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**A study of the perceptions of race and experiences of prejudice in Grade
Four learners at a Cape Town primary school**

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This work has not been previously submitted in whole or in part, for the award of any degree.
It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from
the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Abstract

The researcher is a social worker at a primary school in Cape Town. This school was previously reserved for white children during the apartheid era, but now provides education for a multi-racial group of children, who are predominantly of mixed race. The researcher became aware that incidents of bullying and learner conflict in the school took on a racial flavour at times, but that there was a tendency to deny that race was a difficulty with which the children struggled. She embarked on this research in order to examine the views and experiences of these learners with regards to race and prejudice.

The researcher employed a qualitative research design and made use of a number of focus groups to gather data. These groups were run with Grade Four learners in the primary school, and explored their understanding of race, as well as their views of people from the different races that they identified. They were also asked about their own experiences of being treated in a negatively prejudiced way.

The results show that while the children tended to be reluctant at first to speak about issues of race, many of them had very strong views about their own and other groups. Some children showed very strong prejudice towards people from out-groups, while others displayed strong own-group preference, with little out-group prejudice. On the whole, participants were very reluctant to speak of experiences of negative prejudice shown towards them.

The report is concluded with some recommendations for further study into this area of South African children, race and prejudice, as well as some recommendations to the school where the study was conducted.

KEYWORDS: Racism, Prejudice, Desegregated Schooling, Children, Post Apartheid Education, Contact Hypothesis, Social Identity Development Theory.

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A study of the perceptions of race and the experiences of prejudice in Grade Four learners at a Cape Town primary school

Chapter 1. Introduction

In order to introduce the setting of this study, this chapter briefly presents the political history, which has led to the current situation in education. The rationale behind embarking on the study is then discussed, followed by the research topic, research questions, assumptions and objectives. After some clarification of concepts the structure for the rest of the report is presented.

1.1 Background to the problem

The researcher is the social worker at a primary school that was previously reserved for the education of white children during apartheid South Africa. This was a period when South Africa was deeply divided along racial lines, with policies of gross inequality and exclusion being implemented to the detriment of the vast majority of the people of this country. According to Posel (2001) the authority of the white people in this country was under threat. The number of black people moving into the urban areas was rapidly increasing, and the boundaries of race were being crossed through inter-racial marriages. In order to maintain the tenuous power of the white race in this country, and to ensure that “races (would be) rescued from 'impurity'” (Posel, 2001:52) policies of separation were implemented.

The apartheid government took it upon itself to classify all people in South Africa into four race groups, namely black, white, coloured and Indian. This classification was done using biological (though not scientific) as well as social characteristics, such as whom the person socialised with and where they lived (Posel, 2001). These racial classifications that were imposed on South Africans by the apartheid government persist in present day South Africa, where race is now used to direct efforts of redress. Mare (2001) points out that South Africans have developed “race thinking” (Mare, 2001:77) and have internalised the classifications previously imposed on them.

Education was one of the many areas affected by the policies of apartheid, with each population group receiving separate education from a primary level right through to a tertiary level. This education was separate and unequal in terms of quality and resource availability. The initial aim of this had been to ensure a superior quality of education provision to white children so that eventually the “colour bar” that reserved better paying jobs for white people was no longer necessary (Seekings, 2008). This did a lot to engender and perpetuate feelings of hatred, suspicion and distrust between people from different racial and ethnic groups. With the exception of a few private multi-racial schools, there was very little opportunity for children to interact with peers from other races.

In the run up to the end of apartheid in 1994, education was one of the first institutions to be desegregated. Schools were opened to all races, and in some areas, black, Indian and mixed race children were brought to white schools by bus, in an attempt to bring some parity to education provision in the country. Initially there was conflict and opposition in some areas, but eventually there was acceptance and some level of integration. Today this integration continues in urban schools, but is less likely in the townships and rural areas. In present-day South Africa many people continue to live in the apartheid-dictated single race areas, because continuing economic inequalities have made moving out unaffordable (Seekings, 2008).

According to the “contact hypothesis”, through experiences and contact with people from groups about which they hold stereotypical ideas, people will begin to challenge the ideas that they held about these people (Schneider, 2004). Therefore, one would postulate from this that children who are now experiencing multi racial schooling should no longer hold the racial preconceptions and prejudices that their counterparts in the old regime must have held, due to their predecessors’ lack of contact as well as the policies of the country which kept people apart. However, the researcher has observed in the school environment in which she works, there is a tendency for children to form friendships with peers of the same race group only and to exclude those who are different. Bullying and conflict are not uncommon, and too often this conflict takes on a racial or ethnic flavour.

1.2 Rationale

The purpose of this research is to examine the perceptions that the children who were born into post-apartheid South Africa hold about their own and other racial and ethnic groups, as

well as to explore their experiences of prejudice at this school. According to Davey (1983), schools have a significant role to play in reducing the meaning that race is given in social interactions. It is through positive experiences mediated by educators who help children to interact positively with peers of different races that they are able to reduce their fear and aggression towards people who are different to them. In order to make this difference, schools need to be aware of the views and experiences of their children. This research will provide the current school with information about the racial attitudes and experiences of its learners, which will help the school to introduce the necessary interventions and programs to address these.

While the researcher does not subscribe to the notion that “race” is a biological, clearly defined means of identifying and classifying people, she makes use of this term throughout the paper. This is simply for the purpose of discussion and exploring the beliefs and views of the participants of the study. The ambiguity of race as a means of classifying people was clearly illustrated to the researcher in the process of selecting participants for this study, and identifying which children could be allocated to the different, racially homogenous, focus groups. Eventually, besides the groups of white and black children, the researcher compiled groups made up of children who could be regarded as being of “mixed race”.

1.3 Topic

“A study of the perceptions of race and experiences of prejudice in Grade Four learners at a Cape Town primary school”

1.4 Main Research Questions

- a. What perceptions do learners hold about people from other racial and ethnic groups?
- b. What perceptions do learners hold about how people from other racial and ethnic groups view them?
- c. What perceptions do learners hold about people from their own racial and ethnic groups?
- d. What have their experiences of prejudice at school been?

1.5 Research Assumptions and Objectives

The assumptions of the study were:

- a. That the children hold negative perceptions about people from other racial and ethnic groups;
- b. That the children hold positive perceptions about the people from their own racial and ethnic groups;
- c. That the children have experienced prejudice at school.

The objectives of this study were:

- a. To explore the perceptions that the Grade Four learners have of people from other racial and ethnic groups.
- b. To explore the perceptions that the Grade Four learners have of how people from other racial and ethnic groups view them.
- c. To explore the perceptions that the Grade Four learners have of people from their own racial and ethnic groups.
- d. To examine what their experiences of prejudice at school have been.

1.6 Concept Clarification

The term **coloured** is one that was used during apartheid South Africa to classify people who were essentially of mixed race, or who could not be categorised as white or black. Through the apartheid years, the coloured people of South Africa have developed their own coloured identity (Adhikari, 2009). In the school where this research was conducted, there are many children of mixed race who have one white parent and one parent who is black or coloured. The coloured learner label is used administratively in the school to define children who are of mixed race as well as those who are part of the group that identify themselves as coloured.

Mixed race, for the purpose of this research, refers to children who identify themselves as being “coloured”, as well as those who are the result of the union between two people of different races.

An **ethnic group** is “one whose members share a distinct awareness of a common cultural identity, separating them from other groups around them” (Giddens, 1990:726).

Ethnocentrism, is a term adopted by an American sociologist, Sumner (1906 cited in Davey, 1983) and is central to the concept of prejudice. This term refers to the tendency to think highly of one’s own racial or ethnic group, and to believe that people who are different to this group are inferior (Davey, 1983).

A **Grade Four learner** is a child in the fourth year of primary school, and usually between the ages of 9 and 10 years, but who may be slightly older. The term “learner” replaced the word “pupil” and “grade” was substituted for “standard” according to the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) (Dawson, 2007).

By **perceptions**, the researcher is referring to attitudes, beliefs and values that the subjects hold about their own and other racial or ethnic groups.

By **prejudice**, the researcher is referring to “the holding of preconceived ideas about an individual or group, ideas that are resistant to change even in the face of new information. Prejudice can be either negative or positive” (Giddens, 1990:729). Allport (1954), who formulated the Contact Hypothesis on prejudice, calls it a strong dislike of another person or group in his definition, “Ethnic prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalisation. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed towards a group as a whole, or towards an individual because he is a member of that group” (Allport, 1954:9). In Brown (1995) we find a definition that focuses on group dislike because of negative social attitudes and thoughts about that group. He says that prejudice is “The holding of derogatory social attitudes or cognitive beliefs, the expression of negative affect, or the display of hostile or discriminatory behaviour towards members of a group on account of their membership of that group” (Brown, 1995:8). The researcher will employ all three of these definitions for this study.

Race is defined as the “differences in human physical stock regarded as categorising large numbers of individuals together” (Giddens, 1990:747). A racial group is therefore people who are regarded as being members of the same group according to this concept of race. Holmes (1995) acknowledges that when it comes to definitions of race, most refer to it as a biological criterion or one that includes language and skin colour in an attempt to group people together. However she feels that these criteria are vague and therefore unsatisfactory. Instead she prefers the use of the term “ethnic group” rather than race, since “ethnic group” refers to the group with which people identify themselves and with whom they share culture (Holmes, 1995:4).

The following quotations from Green (1995) speak of the spurious nature of race and how the notion of race is in fact a construction. “In the natural world there are no clear, discrete things called ‘races’ ... and there is no way that a ‘race’ can be objectively defined or consistently measured ” (Green, 1995:11) and, “... no one is a member of a particular ‘race’ simply because he or she has a given amount of skin pigmentation or a particular type of nose, eyes or hair. These physiological features, when we make an issue of them, are really representations of something else, namely our creativity and perverseness in devising social categories, sticking individuals into them and making moral evaluations” (Green, 1995:12). This idea of race as a social construction is further discussed by Shih, Bonam, Sanchez and Peck (2007) who assert that racial categories have been created in the context of the social world, and are neither biological nor scientific categories for the classification of people. While they acknowledge that race plays a central role in the contexts of and prospects available to people, they assert that there is no biological basis for these classifications (Shih, Bonam, Sanchez and Peck, 2007;125).

The researcher strongly agrees with this understanding of race, and she believes that in the South African context, it holds a very important role in understanding the history of the country and also in understanding its present context. In South Africa, the terms “coloured”, “white” and “black” were enforced upon people, and regarded by the apartheid government as a biological indication of intelligence and the right to resources, or the lack thereof. The researcher felt that by employing an initial capital for these terms in this present study, she would be acknowledging the validity of their use by the apartheid government of South Africa. She has therefore only used an initial capital in direct quotes from other sources. In this study, the researcher will employ Giddens’ (1990) definition of race.

1.7 Structure of this Report

This report continues with Chapter Two, which contains a discussion of the development of children and how they learn to identify their own racial group as well as the groups of other people. Chapter Two will also discuss the development of prejudice in children as well as some of the contextual factors that influence the current study. Chapter Three describes the procedure that was followed in order to gather the data needed to explore the research questions identified earlier in this chapter. Chapter Four contains a presentation of the findings of this study, linking these to the literature discussed in Chapter Two. And finally, Chapter Five concludes the study with some recommendations arising from the findings of Chapter Four.

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Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter will present what is found in the literature about the development of children in terms of prejudice as well as some studies about their experience of “race” and “prejudice”. The chapter will also provide some historical background into the current South African context, and the impact of this history on the present day education setting.

The chapter begins with a discussion of Allport (1954) and Nesdale, Maas, Durkin and Griffiths (2005) theories on the effects of contact on the development of prejudice, which form the conceptual framework to this study.

2.1 Conceptual Framework for this study

2.1.1 Allport’s Contact Hypothesis

Gordon Allport (1954) formulated the contact hypothesis that stated that direct contact between groups would lead to a reduction in stereotypical views and ultimately to a reduction in prejudice. In the years since this theory there have been a number of studies that have both supported and refuted his theory (Dutton, Singer and Devlin, 1998; McClenahan, Cairns, Dunn and Morgan, 1996; Pettigrew, 1998). However, his hypothesis remains a useful basis from which to begin a discussion on prejudice.

According to Allport (1954), various sociologists claim that when people of different groups meet, they usually go through four stages in their relationship. The first stage involves simple contact between them. This is followed by some competition, then there is accommodation, and finally there is assimilation. But Allport (1954) goes on to say that it is the type of contact occurring between the groups that will determine whether the contact leads to a decrease or increase in prejudice. If the two groups are of equal status and they are working towards the same goals, this contact between them is more likely to result in reduced prejudice (Allport, 1954). Further studies into the effect of contact on prejudice have revealed that there are a number of factors that need to be in place before contact can result in a reduction of prejudice (Holtman, Louw, Tredoux & Carney, 2005). Some of these factors are mentioned by Cook (1969, cited in Luis and Krige, 1981). The five factors he mentions are 1) that the two groups should have equal status, 2) the group members must get to know each other personally, 3)

there should be positive rewards for their working together 4) there must be norms in their societies about the groups interacting amiably and 5) the two groups should share like qualities. There are in fact too many factors for them all to be present at any given moment in one single context. This means that while contact between people is very helpful in terms of changing perceptions and stereotypes, simple contact on its own it is not sufficient to reduce prejudice as a whole.

2.1.2 Social Identity Development Theory

There are a number of theories as to how prejudice develops. Nesdale *et al* (2005) speak of Social Identity Development Theory (SIDT), which puts forward a four-tiered process to the development of ethnic prejudice in children. The first stage they say is characterised by a total lack of differentiation between ethnic groups. This is followed by ethnic awareness, when the child is able to acknowledge the existence of different ethnic groups. Then comes ethnic preference when the child shows preference for his or her own group. In the final stage the child may move on to ethnic prejudice, but this is not inevitable. The significance of this theory is that it suggests that children do not necessarily form attitudes of prejudice simply because they are able to identify and show a preference for their own racial group (Nesdale *et al*, 2005).

Allport (1954) had earlier presented similar thinking when he stated that children first show a preference for their own group without showing any dislike towards the other groups. According to SIDT, by the age of four or five years, children who live in multi racial environments are usually in this stage of ethnic preference (Nesdale *et al*, 2005). They are aware of which ethnic group they belong to, and are also aware of social status in their society.

The move from ethnic preference to ethnic prejudice means that the child no longer simply prefers his/her own group to what has been identified as the out-group, but now displays an active dislike for the out-group. Nesdale *et al* (2005) state that whether children move from preference to prejudice will depend on the extent to which they identify with their own social group, the extent that prejudice is regarded as a norm amongst the people in their social group, and the extent to which the child's in-group regards the out-group as being a threat to them. This theory therefore argues that if a child is part of a group that does not subscribe to

attitudes of prejudice towards other groups, or where the child experiences harmonious inter-ethnic group interactions, the child may never move from racial preference to racial prejudice (Nesdale *et al*, 2005).

This is significant in terms of the school environment and the general attitude in the school towards other groups, since children spend a significant amount of time there. A school that encourages harmonious inter-ethnic interaction and is positive about all groups could be an excellent arena for children to engage with different people in a positive way. Unfortunately the opposite also holds true, and schools can be potent breeding grounds for strong attitudes of prejudice.

Nesdale *et al* (2005) also found that as they increased in age the subjects of their study become more aware that prejudice and discrimination are generally not acceptable in society. The children began to show less expressed dislike towards the out-group and displayed greater neutrality. However, this was only true when their social group did not feel threatened by the out-group, and did not hold norms of excluding outsiders.

Brewer (1999 cited in Aboud, 2003) mentions some conditions that seem to promote the development of prejudice towards out-groups in children. The first of these is the notion that one's own group is in some way superior to the out group, and that the actions and perspectives of one's own group are regarded as being right and superior to those of the out-group. This is essentially an ethnocentric notion. A second condition refers to when the child's social world is also segmented along racial or ethnic lines. This bears particular significance in the South African context, where thousands of black people live in abject poverty in both rural and urban areas, and are often depicted in the media as victims of natural disasters and diseases. While in post-apartheid South Africa there is growing racial diversity in the higher socio economic echelons, this process is a gradual one. Therefore there is still the possibility for children to associate particular race groups with certain socio-economic groups, leading to prejudice. In Cape Town there is a growing and ever more affluent middle class of black people and people of mixed race and this is also something that the children are witnessing, that may possibly affect their attitudes of prejudice in a positive way.

2.2 Children and Race

2.2.1 Categorisation

According to Davey (1983), when the newborn baby encounters the strange new environment outside of the womb, it is inundated by an overwhelming array of sounds, sights, sensations and other stimuli. In order to avoid becoming totally overwhelmed by these, and also to make some sense of everything it encounters, the infant starts to categorize. This begins with simple categories, like using the word “nana” for any liquid presented to him/her in a feeding bottle, and eventually evolves to more complex categories (Davey, 1983). In this way the infant learns to distinguish what is harmful from what is safe. Categorising for the baby is essentially a survival mechanism, as it simplifies the environment and makes the quick identification of objects and danger possible (Davey, 1983).

The child will eventually progress from categorising things to making social categorisations about the world and the people he or she encounters. Davey (1983) points out that the categorisation of things is very different to the social categorisation of people, as the former does not involve values or emotions, while the latter does. Through this process of categorisation, children also learn to identify the groups to which they do and do not belong. They are able to assign themselves to these groups and are aware of the feelings attached to identifying with them. They also become aware of the prestige or lack thereof that these groups are afforded in their particular society (Davey, 1983).

2.2.2 Child Development

During the primary school years, children are believed to be in Eric Erikson’s fourth stage of psychosocial development and are facing the resolution of the crisis of Industry versus Inferiority (Cole & Cole, 2001). During this stage, the successful accomplishment of tasks leads to increased self-regard. Developing a sense of worth is a vital part of this and it is often to be found in children’s group experiences, since they measure themselves against their accomplishments amongst peers. As a result, children tend to identify strongly with any group of which they are made members. This shows their natural instinct to form an in-group preference, regardless of the nature of the grouping. This is not necessarily accompanied by an equally strong out-group prejudice (Nesdale *et al*, 2005; Brown, 1995).

From the age of six years until about twelve years, the child goes through Piaget's Concrete Operational stage of cognitive development during which he/she develops concrete operations. A chief characteristic of this stage is decentration, which finds the child now able to focus on many aspects of a problem and to classify things at more than one level. There is also significantly less egocentrism, and the child is able to consider how others perceive him/her (Cole & Cole, 2001). The significance in terms of the development of prejudice is that the child is now able to classify an individual in a number of different ways and as belonging to multiple groups. Katz calls this "multiple classification ability" and links this ability to lower levels of prejudice in children just starting grade school (Katz, 2003:902). According to Dutton, Singer and Devlin (1998) from the ages of eight to twelve years, children begin to internalise and maintain the perceptions about race that are held by their society. They acquire these through their interactions with others, much of which happens at school, as well as through watching television.

In terms of the South African context, the theory of Tajfel (1959 cited in Brown, 1995:42) on the "cognitive consequences of categorization" is particularly significant. Tajfel found that when a category is forced upon a set of objects, or people or situations, there is a tendency for people to see the members within each created group as being more similar to each other, and the members of the other group as being more different than they would have if they were not put into these groups. In apartheid South Africa, racial categories were forced upon people, and many strongly identified with the group that they were assigned to, while they regarded people from the other racial groups as being very extremely different to themselves.

2.2.3 Children, Race and Prejudice

There has been a tendency to believe that the development of racial prejudice in children is the result of what they are taught by their parents, and that, if it were not for this input from their parents, they would remain unaware of racial differences between people (Katz, 2003). This has been a contentious issue and has prompted much research, but there had been very little done with children younger than three years of age. The study by Katz (2003) is particularly interesting since it provides a breakthrough understanding of racial conceptualisation in the young infant, and tracks this until the subjects reached the age of six years.

Phyllis Katz (2003) embarked on a longitudinal study that began with a group of 200 six-month-old babies, and ended when these children were six years old and starting school. One half of the babies was African American and the other half European American. The families came from various socio-economic backgrounds. The great value of this study was that it tracked the development of understanding race in young children, and also examined how early on in life this began.

A number of studies (Nesdale *et al*, 2005; Aboud, 2003; Kowalski, 2003) have found that children have an awareness of racial categories from around three years of age, but Katz's (2003) study showed that at the age of six months, when presented with race and gender cues, while the white babies looked longer at the one face of different gender in the group of faces presented to them, the black babies looked longer at the one face of a different race to the others. This means that these young babies already had established categories for both race and gender. Katz attributed the difference in the responses obtained from the white and black babies to socialization. She noted that in the geographical area that this study was conducted, black people are smaller and white people greater in number. Therefore the black babies were exposed more often to people of other races, while the white babies were not. Because of their exposure to people of different races, the black babies had already developed categories to identify racial difference, while the white babies had not (Katz, 2003).

Another interesting finding of this study was when these same babies were 12-16 months old. Their parents were instructed to go through a picture book with them that showed an equal number of black and white people. Both the black and white parents tended not to mention the race of the people in these pictures to their children. Instead they commented on gender. However, both groups of parents were also more inclined to focus their children's attention on the pictures of people who were racially similar to them (Katz, 2003). This avoidance of engaging with race was confirmed later on when the children were three years old, and the parents told the researcher that they tended not to discuss race with their children. Katz (2003) discusses how paradoxical it is that while the parents tended to avoid discussing race, their children displayed very high levels of racial awareness. Furthermore, the study found that when the subjects had reached the age of six years, it was the children whose parents actively spoke to them about race in a positive manner from an early age who showed the least racial bias and prejudice (Katz, 2003).

While studies such as this one have found that children do not acquire their attitudes about race from their parents directly, since they often are not comfortable speaking about it with their children, parents do influence their children's racial attitudes indirectly in a number of ways. These include the choices they make about the neighbourhoods they choose to live in, who their friends are (multiracial, single race, biased), and the schools to which they send their children (Katz, 2003).

By the age of three years, both groups of children in Katz's study showed a preference for their own racial group. By the time they were five and six years old, the white children showed a dramatic increase in this own-group preference. With the black children however, their preference for their own group decreased dramatically by the same age. Katz states that this is an indication that these black children had developed an understanding of the difference in social status enjoyed by their own group, versus that enjoyed by people of the white group, and so preferred the group of higher status (Katz, 2003). This affected their choice of friends too, as they tended to look for children of a higher perceived social status to befriend. The significance of this is that at the age of six years, children are entering the school system where they will often encounter peers from other racial groups. Encountering racially diverse peers in a positive and non-threatening way at school can help children to build a positive sense of their own identity, instead of desiring to belong to a different group.

Brown (1995) discusses a number of studies done in the early to mid 1900's around racial identification and preference. In particular he speaks of the well-known research done by Kenneth and Mamie Clark in 1947, which looked at the ability of children aged between three and seven years to identify themselves with a doll that represented their own ethnic group. They found that in general the black children identified with the darker doll and the white children with the lighter doll. What they were surprised to find however, was that some black children identified with the lighter doll. In the three-year-old group of black subjects, 60% identified with the lighter doll, however this changed by the time they reached seven years when only 23% of them did so. In their study as a whole, while two thirds of the black children identified with the darker doll, 95% of the white children identified with the lighter doll. Brown (1995) also mentions a study by Asher and Allen done in 1969, which found that both the black and the white children aged three to eight years showed a preference for the lighter coloured puppet. They found that this kind of preference in the black children peaked at the age of about six years and showed some decline from seven and eight years (Brown,

1995). This shows some identity conflict in the young black children in terms of who they are, and who they would like to be in society.

2.2.4 Children and Friendships

Simple contact between people of other racial or ethnic groups has been found to be insufficient to reduce the tendency for children across the age groups to prefer friendships in their own race group (Davey, 1983). Davey discusses studies conducted in both primary and secondary schools where the dominant white race experienced being both in the minority and in the majority in their test groups. Yet in both these cases there was a tendency for the white children to still prefer making friendships in their own racial group. Therefore the experience of being in the minority group and having access to or contact with children of other races did not decrease the likelihood that these white children would prefer to make friendships in their own race group (Davey, 1983).

Brown (1995) discusses the findings of the 1977 study by Schofield and Sagar. They observed that in the racially integrated school where they conducted their study, while it was common to find that children preferred to make friendships with peers of the same ethnicity, when they were in a classroom environment that encouraged contact between peers who perceived themselves to be of equal status, cross racial friendships were more likely to occur. This supports Allport's (1954) theory that it is contact between groups of equal status who are working together towards the same goal that will reduce prejudice.

2.2.5 Bullying

The matter of bullying in today's schools is one of rising concern, and has had some tragic consequences such as suicide, or death when the bullying is extremely violent. There are many types of bullying that have been identified, and one of these is racial bullying (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000). These authors speak not only of the prevalence of bullying exercised upon ethnic minorities, but also of the bullying experienced within ethnic minorities. In their study of Asian children in an area of Lancashire in Great Britain, they found the children speaking as much of being bullied by white children, as they did of being bullied by other Asian children of different ethnicities to their own. Children taking part in this study spoke of being

bullied because of their dress, their height and build as well as their cultural practices (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000).

The reason for children engaging in bullying behaviour has been attributed to their feelings of disempowerment in the home or elsewhere, where they are the victims of various abuses. These children then take out their frustrations and disempowered feelings on peers who they perceive to be less powerful and who they feel they can dominate (Wilczenski, Steegmann, Braun, Feeley, Griffin, Horowitz, & Olson, 1994). These same authors identify the link between racism and bullying by commenting on how these both involve a power dynamic of asserting power over another who is regarded as being less powerful.

Racial bullying therefore seems to be the phenomenon of a disempowered person victimising another that they feel will not be able to stand up for and defend themselves. Often this will be someone from a group that is already experiencing disempowerment and less status in the society, which children are able to understand (Katz 2003). In Eslea and Mukhtar's (2000) study, the bullying was between one Asian ethnicity and another, which illustrates that it can be inter-ethnic too, and not just between racial out- and in-groups.

2.3 The South African Context

2.3.1 Apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa

During South Africa's well-known period of racial segregation known as "apartheid", legislation was put into place to keep people from different races apart. Membership to a particular race group was determined according to the Population Registration Act (No 30 of 1950), along very subjective and unscientific criteria:

"A white person is one who in appearance is, or who is generally accepted as, a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously is a white person, is generally accepted as a Coloured person. A native is a person who is in fact or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa. A Coloured person is a person who is not a white person nor a native" (Population Registration Act (No 30 of 1950) cited in Seekings, 2008:3).

There were two main aims for this classification and subsequent legislation. Firstly, to ensure that the white race remained pure and uncontaminated by the blood of other races through the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (No 55 of 1949) and the Immorality Amendment Act (No 21 of 1950), and secondly to ensure that white people enjoyed economic privilege and therefore supremacy and superiority (Seekings, 2008). With the swelling numbers of black people entering the cities, the authority of white rule was under threat. Apartheid was the response to this threat to the power of the white government (Posel, 2001). Seekings points out that post-apartheid South Africa has been significantly shaped by the years of apartheid. Firstly, adults in present-day South Africa have lived through apartheid and still carry the memories and emotions with them today. Secondly, the effects of apartheid are deep-rooted and can be seen all over this society in education, the demographics, employment, economy and the social stratifications (Seekings, 2008).

With regards to the economy, one now finds that the wealth of the country is no longer in the hands of just a few, privileged people. Due to the practices of affirmative action, access to the country's wealth is now also possible for black, mixed race and Indian people (Seekings, 2008). Because of changes in access to education and also to the labour market through affirmative action policies, there has been a rapid economic growth of the black middle class and the black elite. However, at the same time there has also been a dramatic increase in the unemployment and poverty of black people. This means huge inequalities amongst black people. Class is no longer divided as clearly along racial lines as it was in the past. Instead today we find “...the almost entirely African poor, the mostly African working classes, and the multi-racial middle classes and elites” (Seekings, 2008:7).

2.3.2 The Coloured Identity

Apartheid also led to the formation of identity around the races that were allocated to people by the apartheid government. Mixed race people, as noted in the earlier quote, were in fact a group of mixed heritage people that were arbitrarily grouped together by the government into a category called “coloured”, because they did not fit into the categories of white nor black. In their experience of being oppressed together, the people called “coloured” found support and identification with those who were similarly classified and who shared their losses and the trauma of forced removals (Trotter, 2009). They also now shared geographical areas, schools and other resources because of forced removals. What developed was a strong emergence of

Coloured Identification (Ruiters, 2009). This is of particular significance in the Western Cape where the racial make up of the province is very different to that of the rest of South Africa. While African black people comprise the majority race group in all other provinces, the Western Cape has a more than 50% mixed race majority (Ruiters, 2009). According to the results from census 2007, the Cape Town population at the time of the census consisted of 44% mixed race, 34% black African, 19.3% white and 1.8% Asian (Small, 2008). The experience of a Coloured Identity in Cape Town, while not unique, is of particular significance in this province.

According to Ruiters (2009) this identification of “coloured” people with each other as a group has remained even after the legislation of the country no longer classified them as such. What we do find now however is a new group of people who are emerging as the result of inter racial marriages which are no longer prohibited after the removal of the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (No 55 of 1949) in 1985. There are a number of children such as this at the school where the current research was conducted. These children do not necessarily share in the Coloured Identity that thousands of “coloured” people in Cape Town share. They are a new generation of mixed heritage people.

Ruiters (2009) also discusses the issue of the placement of “coloured” people. As a group of people who are of mixed heritage and decent, where do they place themselves in this new South Africa? The feeling that they are not really black, neither do they identify with being African, has led many people to question where they fit into the post apartheid South Africa (Ruiters, 2009).

Dutton *et al* (1998) discuss how the group of people that form the majority in terms of numbers in a population often do not have to come to terms with their racial identity, since they are often the primary people that they have to engage with or encounter. They quote Katz (1978) who said that in the United States where they are in the majority in terms of numbers, “White people do not see themselves as white” (Dutton *et al*, 1998:42). This is interesting in relation to the mixed race people in Cape Town, who are in the majority in this province. One might expect to find among the new generation of mixed race children in post-apartheid South Africa that the awareness of their racial identity is not that strong.

2.3.3 The impact of the South African Media on Prejudice

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the media has a powerful role to play in the development of prejudice in children. The study by Katz (2003) found a correlation between lower levels of stereotyping and increased amounts of time spent watching television amongst the younger children. She felt that this could be because the kind of television that very young children watch tends to promote racial diversity, which is not the case with the television that older children watch. She mentions the findings of Graves (1999 cited in Katz, 2003) that at grade school level, there is a direct correlation between high levels of television watching and gender and race stereotypes. These older children often do not have the appropriate contact with or support from adults who can explain and put into perspective for them what they have just seen.

Holmes (1995) also speaks about the impact that the media, and in particular television, has on the development of children's racial beliefs. She mentions the findings of Greenberg (1986 cited in Holmes, 1995) who speaks about the importance of how minorities are portrayed on television and whether they are shown to be interacting with other groups. In South Africa, apartheid television showed very clear stereotypes in terms of the roles that black and white people were expected to play in South African society. Black people were shown to be the gardeners and domestic servants, while the white people had jobs in commerce, education, law, medicine and other professions of prestige.

South African television has come a long way since then. However, because of our history of inequality, there is still a tendency for the criminal and disadvantaged members of society to be shown to be largely from certain race groups. If a child does not have an adult with him/her to explain what it is that he/she is seeing, the child would tend to generalise what he/she is seeing to all members of that particular race (Holmes, 1995).

2.3.4 Education in Apartheid South Africa

In terms of education, during apartheid there were four separate ministries to control education for the four identified population groups of "whites", "coloureds", "blacks" and "Indians". The education provided to each group was known to be different, and was intended to be appropriate for the "culture and aspirations in life" of each population group (Tihanyi, 2007:181). The opening up of schools in the early 1990's meant desegregation and the

opportunity for children to attend schools they had previously been unable to attend. However, the cost of school fees at these schools made it possible for some level of control in terms of who was able to afford to attend. The black township schools were then and still are predominantly black (Tihanyi, 2007).

Soudien (2007) points out the failure on the part of the new post-apartheid government to fully consider what this desegregated education meant, and how best to go about introducing it. He mentions that the new legislation failed to account for the fact that most people of South Africa were still geographically segregated, living in the townships and suburbs that they were forced into through the Groups Areas Act (No 41 of 1950) which had not been abolished as yet. It also failed to take into account the racial composition of the teaching staff at the schools, which remained unchanged, or the content of what they were teaching. However, desegregation in education as such was not something entirely new to South Africa. Since the 1970's the Anglican and Catholic churches had defied apartheid policy and allowed children of all races to be educated in their schools. Soudien (2007) points out the failure of the post-apartheid government to turn to these educational institutions such as the Anglican St Barnabas College in Johannesburg and the Catholic Open School's Movement, to make use of their wealth of experience in providing desegregated education.

According to the South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996) all schools were obliged to allow admission to all children regardless of race (Soudien, 2007). Desegregation in the 1990's was regarded by many of the white schools as being coupled with their need, and even responsibility, to help the black children to adapt and fit into their white culture, since they believed the black children did not have the social, cultural or economic tools to cope in the white school environment. There continued to exist an air of white cultural supremacy instead of an embracing and acceptance of black and other ethnic groups (Soudien, 2007). Tihanyi (2007) refers to this too and indicates that for many black, mixed race and Indian children who went to these now open schools, trying to fit in was part of the price they had to pay to obtain this education that many felt would help them obtain access to the higher socio economic brackets of South African society. Another difficulty was the predominantly white teaching staff at these schools (Tihanyi, 2007). The people that these children had to look up to and role model at school were so very different to themselves.

2.3.5 Studies into Desegregated School Experiences

There have been a number of studies into desegregated schooling, and the experiences of the children in these schools. The research by Holtman *et al* (2005) with high school children presents us with interesting insights into the attitudes of children in desegregated schools in South Africa, ten years after the end of apartheid. It measures how the contact at school as well as outside of school, between three of the race groups has impacted on their attitudes towards people from other groups. Their study came out in strong support of Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis and found that interracial contact is ultimately the best way to reduce prejudiced attitudes and views towards people from other races.

The study of Dutton *et al* (1998) also looked at the issue of the racial attitudes and identities of children in racially segregated and integrated schools in the United States of America. They found that the children at the racially integrated schools were more likely to have friendships with children of other races than the children from segregated schools. This suggested that contact with other races tended to make the children more accepting of people who are different to themselves.

The study in South Africa by Luiz and Krige (1981) was aimed at examining the effectiveness of contact between white and mixed race girls at racially segregated convent schools, in improving their attitudes towards each other. They found that by getting girls of similar ages, intelligence levels and socio economic statuses to engage in social interaction with each other, as well as to work together on tasks, there was an improvement in their attitudes towards people of the other group. This confirms Allport's theory that contact between people of equal social status who are working together towards the same goal will help to reduce prejudice. The effectiveness of this kind of contact in reducing prejudice is increased if the contact is enforced by institutional structures such as education (Allport, 1954).

2.3.6 Race in Post-apartheid South Africa

As much as South Africa has made huge strides in terms of moving on from the apartheid era, and addressing the huge inequalities that it sanctioned, race is still very much part of post-apartheid South Africa. Just as it was intrinsic in dividing the society and allowing access to resources and to the development of identities, it has now become intrinsic to the redress that is taking place (Posel, 2001). The Employment Equity Act (No 55 of 1998), which is intended

to level out the inequalities caused by apartheid, dictates preferential employment for people who are black, female or disabled. The black people referred to are implied though not specified as those who were classified in apartheid as African, “coloured” and Indian (Posel, 2001).

Race is therefore still central to the experience of South Africans and to the way people interact with each other. It is also integral to how they identify themselves with the groups they feel they belong to, as well as those they regard as being the out-group. Mare (2001) refers to this as race thinking and says that it:

“... refers not only to the manner in which we make sense of social relations, actions and events, but also to the way in which we perceive our own group membership and those of others, the way in which we share identities with some and are distinguished from others the making of boundaries between 'us' and 'them'” (Mare, 2001:77).

Marcelle Dawson’s study (2007) found that this “race-thinking” that Mare (2001:77) describes, was prevalent amongst learners at a Johannesburg high school. Her study found that many learners related the race of their fellow learners with certain expected behaviours from them. They also linked race with the way certain learners dressed, spoke and the music that they liked. Issues such as language and religion were also identified as separating people of different races (Dawson, 2007).

Posel (2001) also speaks of how the distinct races were identified during apartheid by the individual’s skin colour, language, employment, religion, with whom they were friends, who they married, and their surname. She says that in the post apartheid era, people continue to use racial classifiers when speaking of others, as if by doing so they are adding an extra dimension of understanding about the individual being spoken of. Mare (2001) speaks of how when he asks students to describe race, they usually begin with skin colour, and then start adding a number of other features in an attempt to clarify what is an inadequate description for race.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at some theories of prejudice development in children as well as the Contact Hypothesis and Social Identity Development Theory. It looked at the idea of contact as a means to reduce prejudiced thinking in children as well as the conditions of contact that make this a more effective means of prejudice reduction, as well as various pieces of research that have examined this area of prejudice formation in children.

Since the current research took place in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, the chapter also spoke briefly about the legacy of apartheid and the effect that this has had on the current education system, as well as the process of desegregation that South African schools went through. There has been research into how learners at these schools currently experience race and prejudice in their schools, and some of these studies have been briefly discussed.

In the following chapter the researcher will present the methodology used to conduct this study.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher will present the research design used for this study, as well as the research context, and the processes employed for sampling, data collection, data capturing and data analysis. The chapter concludes with the limitations to the study identified by the researcher.

3.1 Research Design

Both qualitative and quantitative research designs can be used very effectively to increase the knowledge base on a number of areas in the social sciences. Each has its own particular and equally valuable approach to this task of gathering information (Tutty, Rothery & Grinnell, 1996).

A quantitative approach aims to produce statistical data, and aims to show what the effects are of certain actions. The data that is obtained from a quantitative study are usually numerical. Qualitative studies on the other hand, aim to obtain a deeper understanding of particular phenomena, and to gain more insight into human experiences. It is helpful to use a qualitative design when the subjective experiences of the subjects are of particular interest to the researchers (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). While quantitative research would usually conclude with the original hypothesis being proved or disproved, the qualitative study will conclude with a discussion that may result in the forming of a hypothesis based on what was uncovered during the study. Other researchers could then make use of the findings of that qualitative study, and explore further the hypotheses that were generated (Leedy & Ormond, 2005).

In the case of this present research, the aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions and experiences of the subjects, who were learners at the school. The questions that this research aimed to explore called for an approach that would bring out depth and richness of information through discussion. This could best be achieved through a qualitative research design. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), a qualitative study aims to “...answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena, often with the purpose of describing, and understanding the phenomena from the participants’ point of view...” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:94). This is what the researcher aimed to do through her exploration of the perceptions and experiences of her subjects on the issues of race and prejudice.

As the resident social worker in this school, over the preceding two years, the researcher had already begun the research process through participant observation and also conversations with a number of learners who shared their experiences and the challenges of being in this multi-cultural and multi-racial school environment. She had been able to observe the interactions between peers in the classroom and on the playground. This provided some insight and the beginnings of a knowledge base about this topic.

Kowalski (2003) states that many studies on child prejudice have made use of techniques which force their subjects to attribute positive and negative values to some sort of representation of the subjects' own group or to that of the other group (e.g. pictures or dolls depicting different races). The problem here is that the subjects would often not want to attribute a negative value to their own group due to high in-group preference, and so would attribute these negative values to the other group, which may be incorrectly interpreted as out-group prejudice. When the children are not forced to attribute positive and negative qualities, they often show very positive views of the out-group. This highlighted the need to avoid forced-choice methodology when examining in- and out-group attitudes in children, and to rather explore their attitudes towards different groups (Kowalski, 2003).

For this reason, the researcher decided to engage in in-depth discussions with the subjects of this study through the use of small focus groups. In this way, the learners were encouraged to engage in open discussion of the topic, without being forced to make any choices or judgements between racial groups – their own or others.

3.2 The Context

3.2.1 Socio economic level of families at the school

The school where this research was conducted services an area of widely differing socio economic groups. Just a few roads away from the school is an area made up of Council flats and semi-detached houses. During the apartheid years this area provided accommodation for white people who were employed by the City Council. During the post apartheid years, many of these white people continued to live in the homes. A number of them are on social and disability grants and pensions, and many are unemployed. There are also a number of black

and mixed race people who have returned to the area to live in homes given to them by the government as compensation for their removal from the area during apartheid. In addition, with the abolition of the Groups Areas Act (No 41 of 1950), many mixed race and black people also moved into the area. In this area there is much poverty, and the children often come to school having had no breakfast, and with no lunch.

A large portion of learners at the school come from predominantly mixed race neighbouring residential areas. The socio-economic statuses of these families vary with some having average to below-average incomes, while others are doing very well economically and are in professional employment with access to good resources.

There are also a number of children who travel in from far outside of the school's catchment area. Many of them come from traditionally black township areas, and have been accepted at the school because their parents are working in the school's catchment area.

3.2.2 Racial Demographics of the school

Figure 3.1 below shows that the learners at the school are predominantly mixed race, making up 76% of the entire learner population. White learners constitute 12% and the black learners are 10%, with the remaining two percent being made up of Asian children and those who have classified themselves as "Other". This predominance of mixed race learners is a reflection of the Western Cape demographics, which shows mixed race people making up the majority of the population at over 40%, while the number of African blacks and Asians in the population continues to increase. There are not many black learners at this school however, but this is probably because of the location of the school and the fact that many people are still living in the racially engineered areas of apartheid (Small, 2008). The racial demographics of the Grade Four children is very similar to that of the school, as can be seen in Figure 3.2 below.

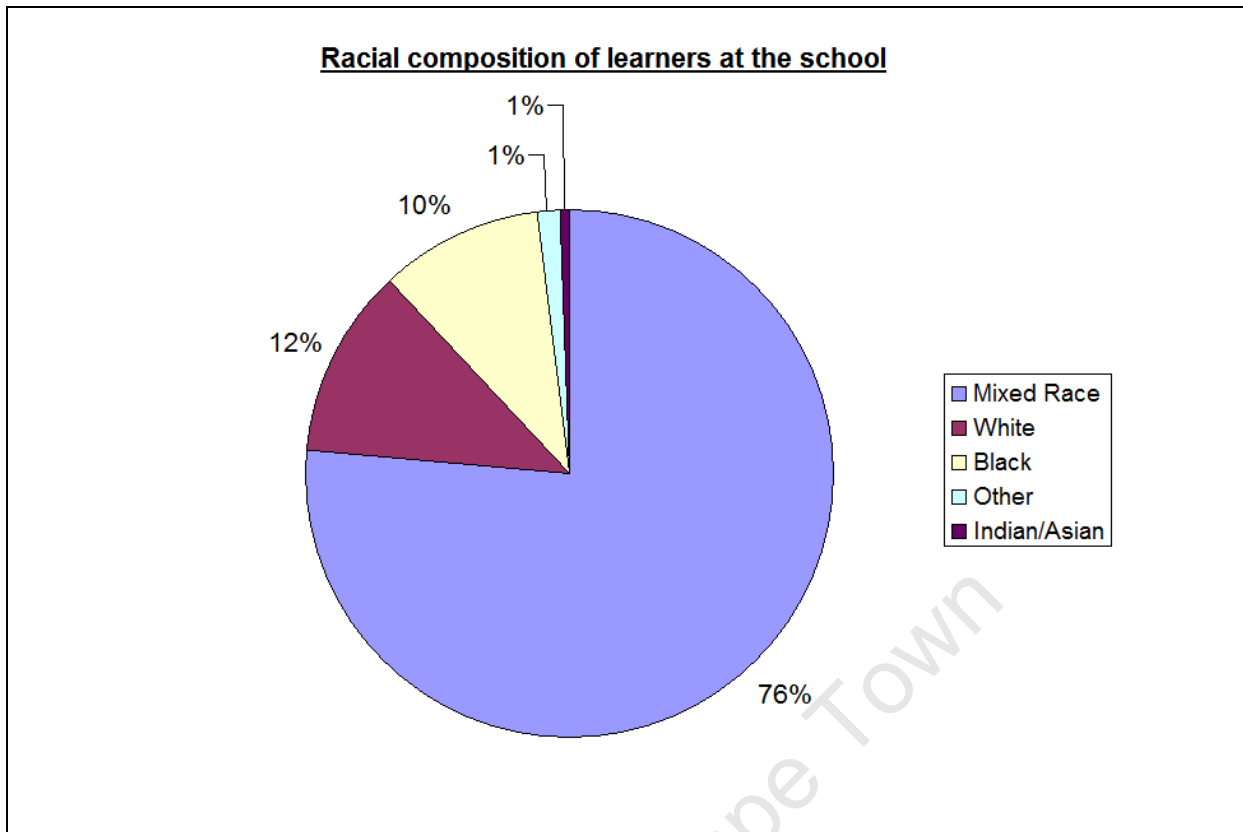


Figure 3.1 Racial composition of learners at the school

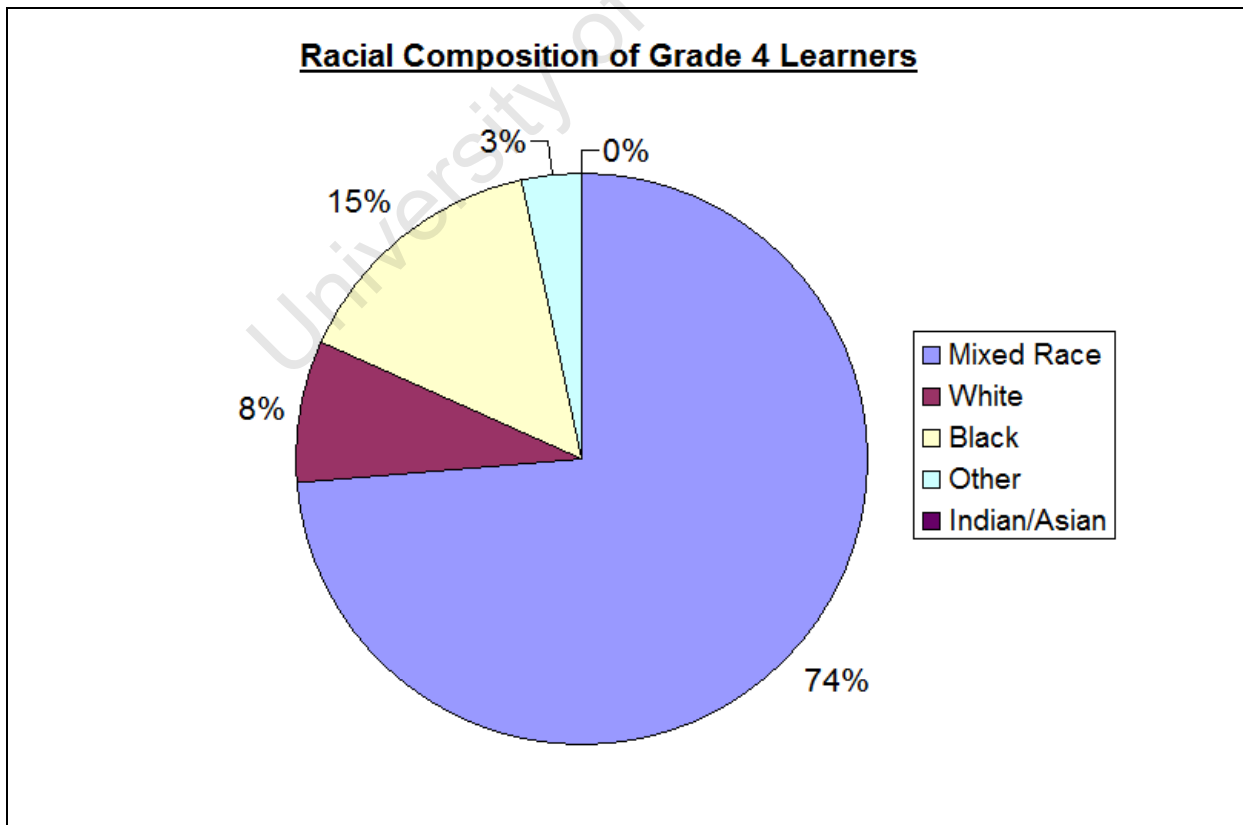


Figure 3.2 Racial composition of Grade Four learners

In terms of the demographics of the school staff, there is a total of 57 staff members. The racial composition of the staff is 35 white, 15 mixed race, 6 African black and 1 Asian. The racial composition of the teaching staff at the school, which can be seen in Figure 3.3 below, is predominantly white. Of the 39 teaching members of staff, 10 are mixed race, while the remainder are white. The mixed race teachers represent 26% of the entire teaching staff. Mixed race and black people can be found in other areas of the school such as the support staff responsible for administration, after care, and the maintenance and cleaning of the school.

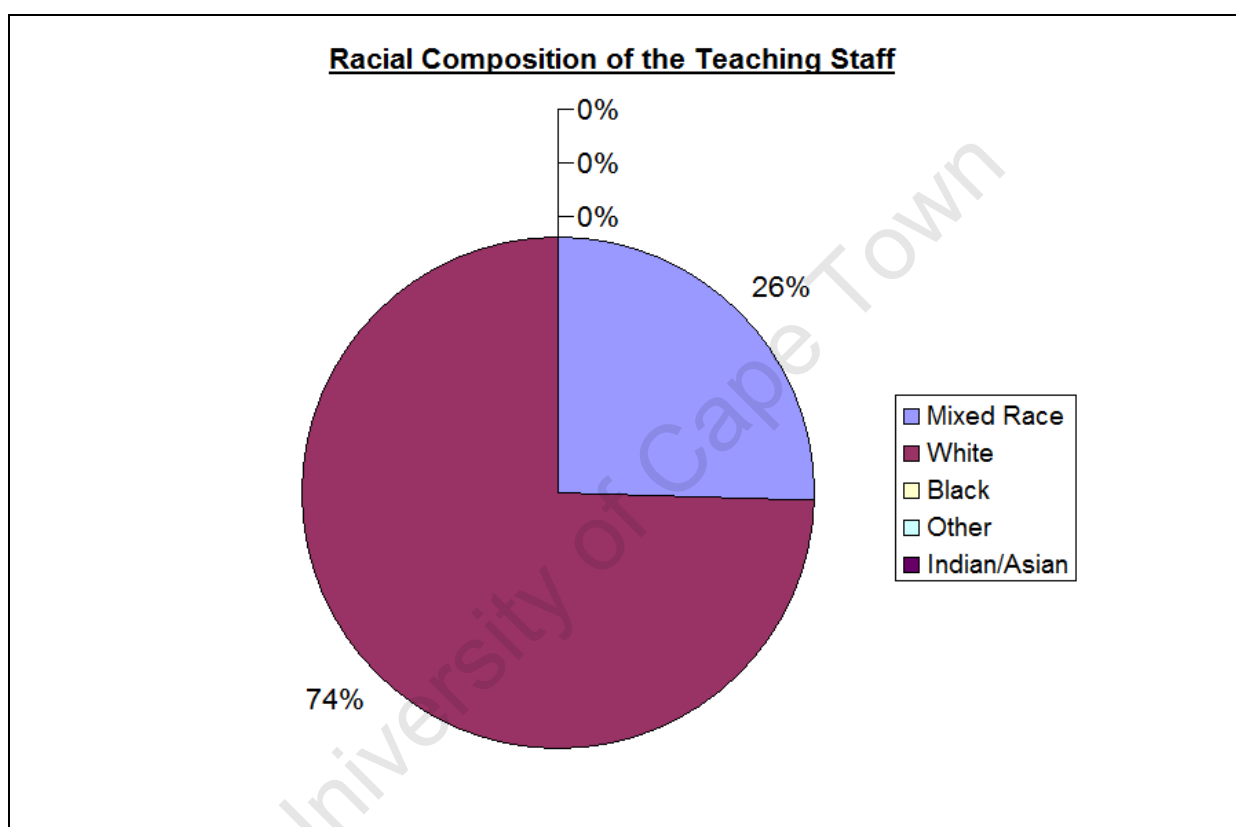


Figure 3.3 Racial composition of teaching staff

3.3 Sampling Process

3.3.1 Population

The population that the present research aimed to examine was the Grade Four learners at the school in question. The decision to conduct this study using Grade Four learners was based on the findings of research by various authors (Brown, 1995; Katz, 2003), which indicated that from the age of about six years, there is some stabilizing in children’s awareness of their racial identity. By Grade Four level when the learners are about nine years old, this has

stabilised and settled and may even have changed into a state of own group preference and out-group prejudice depending on their experiences up to that point (Nesdale *et al*, 2005). The study by Dutton *et al* (1998) was also conducted on Grade Four learners. They mention that Derman-Sparks, Tanaka Higa and Sparks (1980 cited in Dutton *et al*, 1998) propose that from five to eight years of age, children are gathering information about who they are and understanding what makes other people different to them. After this, from nine to twelve years, they begin to look outward more and learn from the example of others as well as from the media. They also start to act in the way that they feel society expects them to. All these studies just mentioned appear to indicate that from the age of about nine years there has been a lot of settling down in terms of children's search for defining their racial identity. Grade Four learners therefore seemed an appropriate age for the study. Children of this age however have also often realised that racial prejudice is not acceptable and so often do not express ideas of prejudice very easily (Nesdale *et al*, 2005), which is a possible limitation to how open the children would be. The total population of the study was close to 100 Grade Four learners.

3.3.2 Sampling

The sample size for the study was 24 learners. The main reason, according to Reid and Smith (1981, cited in Strydom, 2005) for using a sample when doing research is the impracticality of conducting research on the entire population one wants to examine. The aim is to be able to generalise about the whole population from this sample. The importance of having a representative sample is therefore of utmost importance (Strydom, 2005).

The researcher decided to make the focus groups racially homogenous. According to Strydom (2005) people often feel more ready to share their views and feelings when they are with people who they feel are similar to them in some way. The researcher felt that separating the groups according to race would facilitate the open sharing of thoughts about their own and other race groups, without the children feeling the need to censor what they were saying. The aim of running racially homogenous groups was therefore to facilitate discussion amongst the children, rather than to generalize about each race group. The difficulty with compiling the groups however was that the researcher had to often make her own assumptions in terms of the race groups with which the children were most likely to identify.

Krueger (1994 cite in Large & Beheshti, 2001) recommends that when running focus groups with children who are still in primary school, the groups be separated by gender. During

primary school children have a tendency to prefer friendships with peers who are of the same gender as them (Davey, 1983). Creating groups of the same gender was intended to increase their level of comfort in the groups.

In order to get a sample of learners for the groups that were homogenous both in terms of race and gender, the researcher employed Stratified Random Sampling as her method of sampling. According to Leedy and Ormrod, (2005), this type of sampling involves dividing the overall population into different strata according to certain characteristics, and then taking random equal samples from each stratum. This sample was non-proportionate as the researcher did not attempt to create a sample that was proportionate to that particular race group's number in the overall population. The primary advantage of this form of sampling is that each of the strata that have been identified for the study can be equally represented, with the end result being homogenous groups who are heterogeneous from each other (Rubin & Babbie 2005). Minority groups are therefore not under represented in the study and they are also able to have their voices heard. This was particularly important to the present study, since there was a huge variation in the representation of the various races in the school.

The researcher approached the admissions secretary of the school to obtain access to the database of Grade Four learners. The admissions secretary indicated that all the learners in the school are entered onto a database known as the Centralised Educational Management Information System (CEMIS), which is a tool of the WCED (Western Cape Education Department). This database contains various biographical data about each learner registered at the school, including their race. From this database, reports could be drawn that would list learners according to their grade, race and gender. The admissions secretary informed the researcher that the race information is requested of parents on the application forms that they fill in when they make application to the school. Should a parent decline to fill that particular field in, the admissions secretary uses her discretion and fills it in herself. This reminded the researcher yet again of the spurious nature of racial classifications.

The researcher obtained these lists of the Grade Four learners off CEMIS, with the racial categories being "coloured learners", "white learners", "black/African learners", "Indian/Asian learners" and "other learners". The researcher excluded the learners who were classified as "other learners" as there were not many of them, and they did not fall into any of the three racial groups with which the researcher had decided to work.

Using stratified random sampling, the researcher put together a total of five focus groups. Group One was five black female learners, Group Two five black male learners, Group Three five mixed race females, Group Four four white males and Group Five five mixed race males (Table 3.1 below). Because there was only one female Grade Four learner identified as white on CEMIS, there could not be a group of white female learners. There could also not be a group of Asian/Indian learners, since there were none in Grade Four. The target number of members was six per group, but this was not possible in all cases, as some parents did not give their consent. Of the original sample of 30 learners, three parents did not want their children to take part in the study (two white and one mixed race), and one child did not bring back the reply slip. Two others had left or were in the process of leaving the school during the research process. Where possible, the researcher went back to the stratified class lists and using random sampling selected additional subjects. However, sometimes there were no additional children in that race group to be sampled.

Mixed Race	Grade Four Population	Focus Group Sample
Male	35	5
Female	29	5
<u>Totals</u>	64	10
White		
Male	6	4
Female	1	0
<u>Totals</u>	7	4
Black		
Male	7	5
Female	6	5
<u>Totals</u>	13	10

Table 3.1 Grade Four population and sample size

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Gaining Access

At the start of this research process, the researcher requested a meeting with the deputy principal of the school and spoke to him about her proposed research. In this meeting he indicated his interest in and willingness for the research to be conducted at the school. He later confirmed this in writing (see Appendix A).

The researcher then set up a meeting with the Grade Four educators, to inform them of the research, and to obtain their permission to use the learners in their classes as her sample. This meeting was held on the 19th March 2009. During this meeting the researcher explained what the aim of the research was and what the requirements would be in terms of the number of learners and the number of focus group sessions that would be run. The educators were very interested in the research and also very accommodating in terms of allowing access to the children.

Since this research was done with minors, the children were not legally able to give informed consent to take part in the focus groups (Strydom, 2001). The researcher therefore composed a letter requesting permission from the parents or guardians of all the children who had been selected, to take part in the study (Appendix B). Permission slips were attached to each letter for the parents to complete and return to school. Children were only allocated to a focus group once they had returned a signed permission letter.

3.4.2 Focus Groups

According to Morgan (1997 cited in Greef, 2005), research done with focus groups can be the main method of gathering data for research, it can supplement data that has been gathered in another way, and it can be one of a number of other data gathering methods employed in a study. The difference between a focus group and a group interview is that it is the interactions between the group members of a focus group that are vital to the research process (Gibbs, 1997 cited in Large & Beheshti, 2001). These interactions stimulate discussion and elicit a greater wealth of data than simple interviewing would do.

According to Schurinck, Schurinck and Poggenpoel (2001), a focus group is a discussion that takes place between a specific number of individuals on a particular topic. These individuals usually share certain characteristics such as their background and interests. This group environment encourages members to interact with each other, respond to what others have said and to engage in discussion with each other. It is this interaction between members that is the strength of focus groups as a form of data gathering. Members are able to engage with what others have said and this can prompt them to share things they would not have shared in a questionnaire or in an individual interview (Schurinck *et al*, 2001). In the present research, the focus groups were homogenous in terms of race, grade, gender and attendance at the same school. The fact that they were homogenous in terms of race and gender was a significant contributor to the openness and ease with which members shared their thoughts and experiences.

Vaughn *et al* (1996 cited in Nabors *et al*, 2001) recommend that with younger children, focus groups should be made up of no more than five to six children, which is the number of participants that the researcher aimed for in each focus group. The time duration that is recommended for focus groups that are conducted with adults is one, to one and a half hours. However children do not have the capacity to concentrate for that long. Vaughn, Shay-Schumm, and Sinagub (1996 cited in Nabors, Ramos & Weist, 2001) recommend that focus groups run with children aged 10 – 14 years old can be about 60 minutes long, while groups with children younger than 10 years should only be about 45 minutes long. The children in the focus groups of this research were aged between 9 and 10, so the researcher put aside an hour for each group, but was aware that by 45 minutes or even sooner, they became tired and distracted and she would need to conclude. The researcher noticed with interest that the groups of boys tended to become distracted and tired much sooner than did the groups of girls.

The researcher ran two focus group sessions with each group. According to Large and Beheshti (2001) it is unusual to have only one focus group, with between two and four being the norm. According to Schurinck *et al* (2001), the first two focus group sessions usually elicit the largest volume of new information, so for this reason the researcher planned to run two sessions per group. The aim of the second meeting was for the researcher to give the learners the opportunity to speak about anything more that they had not been able to discuss

during the initial session. It also gave the researcher the opportunity to explore in greater depth any interesting themes or topics that had emerged in the first group.

The focus groups began on the 12th May 2009 and the final group was run on the 29th May 2009. The entire data gathering process took two and a half weeks.

3.4.3 Ethics

It is important, when considering the ethics of any research that there is no harm done to the participants, that they give their informed consent, that their privacy is not violated and that they are not lied to (Strydom, 2001). To this end the identity and privacy of all respondents was protected through the use of pseudonyms, which the subjects chose for themselves at the start of their first group. They were given name tags to wear which displayed these pseudonyms clearly so that the researcher as well as the other group members were always reminded of these names during the group. The letters that the children took home clearly stated the aim of the focus groups, stipulated that all the groups would be audio recorded, but assured parents that the children's identities would be protected through the use of pseudonyms. In this way, both the children and their guardians were fully informed what the research was about, and were able to give their informed consent to take part.

Once the sample had been identified, all the subjects in the selected sample were called into an informal meeting with the researcher where she explained to them that she was going to be doing research with the Grade Four children and that they had been chosen to be part of this research. She asked them if they would be prepared to take part in this research, and when they agreed she handed them letters requesting the permission of their parents for their participation. She explained the contents and purpose of these letters to the children before handing them out.

3.4.4 The Pilot

The researcher ran a short pilot with two learners in Grade Four, one boy and one girl, so as to see how they responded to the questions. A very important point that this pilot highlighted was the need to introduce the topic of the differences between people early on in the focus groups, so as to give the children permission to speak about these, as there was a lot of initial

hesitation. From the pilot, the researcher was also able to estimate how long each group would take, and was able to modify the interview schedule, to make it clearer to the children.

3.4.5 The Focus Group Process

At the start of each initial focus group session, the researcher began by welcoming the group members and preparing them for the group. She explained that this was a research group, the use of the tape recorder as well as how the identity of all the participants would be protected through pseudonyms. She also encouraged them to share their opinions and experiences, since this is what the researcher was interested in.

Once this was done, the researcher followed a semi-structured interview schedule in order to encourage discussion. This schedule was used in every initial group, and the researcher probed for depth based on the discussion that the participants engaged in. A copy of this schedule has been included as Appendix C. The aim of the first question was to encourage the respondents to think and talk about different kinds of people. The researcher then introduced a picture that depicted nine different children (Appendix D). The picture contained both boys and girls, and the children were of various ethnic and racial groups. The next questions were about the children in this picture. The subjects were first asked to select the child in the picture that looked the most like them and then after this, the one that looked the least like them. The researcher then encouraged discussion amongst the group members about the children in the pictures and from there explored their perceptions of people who are the same and different to them. The final question on the interview schedule was about whether the group members had ever felt that they had been treated differently at school, because they were not the same as the other children. In the second group session, the researcher went back to areas from the first group session on which she needed more clarity.

The researcher only explored the terms black, white and coloured when the learners had mentioned them first. If they were not mentioned she did not ask about them. The only exception to this was when she asked about the term Indian, to explore the phenomenon that emerged in all the groups when they did not speak about Indian people. The aim of this was to explore what this absence was about.

3.5 Data Capturing

Schurink *et al* (2001) recommend that the facilitator of a focus group should have an assistant present to take notes during the group. The assistant would be able to make observations that the facilitator would not have been able to make. Since the researcher had been unable to make use of an assistant, she had intended to use a video camera to capture each focus group. She felt that this would make the process of transcribing more thorough, by introducing a “digital assistant” that could record important information in the form of body language and interactions between the group members that would be lost in an audio recording. However, Schurink *et al* (2001) also state that simply making an audio recording of focus groups is usually sufficient and that video recordings are not really necessary. Because of the cost of transferring the video-recorded data onto DVD’s, the researcher decided to make use of audio recordings and very thorough notes.

3.6 Data Analysis

Once the focus groups had been conducted and recorded, the researcher made typed verbatim transcriptions of all the sessions. She then employed Tesch’s eight-step approach to analyse these transcriptions (Poggenpoel, 2001).

The researcher began by reading through all the transcripts, in order to identify what was contained in the data. As she read, she wrote down ideas that struck her about what she was reading. This is the first of Tech’s eight steps. The next step entailed selecting any one transcript, reading it and thinking about what was being said at a deeper level. This was done for a number of interviews and any ideas and thoughts were noted down. She then wrote down a list of all the topics that were emerging, and attempted to cluster similar topics together according to Tesch’s third step. She then abbreviated these topics into codes and went back to the data in the transcripts and wrote the relevant code next to the appropriate piece of text, and also added any new topics or codes that emerged. She then grouped all the topics that related to each other together and created a list of categories, according to Tesch’s fifth step, and then finalised the codes and put them into alphabetical order according to the sixth step. Using Microsoft Word, the researcher then cut and pasted the data that fell under each category from the electronic documents, and created new documents for all the categories, so that all the relevant data would be grouped together in the same place. In the final and eighth step the researcher re-coded the data where necessary (Poggenpoel, 2001).

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of creating racially homogenous groups for the data gathering of this research was purely to ensure the comfort of participants in speaking about issues of race, and not to make generalizations about each race group. While the researcher often makes reference to the race of the participants, she has been cautious about making strong statements about the race groups as a whole, based on the comments of this small sample.

3.7 Trustworthiness

According to Guba's model of trustworthiness (1981 cited in Poggenpoel, 1998), there are four elements that are vital in order to ensure the validity and reliability of a study. They are the truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality of the study. The truth value of this present study was established through strategies such as the use of homogenous groups to ensure that members would feel comfortable to share their thoughts and experiences openly, as well as audio equipment to capture the sessions. The researcher provided a very thorough description of both the research context as well as the research process, which would make the transfer of this study to another context possible, thus ensuring applicability. Consistency asks whether the same findings would be obtained if the study were repeated with the same subjects or in another context (Poggenpoel, 1998). The small sample size of this study makes this difficult to confirm. And finally the neutrality of a study is established through the confirmability of the data. This can be established by an audit of the researcher's audio cassettes.

3.8 Limitations

The topics of prejudice and race are vast, and the scope of this study very small. As a result the findings can only provide initial ideas and themes that need to be explored further in a study of greater magnitude that involves children of other ages at other schools and in other socio economic strata to increase the depth of the findings.

This study makes use of a qualitative research design. This research design aims to gain a richer understanding of phenomena and insight into human experience and the meaning they attach to it (Rubin & Babbie, 2005), rather than to prove or disprove a particular hypothesis.

This means that the findings of this study cannot be generalised. Instead they provide a deeper understanding into the phenomena and highlight areas for possible future study.

The fact that this research was conducted in the school where the researcher was employed as the school social worker had the potential to be both a limiting factor, and an advantage to this study. Most of the subjects already knew the researcher as they had either seen her around the school, or had seen her therapeutically at some point over the two and a half years that she had been employed there. The negative impact of this is that children may have associated her with the difficult things that they had worked through with her during their individual therapies. On the other hand, their comfort through the pre-established relationship may have put them at ease, and this may have helped to put other more anxious members of the groups at ease. What the researcher found was that the children with a previous relationship with her tended to dominate the groups and that this needed to be managed, so that the others were also able to take part and make contributions.

Another factor was that the researcher is a woman from an Indian ethnic background. She has been identified as such by many of the children in the school, as she often wears symbols of cultural significance at school (a bindi and a nose ring). This may have affected how the children perceived her in terms of her race and what they did say about the people from the group they identified her with. Having grown up in apartheid South Africa, her own racial preconceptions may also have affected how she dealt with the information that was offered by the children in the focus groups.

A final factor that may have impacted on this study was the researcher's own multi-racial school experience in the 1980's during the years of apartheid and separate education. She experienced multiracial education in South Africa at a school run by the Catholic Church, at a time when schooling was strongly divided along racial lines. The children that she was educated with were generally from families who did not support the apartheid regime, and who sent their children to this particular school so that they could freely associate and be educated with children from different races and cultures. This time period and the mind set of those around her would have given the researcher an experience of education in a multi-racial environment that was very different to the experiences of the members in these focus groups. The thoughts and ideas that were expressed by the children may therefore have been difficult for her to listen to and she may have inadvertently affected the ability of members to share

freely. The researcher found this to be the case particularly when children in the groups expressed racist ideas and feelings.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research methodology that was followed in conducting this study. It has discussed how the researcher identified the sample that was used in the study, and also how the data was gathered, captured and analysed. In the next chapter, the findings that emerged from the focus groups will be presented, with some discussion on their relevance to the literature already presented.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 4. Findings

The following chapter will present findings of the focus groups that were conducted to explore the purpose of this study.

4.1 The Focus Groups

Two focus group sessions were run with each of the groups of Grade Four learners in order to gather information on their perceptions and experiences of race and prejudice.

At the start of each focus group, all the children were requested to choose pseudonyms to be used during the groups. These were written on labels and attached to their shirts. A full list detailing each group's members, their pseudonyms as well as their race and gender can be found in Appendix E.

In the quotations of this chapter, the name of the respondent being quoted is followed by an abbreviation to indicate their race and gender. "*Beyonce (B/F)*" therefore indicates that the respondent with the pseudonym Beyonce is a black female. The researcher referred to herself as "*Res*".

A framework for analysis and a discussion of each of the themes that emerged from the data will follow.

Table 4.1 Framework for analysis

4.1.1 Perceptions of people from other racial and ethnic groups.	4.1.2 Perceptions of how people from other racial and ethnic groups view them.	4.1.3 Perceptions of people from their own racial and ethnic groups.	4.1.4 Experiences of prejudice at school.	4.1.5 Race and Racism	4.1.6 The Group Experience	
4.1.1.1 Characteristics a) Language b) Freckles c) Values	4.1.2.1 Racial Differences	4.1.3.1 Characteristics a) Language b) Values c) Racial identification	4.1.4.1 Relationships a) Friendships b) Exclusion	4.1.5.1 Race a) Defining the races b) Impermanence of race c) Mixed race family		
4.1.1.2 Relationships a) Friendships b) Bullying	4.1.2.2 Xenophobia	4.1.3.2 Relationships a) Friendships	4.1.4.2 Denial of prejudice	4.1.5.2 Racism a) Definitions of racism b) Racism is in the past c) Racism is rude d) Shared humanity		
4.1.1.3 Opportunities a) Wealth b) The work place c) Threat and fear	4.1.2.3 General Differences					
4.1.1.4 Apartheid						

4.1.1 Theme 1: Perceptions of people from other race groups

The first theme that the researcher identified was the perceptions that learners expressed about people who are from racial groups other than their own.

4.1.1.1 Characteristics

During the focus group discussions, the participants made reference to characteristics that they believed one could attribute to people of the various races.

a. Language:

Language was often used as a means to identify an individual's race. When asked how the respondents recognise the race of an individual, some of the responses were:

Beyonce (B/F) – You'll know because the way they talk ... pronouncing ... and they ... that's all I can say. (about how to identify coloured people)

Saarah (MR/F) – The black person is like some one that doesn't speak English but also speaks another language.

There was also a tendency to criticize the way the respondents felt mixed race people spoke.

Stinger (W/M) - ... the coloureds think that they can speak whatever language they want but they actually can't.

One learner expressed feelings of exclusion when her black classmates spoke in their home language. She also referred to the suspicion that arises when people speak a different language.

St Cape (MR/F) - Sometimes when they swear ... the black children ... they saying something different. But then the people think because we cant understand their language ... and sometimes we think they swearing ... but they just saying something. ... some nice words of them ... but then they use some ... they look they swearing ... use nice words

St Cape (MR/F) - Sometimes they do play with the coloureds and blacks, but sometimes they just say rude stuff about them. But sometimes the black people can understand Afrikaans then they know what they are saying, then the whites can't actually talk about their language so that the black people cant understand what they saying.

This confirms what Dawson (2007) found in her study at a South African high school, where language was believed to have a racial basis, and where it was felt to be a means of exclusion. This is also reminiscent of the thinking of the apartheid engineers, as the respondent above seems to believe that each race has their own particular language that clearly distinguishes them from the other races (Posel, 2001). She assumes that all the white children speak or identify with Afrikaans, and that the black children all speak the same home language.

b. Freckles

One of the children in the diagram that the researcher used to encourage discussion in the groups, was girl with orange hair and freckles. These freckles were noted and mentioned in most of the groups, except in the groups of white boys and mixed race girls. In particular, the group of black boys found the picture of this girl very amusing and collapsed into giggles every time the word “freckles” was mentioned.

John (B/M) - (giggles) cause she is white (giggles with all the other boys) and she has freckles ... (giggles)

John (B/M) – Ja ... And we are opposite way ... I am black and she is white ... and she has freckles ...

When the researcher tried to explore what this was about, it emerged that freckles were something that the black boys did not really understand, or encounter very often. This highlighted the awareness of and difficulty with accepting difference of any kind in these children.

Res – OK... Boys? ... Aikon and Danny ... I want to know more about this “freckles”. What is so funny about freckles?

Will Smith (B/M) – Can I??

Res- Will

Will Smith (B/M) – Dark dark dots on your face and they are like pimples ...

Res – They are like pimples? Aikon? Tell me what is funny about freckles (he starts giggling again) You don't have freckles?

Aikon (B/M) – Its stuff like moles on their face (giggles again)

Danny (B/M) – They have like a lot of freckles everywhere ... and they keep ...more freckles keep on growing until their face is completely red (giggling again)

Res– OK ... And? ... Is this something that you don't see with black people?

Danny (B/M) – Yes .. we don't get freckles ...

One group member expresses that freckles are not something that they often see, and even says that they seem to be growing “extinct”.

Aikon (B/M) – Like ... some thing like ... something which is getting extinct (more giggles)

Res – Something which is getting extinct? What do you mean by that?

Aikon (B/M) – Like ... its ... most of the people are not having it this times

This may be indicative of the context in which these black children are living and attending school. Contact with white people is probably not something that happens that often, nor is it something that happens on an intimate level. Many of them live in areas that are predominantly still inhabited by people of their own race, and there are very few white children at the school (12% of the entire school population). This illustrates to some extent how the choices that parents make can affect their children's experience of race (Katz, 2003). Freckles are also probably not something that these children have needed to create a category for, because they have not previously been exposed to them (Davey, 1983).

c. Values

In some of the groups, the children spoke about what they regarded as the characteristics, values and nature of people of other races. The researcher found that participants in the group of white boys seemed to have very negative ideas about people of other races. The comments that they made showed very strong negative prejudices. They expressed beliefs that black and mixed race people lack responsibility and are the source of criminal activity. Some of these were:

Stinger (W/M) - ... And the coloureds are wanting to kill the people because dunno ... they are wanting to know how you do this and they don't want to They don't want to have responsibility and that's why the world is getting more dirtier, because the black, the blacks and the coloured are littering and the whites are trying to keep the world clean but the black and coloureds are just littering and some of the whites are also littering.

Sheron (W/M) - And there's a lot of stuff on news that shows how the black people like hurt the other white people because they jealous how the white people's getting their way.

This last quote illustrates the role that television can play in the development of prejudice in children, as mentioned by Holmes (1995). This last child sees black people being shown on the television news as hurting white people and this has translated into threat for him. This feeling of threat is something that Nesdale *et al* (2005) say is key to the movement of a child from feelings of ethnic preference to ethnic prejudice. These feelings of prejudice that appear to be expressed by all of the quotes above may be as a result of the threat these children believe their own social group is under, as well as prejudice being experienced as a norm in their social group (Nesdale *et al*, 2005).

The black girls group also expressed negative views, but in their case it was towards mixed race people, in particular around their being involved in criminal activity. Once again the threat mentioned above may be playing a role in this kind of thinking.

Beyonce (B/F) – I disagree with her ... Coloureds ... Criminals!!! Not a lot ... Coloureds are criminals

Mary (B/F) – But you know ... Mostly when I go to the police station with my mum and my dad ... I usually see ... coloured people posters. And actually ... I think that Riana should think about what she just said ...

Beyonce (B/F) – I mean ... coloureds ... they also ruining us ... because they are breaking into our houses ... and they are killing our ... most of them are killing our children. They raping and they ... most of them ...they doing that.

This same participant (Beyonce) generally expressed positive views towards white people, as did some other members of her group, however, another member (Riana) felt very strongly that white people are still behaving as they did during the apartheid years. This resulted in some very heated debate in the group.

Beyonce (B/F) – I disagree ... because ... the people ... the white people of now ... not ... they not like... some people think that white people are ... mean and ... mean racism ... some ... some are Mam ... but not most of them ... I disagree with her because ... Mam the white people of now Mam are very nice and kind.

Riana (B/F) – I think I disagree with her because ... ok ... maybe some white people are kind ... but not actually many ... or maybe she is right that some are nice but I don't ... I think people hate the people that ... um ... that are mean and ... white people that are mean and ...um ... and still want to rule the world for themselves ...

*Jaimie (MR/F) - Some of them are still doing the same stuff that they were doing in Apartheid
Res – Tell me about that Jamie ...*

*Jaimie (MR/F) - Some of them are still bullying and hitting you like ... only when they want to
Res – OK Kim*

Kim (MR/F) – Some of them still don't like the black people

Kelsie (B/F) – Mam, sometimes the white people want to be in charge of the black people.

Res - sometimes the white people want to be in charge of the black people? Where do you see that?

Kelsie (B/F) – I don't ...

Res – OK. What makes you say that?

Kelsie (B/F) – Because the white people don't want the black people to get nice stuff

All these comments were from black or mixed race children, who possibly still seem to feel a sense of threat from the white people that they encounter. At school the children are of widely

different social statuses, which may affect the outcome of this contact negatively (Cook, 1969 cited in Kuis and Krige, 1981) According to Nesdale *et al* (2005), their feelings of threat may lead to them expressing ethnic prejudice towards white people.

4.1.1.2 Relationships

a. Friendships

On the whole, the participants seemed to feel that friendships between people of different race groups are acceptable and many of them spoke of having friendships with people of other races

Mary (B/F) – Because ... my mum and I we do have white people as friends

John (B/M) – Even whites ... make best friends

Riana (B/F) - ... I had a friend name Chelsea who was in the school, she was in grade 3... and she was very naughty ... um ... she used to be my friend ... and I don't mean to be rude, but she also had freckles and she had a gap between her teeth but I still liked her and I used to play with her all the time

Some of the black and mixed race children spoke of noticing that certain children, in these quotes the white children, choose to only play with peers from their own race group.

Sarah (MR/F) – Because when they are, when they are friends then its just they all white and when there's one that's a different colour then they don't want to play with the other one, cause it's not like them

This confirms Davey's (1983) findings that regardless of whether they were in the majority or the minority group, the children prefer to make friendships in their own race groups. Brown (1995) expresses a similar view in this regard.

b. Bullying

Interracial bullying was a concern mentioned by both the white and black children in this study. Both of these groups are minority groups in this school in terms of their numbers, since the children of mixed race account for the majority of the learners at the school.

Jack (W/M) – Um one boy was at a tree, because one boy kicked his ball and then the coloured boy started pushing the white one.

Stinger (W/M) – A coloured boy ... I think he is in grade two ... or one ... He keeps on bullying the small children that are black and soon he is also gonna get bullied ... by one of the bigger boys

Jack (W/M) - ...Because there is a lot less white people in SA so um there's probably ... more blacks so the blacks bully the whites because they want to get rid of the whites and so its only coloureds.

This is probably about the experience of a power imbalance between these children. This racial bullying may be the result of mixed race children feeling disempowered at home, and trying to reclaim this power by picking on the children at school that they regard as having less power, in this case the white children (Wilczenski *et al*, 1994).

While the white boys spoke mainly of white children being bullied by the mixed race children, the black children spoke of being bullied by older children in general, and did not identify their race.

Stinger (W/M) - ... because in this school blacks mostly get bullied ...

Riana (B/F) – I think I agree with her ... because when I was in this school at Cape Town ... these people like bullying each other and they bullying me and my friends and then they tell us you don't belong here it was mostly ... other people

Res – What do you mean when you say other people

Riana (B/F) – other races

Marian (B/F) – Mam, the grade 5's, 7's and 6's do it to the younger children.

Res – OK. Thank you Marian. Riana

Riana (B/F) – Mam, actually ... um ... it it it is also grade 5's but I'm saying that there's a little bit of grade 5's that's bullying us and there's more of grade 7's and 6's that are ...

These black children appear to be bullied on a number of levels, racially and by older children. This seems to indicate the extent that bullying is a problem at the school.

4.1.1.3 Opportunities

a. Wealth

The white boy's group expressed uncertainty about the wealth of black and mixed race people. One member felt that black people get all the well-paid jobs and they get more money than the white people, but later on when the researcher explored the employment that black people can be found in, they were thought to occupy the jobs in the lower socio-economic

brackets. They seemed to feel that black people get more money, but are not necessarily more skilled.

Stinger (W/M) – The blacks are complaining that they ... that they are getting hard work than everybody else, but to me the blacks look they getting paid more than every body else ...and that's why there's quite a few ... black people on the streets and they ... if they don't get to their jobs on time they wont have enough money

Jack (W/M) – Umm ... the black people ... um they get jobs like um... only watching the cars on the street... because then people give them about R2, for looking after their car, they um ... they add up their money ... then they go and buy wine and drink it and then they drunk and then they cant look a ... after the cars and then people break into the cars and he just leaves them because he is too drunk and then people still pay him ... And he's not doing his job properly.

There is possibly some lack of congruency between what these boys are led to believe and what they are seeing in their social environments. There is a rising black middle to upper class that is earning more than black people were historically able to earn before (Seekings, 2008). These boys are probably not exposed to people like this in their social environment. Two other boys from the same group expressed their belief that white people tend to have more money than other people do.

Kian (W/M) – I think some white people have more money than the coloureds

Sheron (W/M) – The black people aren't wanting to do their jobs and they ... to me they look they getting jealous because the whites are getting like more money

This was particularly interesting, since these two boys are not from very wealthy families.

The following black and mixed race children felt that white people sometimes do have more wealth, but that black people have wealth too, sometimes more than the white people have.

Kim (MR/F) - No 6 (mixed race girl) thinks of no 7 (white girl) that no 7 is richer than no 6 ... but they still friends

Riana (B/F) – Mam. Some people say white people are rich than black people

Res – OK. What do you think about that?

Riana (B/F) – I don't agree with that

Res – You don't agree that white people are richer?

Riana (B/F) – Some black people are rich than white people ...

Aikon (B/M) – The most white people are rich but some black people are also rich ...

All these children feel that there is material wealth amongst the people of their own group. These statements show that the children are aware of the social status of their group. This was found by Katz (2003) to begin from the time children are about 6 years old. When they feel that their group occupies a high status in terms of having wealth, there is greater own-group preference (Katz, 2003), which was found amongst the black and mixed race children in this study.

b. The Work Place

In this section, the children indicate an awareness of the inequalities that still exist in post-apartheid South Africa. Some accept it while others are questioning of it.

This white boy states that it is possible for all people to work together, as long as the black people are the workers.

Stinger (W/M) – Doesn't matter what colour you are people can still work together. But people are not coming together because they are not wanting to do what the person tells them to do. Blacks are not doing the jobs

When these white boys spoke about the jobs black people do, they placed them in very menial employment.

Stinger (W/M) – Some blacks make stuff out of garbage and then they ... either find paper or something that is useable ... and then they wipe it and clean it as much as they can and then the people don't want to buy.

Kian (W/M) – Some ... some black people are policemen ... or they work in the army.

These same boys felt that the mixed race people do similar jobs to those that the black people do, however there was a slight improvement in terms of prestige and difficulty level.

Res - ... What jobs do coloured people do? Stinger?

Stinger (W/M) – Coloureds ... um also in the army ... and the coloureds do shop ... they work at the shops they and some of them sell (unclear) and sell cars and they teach ...

Res – OK. Thank you. Sheron?

Sheron (W/M) – Some um like some work at ... for scientists Mam and they find problems

On the other hand these same boys felt that the white people are more likely to be in the higher paying professions of society.

Res - What jobs do white people do? Jack.

Jack (W/M) – Um ... Business, like insurance business and work in restaurants ... Ja

Res – Thank you ... Sheron?

Sheron (W/M) – Probably a church ... or something else like a counsellor or a doctor to help people that are sick Mam.

Res – Ok. Thank you ... Stinger?

Stinger (W/M) – White people have nice jobs because they do what they supposed to do and ... some whites are lawyers and some are train drivers and the car park ... they look after that, but not any more ... the black people are doing that ... they get paid a lot from the shops and some body else

Kian (W/M) – Some white people work at shops and ... um ... they work (unclear) ... and they also work in schools ...

Res – What do they do at the schools?

Kian (W/M) – They teach

The black girls spoke about how they never see white people working under the supervision of black and mixed race people. They did feel that the mixed race people sometimes get to be bosses, but only of black people and never of white people.

Beyonce (B/F) – I disagree with some parts what she said

Res – Yes? Tell me what you think?

Beyonce (B/F) – Cause I have never seen a white person working for a coloured

Kelsie (B/F) – I agree

Kelsie (B/F) – I disagree with Riana because black people work for white people

Riana (B/F)- ... why cant a black person ... and a white person work for a black person ... its just all the other way around

The children speak with an awareness of the inequality that they seem to experience through their parents who are in the work force of the country. This awareness of the social status that their parents occupy in terms of employment can contribute to negative feelings towards their own group (Katz, 2003). However these children are questioning rather than accepting that this is how it should be.

c. Threat and Fear

The researcher found that the group of white boys displayed very high levels of perceived threat in relation to black people. They seemed to feel that the black people want to get rid of the white people, and there was a sense of vulnerability and fear of them.

Jack (W/M) - ... Because there is a lot less white people in SA so um there's probably ... more blacks so the blacks bully the whites because they want to get rid of the whites and so its only coloureds.

According to Nesdale *et al*'s (2005) SIDT, one of the conditions under which a child is likely to move from ethnic preference to ethnic prejudice is the extent to which the child's in-group regards the out-group as a threat. The researcher found that of all the groups, the group of white boys displayed the most negative and threatened attitudes to out-groups.

However these negative views were not entirely unique to the group of white boys. The following two quotes are from a black girl and a mixed race girl who speak of feelings of threat and fear towards out-groups.

Beyonce (B/F) – I mean ... coloureds ... they also ruining us ... because they are breaking into our houses ... and they are killing our ... most of them are killing our children. They raping and they ... most of themthey doing that ...

Res – Aha ... OK ... Ok we um talking about coloured people being bad but what I was wondering about with this question was ... what about other people? When are black people bad?

St Cape (MR/F)- Sometimes they bad

Res – Yes, tell me when do you think they are bad St Cape

St Cape (MR/F) – When they when you cant hear what they saying then they sometimes talk about they sometimes talk about rude stuff about you

4.1.1.4 Apartheid

A discussion about apartheid, its history and what took place during those years was initiated by every focus group except the group consisting of white boys. In none of these other four groups did the researcher initiate a discussion. It was the participants themselves that brought it up in each instance.

The participants displayed historical knowledge about what had happened, although they did not seem to have a good understanding of time frames. They did seem to feel that this was in the past, and they could identify that things are different now as can be seen below.

Saarah (MR/F) – Apartheid means, when you apart

Res – Yes ... when you apart? ... St Cape

St Cape (MR/F) –And ... all the C ... all the people are separated ... With blacks, coloureds and whites and Indians ... they are all separate and have one town

Jaimie (MR/F) – And Blacks ...

Res – Separated from each other?

St Cape (MR/F) – Yes

Res – Jaimie?

Jaimie (MR/F) – And like now Mam ... we couldn't be mixed up and come in any school because there was a board that said only whites ...

Their understanding of apartheid was basically about how the black people were treated badly by the white people. It is unclear however if when they used the term “black people” they are also referring to mixed race and Indian people, or if it was just African blacks.

Kim (MR/F) – Mam ... in apartheid days they used to hit the blacks for no reason Mam

Res – OK. Hit the blacks for no reason ... Why do you think they did that?

Kim (MR/F) – Because of apartheid ... cause they didn't like the blacks

Res – Cause they didn't like the Blacks? ... Saraah?

Saarah (MR/F) – Mam because they wanted the best ... they didn't want the blacks to get the best

Res – Who is they?

Saarah (MR/F) – The whites

John (B/M) – Then they say that when there was apartheid, the white people had much more big houses and the black people lives in like ... what ... the not good houses

Danny (B/M) – Shacks

John (B/M) – Shacks things like that ...

Res – They say that, or did that happen?

John (B/M) – It did happen

Many black and mixed race learners attributed their dislike of white people to what happened during the apartheid years. The children saw white people in a rather negative light as a result of this. They displayed significant out-group negativity when they spoke about apartheid.

Aikon (B/M) – In District Six the black people and the white people were normal until the white government broke the houses down and bulldozed the houses and did bad things to the black people... that's when the fighting started with the black and white.

Danny (B/M) – I don't agree with this one here John I don't agree. It wasn't apartheid that split them up ... it was the white

The researcher struggled to find literature that discusses the views of post apartheid children on the apartheid era. While these children may not be living in that era, it has shaped their current experience and society, and most importantly it was the experience of their parents (Seekings, 2008). This indicates a huge gap in information.

4.1.2 Theme 2: Perceptions of how people from other races or ethnic groups view them.

The researcher found that the children did not easily speak about how they thought others viewed them. This may be a developmental issue because of the age of the subjects. Most of the respondents were nine years old and so should be well into Piaget's concrete operational period, which spans the seventh to eleventh years (Cole & Cole, 2001). This developmental stage should indicate a greater ability to understand the experience of the other. This was significantly missing amongst the children of these focus groups.

4.1.2.1 Racial Differences

The white boys expressed the feeling that people of other races think negatively of them: This once again indicates an awareness of status in society (Davey, 1983).

Skinner (W/M) - ... or the coloured or the blacks say ... that they um that the whites are ... the whites are very useless but .. but the whites aren't actually

Another white boy expressed the belief that other people would think negatively of people like him.

*Jack (W/M) – Um I would say he um you no, people would think that he's kinda boring
Res – They would think he is kinda boring? What do you think they would think is boring about him?
Jack (W/M) – Because he is white
Res – Because he is white?
Jack (W/M) – Most people in South Africa are coloured ... so they might think that he is boring*

This is a very interesting comment from Jack, who is a white child living in Cape Town. Here he may be expressing the realisation that he is part of a minority group in this province as well as at school. Jack seems to have experienced not being part of the majority mixed race group, negatively. This may be an expression of his understanding of the status that his own group occupies in Cape Town, which is predominantly mixed race (Davey, 1983).

The black and mixed race children on the other hand seemed to feel that other groups have positive thoughts and feelings towards them.

Kim (MR/F) – About no. 1 (Asian) and no. 6 (mixed race)? I think that no 1 thinks of no. 6 that she is kind ... and clever

One participant expressed her belief that there is negative affect between the races

Res- ... I want you to tell me what do you think the one that is most unlike you, thinks of the one that is most like you ... Riana

Riana (B/F) – I think when I chose number 9 (mixed race boy) and I chose number 2 (black girl), I think that number 9 thinks that she hates number 2 ...

She goes on to relate an incident of racial bullying between a mixed race and black child, with the black child being hurt. It seems that viewing incidents such as the one she spoke of has led this participant to feel that there is animosity between the two races, when bullying is in fact about power (Wilczenski *et al*, 1994), although it can become racial when there are power differences between races.

On the whole, the black and mixed race children displayed ethnic preference, and had a positive regard for their own group, believing that others view them in a positive light (Nesdale *et al*, 2005). This is very different from the views expressed by the white boys who expressed the belief that people from other race groups think negatively of white people.

4.1.2.2 Xenophobia

The children expressed an understanding of the difference between themselves and foreigners. They referred to the experience of being regarded as different or weird, because they do not come from the same country as others.

Jackie Chan (MR/M) – I think the girl thinks the boy's weird ... and the boy thinks the girl's weird.

Res – Why would sh- What would make them think the other person is weird?

Jackie Chan (MR/M) – They come from different countries and they don't know each other very well, so they think each other weird

Bruce Lee (MR/M) – ... that he ...that he ... no like he doesn't like ... she doesn't like him because he comes from a different country

4.1.2.3 General Differences

These children also related how in general, difference is something that is not really tolerated at the school. They spoke of how other children make fun of and reject them, when they do something that is different in any way. The following quotes illustrate the tendency of children to form strong identification with an in-group and to reject those who are not part of it (Brown, 1995).

Riana (B/F) – Mam, since I cut my hair ... people have been treating me differently lately. Like well when I didn't, when I had long hair then, um people used to treat me nicely ... now its like ... its like they change every single time you do something ...

Kelsie (B/F) – Mam sometimes everybody like, I don't say only black people, if you like have braces people like call you Ugly Betty ... just because the Ugly Betty Show she is like wearing braces and Res – So its not about colour, but it's about just if you different?

Agreement from the members

Beyonce (B/F) – Mam since I also cut my hair most of the people don't treat me good Mam

4.1.3 Theme 3: Perceptions of people from their own racial or ethnic group

The third theme looks at how the children viewed and perceived people who are from their own racial group.

4.1.3.1 Characteristics

a. Language

On the whole, when speaking about their own race group and language, group participants expressed positive sentiment.

Res - ... What are white people?

Jack (W/M) – White people don't speak slang.

Res - ... What else do we know about coloured people?

St Cape (MR/F) – I think that they are mostly English

Res – St Cape, so you say that the coloured people speak mostly English?

St Cape (MR/F)- Yes

In the following quote a black participant, when speaking about the experience of being one of only a few black children in his class the year before, discounts another black child in his class as being black like he is, since the other child is from another African country. So within race groups there are characteristics that join and divide too.

Will Smith (B/M) – Last year ... Renaldo and I were also in the same class and we were the only black children in the class

Res – Ok and what was that like

John (B/M) – And me

Res – And you were with them John? So it was the three of you? What was that like for you?

Danny (B/M) - And Sampson

Will Smith (B/M) – No!!! Sampson is not ...

Danny (B/M) – 3B

Will Smith (B/M) –No ... but but we speak Xhosa Mam ... the three of us

Res – And what does Sampson speak?

Will Smith (B/M) – He comes from Zambia

*Res – So when you say black people you mean 3 people that have the same language?
Will Smith (B/M) – Yes*

This illustrates the complex nature of race and draws attention to how, even within the various race groups, there are exclusions and divisions. This illustrates how the notion of race lacks clarity, and how it cannot really be defined or measured (Green, 1995)

b. Values

Participants were generally very positive about their own group's values and showed high own-group preference (Nesdale *et al*, 2005). In the following quotes, the group participants are asked to speak about the characteristics of the child most like them in the researcher's picture.

Riana (B/F) – She looks like she is kind to people.

Res – Do you think other people like the person that you chose? Yes Jason?

Jason (MR/M) – Actually yes ... he does look a bit smart

Bruce Lee (MR/M) – Attractive

Jason (MR/M) – Smart and attractive –

The white children tended to express feelings of superiority over the others. They expressed the belief that the white people are somehow better than the others.

Stinger (W/M) – The whites have more responsibility than the black people

Kian (W/M) – I say the white people are much neater than the coloureds.

Stinger (W/M) - the whites can't take it any more because of the people stealing money ... there in the ... from the banks and the banks can lower ...and the whites are not giving their bonuses and pensions ... all right its getting mucked up because of the blacks or the coloureds and the whites are more ... the whites aren't rude like the coloureds or the blacks

The own group preference amongst these white children is exceptionally high, and it seems to be developing into or already has become out-group prejudice (Nesdale *et al*, 2005). This finding could be an indication that the parents of these children are not speaking to them about race and racial differences in a positive manner (Katz, 2003).

c. Racial Identification

The researcher found a tendency amongst the mixed race children to express a preference to not be white or black. This is an illustration of their stage of ethnic preference according to SIDT (Nesdale *et al*, 2005) and also possibly of their experience of being mixed race in the Western Cape where they are in the majority.

Jackie Chan (MR/M) – I don't really like to be white because lots of people will argue with you

Lil Wayne (MR/M) – I wouldn't want to be black because the white people wants to kill you

These comments from the mixed race children show their awareness of negative attitudes and feelings in society towards people of the other races.

There was a feeling of strong own-group identification and preference expressed by the black children. This could be seen in how they spoke of themselves

Res – OK. I want to go back to what Danny was saying earlier ... about being the only black children in the class ... was that last year?

Danny (B/M) – Yes

Res – What does that feel like? To be the only black child?

John (B/M) - Lucky

Danny (B/M) – Me and Aikon was respected!!

Aikon (B/M) – My teacher used to call us the ... the men in black

Res – The men in black? Did you like being called the men in black?

Danny (B/M) – Ja ...It was our nick name

Res – Did you like it Aikon?

Aikon (B/M) – Yes

The teacher of these boys seems to have helped them to feel good about being the only black children in the class by giving them a nickname, “the men in black”. This name comes from a movie that had very positive connotations for the boys created a sense of self-pride.

There was some question from a mixed race girl about the political existence of her race. She expressed some confusion about where mixed race people fit into South African society. This has been identified as an issue that many post apartheid mixed race people face today (Ruiters, 2009).

St Cape (MR/F) - Mam, do you get a coloured person

Res – What does the rest of the group think? Do you get a coloured person? Are you saying what is a coloured person?

St Cape (MR/F) – No I am asking, do you get a coloured person

Res- What do you mean when you say “Do you get a coloured person” ?

St Cape (MR/F) – Because, in Apartheid they only say a black South African citizens and a white South African citizen ...

Jaimie (MR/F) - but they don't say anything about coloured

This may have come from discussions that she had heard the adults engage in, or it may be her own struggle in terms of making sense of what it means to be coloured (Ruiters, 2009).

4.1.3.2 Relationships

a. Friendships

When the topic of friendship was brought up, there emerged some difficult experiences. These comments from the participants in the white boys group indicate that they experience friendship problems at school. These problems seem to be about struggles for power amongst the children, and also the fear of the unknown.

Kian (W/M) – No one wants to be friends with them ...

Res – Because?

Kian (W/M) – Because he is a white person

Jack (W/M) – My cousin has absolutely no friends at his school.

Stinger (W/M) – no 5 (white boy) doesn't like no 3 (mixed race boy) because they don't get along with each other. They sometimes argue and they fight about who is gonna be the leader or who must write this.

These friendship difficulties may be due to the fact that there are very few white children in the school, and as a result the white children tend to feel marginalized and are sometimes excluded.

Jack (W/M) – In my class there isn't like any like bright ... like white people in our class ...

Res – Bright? What do you mean when you say Bright?

Jack (W/M) – White

Res – Oh ... there are no white people in your class?

Jack (W/M) – Yes... only coloured and black

Since there are so few of them, the white children do not have many friendship opportunities within their own race group. Schofield and Sagar (1977 cited in Brown, 1995) have found that when there is equal status between the children, cross racial friendships are more likely to occur. In the context of this school however, the differences in terms of socio economic

statuses between the learners is very large, and the white learners are typically less affluent in terms of wealth and status.

The black and mixed race children did not speak of the same difficulties that the white children did in terms of friendships, and seemed to be integrating quite well with their peers. The following comments are from black and mixed race participants respectively:

Riana (B/F) – My friends are only coloureds and white ... um ...

Beyonce (B/F) – And black

Riana (B/F) – No, I don't play with black people ... I don't know why ...

St Cape (MR/F) – Coloured people ... like to play with ... sometimes they play with other people ... the blacks and the whites, they like to play with them ... The whites never like to play with them.

One participant spoke of his experience when a friend of his would not take him home to play, as his mother said that he could not come. He felt that this was because of the colour of his skin. It was interesting that when this topic was discussed again in the follow up group, other group members felt that the scenario was not necessarily about race and skin colour.

John (B/M) – I don't agree with him because um ... its not the fault of his skin ... you were born like that ... there's no faultbecause it was Gods first thing ... before he created you ... he first looked at your ears carefully ... and made it ... so there's no fault.

Res – What were you going to say? Maybe he went to his house before and ...?

John (B/M) – And um ... his mother didn't mind him and um some- maybe something changed her mind

Res – OK. But maybe it wasn't the colour of his skin? Ok...Aikon

Aikon (B/M) – Its not just sometimes its not just about your skin colour ... some times its like ... people ... there's a reason why ... like you hurt them or something ... or maybe feelings or...

These boys appear to not expect racial prejudice, while the first child (Danny) does. Interestingly, Danny is not South African, but is a black person from another African country.

4.1.4 Theme 4: Experiences of prejudice at school

The researcher found that while children were generally reluctant to speak of prejudice at school, there had been a number of experiences by group members.

4.1.4.1 Relationships

Many of the experiences of prejudice that the participants shared occurred in the contexts of their friendships and interactions with their peers.

a. Friendships

Res – OK. So do you think on the [name of the school] playing fields, everybody plays with everybody?

(Yes Mam from some members)

Kim (MR/F) – Only some

Res – Kim, only some? Tell me about that?

Kim (MR/F) – Some whites don't want to play with blacks (unclear)

This illustrates the tendency that Davey (1983) speaks of for children to prefer friendships with children from their own race groups.

b. Exclusion

A number of children related experiences of being told that they do not belong at the school. The children who spoke of this were all from the group of black girls. They experienced this from both the white and the mixed race learners at the school. The researcher wondered if this indicated that the experience of the black children in the school is more challenging than that of the other races, as they are given a double blow and made to feel excluded by the other minority group (white learners), as well as the majority group (mixed race learners).

Kelsie (B/F) – I was going to say ... for example ... like ... people like ... a white person ... (laughs) I am not being rude ...

Res – Hmm

Kelsie (B/F) – But when I say “A white child”... we are like black children at the school and then they tell us that we don't belong here ... something like that ...

Res – OK. Has that happened ... Has that happened to you?

Kelsie (B/F) – Yes

Beyonce (B/F) – The grade 7's do say that to us ... They say this is only for the ... this is reserved for coloureds only so you may go out of here you kafirs and all that Mam

These children seem to have had some very negative experiences of racism in the school environment. Being told that they do not belong at the schools they attended has a strong flavour of the apartheid era, and is reminiscent of what is discussed by Tihanyi (2007) as a difficulty when schools first became integrated and black and mixed race children struggled

to fit in, because of a lack of acceptance and embracing of their difference. It seems that this is still happening so many years after integration began.

4.1.4.2 Denial of prejudice

There was a general reluctance in all the groups to speak to the researcher about their experiences of prejudice at the school. This may have been because of the researcher's role as a member of staff and the mistaken belief that they would get into trouble for what they said. This could also be linked to the general reluctance of all group members to speak about race in general.

While there were a few members who felt comfortable enough to speak about their own experiences at school, most of the other incidents that were related had apparently happened off school property. Often they said that these incidents had not happen to them, but to some one else.

Will Smith (B/M) – I ... sometimes when black people touch white people they say don't touch me cause you giving me cooties and germs and ...

Res – Does that happen at school?

Will Smith (B/M) – No

Res – No ... Where does that happen?

Will Smith (B/M) – Sometimes in parks ... by mistake

Res – Have you ... Has it happened to you?

Will Smith (B/M) – No

Res – OK. Is that what you see here? The white children don't really want to play with the other children

St Cape (MR/F) – No ... I see sometimes at other schools and that ...

Res – Oh. But its not like that here?

St Cape (MR/F) – No

Res - ... Have you ever felt at school that you are treated differently because you are not the same as other people? (Head shakes and a "no Mam" from most of the group members) No Mam?

Jaimie (MR/F) – No

This finding may also be linked to the fact that at this developmental stage, children have become aware that prejudice is not socially acceptable, and this may have caused the reluctance to speak of their personal experiences (Nesdale *et al*, 2005).

4.1.5 Theme 5: Race and racism

4.1.5.1 Race

a. Defining the Races

Skin colour was the characteristic most group members used when trying to describe the various races. All the focus groups tried to define exactly what colour best described the skin colours of each different race. Some also spoke of being able to identify the race of someone by knowing their name and in particular, their surname, or just listening to how they spoke English. All of these were the same qualifiers used by the officials of apartheid South Africa, to determine an individual's race (Posel, 2001).

Riana (B/F) – Mam .. I disagree with her ... they might give the names, but there's a lot of people's names that are ... Example ... lets I go about Kelsie over here ... And she's a prisoner ...

Res – Yes

Riana (B/F) – (giggles) they tell the person this is Kel- ... Kelsie is now going to jail ... but there's a lot of people named Kelsie in the world ... but

Beyonce (B/F) – They must include the surname

Riana is making the point that one would not be able to tell Kelsie's race simply by knowing her first name. She felt that one would need to know her surname to be able to identify her race. Riana appears to be using the measure of surname to identify race, which was also employed during apartheid (Posel, 2001).

Jack (W/M) – But the Whites are lightest

Bruce Lee (MR/M) – And coloured is like a caramel colour

Res – ... What makes somebody black?

Aikon (B/M) – Their pigment

Res – Their ...?

Aikon (B/M) – Their pigment

Res – Their pigment ... Thank you Aikon. What is pigment?

Aikon (B/M) – Like ... their colour.

This confirms the findings of Mare (2001) in his discussions with students who also tended to begin with skin colour to classify race. While his students moved on from skin colour to further classifying the races with other characteristics such as facial features and hair (Mare, 2001), the participants of the current study tended to try to define one race by referring to another for the purpose of comparison. Even though their qualifications of how to identify people were very unclear, they spoke with a lot of certainty and conviction in terms of the

reliability of these classifications. None of the respondents in the current study said that they did not know how to define the different races.

There was some confusion expressed about where the mixed race people fit in. A number of children questioned whether they are black or white.

Riana (B/F) – Um ... I think they do fit in because... um ... it's almost like... like ... um ... OK ... some people say that if you mix like black and white, you make coloured? I think they fit in because then if we mix black and white together, they do fit in because its almost like you also the same colour as them ...

Res – They fit in with?

Riana (B/F) – next to each other ...

Mary (B/F) – I think they fit in with black people

Res – OK

Beyonce (B/F) – Mam I agree with Mary

The following respondent took this idea of identifying race by skin colour very literally, and expressed her confusion at how one got caramel by mixing black and white.

Mary (B/F) – I kind of don't understand coloured and caramel ... because if you mix white, black and ... every other ... our skin colour ... what makes the colour caramel?

This is a very good illustration of how literal the thinking of this child is, and how understanding these apartheid-generated terms can be difficult for this new generation of children. It also echoes the struggle of mixed race people post apartheid, who are trying to understand where they fit in post-apartheid South Africa (Ruiters, 2009).

One focus group, when discussing how to identify who the Indian people are, echoed this difficulty as they struggled to explain where Indian people fit in.

Mary (B/F) – Um ... I ... Moslems are actually ... the skins are actually the same as coloured ... Ja ... but some Indians are ... coloureds are ... I mean not Indians ... Moslems

Res – Yes

Mary (B/F) – their colours are actually like white people colours most of them and they also got black hair

Marian (B/F) – Indian people... you cant tell them that um ... from Indian people ... to coloured people

It seems in the above quotes, that these children are beginning to realise that race is not that easy to define after all, as was the finding of Mare (2001) with his students.

b. Impermanence of Race

Many of the black and mixed race children did not seem to feel that race is a permanent feature but instead something that can change over the course of one's life. Some spoke of how one can be born black, but then later on become white, like Michael Jackson had done, and vice versa. Amongst these children, race does not seem to have a cultural connotation. The notion of race is related purely to skin colour, which is something that changes naturally with exposure to the sun, or can be changed medically.

Jackie Chan (MR/M) - ... people can actually change their skin colour ... going to be some sort of (unclear)

Res - And then what happens? Tell me about that?

Jackie Chan (MR/M) - Um ... like Michael Jackson ... He was black ... and then he (unclear) his skin ... that's what they call it

Jason (MR/M) - Doctored

Jackie Chan (MR/M) - Doctored his skin and so he went to white ... because he said he always wanted to be white ... and then he made up a song "It doesn't matter if you black or white"

Res - So you think that Michael Jackson he was born black but now he's white

Jackie Chan (MR/M) - Ya

Res - So it's possible to change?

Jackie Chan (MR/M) - Yes

Will Smith (B/M) - Nearly everyone is born white and then they change

Res - What changes them?

Will Smith (B/M) - The sun ... sometimes ... cause I was born white ... and then I changed ... the colour of my skin changed.

Aikon (B/M) - My sisters white -

Danny (B/M) - An Albino?

Aikon (B/M) - NOOOO ...

John (B/M) - Some one that's white white white?

Aikon (B/M) - No she's a baby she's really a baby ... she's three weeks now

Res - OK. So you agreeing with what Will Smith was saying?

Aikon (B/M) - Yes Mam, so when my sister ... now if you look at her she's white, but when she grows up, she's gonna be black ...

This seems to show the emergence of a different understanding of race. These children do not see race as being a biological construct that one can identify and label a person with from birth, as it was in the past (Posel, 2001).

c. Mixed Race Families

Some children in all the focus groups shared the experience of having mixed race family. With some it was their direct family, like siblings, while with others it was extended family.

Kelsie (B/F) – Mam ... I disagree with Riana because sometimes I also have family that is sometimes white ... and then ... but they are not like racist and stuff ...

St Cape (MR/F) – My mother has ... my baby brother is white ... his father is white

John (B/M) – My little brother is white ... why am I black ??(Danny giggles loudly) Because my father is black ...

Res – Yes ... and your mother?

John (B/M) – Yes

John (B/M) – My mother said ... my brother's father ...is white

This illustrates the movement in South African society towards greater racial integration. People are engaging in inter racial relationships more often and the children in these focus groups are experiencing it in their own families.

4.1.5.2 Racism

a. Definitions of Racism

These children identified two elements to the act of racism. The one element was when people are simply referred to by their skin colour, which explains why the children were constantly apologetic when they used racial terms during these groups, and the other was when people are treated in a negative manner because of their skin colour. Once again it was directly linked to skin colour, rather than to a cultural group identification.

Res - What is racism?

Jack (W/M) – its when a black person doesn't like a white person

Res – What is racist? Yes Will?

Will Smith (B/M) – Um ... When you call somebody by their colour and you don't like them cause the colour of their skin is different ...

Will Smith (B/M) – Um ... Racism is when people call you by you ... by the colour of your skin and they don't like you by the colour of your skin

The first comment from Jack who is white shows that maybe for him racism is a very current experience and not in the past. Will, who is a black boy, on the other hand understood that

racism is something that he could engage in as well as something that could happen to him, which is a very different understanding.

b. Racism is in the Past

Some of the children felt that racism is in our past and is not something that still happens today. This may explain the reason why they tended to avoid discussing experiences of prejudice. The researcher wondered if this was a denial of what is really happening in their world, or if this indicated a different reality and experience that these children now live in.

Beyonce (B/F) – I think no. 7 thinks that um... no I think no. 7 thinks that no. 6 is a good friend because ... racism is already finished. Maybe they don't know about this racism anymore, so Mam I think they could be friends

Maybe this illustrates that this new generation of South African children are moving away from the ideas that bound the apartheid –era generation.

c. Racism is Rude

Many children felt that it was racist to speak of people being black, white or coloured and that just speaking of this was not okay. They seemed to fear that they may be rejected by others for appearing to be racist. They displayed a social awareness that being prejudiced is not accepted in society. This finding confirms the findings of Nesdale *et al* (2005). They are therefore less likely to express dislike of the out-group.

Jackie Chan (MR/M) – I really think its un-cool you know ... because ... we don't really ... you know ... people wont actually you know ... they'll think you ... they'll think you a little rude if you dis other people and they wont really hang out with you. So ... that's what I think ... because ... cause ... cause I do ... not all but I mean not all but some people do it.

d. Shared Humanity

Amongst the black and mixed race children, there was a tendency to see people as simply being people. The humanity that is shared by all was often mentioned.

*Aikon (B/M) – Everybody is the same
Res – Explain what you mean by that*

Aikon (B/M) – All the people get grey hair and people are different ... but in the inside we all look all the same

Aikon (B/M) – I think we mustn't call people coloured and black, because we are all South African

This child feels we need to see each other as South African rather than the colours or races that divide us.

Danny (B/M) – I was trying to say earlier on ... that between the blacks and the whites there's nothing different. We all the same on the inside. Just the outside that's different. So inside ... So we not supposed to be fighting with each other, we supposed to be helping each other.

This comment seems to illustrate a desire for people to treat each other as if they are all the same, yet also an awareness that this is not in fact what is happening in reality.

4.1.6 Theme 6: The group experience

It was interesting that generally the black and mixed race children reflected on how they had enjoyed and found very valuable the experience of being in the research focus groups. Nesdale *et al* (2005) discuss how vital group identification of any form is for children of this age, and the response of many of the participants to the experience of being in these groups was an excellent illustration of this sense of identification with others in their focus groups. The researcher noticed how participants would often refer to the focus group with some sense of loyalty.

Jackie Chan (MR/M) – Um Mam ... they um ... they don't really dis each other ... some people do at [name of the school] but some people are very kind ... at [name of the school] ... like them ... (referring to the other boys in the group).

Many of the participants seemed to feel that the group had provided them with a forum to speak about issues of race in a respectful way, and in a way that had afforded them the opportunity to learn. They seemed to feel that they had learned about being respectful to all people, especially towards those who are different to them.

Jason (MR/M) – We've learned something ...

Res – You've learned something? ... What have you learned?

Jason (MR/M) – I don't know what we learned but we did learn something

Res – OK ... Jet Lee?

Lil Wayne (MR/M) – Skin colour

Jet Lee (MR/M) – To not worry about skin colour to not treat to not treat children differently because of their skin colour

Res – OK

Jason (MR/M) – Cause even if they different skin colour we still the same ... kind like

Beyonce (B/F) – Mam I just say ... I was gonna say I think it was nice being here and I liked us as being a group.

Beyonce (B/F) – Mam ... I think it was a good ... thing ...

Res – What makes you say it was a good thing ... what was good about it?

Beyonce (B/F) – Because Mam, there was no arguing ... or ... fighting or talking about “No ... No you wrong” ... it’s like saying disagree or don’t disagree ... um ... I liked the way that we talked like saying disagree not disagree because Mam it doesn’t make “Kaal” feelings

The researcher was amazed at how much the children had taken from the focus groups. While the purpose of the groups had been data gathering rather than educational, the children had taken so much out of it for themselves and had learned simply from the experience of engaging with others about something that they had previously not felt they had permission to speak about. The also experienced how race can be discussed in a respectful manner.

One group member expressed his discomfort about having spoken about race but not everyone in the group agreed with him.

John (B/M) – Its like were racist (giggles) Its like we were racism now ...

Danny (B/M) - We were racism talking about different ... it feels racism

Res – OK ... do the rest of you feel that way as well? That it feels like we have been racist by talking about racism?

John (B/M) – No ... when like (Danny interrupts)

Danny (B/M) – Cause cause we were talking about –

Res – Let John finish, let John finish.

John (B/M) –No ... because you also talking about freckles and asking us questions, so its not racism ... only we laugh when every time we heard the world freckles we laugh (he starts laughing)

Danny (B/M) – Or Or black or white its racism ... or something like that

The feeling that the groups had been beneficial to them in some way, was expressed by all the groups except the groups of white boys and mixed race girls. The researcher wondered if these children had found the experience to be a lot more uncomfortable than the others had.

4.2 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the context in which the research was conducted, as well as the six main themes that emerged from the focus group discussions. The comments of the children

were used throughout to validate and also to illustrate the main findings of the research. A summary of the conclusions of these findings follows in Chapter Five.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research aimed to explore the perceptions that Grade Four learners have of people from their own as well as people from other race groups, how they thought these people viewed them, and what their experiences of prejudice at school have been. In this chapter, each of the research questions will be presented once more, and will be discussed with the information from the findings just presented. The chapter will conclude with recommendations to the school where the research was conducted, as well recommendations for further study.

5.1 Conclusions of the Research

5.1.1 The perceptions learners hold about people from other racial and ethnic groups

The comments made by the children about people from other races indicated that there are feelings of threat and suspicion between the children of different races at the school. This could be seen in the negative stereotypes that were expressed about language, and the values they see in other people. While there seem to be inter-racial friendships, some children tend to prefer to have friendships with people of their own race. Bullying was identified as a problem by the white and black children, and seems to take on a racial flavour at times.

The black and mixed race children tended to speak about the apartheid era and linked this strongly with abuses experienced by black people at the hands of white people, while the white children did not mention apartheid at all. All the children were very aware of inequalities between the races, and in particular inequalities in the work place. There seemed to be a strong feeling of threat by the white children from black and mixed race people, and they seemed to be aware that they are a minority group in the school and in the Western Cape.

5.1.2 The perceptions learners hold about how people from other racial and ethnic groups view them

Most of the children felt that people of other races would view them in a positive manner, with the exception of a couple of the white boys who believed other races think negatively of them. The children expressed an awareness of xenophobia, and the idea that people dislike those from other countries, which may have been related to reports of xenophobic attacks in the media at that time. The children spoke of the experiences of being regarded negatively by

their peers if they are different in any way, and not just racially. This seems to indicate a general inability of these children to deal with and accept differences of many kinds.

5.1.3 The perceptions learners hold about people from their own racial and ethnic groups
On the whole, these children felt very positively towards people from their own racial and ethnic groups. They used words like “smart, attractive and kind” to describe children from their own groups. The white boys tended to express feelings of heightened superiority, possibly in response to the negative way they feel others view them, or their negative views of others. The words they used to describe white people included “more responsible”, “neater”, “honest” and “not rude”. The black children expressed a sense of own group preference.

In terms of friendships, the black and mixed race children did not feel that they have problems developing friendships with children of other races and seemed to be integrating well with other children. The white boys on the other hand, spoke of friendship difficulties because of their race.

The children indicated an awareness of race and its connection with access to resources. The black children spoke of being aware that black people are starting to obtain more wealth than they did before, while the white boys felt that white people are richer than the other races. In terms of work, the white children had very positive ideas about the work that white people can do and ascribed them to jobs of importance and prestige. The black children felt that black people are not being given the opportunity to manage.

5.1.4 The experiences learners have of prejudice at school

The children were reluctant to speak about experiencing prejudice at the school, and even denied that it happens. They did speak of the awareness that sometimes children did not play with children of different races, and in particular the white children. The black children however spoke of being excluded at the school. They had had experiences of being told by others at the school that they do not belong there and spoke of being called racial names such as “kaffir”.

5.1.5 Other Findings

The researcher found that all the children tended to define race primarily according to skin colour. As a result of this understanding, the children felt that race changes over the course of one's life, since skin colour changes due to sun exposure. They therefore felt that people change their race as they go through life and race is not something intrinsic and permanent. This was a very interesting understanding of race. In every group there were children who spoke of having family of mixed race, indicating that inter racial unions and marriages have become more common in our society.

Many children felt uncomfortable speaking about race as they felt that this was in fact racism. On the other hand they spoke about how good it was to be able to speak about race, so it seemed that the focus groups had given them the opportunity to speak about something that their social environments were not allowing them to speak of.

Many children expressed the belief that racism is something that is the past. They felt that we are all South Africans and we share membership to the human race, and this is what unites us. This came from the black and mixed race children, and not from the white boys.

The researcher found that the views expressed by the mixed race children tended to be more neutral than those expressed by the other children. The black and white children on the other hand expressed strong views about people of the other races.

5.2 Recommendations arising from the study

This study was done on a very small scale, with a very small sample at just one school. All the race groups could not be represented in the study because of the small sample. The researcher feels that this study could therefore be expanded in a number of ways:

- Further research could expand on this study by conducting focus groups in more schools, with a much larger sample of children.
- This study was done at one very particular type of school, namely a school that had previously been for white children only, but which now educates mostly mixed race children. Further research could be extended into schools that are more racially

integrated and also those that are less integrated, so that comparisons can be done on the effects of integration and contact on attitudes towards other races.

- The researcher found that there is a scarcity of research on the views of post-apartheid children on the apartheid era. Many of the children in this study held surprisingly strong ideas about what happened and also about how people interact with each other today as a result of those years. Apartheid has affected their lives in a significant way, yet not much is known about how they understand this era.

There are a number of recommendations for the school where this study was conducted.

- Many of the children who took part in the study indicated how helpful it was to engage in a discourse on race. Race is part of their daily experience, yet it seems that they do not have permission to speak about it. Providing more group experiences such as these would be very helpful in terms of giving them the space to speak out their thoughts and feelings about experiences.
- Race appears to be a salient part of the experience of many learners at the school. It was evident from the study that there are a number of racial divisions amongst the learners. Engaging in overt discussion in the school about issues of race, and embracing “otherness” and difference would be very helpful. The best place to start would be with the staff. By running workshops with them on diversity, they could begin to engage with each other on the things that unite and also the things that make them different. In this way being different can be normalised and embraced in the school, and would extend to the children.
- Racism and prejudice are found to reduce when they are spoken of with children in an open and non-judgmental way. The school is an excellent arena where this can happen, and where children can start to challenge the prejudices that they hold. This is an area in which the teaching staff can make a significant impact.

5.3 Conclusion

This final chapter of the study has summarised the findings of the focus groups, and has presented some recommendations for further research into this topic. It has concluded with some recommendations to the school on how the issues that arose from the focus groups can be addressed with the learners at the school.

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Appendix A: Letter of Permission from the School

University of Cape Town

9 March 2009

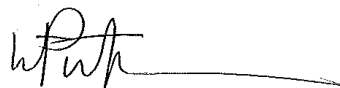
Dear Ms West,

Re: Permission to conduct research at our school.

I am pleased to inform you that permission for you to conduct research into the experiences and perceptions of race and prejudice amongst Grade Four learners at our school has been granted.

We wish you every success in this endeavor, and look forward to hearing your findings on this very interesting and relevant topic.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Pietersen', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

W. Pietersen (Mr.)

Deputy Principal

University of Cape Town

Appendix B: Letter to Parents requesting consent for research

University of Cape Town

28 April 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Permission for your child to participate in research at ** Primary***

I am a social worker currently registered for my Masters in Clinical Social Work at the University of Cape Town. For the research component of this course, I have decided to explore children's experiences of prejudice and their perceptions of people who are different to them. The children in Grade Four will be the focus of my study.

Racism and negative prejudiced behaviour are issues that have been central to the history of our country. Post apartheid, the people of South Africa were once again able to freely associate with each other, however this has not always been positive. Just last year we heard of and witnessed the violence shown towards refugees and asylum seekers who had come to our country to escape the unsafe conditions in their homelands. This lack of tolerance for people who are different seems to be spilling over into schools all over the country. We are hearing all too often about children being bullied by others because they are different in some way. By addressing attitudes of intolerance at the primary school level, we can make a difference to the attitudes of the adults of the future.

Through the use of focus groups with the Grade Four children at ***** Primary, my research will explore these children's experiences of prejudice, as well as the views they hold about other people and groups. The identity and privacy of all the children who participate in the study will be protected **at all times**. I will make an audio recording of all the groups, but the identities of the children will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. No one at the school will have access to these audio recordings. Only my findings will be presented to the school, to aid their creating appropriate useful future programs.

Your child has been randomly selected to be a member of one of these focus groups. I have negotiated with the Grade Four teachers for a timeslot when I will be able to meet with the children, with minimal disruption to their schoolwork and learning.

Please could you complete the attached permission slip and return it to the child's class teacher by Monday the 4th May. I plan to start the focus groups on Thursday 7th May. I can be contacted at school on (021) *** **** Monday to Thursday if there are any questions or concerns you would like to raise with me.

Thank you in advance for allowing your child to take part in this exciting process.

Yours sincerely,

Verusha West

School Social Worker

University of Cape Town

Permission Slip

I parent/guardian of in grade give permission for him/her to take part in a focus group for the research being conducted by Verusha West (School Social Worker) at ***** Primary School. I am aware that while these group sessions will be audio recorded, my child's identity and privacy will be protected at all times.

Signature :

Date :

University of Cape Town

Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Schedule

University of Cape Town

Focus Group Interview Schedule

Introduction

- This group is part of the research that I am doing.
- The group will be tape recorded, however at all time you will be called by the name that you have chosen for yourself. In that way, I can use whatever you say during the group for my research, but no one will know that it's you who said it.
- Nothing you say is wrong – there are no right or wrong answers. I just want to find out more about what you think. You don't have to think or say the same as every one else.
- I am going to ask you some questions and you just need to tell me what YOU think. You can also respond to what other group members are saying. This is a discussion.
- Please try not to talk while someone else is speaking. Rather let them finish before you speak.

Focus Group Questions

Start by going around the group getting each member to introduce themselves by their chosen name.

1) What kinds of people do we find in South Africa?

Present the page with pictures of the children and ask what do they see in this picture?

2) Following on from this, which picture do you think shows a child who looks the most like you? You can choose the same or differently to the others. Remember to say the number of the picture you have chosen.

- Tell me why you chose that one. Tell me more about the child in the picture – Does he/she have friends? Lots of money? Tell me about his/her family? Do people like him/her? What do people think of him/her?

3) And which picture shows a child who looks the most **unlike** you? Again, you can choose the same or differently to the others.

- Tell me why you chose that one? Tell me more about the child - Does he/she have friends? Lots of money? Tell me about his/her family? Do people like him/her? What do people think of him/her?

4) What do you think children like the one in your first picture think of children like the child in the second picture you chose? And vice versa?

5) Have you ever felt at school that people treated you differently because you are not the same as them? Tell me more.

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Appendix D: Photographic montage for Discussion Purposes

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Appendix E: List of Group Members and their Pseudonyms

University of Cape Town

Group One: Black Females (B/F)

Mary
Riana
Marian
Beyonce
Kelsie

Group Two: Black Males (B/M)

Danny
Aikon
Ronaldo
Will Smith
John

**Group Three: Mixed Race Females
(MR/F)**

Alex
Kim
Saarah
Jaimie
St Cape

Group Four: White Males (W/M)

Jack
Stinger
Sheron
Kian

Group Five: Mixed Race Males (MR/M)

Jackie Chan
Bruce Lee
Jason
Jet Lee
Lil' Wayne

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