The focus of this study was the achievement orientations but it revealed that success was relative and students' perceptions were formulated by the effect the reward system in particular, was having on their sense of self. The reward system is indeed an integral part of the school system and it is not that the students are not motivated but they seem to be motivated for the wrong reasons. If they can play the game well and the stakes are on their side then they have more positive

sense of self and their orientations are those that promote success-oriented students who go on to become high achievers in the academic arena.

One of the objectives of SEMP is: "To decentralize staff and school development by handing over the responsibility for curriculum implementation, improvement, and transformation to the schools themselves." (Ministry of Education, 1999) This should mean that schools could be able to design programmes which are relative to their own environment, monitor the implementation process through action research and testing and assessment and work at transforming the environment into 'inclusive schools'. This would be one step that could assist in making the institutions ones in which equity and equality of opportunity are not just clichés.

When someone deeply listens to you,
your heartbeat is on the earth
and a beloved land that seemed distant
is now at home within you.

John Fox

More important than the outcome is the satisfaction gained from listening to the girls and the responses of those who were given the opportunity by the writer to listen to them and those who will listen through reading. I remember the response of Francisco as she came to the end of the interview. She was relieved that she had had an opportunity to "get it off her chest". Someone had listened to her and the healing had

Epilogue

Chorus:

When someone deeply listens

i

When someone deeply listens to you
it is like holding out a dented cup
you've had since childhood
and watching it fill up with
cold, fresh water.

When it balances on top of the brim,

you are understood.

When it overflows and touches your skin,

you are loved.

ii

When someone deeply listens to you,

the room where you stay

starts a new life

and the place where you wrote

your first poem

begins to glow in your mind's eye.

It is as if gold has been discovered!

iii

When someone deeply listens to you,

your barefeet are on the earth

and a beloved land that seemed distant

is now at home within you.

John Fox

More important than the outcome is the satisfaction gained from listening to the girls and the responses of those who were given the opportunity by the writer to listen to them and those who will listen through reading. I remember the response of Francine as she came to the end of the interview. She was relieved that she had had an opportunity to "get it off her chest". Someone had listened to her and the healing had

begun. That was not the intention but this happened and she was overjoyed. Macy was given an opportunity maybe for the first time to voice her opinions and to speak freely about the things that were affecting her. She was a star on stage, her lines were being heard, and her story was told. Lucky had an opportunity to continue to star, to voice her doubts and concerns and to tell her story as no one else could. The three girls were all stars in the data and moved from instruments used to understand a phenomenon to individuals who were unique and special. By their stories they can help the readers to feel what they felt and to hopefully realise the importance of listening to the voice of the actors on the classroom stage. The writer applauds them and expectantly looks to the continuing story of their achievement orientation. I sincerely hope that as you the audience read this study you were able to reflect on your practice. I trust that you too will begin to ask questions about how you relate to students, the judgements you make about the students without truly knowing them, and what affects and influences their achievement behaviours.

I agree that we need to know even more in terms of personality types and the larger picture of the total quality of family life and the classroom environment characteristics. However, the process has begun and we have a slice of the picture of how the girls' perceive they have come to be as they are now. We need like Haggerson (1992) suggested to get in the boat more and not just sit on the sidelines and allow others to determine what needs to be done. We need to make our schools more

inclusive learning environments in which the diverse student population can all find a place and learning can be meaningful for each student.

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APPENDIX I
SELF REPORT
STIMULUS
AND
STUDENT'S RESPONSE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION

SELF REPORT

I am conducting a research study in order to gain an understanding of form three students in your secondary school. The information you give will provide me with some insight into who you are and what are your goals and aspirations for the coming year. The information will be kept in strictest confidence and your names will not appear in the report. This is the first part of the study which will be conducted over the year. I thank you very much for your honest and full response to the question asked. If I am not certain about something which you have written I will ask you to explain what you mean. This is to ensure that I correctly represent what you say. Thank you for your participation.

QUESTION

Imagine you are making a very long diary entry which you will come back to at the end of your form three year.

Describe in detail what you plan to achieve during this year, how you plan to achieve these things, and why they are important to you. Note the difficulties you think you may encounter and how you think you can overcome them. Identify the persons whom you think can be of assistance to you over the year.

Please pay close attention to every part of the question and be as detailed as possible.

My Goals

Dear Diary,

Today is the 25th of November. I have been in Form Three for almost three months now. So far, it's going okay. I'm slowly adjusting to the new subjects: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Geography and History.

Well, I must say, I do not really have a lot of goals for this school year. However, my main goal which I am really determined to achieve is doing well in my end of year exam. In fact, all of my exams. I am focused on the science because I would like to be in the field of science, but it's nice to do well in other subjects, so I can have something to 'fall back on'.

But academic goals are not all that I have. There are some social aspirations also, but they all lead back to academics. One of my social goals is to not let boys take over my world. Because, I mean, when you are in love with a boy, you revolve around him, he is on your mind all the time. I don't think I'm ready to handle that. Another social goal is to balance my time well. I am in the school choir, and on the school's volleyball team. Sometimes, on lunchtimes, I get so frustrated because the choir mistress demands that we come to practice at 11:20 (that's as soon as the bell rings for lunch). Now, lunch is a half hour, so when we practise, there is no time for me to relax, or go to the library, or even eat my lunch! So, it's really tough. I can't drop out of the choir because I'm the lead alto, and the choir has so many interesting things, so that's one problem.

Another academic goal I have is to add chapters. It's not really my goal because everyone except myself is telling me

to do Add Maths. They say that since I want to do medicine, Add Maths would be very helpful, and it would also look good on my resume. I think so too, but I am hindering myself from doing it by my mental pessimism. I'm always telling myself that I can't do Add Maths, it's too hard. My relatives tell me to take on the challenge. My other brother says never, even do Add Maths, it's sheer hell. So, I don't know who to listen to. A lot of people say to listen to your heart, well my heart's telling^{me} don't even consider doing Add Maths! I really don't feel comfortable with the idea of doing Add Maths. I tell my family this, and they say that I'm underestimating my capabilities. They tell me that I'm intelligent and I'll thank them when I get older, but I don't know. I think I'll go for it, I'll just have to overcome that mental block. If I don't make it, well, at least I tried.

Now, achieving my goal of doing well in exams. I can achieve that goal easily by studying hard, stay focused and determined, constantly setting little goals to achieve that big goal and last but not least, planning my time well, that is extremely helpful.

The only way to solve my problem with the choir is to speak with the choir mistress. I'll ask her to be five minutes late. I'm sure she'll understand. I'll also try to plan my lunchtimes well.

I think that my teachers and my family will be of the greatest assistance to me. My family constantly gives me continuous support, and my teachers encourage me to go for my aspirations. Well, with the support and encouragement that I'm getting, and my plans for achieving my goals and overcoming my obstacles, I'm sure, that by the end of Form Three, I can look back and say, "Wow, look how far I've come. I've overcome my obstacles, and I'm ready to go further ahead, and reach for the stars!"

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION

SUBJECT TEACHER REPORT

APPENDIX II
SUBJECT TEACHER REPORT

STIMULUS

(Content of report not provided for ethical reasons)

AREA

STUDENT'S NAME

COMMENTS ON STUDENT'S ABILITY IN SUBJECT
AREA

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
ST. AUGUSTINE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION
SUBJECT TEACHER REPORT

I am conducting a research study in order to gain an understanding of the achievement orientation of form three girls who attend this secondary school. The subject teachers' assessment of the student at the start of the year and the students' academic achievement in the subject area will provide information which will assist in my understanding of the students' achievement behavior. I will be very grateful if you can make an assessment of the ability of the individual students whom you have been teaching for the past two and a half months. Please be assured that the information will be kept in strictest confidence and your names will not be used in the research report. Thanks for you participation.

SUBJECT AREA

STUDENT'S NAME	COMMENTS ON STUDENT'S ABILITY IN SUBJECT AREA

FIRST DRAFT OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENT SELF REPORT

Thursday, December 31, 1998

The students were asked to make a diary entry response to the question on their goal and aspiration for the term three year and the problems they thought they might encounter. They were also asked about the kind of support they thought they would need in order to deal with the problems. The following is a summary of the responses students made.

APPENDIX III

SUMMARY OF INITIAL ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED DURING THE FIRST PHASE

Produce marks and testimonials and do well in all the tests so that they could be able to choose the subjects they want to do at CXC and not be just given subjects that their authority judged they were good at. Students who have never received honor cards were determined to get one at the end of each term. This goal was achieved by many of the students.

Be able to go on to University.
Further study of their choice and become successful.
Achieve career goals.

Make their view their difference.
Developing a clear mind and discovering their purpose in life.
Improvement of their relationship with their parents and in particular with their mothers, their friends, (male) in some circumstances, with God or their supreme being. Relationships with mothers seemed to be most important. Only two students referred to their fathers.

Build self-confidence and self-esteem and improve self-worth.
Development of their physical body image. Lose weight and become more fashion conscious.

Become the top student.
Become a scholarship winner.
Develop "ME" getting to know themselves and thus be able to make decisions.

Develop sporting and musical abilities.
Make best of educational opportunities.

FIRST DRAFT OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENT SELF REPORT
Thursday, December 31, 1998

- The students were asked to make a diary entry response to the question on their goal and aspirations for the form three year and the problems they thought they might encounter. They were also asked about the kind of support they thought they would need in order to deal with the problems. The following is a summary of the responses students made.
- Honour cards and testimonials and do well in all the tests so that they could be able to choose the subjects they want to do at CXC and not be just given subjects that those in authority judged they were good at. Students who have never received honour cards were determined to get one at the end of each term. This goal was common to many of the students.
- Be able to go on to University.
- Pursue careers of their choice and become successful
- Achieve career goals
- Make others view them differently
- Developing a clear mind and discovering their purpose in life
- Improvement of their relationship with their parents and in particular with their mothers, their friends, (male) in some circumstances, with God or their supreme being. Relationships with mothers seemed to be most important. Only two students referred to their fathers.
- Build self-confidence and self-esteem and improve self-worth.
- Development of their physical body image. Lose weight and become more fashion conscious.
- Become the top student
- Become a scholarship winner
- Develop "ME" getting to know themselves and thus be able to make decisions.
- Develop sporting and musical abilities
- Make best of educational opportunities

SUMMARY OF THE SUBJECT TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDENTS ABILITY AND POTENTIAL AFTER HAVING TAUGHT THEM FOR EIGHT WEEKS

- Ability levels varied. Some students were judged as having average, below average and above average ability. The English Language teacher assessed according to skills and then made a personal comment on the students all round development. She assessed students writing ability, analytic skills, comprehension skills and creativity and then gave an overall grade.
- Comments on individual students varied according to subject areas.
- Most teachers were concerned about the academic performance of some students
- Students were considered hard working, intelligent, interested, keen and weak.
- Students performances were sometimes compared to past --- form one in particular.
- One major problem seemed to be the students who were considered attentions seekers by many of the teachers. These students were sometimes referred to as distracting others or distractions. The inattention of some students was blamed on the distraction of peers. Some students were referred to as easily distracted and others as very distractive. About fifty percent of the population was referred to in some way by one or more of the teachers as distracted or distractive.

PROBLEMS STUDENTS BELIEVE WOULD AFFECT THEM

- Negative peer pressure. They voiced the opinions that their peers 'bringing them down' could affect them but this also motivated some to perform so that they could disprove their peers and others.
- Parents' expectations
- Relationships with their male and female friends and with their parents and teachers.
- Teachers' attitudes, expectations and perceptions of the class in particular.
- Lack of understanding ----- identity crisis and confusion. Undecidedness and lack of understanding of self.
- Individual lack of personal discipline and procrastination in particular.
- Distractions like television and social activities----- boys on their minds
- The school environment itself and the classroom in particular. Some students were distracted by the behaviour of some of their peers and sometimes the behaviour of the class in general. The reputation of the class also seemed to be a problem to some students.
- The teaching styles of some teachers.
- Balancing sport, social and emotional needs with academic demands of form three.
- Fear of becoming someone with low morales
- Trying to fit in with the group.
- Lack of confidence in the student by others.
- Difference in performance between form one and form two.
- Students perceptions of others as being hypocritical and prejudiced.

HOW THEY PLAN TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS

- Study time-table and change in study habits.
- Plan and organise work so that they can achieve their goals.
- Pray and build their spiritual relationship
- Use failure as a stepping stone
- Parents, teachers, friends and siblings' support.
- Develop self confidence
- Disregard what others say and think about them and demonstrate to others that they are not what they think.

RESEARCHER'S PERSONAL RESPONSE

This is a preliminary report on the analysis of the first set of data collected from the students and subject teachers of form three plain of St. Joseph's Convent, St. Joseph.

From this analysis I have found that there seems to be a perception by some of the students that teachers have a negative opinion of them in terms of their ability and the personal behaviour. The English Language teacher seems to be the one that they are most likely to trust. One student actually expressed this in her self report. This class may have been labelled in some way and is probably trying to cope with this problem. The fact that the teachers deem so many of the students as attention seekers is of great importance to me right now. One student felt that they were performing as well as the other classes and that they had just as good results. Some students actually admit that the class has a reputation which is affecting them. Of importance to this study is how does all of this and in particular the perception that the students have affect or influence how they are oriented to achieve. There are two students who are national volleyball players

and who are struggling to balance their academic and sporting curricular activities. Not many of the students are assessed overall as outstanding. One student in the entire group was given an overall grade A by the English Language teacher. Many of the students were not too thrilled by the Spanish class and the teachers' report also demonstrated that there was a problem in the class. I have identified some students whom I would like to interview. I still am uncertain where the study is going. I hope that things will become clearer as the new term begins.

APPENDIX IV
FIELD NOTES FORMAT
USED DURING THE SECOND PHASE
OF DATA COLLECTION

FROM JANICE'S DESK

FIELD NOTES

Date: _____

APPENDIX IV

FIELD NOTES FORMAT

USED DURING THE SECOND PHASE

OF DATA COLLECTION

Date: _____

[illegible]

the teacher comes over and talks to me. She says au revoir to the class and leaves. [redacted] and [redacted] goes to the teacher. [redacted] writes one on the blackboard after the teacher leaves the room. [redacted] is greeted by the class. Teacher: Some people are owing me projects. [redacted] You need to erase the blackboard before the teacher comes. [redacted] Women I didn't do your homework. The teacher calls on [redacted]. I notice for the first time [redacted] and [redacted] talking to each other during class. Teacher to [redacted] stop your wild, wild guessing. [redacted] and [redacted] talk to each other constantly. [redacted] is asleep at this time. The teacher then addresses [redacted]. I see no books on your desk. The teacher notes that the bell has gone and they have not reached far. The teacher leaves the class and comes to me. I learnt from them that there were two groups in the class and that those in the other group did not like them. [redacted] is the niece of [redacted] the form teacher.

APPENDIX V

21.99 (0-21 AM) (day on which the notes were typed) FIELD NOTES FOR DAY TWO
27 January, 1999)

SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED FIELD NOTES

(Names have been blanked to ensure anonymity)

arrived at 8.10 am greeted the class teacher and assistant. I was told that there was no assembly because yesterday. [redacted] She seemed to be apologetic. I was told that I could talk to them if I wanted. I took up my place at the back of the classroom and questioned the three beauties about how they were feeling today. They said they felt better. I asked about what they had missed in Spanish and they said they would do it today. They had arranged this with the class teacher yesterday. I try to learn the names of students so that I can identify them by name and make it much more personal. I remember [redacted] and [redacted] who sits next to [redacted]. She was absent yesterday. I mistake [redacted] for [redacted] and she is upset. They have a similar appearance and probably are normally mistaken for each other.

The Biology teacher [redacted] arrives at 8.20. The class stands and greets her. She introduces the topic and asks the class to take out graph paper, which they will need for the exercise.

Teacher: Go outside and look for a small tree and get a range of leaves five and come back and draw and try to estimate the Mean Surface Area.

The students do not all listen and so they are not sure what they have to do. They only thing they know is that they have to go outside. They go out quickly and come back with one leaf or some have five different leaves.

[redacted] How much you have to pick? It have to be from the same plant?

[redacted] Didn't know you had to pick it

[redacted] I did know it had to be from the same tree.

[redacted] Yes, you all just bare [redacted] plants

[redacted] Hurry up

[redacted] I got my leaf

Teacher: Put leaf on the graph paper and draw an outline.

Try to fit them on one page. Under each leaf write estimated surface area. This is a lab

your manipulation.

The teacher comes over and talks to me. She says au revoir to the class and leaves.

_____ and _____ goes to the teacher. _____ tries one on the blackboard after the teacher leaves the room.

_____ is greeted by the class. Teacher: Some people are owing me projects.

Teacher: You need to erase the blackboard before the teacher comes.

_____ Woman I didn't do your homework.

The teacher calls on _____ I notice for the first time _____ and _____ talking to each other during class. Teacher to _____ stop your wild, loud guessing. _____ and _____ talk to each other constantly. _____ is asleep at this time. The teacher addresses _____ I see no books on your desk. The

teacher notes that the bell has gone and they have not reached far. The teacher leaves the class and comes to me. I learnt from them that there were two groups in the class and that those in the other group did not like them. _____ is the niece of _____ the form teacher.

1/21/99 10:31 AM (day on which the notes were typed and printed). FIELD NOTES FOR DAY TWO (20th January, 1999)

I arrived at 8.10 am greeted the class teacher and assistant. I was told that there was no assembly because yesterday was a holiday and no planning had taken place. She seemed to be apologetic. I was told that I could talk to them if I wanted. I took up my place at the back of the classroom and questioned the three beauties about how they were feeling today. They said they felt better. I asked about what they had missed in Spanish and they said they would do it today. They had arranged this with the class teacher yesterday. I try to learn the names of students so that I can identify them by name and make it much more personal. I remember _____ and _____ who sits next to _____. She was absent yesterday. I mistake _____ for _____ and she is upset. They have a similar appearance and probably are normally mistaken for each other.

The Biology teacher _____ arrives at 8.20. The class stands and greets her. She introduces the topic and asks the class to take out graph paper, which they will need for the exercise.

Teacher: Go outside and look for a small tree and get a range of leaves five and come back and draw and try to estimate the Mean Surface Area.

The students do not all listen and so they are not sure what they have to do. They one thing they know is that they have to go outside. They go out quickly and come back with one leaf or some have five different leaves.

_____ How much you have to pick? It have to be from the same plant?

_____ : Didn't know you had to pick it

_____ I didn't know it had to be from the same tree.

_____ Yes, you all just bare _____ plants.

_____ Hurry up.

_____ I get my leaf!

Teacher: Put leaf on the graph paper and draw an outline.

Try to fit them on one page. Under each leaf write estimated surface area. This is a lab about manipulation.

Students begin to return with leaves.

It is 8.35 and I notice that [REDACTED] is not here as yet. [REDACTED] comes to [REDACTED] for graph paper. I think the class is quite orderly given that they had to all go outside to collect the leaves and were not followed by the teacher who stayed in the classroom and gives instructions to those who come in and others are still outside looking for leaves. The teacher stops everyone and gives the instructions again. The class writes the question being given. One student tells the teacher that she is calling too fast. "Just now miss you calling too fast."

[REDACTED] looks to [REDACTED] for assistance. [REDACTED] looks to [REDACTED] to check to see if she is copying what the teacher is calling. Class is very quiet. I notice that [REDACTED] is not at her seat. She is at [REDACTED] seat. I then realise that Rochelle is absent.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] work together. Teacher goes to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] arrives at 8.40 and goes directly to her seat. Nothing is said to the teacher and the teacher does not seem to notice and so does not ask [REDACTED] anything. One student who notices her entrance says something to her. She and [REDACTED] who is her partner (they sit next to each other) chat briefly.

Afeisha: Where you get your leaves? She goes outside to get her leaves.

The teacher comes to [REDACTED] and assists her.

[REDACTED] leaves the back of the class and goes to the front next to [REDACTED]. This is where [REDACTED] normally sits. The teacher assists [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] cracks her knuckles and talks to [REDACTED] for clarification. [REDACTED] goes over to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for assistance.

Teacher comes to [REDACTED] and asks, "Can you calculate it? Let's see you do it." She shows [REDACTED] how. I want you to outline.

[REDACTED] calls the teacher to explain something to her. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are working together. [REDACTED] is very quiet and uninvolved. The teacher assists [REDACTED] who is seated at the front of the class still.

[REDACTED]: [REDACTED] can I borrow your coloured pencils. ([REDACTED] points to [REDACTED] who has them in her bag. I noted that yesterday she borrowed a Spanish text from [REDACTED] whom she sits by all the time. She was also asking someone to lend her a Literature text the day before. I am a bit concerned about this. Where are her books? She never seems to remain at her seat.

8.45 I realise that [REDACTED] is absent and thus [REDACTED] has gone to that side of the class. The left side is a noisier section. They seem to interact with each other more frequently and the teacher seems to focus on this group. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] try to communicate with Naila who is using the leaves to make what she called a lettuce.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] talk to each other. [REDACTED] talk to each other she holds [REDACTED] hand and looks directly at her. (I discovered this morning that [REDACTED] considers her her second best friend. They use to be best friends before now [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] first best friend. They sit next to each other and [REDACTED] sits in front of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] two of the "beauties" talk to each other while [REDACTED] does her assignment. [REDACTED] goes to the teacher's desk for clarification. The bell goes and the

INTERVIEW WITH (Name deleted)

May, June 8th, 1999

primary school you have you know if you don't do something you will get punishment
 will get ticks or something in secondary school you don't do it and the teachers don't
 I think they don't bother if you don't understand. Like once I ask this teacher it
 the first time I could remember asking the teacher to explain something. Because I
 really I see that they just seem they teaching because they have to teach and they
 they care but it doesn't look to me as if they care. So I don't really bother to ask you
 thing I don't understand. But I really thought I didn't understand because I studied
 I studied and I studied and I didn't get it I don't what it is I do I did the exact
 parts of what we were supposed to do and right after the test, as a matter of fact
 right after the test when the teacher came in she said I didn't understand. I was in
 the front here and I tell the teacher I don't understand. She said I really don't
 understand and I think I should ask the teacher but she didn't she just come in class and
 I was writing so I didn't get chance to ask her. But I know I was going to bad because I
 didn't understand. So when the test was over I said Miss I didn't I don't think I do good I
 I fail because everybody was telling me I do stupidness and I was wondering how
 I do stupidness when that is what I thought she was saying all the time. So I told
 her to explain it. She say next time I come in class I will be sure to explain it you don't
 need to remind me. I will explain it. So next time she come in class she just sitting down
 there and she just like watching me and you know if you watching that should tell me
 to myself you didn't remember when you watch me you should remember that I asked
 something and you told me not to remind you so I think you just ignoring me and
 I don't want to explain it. And she just went on she didn't go back on it at all. So I
 stay off fine. That's your attitude fine. So I get vexed but that's what happen pretty
 often for the years I have been coming to this school.

APPENDIX VI

SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW NOTES

(Names have been blanked to ensure anonymity)

INTERVIEW WITH (Name deleted)

Tuesday, June 8th, 1999.

In primary school you have you know if you don't do something you will get punishment you will get licks or something in secondary school you don't do it and the teachers don't bother. I think they don't bother if you don't understand. Like once I ask this teacher it was the first time I could remember asking the teacher to explain something. Because I don't really I see that they just seem they teaching because they have to teach and they say they care but it doesn't look to me as if they care. So I don't really bother to ask you something I don't understand. But I really thought I didn't understand because I studied for it I studied and I studied and I didn't get it I don't what it is I do I did the exact opposite of what we were supposed to do and right after the test, as a matter of fact before the test when the teacher was still walking up the corridor I was sitting down in the front here and I tell the person I was sitting down next to that I really don't understand and I think I should ask the teacher but she didn't she just come in class and start writing so I didn't get chance to ask her. But I know I was going to bad because I didn't understand. So when the test was over I said Miss I didn't I don't think I do good I think I fail because everybody was telling me I do stupidness and I was wondering how could I do stupidness when that is what I thought she was saying all the time. So I told her to explain it, She say next time I come in class I will be sure to explain it you don't need to remind me. I will explain it. So next time she come in class she just sitting down there and she just like watching me and you know if you watching that should tell me even self you didn't remember when you watch me you should remember that I asked you something and you told me not to remind you so I think you just ignoring me and you don't want to explain it. And she just went on she didn't go back on it at all. So I just say ok fine. That's your attitude fine. So I get vexed but that's what happen pretty much for the years I have been coming to this school.

I notice you said that you can't study at home why?

Well you see we don't exactly live alone. Right now we living with my brother girlfriend actually she is living with us. Because my brother girlfriend an niece they give me like real thunder. Is like I come home on an evening and they come and I can't go in my room because my room is in a state. I have to share my room with my brother and my mother. But is two rooms join up in one so it not really and it hot and sticky in there so I can't study in there. So I does come outside and study and they will come and they will just like torturing me and they will take my book and is like I writing here and they just fling up the book so in my face and you can't concentrate when it like that. Or they will come to my face and sing to the top of their voices and sometimes they not really singing anything they just going blah blah blah right to the top of their voices and that hard to concentrate under. And last week or week before like I told them to be quiet and their mother just explode on me and my mother was sitting down right there and my brother girlfriend she just start to curse and carry on and I was like why she doing this. All I could do was watch her and laugh. I didn't do her anything. Her children there she see they tormenting me and she not telling them anything so I can't study under that and it has been going on since form one. Right and she just so wicked and she don't tell the children anything. They just irritate me all the time. And the onliest way I could study is if I go in my room but my room is so hot and sticky I can't concentrate in there either and if I go in the room in the evening when they could go outside still they will come in the back and they know I in the room and they will come and they will be up and down running and they will bang on the window and they will do all sort of things and they will bang on the window and that is hard to study under. So so I think may be if it was just me and my mother and they are grown ups they will understand and they will keep quiet I wouldn't have noise in my head. Because like before they come home on an evening it is easy for me to study. Because like that is the best time I think I should be studying but when they come home it is just hard to study anytime after that. You can't do anything after that. And so I go in my bed very early I go in my bed about half past seven to get the first part of the news and then I go in my bed because I can't do anything. They don't even allow me to watch the TV they come and they will stand up and they will block the

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE QUESTIONNAIRE

DE STUDENT:

is being conducted among students of your age in the western secondary curriculum. I will
be your assisting in the study by completing this questionnaire.

at an examination. Simply answer the questions which follow as briefly as you can, either by
a tick (✓) mark, or writing your own words as necessary.

your answers will be kept in strictest confidence.

APPENDIX VII

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

NAME: NUMBER:

Which of the following best describes you?

Black African/Negro

Chinese

East Indian

Other

Sri Lankan/Ceylonese

White

State your religion:

Your father's religion:

Your mother's religion:

Your Guardian's religion:

With whom do you live?

Mother's occupation/job:

Father's Occupation/job:

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE QUESTIONNAIRE

TO THE STUDENT:

A study is being conducted among students of your age in this assisted secondary girl school. I will appreciate your assisting in the study by completing this questionnaire.

This is not an examination. Simply answer the questions which follow as honestly as you can, either by making a tick (/) mark, or writing your own words as necessary.

Your answers will be kept in strictest confidence.

1. STUDENT NUMBER.....

2. AGE.....

3. Which of the following best describes you?

- ☐ Black/ African/Negro
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ East Indian
- ☐ Mixed
- ☐ Syrian/Lebanese
- ☐ White

4. State your religion:.....

Your father's religion..... Your mother's religion.....

OR

Your Guardian's religion.....

5. With whom do you live?.....

6. Mother's occupation/Job:.....

Father's Occupation/Job:.....

7. (a) Give the name of the village/town in which you live:

.....

(b) How far is it from school?

.....

© How do you travel to school?

.....

8. What Primary school were you attending when you wrote Common Entrance exam?

.....

9. When you wrote Common Entrance did you pass for this secondary school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If no explain where you were transferred from and why:

.....

.....

.....

.....

10. List in order of preference three persons you would like to work with **most** in this class.

1.....

2.....

3.....

List in order of preference the three persons you would **least** like to work with in this class:

1.....

2.....

3.....

11. Do you have a good/best friend? Yes / No

(a) If yes, describe her (without naming) and say why she is your best friend.

(b) If no, why not?

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PROTOCOL WRITING

I have been observing the class over the past few hours and have been taking notes and interviewing some of the students. This has provided me with some information for the project on the achievement orientation of students in the class. I will now like to know what have been your experiences of success or failure over the past three years. I will therefore like you to spend at least three minutes reflecting on your past three years and thinking of instances when you have succeeded and when you considered you had failed in some way.

APPENDIX VIII

PROTOCOL WRITING

STIMULUS

Describe the incident/s. Give details about when, what and where the incident/s occurred. Describe your feelings and thoughts. AND Describe how you reacted and how it affected what you did in school after it happened. Give as much detail as possible about the atmosphere when the incident/s occurred.

SAMPLE OF STUDENT'S RESPONSE

I take this opportunity to thank you sincerely for your cooperation and to thank in advance those whom I will like to interview over the next week. I trust that you will continue to grow strong and will strive to be the best you can. I will be in touch with you and will want to share my findings with you. I am interested in your growth and development and look forward to seeing you at a future date.

Jaruce Fournillier
M.A. Ed student
UWI St. Augustine

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PROTOCOL WRITING

I have been observing the class over the past two terms and have been taking notes and interviewing some of the students. This has provided me with some information for the project on the achievement orientation members of the class. I will now like to know what have been your experiences of success and or failure over the past three years. I will therefore like you to spend at least three minutes reflecting on your past three years and thinking of instances when you had succeeded academically or when you considered you had failed in some way.

Describe the incident/s. Give details about when, what and where the incident/s occurred. Describe your feelings and thoughts. Identify anyone involved in the incident with you. Describe how you reacted and how it affected what you did in school after it happened. Give as much detail as possible and try to recreate the mood and atmosphere when the incident/s occurred.

I take this opportunity to thank you sincerely for your cooperation and to thank in advance those whom I will like to interview over the next week. I trust that you will continue to grow strong and will strive to be the best you can. I will be in touch with you and will want to share my findings with you. I am interested in your growth and development and look forward to seeing you at a future date.

Janice Fournillier
M.A. Ed. student
UWI St. Augustine

Form III

What do I consider failure or success? That's the first thing I should answer before I begin. Failure for me is not accomplishing what I set out to and success is obviously accomplishing it.

Well, I have been failing ever since form 1. I started with me being assessed with end of term percentages of 85% and up then it raised to 95% and up, but that was in primary school. When I started secondary school it just wasn't what I expected and I think maybe that might have caused me to be kept back academically. Our class was always loud and in chaos never ready to settle down. Never really ready to do serious work in school! That's the only place I could do serious work, because of circumstances at home.

So, when I realized that I was doing horribly bad in my academics I wanted to start studying harder, but I have always had these obstacles in my way. Between form 1 and 3 I gave up on many occasions and I think that and me not being organized well enough were my problems. Although I could say that the teachers too could have been a very reasonable, logical cause of failure because for example my French in form 1 was not as good as I hoped that was with ~~Mr. [redacted]~~. In form 2 it got better with Mrs ~~[redacted]~~ and now in form 3 it has gone back to how it was with Ms. ~~[redacted]~~.

Now, this essay or whatsoever is there

correct word. MIGHT be confusing but I am
in a hurry. I cannot take out exact include-
-s but this is pretty much what has been
taking place. Also, there is my problem with
when it is not one subject it is the other
and for me to feel I have accomplished
something I need to accomplish in everything.
Thank God pretty soon I will only have
to do the subjects I am capable of. Please
excuse my handwriting blame the pen. Oh
by the way failing a subject is 67% and
under or even 75% and under it depends
on what subject and how hard I studied
and how much of the notes I actually
had.