

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**GIRLS AND BOYS IN THE EARLY YEARS: GENDER IN AN AFRICAN
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MARIANHILL, DURBAN**

by

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degree of
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DECLARATION

I, Phumzile Jane NZIMAKWE declare that

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As the candidate's Supervisor I agree/do not agree to the submission of this
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- My husband, **Thokozani**, son **Skhumbuzo** and daughter **Asanda**, for support, patience and understanding; and
- Lastly, **God** for giving me strength to persevere.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents **Ernest** and **MaNdwalane Zinya**

ABSTRACT

There is evidence that primary schools are important places where gender inequalities are prevalent. The aim of this study was to explore how gender relations amongst grade two boys and girls in an African junior primary are constructed. It investigated how gender relations amongst 7/8 year old grade two boys and girls in an African Catholic junior primary school situated in Mariannhill, Durban, are constructed. It explored the process through which young township boys and girls attach meaning to gender and forge their gender identities. In this study young boys and girls were active agents in the construction of their gender identities. This study adopted a qualitative approach. Observations and unstructured interviews were used as methods of collecting data from grade two boys and girls. Purposive sampling was used in selecting seven boys and seven girls to participate in group interviews.

The study focussed on micro dynamics of boys and girls pertaining to friendships, sexualities, play, violence, religion, classroom chores and school subjects in a detailed analysis. It showed that gender equalities are pervasive in the little cultural world of grade two boys and girls.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus on primary schooling and gender is now growing (Bhana 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008; MacNaughton, 2000; Thorne, 1993; Renold, 2005). In these studies the primary school is constructed as an arena where gender inequalities are perpetuated and where boys and girls engage in gender divisions but also unite (Thorne, 1993). Some people believe that gender does not matter to young children, but theorists like Paechter (2007) and MacNaughton (2000) challenge this belief and maintain that as early as in primary school children are clearly aware of their gender. Skelton (2002) believes that children pick up gender messages from their relationships with their families, their interactions with their local communities, nursery workers and primary school teachers, as well as the media. This study demonstrates that grade two township boys and girls in a Catholic environment are active agents in the construction of their gender identities.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate how gender relations amongst grade two boys and girls in an African primary school are constructed. It explores the process through which boys and girls attach meaning to gender and forge their gender identities.

1.3 FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Motivation for the study

I am an African female. I teach grade two at an African Catholic junior primary school in Mariannhill, Durban. I intend to investigate how gender relations are constructed amongst grade two boys and girls at this school. My decision to focus on this phase of schooling, and within a gendered perspective, derives from my seventeen years of experience as a junior primary school teacher and the focus of my postgraduate studies in gender and education. When I enrolled for a Bachelor of Education Honours specialising in gender studies, I had known little about gender in schools. I was not aware that I was one of those teachers indirectly perpetuating unequal gender relations through my practices and behaviour. As I became more alert to the theoretical issues in gender and education, I was able to understand better the domain of schooling as a gendered and masculinising agency producing and reproducing gender inequalities. Unequal gender relations start at an early age, and this is

perpetuated by schools as well as families. It is the school, and this school in particular that becomes the focus of the proposed investigation.

Children learn appropriate gender roles very early by the way they are treated in the family (Maher, 2002, p. 85). Feminists' research has drawn our attention to the fact that primary schools are important places where gender is enacted contributing to unequal gender relations and thus an area requiring intervention (Thorne, 1993; MacNaughton 2000; Renold, 2005; Bhana, 2002). Thorne's (1993) classic study of primary school boys and girls shows how gender is policed through the active participation of young children in producing dominant versions of masculinity and femininity. Thorne also shows that much of the border work that separates the sexes is also delicate and fragile; in the process both boys and girls break these boundaries. Renold's (2005) study in the UK also demonstrates the active ways in which gender is constructed and the ways in which sexuality is embedded within gender relations. A review of literature of the 1980s and 1990s on gender and primary schooling has shown that little has actually changed for girls in the primary classroom (Skelton & Francis, 2002). Connolly's work (2004) in the UK also shows how boys construct their masculinities within familiar versions that include misogyny and unequal gender relations. In these studies the primary school is constructed as an arena where gender inequalities are perpetuated and where boys and girls engage in gender divisions but also unite.

Thorne (1993, p. 36) maintains that boys and girls separate (or are separated) periodically, with their own spaces, rituals, and groups, but they also come together to become, in crucial ways, part of the same world. Some teachers believe that gender doesn't matter to young children; some believe that good early childhood practice produces equity for all and others believe that pursuing gender equity compromises relationships with parents (MacNaughton 2000, p. 9). MacNaughton confronts these common myths and shows that even very young children are clearly aware of gender roles, whether they are playing among themselves, listening to stories or interacting with adults. Although children do play together, one may find them playing with different toys. Boys prefer to play with cars like spiderman vehicles and girls with Barbie or Bratz dolls.

In South Africa work around gender and primary schooling has received less attention, although Bhana (2002) has begun to show how primary school sites are both gendered and sexual arenas. Schooling covers early childhood education, primary and secondary levels. But there is a tendency to focus disproportionately on secondary schooling. Girls and boys actively learn, as they engage with the formal and informal processes of schooling, that their sex defines almost everything they do, who they are, their hopes and possibilities, their futures and how they relate to others. This knowledge is in conflict with the world in which they will be required to live as adults in the 21st century (Wolpe et al, 1997, pp. 76-77).

In addressing the gender problems, the Department of Education established a Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) to make recommendations on how gender equity could be achieved. The GETT was created in September 1996. The team recommended a wide-ranging set of issues that could be taken up through the establishment of a Gender Equity Unity and gender equity machinery in the national and provincial Departments of Education (DoE, 1997). Although the GETT was created and policies developed, some schools have not yet implemented these policies. Much has therefore to be done to challenge gender inequalities.

1.4 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to investigate girls' and boys' perceptions of gender in the early years, this study will attempt to answer the following key questions:

- 1) How do grade two girls and boys understand gender?
- 2) What are the implications of addressing gender equality in the primary school?

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.5.1 The Research design

This study is qualitative in design and the intention is to understand how grade two girls and boys between the ages of seven and eight make meaning out of gender. Babbie and Mouton (2006, p. 270) say that qualitative researchers

always attempt to study human actions from the perspective of the social actors themselves. In this study of gender and primary schooling, the intention is to get grade two girls and boys to articulate their meanings of gender. This study will use unstructured interviews to chat with grade two boys and girls.

1.5.2 Selection of the school

The study will be conducted in an African junior primary school in Mariannahill. The selection of the school will be based on purposive sampling. In my study I intended to investigate boys and girls perceptions of gender in the early years. The school was appropriate for this study as it is a junior primary school. It starts from grade one and goes up to grade four. Children in these stages are often referred to as infants. Even today there are still people who refer to it as an infant sector as it caters for learners in the early years. I teach in this school and it is very close to where I reside. This school, therefore, has been selected on the grounds of its accessibility and feasibility. In order to maintain anonymity, the pseudonym for the school will be Hambanathi.

1.5.3 The selection of participants

To investigate gender in the early years, I will work with grade two boys and girls. I will use a purposive sampling and work with a selected group of boys and girls. I have decided to work with grade two girls and boys as I once taught this group of children and access to them will be easy. Struwig and Stead (2001, p.121) maintain that qualitative researchers must carefully consider why they have

selected a particular sample and not another. In my study, grade two is more feasible and accessible to me as a researcher. The selection of boys and girls will be based on friendships. In this way access to them in the playground will be easy as this group plays together.

1.5.4 Data collection and instruments

I will conduct interviews and observations with fourteen grade two learners of which seven will be boys and seven will be girls. Unstructured group interviews with boys and girls will be conducted in single-sex group and in mixed-sex group as well. Interviews will be tape recorded. Observations will also be conducted to supplement interviews. Henning (2005, p. 82) says observation implies seeing as well as observing with the other senses. I will observe girls and boys to get first-hand evidence (Struwig & Stead, 2005, p. 172, Roberts-Holmes, 2005, p. 92 citing Rolfe, 2001; Lindon, 2003). In observations, I will try to get an overall feel for the situation (Roberts-Holmes, 2005, p. 97). As I observe I will take photos using a camera and jot down notes in my note book. I will take photos of incidents that are related to my study. I will use unstructured observations. Boys and girls will be observed in the classroom, in the morning assembly and on the playground. The playground will be observed before the morning assembly and during break time.

1.5.5 Data analysis

The data will be analysed qualitatively. To analyse data I will first organise data by reading the transcribed interviews and the field notes. The data will be the responses from grade two boys and girls. I will categorise data into themes. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005 p. 211) say that field notes can be described as detailed notes made by hand, tape recordings, and observation, and are compiled during qualitative interviewing. In order to analyse the raw field notes, these have to be processed.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The participants will be informed that they will be observed. They may therefore behave differently to impress the interviewer. The other limitation is that I will only conduct this study with grade two learners. Teaching and researching on the same site is a limitation in itself. I might be biased in disclosing confidential school information. I will try to overcome this by being unbiased. Grade two boys will be interviewed in their mother tongue (Zulu). This is a limitation because translating their responses into English when transcribing data will be time-consuming.

1.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical issues will be considered before conducting this study. Permission will be sought from the school. The Department of Education will also be informed about this study. I will explain the purpose of the study to the participants (grade two learners). Permission from parents will also be sought. Ethical behaviour is important in research, as in any other field of human activity. The principles underlying 'research ethics' are universal and concern issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005, p. 181). The participants will be made aware that they are being observed and they will be allowed to read the field notes. In order to maintain anonymity, the school and the participants will be given pseudonyms.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The structure of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter One (1) discusses the introduction and background to the study. The chapter also highlights the focus and purpose of the study, key research questions, the theoretical and conceptual framework, research design and methodology, limitations of the study, and the breakdown of chapters.

The literature review on gender, construction of masculine and feminine identities in schools is undertaken in Chapter Two (2). Local and international literature will

be referred to when discussing topics like gender and early childhood, gender and young children, gender and primary schooling, gender and religion, gender equity in South Africa and implications for changing practices.

Chapter Three (3) examines the research methodology, research design, research instruments and other approaches used to conduct a study on boys and girls in a primary school.

Data collected is presented, interpreted and analysed in Chapter Four (4).

Chapter Five (5) presents the conclusion and recommendations arising from the study on how gender relations amongst boys and girls in an African junior primary school are constructed and how this can be improved.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This dissertation investigates how gender relations amongst grade two boys and girls in an African primary school are constructed. It explores the process through which boys and girls attach meaning to gender and forge their gender identities. The study shows how young boys and girls construct their masculine and feminine identities. The next chapter discusses the existing literature on gender and masculinities.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to investigate how gender relations amongst grade two township boys and girls in a Catholic primary school are constructed. It will also explore the process through which boys and girls attach meaning to gender and forge their gender identities. Being a young child is often perceived as a space where children are untroubled and untouched by the cares of the (adults) gendered world. Although this is not true about children in this study, for some theorists children are seen to be degendered and without knowledge about gender and sexuality. They are seen as too young to understand such issues (Renold, 2005). This study agrees with Corsaro (1998, 2005) who sees children as active agents rather than passive agents in constructing their own cultures and contributing to the production of the adults' world. Like MacNaughton (2000) this chapter draws from work in the new sociology of childhood which demonstrates that young boys and girls are active agents in constructing their masculine and feminine identities.

Sociologists working within the new sociology of childhood believe that children should be treated as autonomous beings (King, 2004, Jenkins, 1998). This

chapter firstly considers the theoretical premise of the new sociology of childhood. This is important as it sets up the understanding of young children as agents in the making of gender identities. The chapter then goes on to consider:

- Gender and early childhood;
- Gender and young children;
- Gender and primary schooling;
- Gender and religion;
- Gender equity in South Africa;
- Gender and primary school research in South Africa; and
- Implications for changing practices.

2.2. THE NEW SOCIOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD

The main frame of the new sociology of childhood is organised around the idea that the child is a social actor: This approach focuses on everyday life and the ways children orientate themselves in society; it engages with the cultural performances and the social worlds they construct and take part in. Children are viewed as active participants and members of society right from the beginning. Theorists within the new sociology of childhood argue that childhood is socially constructed (Corsaro, 2005; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998).

Theorists working in the new sociology of childhood reject the view that childhood is a tabula rasa and state of immaturity or that their minds are blank. Matthews

(2007) challenges this myth as she points out that “Infants are not blank slates but come equipped with remarkable minds programmed to be receptive to and to make sense of what is going on around them in both the social and physical worlds”. The newest evidence suggests that socialisation is very much dependent on interaction in which children, even infants, play an active role. Children are active agents rather than passive, involved in appropriate information from their environment to use in organising and constructing their own interpretations of the world (Corsaro, 2005; MacNaughton, 2000). Corsaro (1997) sees the process as a structural form or part of the society. Like adults, children are co-constructors of society. Corsaro (2005) has put forward the following views about children as active social actors: ‘As social actors children produce their unique cultures while simultaneously contributing to the production of adult societies.’

Childhood, that socially constructed period in which children live their lives, is a structural form; it is a category or a part of society, like social class and age groups. In this sense children are members of childhoods.

The new sociology of childhood is in contrast with the old sociology where children are often perceived as unformed and undeveloped, yet they are in the process of development and socialisation (Goldin in Jenkins, 1998, p.138). Sociologists within the old sociology maintained that others have been allowed to speak for children, effectively silencing them. In research on children in families,

as for example, parents, typically mothers, routinely speak for their children about issues deemed important by adults. In research on school children, teachers assess children's personalities, abilities, and promise. Interaction among children is dismissed as merely play or as preparation for adulthood. The assumption that children cannot speak for themselves was rarely questioned because the voices of those not yet fully socialised were deemed not worth taking seriously. Scholars of the new sociology question the practice of privileging adults' views over children's about issues related to children's lives. The researchers advocate interacting directly with children. Scholars within the new sociology see children as autonomous beings and active agents in constructing their identities.

Feminist orientations to childhood studies have used the new sociology of childhood to expand the idea that children are gendered agents and not separate from the socio-cultural world that they live in.

The ways in which gender is theorised in early childhood is discussed in the next section.

2.3 GENDER AND YOUNG CHILDREN

This section will show how young children actively construct their gender identities as boys and girls. It will further examine the influence of the family, the school and the peer group they have in children's learning of their appropriate

gender roles. Teachers in schools and parents believe that boys are aggressive whereas girls are gentle. For children in most contemporary societies, there are three key sites in which the communal construction and learning of masculinities and femininities take place, namely the family, the peer group, and the school. These have different times in a child's life. In the very early years the family is central to the child's developing understanding of what men and women, boys and girls do, and how these activities may differ according to gender (Paechter 2007, Plaster & Schiller in Koch & Irby 2005). Paechter further says that when a baby is born the first thing that people usually want to know is what sex it is. MacNaughton (2000, pp. 21-22) argues that children do receive messages from society about who they should be. They receive many different messages from many different sources. For instance, parents, teachers and grandparents may provide very different messages about how to be normal, given the child's gender, 'race', class and ability. In black society the mother or the grandmother is responsible for educating young girls on how they should behave. There is expected behaviour of girls which is very different from that of boys.

My observations as well as my experiences as both a teacher and a learner reveal that it is in schools and at home where gender differences are produced and perpetuated. Appropriate gender roles are instilled in young boys and girls. Wrigley (in Wrigley 1992, p.14) maintains that girls, historically and today, are subject to demands that they demonstrate feminine behaviour within schools. This illustration demonstrates that gender is socially constructed. Jackson &

Scott (2002, p.1) maintain that the concept 'gender' was adopted in order to emphasise the social construction of masculinity and femininity and the social ordering of relations between women and men. Gender denotes a hierarchical division between women and men embedded in both social institutions and social practices. Gender is thus a social structural phenomenon but is also produced, negotiated and sustained at the level of everyday interaction. Boys perceive girls as neither powerful nor strong. Blaise's study (2005) demonstrates that boys could not accept the fact that there are strong girls. For them only boys are strong. Children pick up these gendered messages from their relationships with their families, their interaction with their local communities, nursery workers and primary teachers as well as the media (Skelton, 2002). The gender messages that girls are by nature weak is perpetuated. At school they cannot move desks because they are not as strong as boys.

2.4 GENDER AND PRIMARY SCHOOLING

This study is set in the primary school. This section shows how the literature drawing from the new sociology of childhood and feminist orientations to childhood feature in research around primary schooling.

2.5 GENDER AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The focus on primary school and gender is now growing (Bhana 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008; MacNaughton, 2000; Thorne 1993; Renold, 2005). In these studies the primary school is constructed as an arena where gender inequalities are perpetuated and boys and girls engage in gender divisions but also unite. Thorne (1993, p. 36) maintains that boys and girls separate (or are separated) periodically, with their own spaces, rituals, and groups, but they also come together to become, in crucial ways, part of the same world. Some teachers believe that gender doesn't matter to young children; some believe that good early childhood practice produces equity for all and others believe that pursuing gender equity compromises relationships with parents (MacNaughton, 2000, p. 9).

MacNaughton confronts these common myths and shows that even very young children are clearly aware of gender roles, whether they are playing among themselves, listening to the stories or interacting with adults. Although children do play together, you may find that they play with different toys. The boys prefer to play with Spiderman cars and girls with Barbie and Bratz dolls. Connolly (2004, p. 65) contends that young children are too young to recognise gender differences, certainly in terms of anything beyond simply being able to distinguish between boys and girls. Because of my own experiences as a young girl, I totally disagree with Connolly's notion.

Schools, including primary schools, are important sites in the making of gender power relations. In other words, schools are places where femininities and masculinities are produced (Skelton, 2001, Frosh et al, 2002 cited in Bhana, 2005). Wolpe et al (1997, p. 6) argue that it is in schools that sexism, as well as racism and other forms of pejorative differentiation, not only occur, but are also redefined and reinforced. I concur with this illustration. In schools teachers are often responsible for gender inequalities. Boys and girls are treated differently. In most schools the school gender regime is patriarchal. Boys and men are given preferential treatment.

Schooling is a process that interacts with family life. Children learn in their homes about gender differences in a way that makes them natural and irrefutable. In the course of this the importance of men is not questioned, nor are the masculine interests. Girls and boys in the earliest years of schooling have already acquired traditional gendered forms of behaviour, which may lead to forms of oppression (GETT, 1997).

Feminists' research has drawn our attention to the fact that primary schools are important places where gender is enacted and contributes to unequal gender relations and thus an area requiring intervention (Thorne, 1993; MacNaughton 2000; Renold, 2005; Bhana, 2002). Thorne's classic study (1993) of primary school boys and girls shows how gender is policed through the active participation of young children in producing dominant versions of masculinity and

femininity. Thorne also shows that much of the border work that separates the sexes is also delicate and fragile; in the process both boys and girls break these boundaries. Renold's study (2005) in the UK also demonstrates the active ways in which gender is constructed and the ways in which sexuality is embedded within gender relations. A review of literature of the 1980s and 1990s on gender and primary schooling has shown that little has actually changed for girls in the primary classroom (Skelton & Francis 2002).

Connolly's (2004) work in the UK also shows how boys construct their masculinities within familiar versions that include misogyny and unequal gender relations. This is revealed in the conversation between the researcher and the young boys where boys mentioned that they hate being girls as girls were 'yucky.' In Bhana's (2002) study boys hate girls because of their smell and their talkativeness. On arrival at primary school, children are confronted with various organisational features in which their gender is a major indicator of where they can go and what they have access to. Recent studies show that one of the most highly-gendered aspects of primary schools is the control of pupils' use of physical space. There are toilets and changing rooms for boys and girls (Skelton, 2001, p. 27).

2.5.1. Gender and the curriculum

Children are active agents in constructing their masculine and feminine identities. This section will pay attention to gender and the school curriculum. It will

demonstrate how boys construct their masculinities in doing maths. It will again seek some reasons why girls shy away from mathematics and why this subject is regarded as masculine. Furthermore, it will show how the school curriculum operates in a way that short-changes girls. The curriculum is the cornerstone of the school experience. It is the vehicle for informing the learner. The nature of this curriculum, however, contributes to reinforcing stereotypical notions of gender differences (Department of Education, 2002). The subjects that are done in schools have proved to be gendered. As it is well known, girls do not tend to pursue mathematics at school. The reason for this is complex and multi-faceted. They include the image of mathematics as male domains (GETT, 1997).

Maths is regarded as masculine and as a status subject. In their earliest years of schooling young boys demonstrate that maths is their subject and girls tend to think that maths and science are difficult subjects and so they cannot take the risk. Irby et al support this view; they say that as early as second grade both boys and girls express gender stereotyping by describing maths as a male domain (Irby, Rodriguez & Lara-Alecio in Koch & Irby, 2005. p.64). Some teachers encourage boys to take up this subject as a major. Girls tend to shy away from maths. This is worsened by the lack of motivation. The gender differences in mathematics start in primary schools. Lucy et al (in Skelton & Francis, 2003) point out that the different treatment of boys and girls and the differential encouragement of boys and girls to study maths might have a negative influence on girls' confidence in learning maths. Bhana's 2005 study in a Durban primary

school reveals that boys think of themselves as good at mathematics as girls “drool when they (boys) rule in the mathematics classroom”. This study demonstrates how boys’ knowledge of mathematics and being identified as ‘Best in maths’ as well as gendering of mathematics as masculine, and the power invested in mathematics, is really important in the structuring of hegemonic masculinity. There is a belief that boys perform far better than girls in maths because the male and female brains are structured differently and so maths becomes suited to boys’ brain structure (Bhana, 2003; Irby, Rodriguez & Lara-Alecio in Koch & Irby, 2005). According to Bhana (2003, p. 39) girls’ brains are structured for reading. That is why there is a belief that girls are better at reading (Interview between Bhana and a teacher in a Durban primary school).

2.5.2. Gender and classrooms

This section demonstrates how teachers short-change girls. A review of the literature of the 1980s and 1990s on gender and primary schooling has shown that little has actually changed for girls in the primary classroom (Skelton & Francis 2002). Schools are sites of normalisation: that is, they are places in which the idea of the ‘normal’ child is constructed. Part of this construction is an understanding that boys and girls behave, think and learn in particular ways, and this affects how they are treated, and, in turn, how they behave in the classroom (Paechter, 2007, p 61). Wolpe et al (1997, p. 77) maintain that teachers play a crucial role in transmitting all forms of knowledge, including those parts that reinforce gender inequities. In the classroom boys are given more attention than

girls; girls tend to be marginalised. Among the ways in which girls are located in and take up marginalised positions in the classroom are the use of physical space, the use of curriculum materials, and the teacher attention (Skelton & Francis, 2002, p. 9). In this way gender inequality is perpetuated instead of being challenged. The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Report (1995) stated that teachers typically interact more with male students, whether it is to verbally reprimand them, to answer their questions, to elaborate on their comments, or to help them with schoolwork.

Furthermore, boys tend to control the conversations in the classroom, ask more questions, and receive more praise and correction for their mistakes (Evans, 1998, p. 83). Teachers praise young girls for their appearance, co-operation, and obedience while praising boys for achievement. This sends a gender specific message to young males and females that could contribute to biased attitudes in children. According to the study conducted by the South African National Department of Education (2002, p. 29) the way in which the school is organised often reinforces what appears to be 'natural' differences between the girls and boys. Boys and girls may line up in separate lines. Teachers may discipline each group differently. There are specific tasks allocated to each gender. Girls are responsible for the sweeping and washing of the classroom. The moving of desks is the boys' task. This view is supported by Wolpe et al (1997) where they maintain that girls are to arrive early or leave later than boys do in order to clean and wash the classroom floors.

2.5.3. Gender and friendship

Children's ability to negotiate an acceptable daily experience is heavily dependent on the adults' understandings of childhood and of appropriate activities by and for children in the two settings, that is, school and home. The whole process of socialisation and the integration of the child into the social world is the cornerstone of the parental role (Mayall, 1994, p. 115). The parents' task in the past was to mediate cultural expectations and beliefs and to ease him out of the total egocentricity of babyhood into modes of behaviour which will be acceptable in a wider world (Mayall, 1994). At home girls are taught not to play with boys. They are aware that they are different from boys and they come to school with that gendered attitude.

School provides opportunities to develop friendships but these too are highly-gendered and sexualised making it impossible for cross-gender friendships. Opposite-sex friendships are comparatively rare; patterns of play tend to be segregated by gender and this is replicated in children's friendship relations (Barnes, in Kehily & Swann, 2003, p.72). When girls and boys cross into groups and activities of the other gender, especially at the earnest end of the continuum, they challenge the oppositional structure of traditional gender arrangements. Teasing and labelling can be seen as strategies for containing the subversive potential (Thorne, 1993, p. 133). McLeod (2002, pp. 224-227) says that capacity for friendships and intimacy have operated discursively as key markers of gender difference. Friendship is part of the web of social practices that mediate and

constitute gender identities. My observations reveal that boys and girls prefer to be friends with the same sex. McLeod's research reveals that girls and boys understand friendship in similar ways. For boys girls' friendships involve gossiping and keeping secrets whereas boys' friendships involve talks about sports. A study conducted in Australia with secondary students reveals how students perceive gender and friendship. One student pointed out that a lot of people did not realise that boys and girls could be friends, and did not have to be dating (Australian school communities). Most people have very stereotyped ideas about relationships between males and females. Sometimes even children's parents tease them about boyfriends and girlfriends if they see their young children playing or talking with members of the other sex.

2.5.4. Gender play and playground

It is argued that play is very important to young children. Connolly (2004) argues that play provides the opportunity for young children to develop a wide range of physical, social, cognitive and emotional skills. On the other hand, MacNaughton (2000) says play and playgrounds are also dangerous spaces. They tend to reflect positions of power and are characterised by relations of domination and subordination. They reflect the more overt examples of male dominance of the playground, such as the exclusion of boys or girls from certain activities and incidents of teasing and sexual harassment. Connolly's study (2004, p. 196) reveals playground sexual harassment such as boys pulling a girl's pants down and burning her bottom. Play is viewed as children's serious real life work; they

are constructing, organising, and shaping social orders, and gender is recognised as one type of social order, according to Danby (1998) and Davies (2003) as cited by Blaise (2005). Blaise, citing Davies, says there is a belief that children have the ability to establish gendered practices and identities in their play. Paechter (2007, p. 100) maintains that playground games play a role in the construction of masculinities and femininities. Although there is a tendency of boys to dominate space while girls are often excluded from playground games, many girls refuse to be dominated by boys, and some are able to deliberately exercise power over them (Bhana 2005, Connolly 1998). Bhana's study reveals that girls in a township school contested boys' domination of space by raising their school dresses and revealing their panties. They did this to scare boys so that they could continue with their play. Bhana's study demonstrates how young girls in a township school use play to construct their gender and heterosexual identities. She found that 'girl play' in the primary school often involved small-scale turn-taking kinds of play. She further noted that 'girls play' often involves singing, clapping to the sounds of rhythmic tunes about girls, boys, kissing, love and cosy life. Contrasts between the world of boys and the world of girls usually begin with themes of location and size. Boys more often play outdoors, and their activities take up much more space than those of girls. Many researchers have reported that boys engage in more rough-and-tumble play and physical fighting than do girls (Thorne, 1993, pp. 91-92).

2.5.5. Young children and sexuality

There is a myth that the primary school is a cultural greenhouse for nurturing and protection of children's sexual innocence. Renolds (2005) argues against this notion by confronting these myths. She maintains that primary school is a key social and cultural arena for doing sexuality. Children as young as four and five are actively engaged in the boyfriend and girlfriend culture. Children's actions and articulation demonstrate that they are segregated by gender. They regulate each other's behaviour by, for example, saying: "Girls can't do that"; or "only boys play football"; or "boys can't sit there"; or "only girls stand in this line." Children as young as three and four giggle when parts of their bodies are mentioned (GETT). Bhana's study (2006) with young Durban children reveals that they have boyfriends and they have kissed them. These kids also know about Aids. They kept that as a secret. This is in contrast to the notion that children are too young to know.

2.5.6. Gender and violence

Violence is one of the major social problems of our times and so should be one of the major issues in current debates about education. Several research findings support the argument that violence is widespread in schools, and in most instances such violence is perpetrated by males and must be understood as a violent expression of certain types of masculinity. Schools are implicated in the making of masculinities and it is increasingly accepted that schools have a role to play preventing violence. Even so, there is overwhelming evidence to show that

verbal and physical harassment, teasing and taunting relating to sexuality or gender against girls and women is rife in schools. Most boys either engage in this or comply with it (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997 pp. 206-210). Tolerance of gender-based violence in schools is a serious form of discriminatory treatment that compromises the learning environment and educational opportunities for girls. Girls are disproportionately the victims of physical and sexual abuse at school. Girls are raped, sexually assaulted, abused, and sexually harassed by their male classmates and even by their teachers. In South Africa, some girls have left school as a result of their experiences with sexual violence (Human Rights Watch, 2001). This happens even in primary school. This is revealed by a Human Rights Watch Report where a nine-year old girl was gang-raped at school by older classmates. Bhana (2002, pp-208-209) maintains that violence interferes with a school's ability to produce a safe learning environment. She further says that violence is seen as an ideal way of gaining and maintaining status and resources. Her study in a township school reveals that children's conflicts ranged from the demand for a slice of bread to a fight for an old pencil. I agree with Bhana (2004), where she maintains that violence is not a means of power for boys alone; girls too display violent femininities.

2.6 GENDER AND RELIGION

This section will consider gender and religion. It will highlight how religion can produce as well as transform gender inequalities in schools. Religion has played

a role in the perpetuation of gender segregation in schools. It is argued that most religious schools are private schools and these schools have more opportunities than public schools. A study conducted by the Department of Education (2002) in South Africa reveals that religion remains one of the most powerful belief systems that is resistant to change. Young boys and girls grow up with the stereotype that men are different from women, and church leadership is usually a male domain. Witte (in Fuller et al, p. 135) demonstrates this and reveals that religious private schools offer scholarships to low-income students. This is evident where Catholics and Protestants run schools which cater for teachers and learners who are affiliated to them. Non-members of their religious domination are not allowed to attend or teach in their schools. Religion, has, in addition, played a role in the founding of single-sex schools for boys and girls. There is evidence that religion can produce gender inequality. In Northern Ireland boys were viewed as lower achievers than boys in Britain, particularly in Catholic schools, and were more likely to leave school without obtaining a qualification in public examinations of any kind (Gallagher et al, in Salisbury & Riddell, 2000, p. 80). Some teachers, and even parents, believe that religion plays a pivotal role in building the characters and morals of young children. A child who is raised by a religious family has to display certain characteristics. Catholics are said to be stricter than Protestants in the upbringing of children. Catholic school ethos includes the espousal of equality among men and women (Catholic Education, 2008). A study by Wilgus (in Koch & Irby, 2005) demonstrates that the teachers in the study reported being raised in a strict catholic environment. The study also

reveals that in catholic schools corporal punishment was utilised to maintain discipline.

In the year 2000 the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education sent out circulars (school policy on religion) to its schools stating that different religions should be tolerated in schools. At the same time the circular announced the end of religious observances. In doing so, the Department intended to encourage the respect of other people's cultural beliefs. This was to cater for all religious groups within the schools. In what I have observed in most African schools, the Christian religion dominates. Even the non-Christian learners are obliged to practice these observances. In the school where I teach (a Catholic school) about 80% of teachers and learners are Catholics. The non Catholic learners attend this school because the Catholic schools have a history of being the best schools in academic achievements. The non Catholic teachers and children are to adhere to the Catholic ethos. Differences in religion are sometimes observed when the non Catholics are excused from the Ash Wednesday celebration. This is very similar to Thorne's study (1993) where differences of religion are obvious such as when Jehovah's Witnesses are excused from Halloween, birthday and Christmas celebrations.

2.7 GENDER AND PRIMARY SCHOOL RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa work around gender and primary schooling has received less attention, although Bhana (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007) has begun to show how primary school sites are gendered and sexual arenas. Schooling covers early childhood education, primary and secondary levels. But there is a tendency to focus disproportionately on secondary schooling. Girls and boys actively learn as they engage with the formal and informal processes of schooling; their sex defines almost everything they do, who they are, their hopes and possibilities, their futures and how they relate to others. This knowledge is at odd with the world in which they will be required to live as adults in the 21st century (Wolpe et al, 1997, pp. 76-77). The next section will look at what has been done to promote gender equality in the early years.

The problems of gender equity in South Africa (SA) and globally has seen the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) in SA and the United Nations Children's Fund intervening (globally). The following are some of the problems that were to be addressed by the GETT.

2.7.1. Problems of gender inequalities in the South African education system pre-1994

A country with a history of apartheid, South Africa became a democratic country in 1994. That was the end of the apartheid government. After 1994 SA has seen

some strides in the education system. The establishment of the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) in September 1996 marked the beginning of a process in which the Department of Education will tackle, meaningfully, the elimination of gender inequality throughout the whole system.

In South Africa the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) was established to address some the following problems:

- Disparities between girls and boys; and many girls and women suffer unfair discrimination and ill-treatment within the education systems;
- Girls and young women exhibit significantly narrower subject and career choices than what boys do; and
- In many schools there is sexual harassment of girls, women students and women teachers as well as acts of violence against women (Wolpe *et al*, 1997).

In addressing the gender problems above, the Department of Education established a Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) to make recommendations on how gender equity could be achieved. The Team recommended a wide-ranging set of issues that could be taken up through the establishment of a Gender Equity Unit and gender equity machinery in the national and provincial Departments of Education (DoE, 1997). Although the GETT was created and policies developed, some schools have not yet implemented these policies. Much has to be done to challenge gender inequalities.

2.7.2. Strategies for challenging gender in ECD

There has been little research in South Africa around gender issues in Early Childhood Education. Recent research in Australia offers some useful insights. In South Africa the Qhubeka conference was held in September 1996 in Cape Town. Interesting ways of dealing with anti-bias education were discussed (GETT). It was recommended that a policy insisting that anti-bias education forms a component of the training of all teachers dealing with pre-school children needs to be established.

2.8 INTERVENTIONS

The GETT and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are to be praised for their contribution to transition. Globally UNICEF and the GETT in South Africa have done much to see justice being done in the ECD sector. UNICEF works worldwide to give children the best possible start in life by making sure they have access to health care, clean water and sanitation, nutrition and early education. UNICEF takes action to ensure that preventive and curative health care, adequate nutrition, safe water and sanitation are made available to all children and those who care for them. In South Africa the GETT has done the very same thing.

Because of the GETT in South Africa the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) referred to Early Childhood Development as a priority area for development. The development of a national policy on ECD was also initiated.

2.8.1. Recommendations

In South Africa the GETT made some recommendations on how gender equity was to be achieved. To bring about gender equity in the ECD sector the GETT recommended that:

- Resources were to be allocated especially to those children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Policies insisting on anti-racist and anti-sexist education are required; and
- A policy insisting that anti-bias education forms a component of the training of all teachers dealing with pre-school children needs to be established.

All these issues were recommended at national level.

2.8.2 Problems of gender inequity globally

UNICEF had to tackle the following problems:

- No school close to home, resulting in the increased likelihood of non-attendance and dropping out after enrolment.
- Physical and psychological violence caused by lack of sanitation facilities affecting girls. Boys often experience beating and bullying. Girls are more

likely to be called on for service tasks (e.g. cleaning), or be sexually assaulted or harassed.

- Girls often invisible in the curriculum content and images and often excluded from taught curriculum.

2.8.3 Interventions

To tackle the above-mentioned problems, UNICEF took action and initiated programmes aimed at contributing to national reforms in the education sector by supporting interventions to increase access to and quality and relevance of basic education. Through this programme, UNICEF:

- Advocates an increased public budget allocation for the education sector;
- Supports in-service teachers' training as a strategy to improve learning outcomes for children;
- Provides technical assistance and policy advice to the Ministry of Labour for the development and the implementation of Early Learning and Development Standards for pre-school education within the framework of a new national policy for early childhood and education (under preparation).
- Provide support and technical assistance to government and communities to ensure increased access for those children who are hardest to reach. In South Africa, the KwaZulu–Natal Minister of Education Ina Cronje provided certain rural school children with bicycles to ensure easy access to schools.

To address the issue of violence, there was advocacy and action for safety and security in schools. Skills-based, gender-sensitive educational content and a gender-sensitive curriculum was promoted.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has looked at the literature which investigates how gender relations amongst grade two boys and girls in a primary school are constructed. It explores the process through which boys and girls attach meaning to gender and forge their gender identities. The study shows how young boys and girls construct their masculine and feminine identities. The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology used to collect data to support the existing literature on gender and masculinities.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research design and methodology I used to collect data regarding grade two boys and girls in an African junior primary school located in Mariannhill. This study investigates how gender relations amongst grade two township boys and girls in an African Catholic junior primary school are constructed.

To explore how grade two boys and girls understand gender I made use of group interviews and observations. This chapter deals with the Research Methodology and the justification of the choice of the study, and the problems which are experienced in a Catholic primary school.

3.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

To investigate how gender relations amongst grade two township boys and girls in an African Catholic primary school are constructed, this study seeks to answer the following key research questions:

1. How do grade two boys and girls understand gender?
2. What are the implications of addressing gender equity in the primary school?

3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This study took a qualitative approach and intended to understand how grade two boys and girls between the ages of seven and eight make meaning of gender. Henning (2005, p. 8) maintains that the thick description is the most distinguishing factor in progressive qualitative researchers. In my study of boys and girls and their meanings of gender my intention was to get rich data. Babbie & Mouton (2006, p. 270) maintain that qualitative researchers always attempt to study human actions from the perspective of the social actors themselves. In this study of gender and primary schooling the intention was to get grade two boys and girls to articulate their meanings of gender.

As a qualitative researcher I collected data by means of unstructured interviews and observations. These two methods are suitable for qualitative researchers (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005, p.193). In this study of grade two boys and girls I wanted to know more about them and their understanding of gender. I chatted with boys and girls in groups as they were seated in the classroom. I also interviewed boys and girls in the playground as I watched them playing games. I also observed them in the classroom, playground and during morning assembly. With observations I was able to see unnoticed and ignored aspects of gender and schooling (see Bhana, 2002). Observation allows previously-unnoticed or ignored aspects to be seen (Babbie & Mouton, 2006).

This study explored how grade two township boys and girls understand gender and as a qualitative researcher I was trying to see gender through the eyes of young boys and girls as they attach meaning to gender and forge their gender identities (Struwig & Stead, 2004, pp 12-13).

3.4 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

3.4.1 Research Site: Selecting the school

The school is located in Mariannhill near the monasteries and is about 10 kilometres (km) from Pinetown. The school starts from grade one and goes on to grade four. Learners who attend this school come from neighbouring townships like KwaNdengezi, Tshelimnyama, Mpola and Nazareth. Some come from squatter settlements in Tshelimnyama. The school caters for both Catholic and non Catholic learners but the majority of learners and educators are Catholics. The learners come from working to low income families. Some learners come from unemployed families and rely on food from the School Feeding Scheme. The school was fortunate enough this year to have sponsors from Bokomo, a company specialising in breakfast cereals, and East Coast Radio station which supplied the learners with breakfast cereals. The serving of the breakfast cereals each morning helps to feed learners who come to school without having eaten anything at home and this has helped to drop the rate of absenteeism. Some learners come without eating breakfast at home because of rushing for lift clubs and others because of poverty. The school was founded in the year 1949 with

about 240 learners. The school was then run by the Mariannahill Mission. The Parish Priest, Father Brunner, who belonged to the Congregation of Mariannahill Missionaries, was a manager. Since then the principals of the school have been Catholics. The school was taken over by the Department of Education in the early 1990s. Although it was taken over, the Catholic Institute of Education (CIE) together with the school governing body (SGB), signed an agreement with the Department of Education that the Catholic ethos and its religious practices were still to be maintained in the school. The CIE therefore partially controls the school. History was made this year in August when the (SGB) recommended a non Catholic member of staff to be appointed as the principal of the school. There were mixed reactions after the appointment of the current principal.

In the 1980s the enrolment increased rapidly due to the squatter settlement in Tshelimnyama. As a result the learners had to occupy rooms at the neighbouring school and even the church hall. Also, since 1996, almost 100 learners were being taught in a dilapidated house at Jabulani centre which is about 1km away from the school. The classroom was shared by two educators who taught their classes simultaneously. The current enrolment is 875 with twenty-five educators, twenty three of whom are females, and two males who joined the school this year.

3.5 GAINING ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL

In most cases, permission for fieldwork is necessary, as for example from the manager of the factory, or the head of a rural community, or the members of the local civic association, before interactions can be observed (Van der Waal in Rossouw, 2003, p. 151). My study was conducted in an African Catholic school. I have taught in this school for one year and three months and still am not aware of other procedures. When I first thought of undertaking this study I intended seeking permission from the senior Catholic members as well. I first sought permission in a written letter to the school principal. I raised my concern about seeking permission from the senior members of the Catholic Church. She said there was no need. I wanted to make sure of her opinion as she was a non-Catholic. I then proceeded and raised my concern with my Head of Department (HOD) who is a Catholic. They assured me that there was no need to seek permission from the senior members of the Catholic Church, as long as the School Management Team (SMT) was aware and the parents of those learners who would be participating were informed. The principal then advised me to negotiate with the class teacher of the learners with whom I intended conducting my study. I was aware of that even before being told. I also sought permission from the provincial department of education in a written letter. I prepared consent forms for learners who were to participate in my study before selecting them. Gaining entry therefore was easy as I am also a member of staff in this school.

3.6 GAINING ACCESS TO THE LEARNERS

I conducted this study with fourteen learners of whom seven were boys and seven were girls. When I first thought of conducting this study, I was a grade two teacher and I intended conducting my study in my own classroom with my learners. The plan had to change because of classroom reshuffling and I was placed in grade four. I then had to take another decision and I had to negotiate with a grade two teacher who was substituting for a teacher on maternity leave. The teacher was very reluctant to allow me into her class. I explained to her that I only needed to talk and observe learners as my study was to be based on them. She felt there was nothing that I would get from the children in her class. We did, however, reach an agreement. She allowed me into her class. Usually for researchers who conduct their studies in schools, the gate keepers are the principals of schools. Mine was a different story. The class teacher was a gate keeper as well.

3.7 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

There are four classes in grade four, namely Class A, B, C and D. I selected section B. As a qualitative researcher I carefully considered why I selected that particular sample (Struwig & Stead, 2001, p.121). The reason I chose to work with Class B was that I knew them. They were my learners before I was placed in grade four, and I thought that access to them was going to be easy because of

the relationship I had as their former teacher. After reaching an agreement with the class teacher I did not waste any time but went straight to grade two B. The aim was to select fourteen learners to work with. I told them that I was going to conduct a study and I needed some of them to participate in my study. They were reluctant and only one boy volunteered, followed by a girl. I told them that I needed seven boys and seven girls and asked them to give me their friends' name so as to include them in my study. They gave names and I asked their permission and they agreed. I then gave them consent forms for their parents to sign on their behalf. The next day they returned the forms. All the parents signed. The children were more than willing to participate in my study. In order to get rich data I worked with a selected group of boys and girls. The selection of learners I worked with was based on friendship with each other. The reason of such selection was to access them easily in the playground as they played together.

3.8 METHODS OF COLLECTING DATA AND INSTRUMENTS

Triangulation was applied to check validity. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) define triangulation as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspects of human behaviour. In this study I collected data by means of unstructured interviews and observations. The use of unstructured interviews was based on the reason that my study was an explorative one hence unstructured interviews are usually employed in explorative research (Kruger, Wellman & Mitchell, 2005, p.197). I considered observing children to supplement

interviews and to get first-hand evidence. I made use of an audio tape to record the discussions with grade two boys and girls. I observed and took photos using a camera. Like Bhana (2002) as I observed, I kept jotting down notes.

3.9 INTERVIEW PROCESS

The first thing that I did was to thank the children for their willingness to participate in my study. I collected their consent letters to check if their parents had granted them the necessary permission to participate in my study. I then introduced myself for the second time. After introducing myself I then asked them to introduce themselves. At first I was sometimes unable to recall their names. I therefore requested their permission to make name tags that they had to put on during interviews. They agreed and were very happy to have them. I chatted with boys and girls as they were seated in the classroom. I also chatted with them in the field before the school assembly and during break time. Before conducting interviews I explained to them the aim of the study. I made them aware that I was going to record their responses in order to recall what I was discussing with them. I reminded them that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time when they felt like withdrawing. I also reminded them that the discussions would be confidential. Sometimes I had to remove a child from the group when his or her response was sensitive. All the sensitive issues were from girls. In cases like the above I had to play the role of a researcher, a mother and a social worker.

For example responses like these below were treated as very sensitive:

Me: If you had a choice, would you choose to be a boy?

Wendy: No.

Me: Why?

Wendy: They abuse us.

Me: How?

Wendy: They rape us.

Me: Did they rape you, *sisi*?

Wendy: Yes.

The extract from the discussions reveals that boys abuse girls sexually. I also jotted down their responses. One girl was not comfortable with that and she complained saying, "*Hawu* she is writing down". I had to show them what I was writing. I assured them that I was using pseudonyms. The use of the audiotape and taking of photos of them excited them. They requested that I play the audiotape so that they could hear their voices. This made them very happy. At the end of the interviews I again thanked them for participating. Up to this point they still came and requested me to interview them again. No one withdrew; instead I had many children, even in other grades, who wanted to be included in my study.

I interviewed children in single-sex groups as I intended. I crossed the boundaries by interviewing them in mixed groups although I did not intend it. I was obliged to by the way they were seated in the classroom.

3.10 OBSERVATIONS

There were 46 learners in the grade two class of which 20 were boys and 26 were girls. I had to observe only the selected group of boys and girls.

In this study I was a non-participant observer. As Henning (2005, p.87) argues there are many researchers who observe in a site without really participating. I did not participate in their activities; I intended to investigate issues relating to boys and girls and their understanding of gender. My observations were not structured but rather semi-structured and sometimes unstructured. With my unstructured observations I tried to get an overall feel for the situation (Roberts-Holmes, 2005, p.97). I observed the classroom, the playground and the morning assembly. I had a note book in which I jotted down all the incidents that were gender-related.

3.11 OBSERVING THE MORNING ASSEMBLY

The research site is a Catholic school. Everyday at 08h45 the learners and teachers assemble in the school yard to conduct prayers. Each class lines up in

its own line and boys and girls line up in separate lines. As an observer it was easy to observe as I was able to stand behind the learners who were participating in my study. The teacher on duty usually tells the learners to form straight lines. Catholic songs dominate and prayers are conducted in Catholic tradition. The focus of my observation here was to see how grade two boys and girls behave in the assembly. I was also interested in the songs they sing and the way children prayed. Learners were always reminded to do as Catholics do. One teacher even said, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". Here she was referring to learners who were not making the sign of the cross. I jotted down all the information and incidents that were related to my study. One of the aspects I noted was that some learners were less concerned when the prayers were conducted. Some were kicking others and their eyes were not closed as it was required when praying.

3.12 OBSERVING THE PLAYGROUND

Here I was observing playground behaviour. My intention was to check how boys and girls interact with one another, the use of playground space, bullying and the games they play. The learners who were not part of my study were very keen to know what I was doing particularly as I was sometimes taking photos and writing down notes. Sometimes they would pose for a camera shot as if I were really taking their photos. I only took photos of actions and incidents that were relevant to my study. The playground was observed before the school assembly and

during breaks. It was not easy to observe in the playground as I had to work with my selected group of learners only even though the playground was used by all learners in the school. I had to keep on moving between the boys and girls.

3.13 OBSERVING THE CLASSROOM

I observed the classroom for one week. I observed the teacher's interaction with boys and girls, the way she treated them, the classroom chores, the performances in school subjects and the behaviour of the learners in class. In order not to distract children, I asked them to ignore me and pay attention to their teacher but I made them aware that I was observing them. This impressed them. The first period starts at 08h00 and I used to go to the classroom before the period commenced. I observed until 12h15 (home time) and I used to sit at the back of the class to make sure that I could see all the learners. Before observing, I made sure that my note book was ready. I did not draw up any observation schedule but I made field notes. As I observed I made an attempt to take down notes. As I wrote, the children were very curious to know what I was writing.

3.14 DATA ANALYSIS

I analysed data qualitatively. I listened to the responses of children from the audiotape and then transcribed data into my book. I kept rewinding the tape to make sure that I transcribed exactly what the children had said. To analyse data

I first organised data by reading the transcribed interviews and the field notes. The data covered the responses from boys and girls. I then categorised data into themes. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005 p. 211) say that field notes can be described as detailed notes made by hand, tape recordings and observation, and are compiled during qualitative interviewing. In order to analyse the raw field notes, these have to be processed. I compared the responses of boys and girls as they articulated their meanings of gender. During this stage I found myself returning to my participants and conducting further research as the data I needed was not sufficient. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) say this is done to check whether the essence of the first interview has been accurately and fully noted.

3.15 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical issues were considered before the study was conducted. Permission was sought from the school principal and from the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education in written letters in which I explained the purpose of my study. I also sought permission from parents of the learners who were willing to participate in my study. I gave them consent letters which were signed by the relevant parents or guardians. The study was conducted only after the letters were signed. Ethical behaviour is important in research, as in any other field of human activity. The principles underlying research ethics are universal. They also concern issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005, p. 181). My study involved my taking photos

of children. I therefore had to abide by Roberts-Holmes's opinion (2005) in which he points out that if one's research project involves taking photos one must ensure that permission is obtained from the manager, the parents and the children themselves. This was considered. The participants were made aware that they were being observed and I allowed them to access what I was jotting down. In order to maintain anonymity the school and the participants were given pseudonyms.

3.16 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The participants were made aware that they were being observed. That made them behave differently to impress me whenever I observed them. I was a teacher and the researcher in my own school. Due to the fact that the children know me they were sometimes ashamed of giving me a true reflection of how they felt. Conducting the study with young children was a limitation in itself. Roberts-Holmes (2005, p.56) points out that when involving children their protection from risk must be given due consideration by the researcher. In my study of boys and girls I encountered sensitive issues from girls. One was gang raped by five boys at home and the other one was raped by a grade four school mate in the school yard. I was not sure if I was causing unnecessary stress to them as they were to recall what had happened. I feared they may act negatively by, for example, committing suicide. Some children sometimes pretended they did not understand my questions and shied away from answering me. Some

were quick to give answers to impress me. Sometimes they were shy to respond to the questions pertaining to boyfriends and girlfriends. In cases like that they would respond by saying, "I don't know".

3.17 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness was achieved by being transparent. One girl was concerned about what I was jotting down and as a result one boy peeped to see what I was writing. He saw their names and told the other learners. I told them that they were at liberty to look at what I was jotting down. Learners will be allowed to see the photos taken. Like Bhana (2002), I was jotting down notes and allowed children to look through what I was writing.

3.18 CONCLUSION

This chapter has described the research design and methodology I used to collect data on how grade two township boys and girls in an African junior primary school make meanings of gender. The next chapter presents the findings and data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results from the responses and observations of seven (7) boys and seven (7) girls in Grade two. This study investigates how gender relations amongst grade two township boys and girls in an African junior primary school are constructed. This study shows how young boys and girls aged between seven and eight actively construct their masculine and feminine identities. For young children primary schooling is a major site for the construction of gender identities (Paechter, 2007, p.76). In South Africa Bhana (2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2006) has shown how primary school sites are gendered and sexual arenas. The findings in this study confirm that primary schools are major sites for the construction of masculinities and femininities.

This chapter discusses ten themes. The themes are:

- Gender and friendships;
- Girlfriends and boyfriends;
- Fantasy play;
- Girls' game;
- Boys' game;

- Violent boys;
- Violent girls;
- Gender and religion;
- Children and classroom chores and;
- Children and school subjects.

4.2 BOYS, GIRLS AND GENDER RELATIONS

Gender and friendships

In nearly every study of school situations where children from age three through junior high are given the opportunity to choose companions of the same age, girls have shown a strong preference to be with girls, and boys to be with boys (Thorne, 1993, p.46). In choosing friendship groups, the membership of girls' friendship groups is more closely matched than those of boys, with more commonly accepted norms, mores and attitudes in evidence. There is a high likelihood that members of the groups identify each other as mutually connected; girls look to those they consider to be like themselves when choosing friends (Alder and Alder 1995 cited by Besag, 2006). They select their friends on compatibility of personality, preferring them to reflect themselves (Erwin 1985). Their groups are composed of those who tend to be a similar age, with the same interests and outlook, with all the members sharing ideas, idols, style, attitudes, likes and dislikes. Thorne (1993, p.131) pointed out that there is some evidence

that even when children play team sports, girls more often choose players according to who is a friend rather than who is more skilled at the game.

In this study the girls made it clear that there are certain qualities that they look for when choosing friends. The qualities that girls look for are beauty, intelligence and appearance. The economic status was also raised by girls in this study. On the other hand, boys were less concerned about appearance and beauty in choosing friendship groups; they were more concerned about the skills displayed in playing football.

I had informal conversations with boys and girls and this is what they said they liked about their friends.

Me: You say Philile is your friend. What do you like about her?

Wendy: *Muhle* (she is pretty).

(Nokuphiwa is whispering)

Me: What do you say Nokuphiwa?

Nokuphiwa: Her dad has a shop and she gives us chips and sweets.

Wendy: She also gives us money to buy pens from Mrs Musi.

Me: Casa, tell me, what do you admire about Sphe?

Casa: *Sidlala ibhola*. (We play football).

Sphe: *Siyamgabha uSipho akakwazi, uyinkomo*. (We don't play with Sipho because he can't kick a ball; he is a 'cow'). (*Unrecorded interviews*)

My observations both in the playground and in the classroom confirmed that both boys and girls prefer single-sex friendships. Some children tease each other if they see another chatting with the opposite sex. Children themselves do not like to be seen engaging themselves in opposite-sex chat. They somehow perceive it as wrong. This is the way in which the young boys and girls were socialised to be boys and girls. This extract reveals how Scebi, Khulekani and Philile understand friendships.

Me: Scebi, you are playing nicely with your friend. What's her name?

Scebi: It's Vuyiswa.

Me: Do you love her Scebi? Why is she playing nicely with you?

Scebi: I don't know teacher.

Me: Who's your friend?

Scebi: Khulekani.

Me: Khulekani, is Vuyiswa your friend?

Khulekani: Vuyiswa is Luyanda and Lule's friend.

Me: Philile tell me who's your friend?

Philile: Vuyiswa.

Me: Is Scebi your friend as well?

Philile: Hayi!

Me: Why can't Scebi be your friend?

Philile: I am a girl and can't be a friend with a boy.

The extract above demonstrates that friendship is gendered. Khulekani makes it clear that Vuyiswa is not his friend but Lule and Luyanda's friend. On the other hand Philile can't be Scebi's friend because Scebi is a boy and she is a girl. This study confirms what Thorne (1993, pp. 46-47) found in her study. Thorne found that researchers who have asked children of different ages to name their best friends have found that in at least 75 percent of the cases, boys name only boys' names and girls name only girls. This illustration shows that friendships are very polarised with boys and girls stating that they do not have friends of the opposite sex.

There is a tendency to naturalise gendered friendship. A study conducted in Australia reveals how students perceive gender and friendships. One student pointed out that a lot of people don't realise that boys and girls can be friends, and don't have to be dating (Australian School Communities). McLeod (2002, pp. 224-227) confirms that children's friendship is gendered and points out that the capacity for friendships and intimacy has operated discursively as a marker of gender difference. In this study girls' friendships are characterised by intimacy they share. They are mostly concerned about their looks and fashion. Girls are mostly found combing and plaiting a friend's hair, sharing lunchboxes and even exchanging shoes and jerseys. Thorne, (1993, p.94) concurs and maintains that in gestures of intimacy, that one rarely sees among boys, girls stroke or comb their friends' hair. They notice and comment on one another's physical appearance such as haircuts or clothes, and they borrow and wear one another's

sweatshirts or sweaters. Boys' friendship is characterised by speaking *slang*; for example they say, "Sho" and hold a thumb up or "Sharp *mfowethu* (brother)" meaning 'goodbye'. This example shows how young boys forge their masculine identities when they are chatting with their friends.

Sphe: *Hola mfowethu*.

Siyanda: *Moja*.

Sphe: *Ngigrand* (I am fine).

Siyanda: Sharp *mfowethu*.

The extract above demonstrates that even the language that children speak creates a gender boundary between boys and girls.

4.3 GIRLFRIENDS AND BOYFRIENDS

Young boys and girls have a clear understanding of what it means to be a girlfriend and a boyfriend. Talks on this topic really excite them and one finds them giggling. It is a school that provides opportunities for boyfriends and girlfriends. In this study grade two boys understood exactly what it meant to be a boyfriend and a girlfriend.

Me: Do you have a husband?

Zinhle: Wendy has a boyfriend.

Me: How do you know?

Zinhle and Nokuphiwa: She told us.

Zinhle: His name is Khethelo.

Philile: They had sex in the toilet.

Me: Which toilet?

(Laughter)

Philile: At her home. They will marry.

Zinhle: Wendy kissed Yum in class.

Nokuphiwa: Sli gave Mabhebeza a flower. (Unrecorded chat with girls).

Mlungisi: Siyanda is writing a letter to her girlfriend.

(Reading it) Mlungisi: I love you.

Casa: Please teacher this one has a girlfriend. Her name is Thando.

Sphe: (Pointing at Siyanda) Yes you told me and she wrote you a card.

Nompilo: Please teacher he sent me to give her a flower.

Me: What is her name?

Siyanda: He is lying. I am still young. And Sphe has it.

Me: And Sphe has one.

Siyanda: Yours is Khetha isn't it?

Me: Then how many are there? Siyanda tell the truth!

Siyanda: It's a white girl.

It is important to understand that masculinities and femininities are constructed within children's communities of practice as almost entirely heterosexual. Although adults tend to construct childhood as a time of innocence (Epstein 1999; Renold 2005), there is, among children, a communal assumption of current and future heterosexuality. This is developed particularly through a dual culture

and future romance, and teasing boys. 'Boyfriend' and 'girlfriend' couples can be found throughout primary school (Paechter, 2007, p.96). This study also reveals that boyfriend and girlfriend couples are found in primary school. There is evidence that Siyanda has a girlfriend in grade three, Wendy also has a boyfriend in the very same school. The exchanging of flowers by young boys and girls demonstrates that children are not too young to know. They clearly understand the meaning of flowers as gifts showing love and affection for the opposite gender. The following field notes taken during class observation shows that primary school is a key site for the production of sexuality (Renold, 2005, p.17).

Zuziwe, accompanied by David, came to Mrs N crying. Mrs N asked her why she was crying. She was unable to answer and David answered for her. He told Mrs N that Mlungisi was wearing a ring and that the ring was for Zuziwe as he was proposing marriage to her. Zuziwe made it clear that she didn't like what Mlungisi was saying. Mlungisi's action is a sign of affection for Zuziwe.

The illustration above demonstrates that at their earliest age children take part in boyfriend and girlfriend relationships and shows that childhood innocence is a myth. Renold (2005) confirms this notion and confronts the myth that primary school is a cultural greenhouse for nurturing and protection of children's innocence. Renold confronts the myth and maintains that primary school is a key social and cultural arena for doing sexuality. On the other hand the GETT (1997)

pointed out that children as young as four and five are actively engaged in the boyfriend and girlfriend culture.

4.4 FANTASY PLAY

My chat with grade two boys and girls disclosed that although both boys' and girls' play has a dividing line, there are situations that make them unite. The domestic play known as *masigcozi* in this study and chasing games keep opposite genders together. This extract shows the pleasure boys and girls get from playing together in this type of play.

In this type of play boys and girls unite (Thorne 1993). It is in this play where boys and girls construct their gendered identities and learn to be proper men and women. This chat demonstrates how powerful gender is. In this fantasy play girls play the roles of the mothers. They are housewives who cook and look after the children. On the other hand boys play the roles of fathers. They are the ones who work and support the family. The gender performances in my study are in line with Danby (1998), Davies (2003) studies cited by Blaise (2005) where they argued that play is viewed as children's serious real-life work of constructing, organising, and shaping social orders, and gender is recognised as one type of social order. Again Blaise cites Davies and maintains that there is a belief that children have the ability to establish gendered practices and identities in their play.

The children's fantasy play demonstrates that gender does matter to young children and this is confirmed by MacNaughton (2000) where she argued that even very young children are clearly aware of gender roles, when they are playing among themselves. MacNaughton's illustration confirms that in their fantasy play, boys are clearly aware that their role is that of a father and girls play a role of a mother.

Me: Do you play *Masigcozi* (housie-housie)?

Wendy: Yes.

Me: I have heard that *masigcozi* is played with boys. Is there any *masigcozi* dad?

Wendy: There is.

Me: What task does he perform?

Wendy: He goes to work.

Me: What does *Masigcozi* mom do at that time?

Wendy: She remains and cooks.

Me: Casa, do you play it (housie-housie)?

Casa: *Angiwazi*, (I don't know it). I have heard that there are moms and dads and moms cook for dads.

Me: Then there are moms and dads. What do they do?

Casa: Dad orders furniture for the house and mom cooks.

MacNaughton, (2000, p.115) maintains that when girls were in the fused area by themselves, they always initiated domestic play centred on the daily domestic

tasks of being 'mums', such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, looking after 'baby' and having parties. MacNaughton's point is partially true in this study. In this study boys too initiate domestic play centred on daily domestic tasks of being 'dads' such as going to work and buying house furniture. In this study the domestic play is the one that unites boys and girls; they play together, as in MacNaughton, and girls perform tasks of being mothers.

4.5 GENDER AND CLASSROOM CHORES

This section pays attention to the gendered nature of the classroom chores. The duty rooster below captured my attention on my first day in grade Two B. The duty rooster shows the girls responsible for cleaning the classroom on that day.

Duty Rooster 2008

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Zinhle	Norma	Sphile	Messy	All girls
Nokuphiwa	Nompilo	Sindy	Claire	All girls
Zuziwe	Asanda	Luyanda	Michelle	All girls
Wendy	Philile	Chanie	Ntokozo	All girls

Me: Do you enjoy sweeping?

Sphe: Yes, but it's boring.

Me: Why is it boring?

Siyanda: It's a girl's job.

Me: Do boys sweep everyday?

Zinhle: Sometimes they run away to play outside.

Me: What does your teacher do to them?

Nokuphiwa: She says she will hit them.

Me: And she hits them?

Zinhle: No, she hits girls for not cleaning the classroom.

Me: What chores do boys do?

Siyanda: We move desks for them to sweep.

Sphe: We dust the chalkboard

After observing the children cleaning the classroom, I chatted with them. My observations showed that the classroom chores are gendered. The hidden curriculum disadvantaged girls who are forced to keep the classroom clean. In the above example the two boys (Siyanda and Sphe) and the two girls (Zinhle and Nokuphiwa) are sweeping the classroom floor. It is clear that the boys do that voluntarily, and girls are compelled to clean. This demonstrates that classroom chores are gendered. When teachers allocate chores they do so according to gender. The classroom duty rooster below shows the allocation of chores each week.

The curriculum means the subjects that are included in a course of study or taught in a school. Some educationists speak of the "hidden curriculum". By this

they mean those things which boys and girls learn at school because of the way in which the work of the schools is planned or organised; these aspects are not themselves overtly included in the planning or even in the consciousness of those responsible for the school arrangements (Kelly, 1997, p. 7).

From the duty rooster above only girls' names appear. Every Friday they are to sweep, wash and polish floors. Boys, by that time, have gone home or are playing on the field. The illustration above concurs with Wolpe et al (1997); they maintain that girls are to arrive earlier or leave later than the boys do because they have to sweep and wash the classroom floors. This reinforces the notion that girls' domestic roles are "normal", while boys' studies are accorded more importance. It is argued that teachers play a role in perpetuating gender stereotyping amongst boys and girls.

The following field notes were taken five minutes before break and reveal the gendered nature of classroom chores.

Five minutes before break the teacher sends children to warm food in the kitchen. On the next day I followed Sindy and took photos. There were about fifteen girls from different classes who were sent to warm their teachers' food. Some of the girls were busy making teas and others washing dishes. I also found that some girls were peeling vegetables for the next day's meal. They were helping Aunty Rose. (Aunty Rose is a school cook).

Me: Who warms food?

Sphe: It's Cindy.

Casa: Cindy and Nompilo warm food.

Me: Does madam send boys to warm food?

Sphe: *Phela singamadoda thina.* (We are men)

The example above shows that it is a girl's job to warm food. Warming of the teacher's food is part of the classroom chores. I also observed that before the morning assembly girls are to fetch water from the tap, fetch food before break and wash the dishes after meals. The illustration above confirms that teachers play a crucial role in transmitting all forms of knowledge, including those parts that reinforce gender inequities, and girls and boys in the earliest years of schooling have already acquired traditional gendered forms of behaviour, which may lead to forms of oppression (Wolpe et al 1997, pp.76-77). Even after break, girls miss their classroom lessons washing dishes for their teachers and others wash big pots for Aunty Rose.

4.6 BOYS' GAMES

When observing boys playing, I found that the games they play were very risky. Boys were interested in playing adventure games. The group of boys I interviewed made it clear that the games they play were very risky. The most popular game was a stick fighting game where they hit each with sticks. In this

game they even hit each other with long yard brooms. When they play the pushing games they occupy the school verandas making it difficult for others, even for teachers, to move around. The other stick game was a stick game which they played in the sand pit where there was enough sand. In this game they dug a hole then they put the stick inside it. In this game they construct their masculinity as strong and powerful boys.

Mlungisi made it clear that the stick game was a boys' game and girls were unable to play it as they were not strong. He maintained that because they were strong, they didn't fall when playing this game. This makes it clear that children's games are gendered. Boys perceive themselves as stronger and the girls as weaker ones. Thorne (1993) confirms the adventurous nature of boys' games and maintains that many researchers have reported that boys engage in more rough-and-tumble play and physical fighting than do girls. The spinning top game was also among the popular games boys played. Some boys even dodged the morning assembly because of the spinning top games.

Me: Tell me what is the name of that game?

Mlungisi: Stick game.

Me: How do you play it?

Mlungisi: We hold the stick, put it in the mud, push, sit and then fall.

Me: Aren't you scared of falling and getting hurt?

Kwando: No, we don't fall in the pit.

Me: Do girls play this game as well?

All: No, no, no.

Mlungisi: They are scared they will break their legs. They have thin legs.

Me: What games do you play?

Kwando: I play soccer and cricket.

In the interview above, boys perceive girls as not as powerful and strong as they are. Blaise' (2005) study demonstrates that boys cannot accept the fact that there are strong girls. In this study boys see girls as being unable to play their games which they associate with masculinity. Boys usually play outdoors, and their activities take up much more space than those of girls. Many researches have reported that boys engage in more rough-and-tumble play and physical fighting than girls do (Thorne, 1993, pp. 91-92). One has been made to believe that football is the most popular game amongst boys and it plays a role in the constructions of masculinities. (Renold, 2000, p. 68) maintains that it is therefore not surprising to discover that the playground is the most commonly cited example of overt gendered segregation, and football the most commonly cited activity of the monopolisation of outside space (Delamont, 1990; Ross and Ryan, 1990; Thorne, 1993; Renold, 1997; Swain, 2000, 2003; Skelton, 2001; Connolly, 2003). Connolly's study (in Skelton & Francis, 2003) discloses that in East Avenue Primary School the boys who played football regularly had gained status and prestige among peers. Boys construct their masculine identities through football. In this study playing football is associated with masculinity. Girls

themselves perceive football as a boy thing. The following extract shows how girls themselves perceive football as a boys' game.

Me: If you had a choice would you like to be a boy?

Sindy: Yes, so I can play football.

To be seen playing football with children who were regarded as weaker and/or less skilled would certainly undermine the masculine identities that the boys had so carefully constructed. Bhana (2002) in her a study in a township confirms this illustration where 'soft boys' were excluded from playing football. In this study boys who were unable to display skills in football were excluded from friendship groups.

4.7 GIRLS' GAMES

Girls' games are somehow different from that of boys. Girls involve themselves in games that keep themselves closer to their classes. The singing and clapping games are popular amongst girls. Connolly (in Skelton & Francis, 2003, p.121) maintains that when singing rhymes, the rhyme would involve the girls singing the name of the chosen boy and saying how he loves her. The following rhyme was sung by the girls in this study. This rhyme displays the love the girl has for the boy.

Ngahamba nesikole

Ngahlangana nomunye umfana

Wangibuz' igama lami

Nam' ngambuz' igama lakhe

Saya endlini yakhe

Sangen' ekameleni

Wangikhumul' ipenti lami

Ngamkhumul' i anda yakhe...

Ngakhulelwa (I fell pregnant)

The above song is a song about the love a girl has for a boy she met on a school trip. Like in Bhana (2002) this study of grade two boys and girls demonstrates that girls use play to construct their gender and heterosexual identities and that girls' play often involves singing and clapping to the sounds of rhymic tunes about girls, boys, kissing, love and cosy life.

Me: What games do you play?

Girls: *Ingqathu* (skipping game).

Me: Do you skip?

Kwando and other boys: *Hayi!*

Casa: It's a girl's game.

The extract above confirms that games are gendered and that girls and boys play different games because of their bodies. Unlike girls, boys engage themselves in

games that encourage physical fitness, kicking and roughness as for example football and rugby. On the other hand girls prefer skipping games.

4.8 CHILDREN AND SCHOOL SUBJECTS

This school is a Catholic school and the subject Religious Education (RE) is compulsory in all grades. Religious Education aims to nurture in Catholic students their personal gifts of faith so as to bring awareness, growth, true freedom and healing to their daily life (Fostering Hope).

Me: Do you like Maths?

Sphe: Yes.

Me: What do you like in Maths?

Sphe: Doing sums.

Me: Did you say you are the best in Maths?

Sphe: Casa is the best in Maths.

Me: Casa, they say you are the best in Maths. Is it true?

Casa: Yes teacher.

Me: Nompilo, what other subject do you like?

Nompilo: *Ezenkolo* (Religious Education).

Me: (Talking to Luyanda) Luyanda, do you like Maths?

Luyanda: Yes, teacher.

Me: Why do you like Maths?

Luyanda: (Silent).

Me: (Talking to a girl confusing names). Tell me Thembelihle why do you like Maths?

Girl: I am Sindy.

Me: Why do you like Maths?

Sindy: It is interesting.

There is evidence that the choice of subject is gendered. As early as in primary school boys are encouraged to do well in Mathematics and they are encouraged to take Mathematics as a choice because it will impact on career choices for their future. On the other hand girls see Mathematics as difficult. Paechter (2007, p.119) argues that mathematics is strongly constructed as masculine. It is understood as fundamentally rational, of the mind rather than the body, and depersonalised. Paechter further maintains that it is therefore unsurprising that, given the choice, girls tend to steer away from studying mathematics and related courses, particularly as they grow older, and as these structural features of mathematics become more pronounced.

Although RE is compulsory and there is a reason for it being taught, it is clear that children see it as unimportant, and in making choices children prefer Maths and English; only one learner mentioned her love for RE. This interview revealed that Maths is regarded as a masculine subject. There is evidence that as early as second grade both boys and girls express gender stereotyping by describing

Maths as male domain (Irby, Rodriguez & Lara-Alecio in Koch & Irby, 2005. p.64). In my informal interviews with girls, girls told me that although they liked Maths boys understood Maths much better than they did. The children, both boys and girls, were quick to tell me that Casablanca was the best in Maths. The perception that boys were best in Maths contradicted my observations in the Maths classroom. My observations revealed that even girls did very well in Maths.

4.9 CHILDREN AND RELIGION

This section discusses gender and religion. It will demonstrate how religion is instrumental in producing gender inequalities. All people are created in the likeness of God and have a right to be treated with dignity and respect (Catholic Education, 2008). Catholic school ethos includes the espousal of equality among men and women (Catholic Education, 2008). In conducting this study with grade two boys and girls, however, it was apparent that this ethos did not necessarily filter down to these young children. After observing boys and girls in the morning assembly I had a chat them.

Me: Do you go to church?

Sindy: Yes.

Me: Which church do you go to?

Sindy: *Sheshi* (Anglican Church).

Me: And what about you Zinhle?

Zinhle: Shembe.

(Laughing)

Me: What's wrong now?

Sindy: *Uthi usonta kaShembe* (She says she goes to the Shembe church).

Me: And so, is there any thing wrong with her attending Shembe?

Sindy: *Uyabheda UShembe* (Shembe sucks).

Me: Would you like to be Fata (Catholic Church leader)?

Mlungisi: Yes, because I shall have money.

Me: What about you Zinhle?

Zinhle: *UFata Uwumfana mina ngiyintombazane* (Father is a boy and I am a girl).

Me: It doesn't matter.

Siphokazi: *Amantombazane aba amasistela* (girls used to be nuns) *uFata umfana*.

Sphe: No, I don't like to be Father. I want to have a wife, and they don't have wives. And I won't go to that church if Father is a girl.

Siphokazi: *No sista akanaye umkhwenyana* (and the Sister doesn't have a husband). And I like to have babies.

This example shows the role played by religion in producing gender inequalities in schools. There are religions that are belittled. Learners who affiliate with the African religion are discriminated against. In my observations I found that the Shembe affiliates group themselves together and they articulated that some

Catholic students wished that they attend their own school. African churches are dominated by males (men), whereas Catholic churches are dominated by females (women). Church leaders in Catholic churches are men and children grow up with the stereotype that only men can be leaders in the churches.

Me: Do Catholic children treat you well?

Girls: No teacher.

Me: Do they know that you are non-Catholics?

Girls: Yes.

Me: Wendy, do you like the Catholic prayer?

Wendy: My mom said I mustn't make a cross because I am not a Catholic.

Me: Luyanda, tell me, do you like non-Catholic learners to attend this school?

Luyanda: Yes.

Me: What about you Nompilo?

Nompilo: No, they don't have respect. They swear.

The CIE has undertaken to support the Bill of Responsibilities for the Youth of South Africa launched by Minister Naledi Pandor and Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein at a joint press conference on 18 February 2008 which says: The right to equality places on me the responsibility to treat every person equally and fairly, and not to discriminate unfairly against anyone on the basis of race, gender, religion, ethnic or social origin, disability, culture, language, status or appearance. My study is somehow contrary to the Bill of Responsibilities above.

The interviews with children disclose the unfair discrimination on the basis of religion of children who are non-Catholics. Nompilo made it clear that her wish was to see non-Catholics excluded from this school. The non-acceptance of learners who affiliate with the African religions by the Catholic learners shows that religion has not transformed gender inequalities. My study also reveals that even non-Catholics discriminate against Catholics. Wendy cannot accept the Catholic way of doing things because she is not a Catholic. Nompilo pointed out that the non-Catholic learners lack respect. On the other hand Byrne (2002: 8) argues that in Catholic schools it must be hoped that the young person's experience of sacredness and their sense of self-worth is nurtured in the practices and education each school provides. If this is effective, they will grow up respecting themselves and others as children of God. My study in a Catholic school reveals that children, even Catholics, do not respect themselves, others or God as they regard themselves as children of God. This is an example of blasphemy.

Casa: Please teacher, Mthoko taught us this song. (Singing) *Zawa izinqe* (The bums are falling). *Ezegorilla zawa zawela le*. (The song is sung in churches but these boys have changed it to make a joke out of it).

Me: Can you sing this song as it is sung in church.

Casa & Sphe: (Singing) *Zawa izindonga zeJericho zawa zawela le*.

Me: You go to church and this is a Christian school?

Casa & Sphe: Yes, teacher.

Me: But why are you swearing at God.

Sphe: We didn't mean it teacher.

Casa: We are sorry teacher. We won't do it again.

The above extract shows that for boys, religion is not important and they don't take it seriously. This is a Christian school and the children in this school are regarded as the "children of God".

4.10 THE VIOLENT BOYS

My observations disclose that violence is rife in primary schools. Bullying and swearing amongst boys are the order of the day. The example below reveals the level of bullying in a Catholic primary school:

Mlungisi: Please teacher "*uthi ngiyamudakelwa*".

Sindy: He said "*Fuseki uyangidakelwa*".

Nompilo: He said "*uyangidakelwa*".

Physical violence is also rife. Each day some learners report being hit by others. My observations reveal that in most reported cases, boys are the perpetrators of violence in this school.

Nompilo: Casa was hitting us in class, and slapping Sindy and I.

Girls: He was hitting us with pipes.

Wendy: They (boys) throw stones at us.

Nokuphiwa: They kick us.

Wendy: They trip us.

The examples below confirm that violence is one of the major social problems of our times (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997, p.206). There is evidence that boys sexually harass and rape girls in the school yard.

Nompilo: One in my class touched me like this. Others say they will impregnate me and give me ten babies.

Sindy: A boy in this school raped me.

The above examples illustrate that violence is gendered. The interviews reveal that girls are disproportionately the victims of physical and sexual abuse at schools. Tolerance of gender-based violence in schools is a serious form of discriminatory treatment that compromises the learning environment and educational opportunities for girls. Girls are disproportionately the victims of physical abuse and sexually harassed by their male classmates and even by teachers. In South Africa some girls have left school entirely as a result of their experiences with sexual violence (Human Rights Watch, 2001). In his research Paechter (2007, p. 72-73) argues that fighting and other forms of physical violence emerged as a recurrent theme in boys' talk throughout the school day. Fighting tactics, congratulatory comments on physical endurance, showing each

other their marked and scarred bodies and recalling past fights were ways in which discourses of 'being tough' were produced and maintained.

4.10.1 The violent girls

Bhana, (2008) argues that violence is not the means of power for boys alone. Girls too display violent femininity. I concur with Bhana as this study demonstrates that girls too are violent.

It is break time and I am observing the playground. Sindy is teasing the boys.

Sphe: Sindy is rude.

Siyanda: She annoys us.

Casa: She talks too much and when we say she must come out she argues with us.

The following field note was taken during break time. It demonstrates that girls can be violent and again it demonstrates the shifting of power.

Zinhle had been playing with her friends. Sifiso came running, teased, kicked and pushed her. She fell. Zinhle stood up, grabbed him and bit him on his arm. Sifiso bled, cried and reported her to their teacher.

In most cases it is normal for boys to bully girls, but girls can be bullies too. Recently, we have come to realise that there is far more bullying among girls

than was previously thought but that it may take a different form from bullying among boys (Besag, 2006, p. 38). The following example demonstrates the shifting of unequal power relations. A girl by the name of Buyile bullies boys.

UBuyile uthi ngiwumlomo wenja (Buyile says I am a dog's mouth). She often calls people names. She called Nkululeko a pig. She once said Thabiso was a big head. These are the words that are heard daily and they show the belittling of other children.

4.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the results from the responses of 7(seven) grade two boys and 7 (seven) girls in an African Junior Primary school. The aim of the study was to investigate how grade two boys and girls understand gender. The data was analysed according to the following themes: Gender and friendships; Girlfriends and boyfriends; Fantasy play; Girls' game; Boy's game; Violent boys; Violent girls; Gender and religion; Children and classroom chores; and Children and school subjects. The next chapter presents conclusions of the study and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines conclusions from the results of the study, implications for changing practises and limitations of the study. This study was set in an African Catholic Junior Primary school and investigates how gender relations amongst grade two boys and girls are constructed. It was conducted with 7/8 year old grade two boys and girls. The study was conducted with fourteen learners of which seven were boys and seven were girls.

In the beginning this study began by giving a brief background of the study and the two research questions. In chapter two it reviewed the literature where the arguments and debates about gender in the early years were reflected. Chapter three described the design and methodology used in collecting data. Chapter four of this study presented and analysed data generated from observations and chats with grade two boys and girls. Talks with grade two boys and girls were based on questions like:

Do you wash pots at home?

Does your dad cook?

Do you play with boys/girls?

Do boys sweep the classroom?

Who is your friend?

Would you like to be Father when you grow up?

5.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate how gender relations amongst grade two township boys and girls in an African Catholic junior primary school are constructed.

5.3 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study aimed to answer the following key research questions:

1. How do grade two boys and girls understand gender?
2. What are the implications of addressing gender equity in the primary school?

5.4 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study investigates how grade two boys understand gender. It explores the process through which 7/8 year old boys and girls attach meaning to gender and forge their gender identities. Observations and conversations with grade two boys and girls are methods employed to gather data. Grade two boys and girls were interviewed in a single-sex and in a mixed-sex group.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHANGING PRACTICES

The first chapters of this dissertation have shown how 7/8 year old grade two boys and girls in a Catholic junior primary school understand gender. It thus demonstrated how their understanding of gender impacts on producing gender inequalities.

This section suggests the recommendations on how gender equity could be achieved in a primary school. The recommendations emanate from the findings of the study. This study is based on the early years of schooling and one is optimistic that if the school can introduce gender equity programmes in this phase children can grow up understanding that no one gender is more powerful than the other. Primary schooling is a central arena for the development of child communities of masculinity and femininity practice (Paechter, 2007). On the other hand children pick up gendered messages from their relationships with their families, their interactions with their local communities, nursery workers and primary teachers, as well as the media (Skelton, 2002).

As there is evidence that masculinities and femininities are developed in primary school, it is important that schools do something to challenge this practise. The Gender Equity Task Team together with the policy-makers have tried to show how gender equity can be achieved, yet little has been done in some schools. One feels that the school should introduce gender equity programmes and

teachers should be the agents of change. Before a child is even exposed to a school environment, his or her earliest exposure to gender identity and what it means to be male or female comes from parents (Plaster & Schiller in Koch & Irby, 2005). It is thus important that in the processes of developing gender equity policies, the parents and the teachers work together.

At Hambanathi primary school the gender regime is that which is patriarchal; in other words it favours boys, and boys use that power to dominate and exercise power over girls. At their early age children should be taught that no gender is more powerful or better than the other. The school should prioritise programmes that challenge the dominance of masculinities in a school. Equal opportunities should be given to both genders. Mixed-sex friendships should be encouraged. The mixed sex grouping in class might bring positive perceptions about the opposite gender friendship. In MacNaughton's 2000 study the teachers felt that girls should be encouraged to be proud of being female rather than trying to be the same as boys. They felt that equity would only be achieved if girls knew they were as good as boys and that they could do anything boys could do. This can work for Hambanathi primary school too.

Children and school subjects

The issue of Maths should be addressed. Maths is a status subject. In Hambanathi primary school most grade two B learners say Casablanca is the best in maths, though some girls were also doing well in maths; in this way the

children associate Maths with masculinities. Teachers need to motivate girls in doing maths. A competition like 'conquesta' for Maths can be organised where both boys and girls can take part with certificates issued to motivate both genders in taking up Maths.

Boys and girls' games

Girls like Philile and Sindy in this study should be motivated to feel proud of themselves. On the other hand Sindy wished to be a boy so that she could play football. In South Africa we do have ladies' football teams. It is now up to teachers in the school that they provide girls with the opportunities of playing football. A girls' football team should be introduced. Some girls tend to shy away from playing games that have been traditionally associated with masculinity. The communities have played a role in perpetuating that gender stereotype. Some parents do not allow their children to play such games as they are labelled as "*Izitabane*". A school can introduce mixed-sex games and encourage both genders to participate in these games.

It is thus important that the parents are involved in introducing gender equity programmes in primary school. It is argued that media plays a role in producing gender inequalities. In working towards fair gender relations I suggest that teachers organise mixed-sex football teams where the teams can compete in full view of soccer legends like Doctor Khumalo or Lucas Radebe. The media should

be invited to observe these games so that they can be shown to a large section of the community.

Gender and violence

In Hambanathi primary school bullying, sexual harassment, sexual violence and physical violence happen in the school playground. The high rate of violence shows that the school playground is unsupervised. To address violent behaviour one feels that school rules should form part of everyday practise. Admission policy should include a school code of conduct so that both learners and their parents are aware of the school's expected behaviour. Duty lists or rosters for teachers should include the monitoring of the school playground. Although the school has "Soulbuddyz", they are not properly trained and they are young and still enjoy playing. Teachers cannot rely on them. To address the issue of sexual violence, the school can work together with social workers so that they can give counselling to the victims and perpetrators. Hambanathi is a Christian school, and is surrounded by religious people who can advise and guide children who display unruly behaviour. To address the issue of bullying I suggest the school apply Besag's view (1989); she maintains that the most effective preventative measure a school can employ is perhaps for all staff members and the local education authority to establish clearly that bullying in school, in any form, will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with firmly. In South Africa the national minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, introduced a school pledge for learners to sign. Hambanathi junior primary school should take into consideration that schools as

places need to be secured and made safer. Schools need to do away with many of their own practices that foster violence. For example, corporal punishment merely teaches children the values of degradation, force and humiliation and must be stopped (Potterton, 2008). Many researchers believe that boys are the most likely victims of corporal punishment from the teachers. One then can argue that because boys can become violent they may rebel. Philile wished to be a boy so that she could annoy girls. For Philile it was accepted and normal that girls be annoyed by boys. It is the duty of the school to challenge the discourse that “Boys will be boys”.

Gender and religion

Hambanathi is a Catholic school and religion in the school remains one of the powerful belief systems that is resistant to change (Department of Education, 2002). The study was conducted in a Catholic school. Catholic school ethos includes the espousal of equality among men and women (Catholic Education, 2008). In conducting this study with grade two boys and girls, however, it was apparent that this ethos did not necessarily filter down to these young children. Children in this study make it clear that the religious leadership is associated with masculinity and there is no chance that women can occupy leadership positions in the church. If both genders can have opportunities to conduct the school assembly, children might grow up knowing that men and women can take up leadership positions in the church. The school needs to have policies on religion and learners should be taught to respect the beliefs of others. Teachers

themselves need to respect other people's religious rights. For some teachers, being in a Catholic school (whether or not a Catholic) means that you have no choice but to adhere to the Catholic ways of doing things. One teacher even mentioned that in Rome one does as the Romans do. How then can learners respect other people's beliefs.

Children and classroom chores

The results of this study show that classroom chores are gendered. Classroom chores should include both genders. Girls should also dust the chalkboard and wash windows. Boys as well as girls should sweep and clean classroom. The serving of the food can also be done by boys. The school may organise school trips to the restaurants where boys can see male chefs and waiters.

Gender and friendships

Schools provide opportunities for friendships and these friendships are gendered. If Hambanathi primary school can introduce secret pals that include both genders, this might bring about change. Children can learn to love one another.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out in one school and with young children. Conducting research and being employed in the same school was a limitation itself. The conversations with boys and girls were conducted in their mother tongue (Zulu)

which was a limitation too as the researcher had to transcribe data into English which is a requirement in this study.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The findings in this study have demonstrated that a primary school is an important place where gender is enacted and contributes to unequal gender relations and thus is an arena requiring interventions (Thorne, 1993; MacNaughton, 2000; Renold, 2005; Bhana, 2002). Finding solutions to the problems raised by these findings is not an impossible task but one that will present challenges. It is not as simple as abolishing the discourses around gender and masculinity.

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RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

17 OCTOBER 2008

MRS. PJ NZIMAKWE (205520560)
EDUCATION STUDIES

Dear Mrs. Nzimakwe

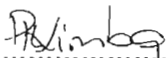
ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0642/08M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been approved for the following project:

"Girls and boys in the early years: Gender in an African Catholic Primary School in Mariannhill, Durban"

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully



.....
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA

cc. Supervisor (Prof. D Bhana)
cc. Mr. D Buchler



PROOFREADING

The following dissertation has been read and, apart from a few suggestions relating to minor sentence changes, is ready for submission. The focus has been on sentence construction, spelling, punctuation and the “flow” of each paragraph.

NAME OF STUDENT: Ms Phumzile Jane Nzimakwe (205520560)

TITLE: Boys and girls in the early years: gender in an African Catholic Junior Primary School

Name of proofreader: J J D'Eramo (Tel: 0317019651)

Dec. 2008

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. J. D'Eramo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and a smaller 'J'.

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag X03
Ashwood
3605
21 May 2008

Mr S. R. Alwar
Department of Education
Research Strategy and Policy Development
Private Bag X05
Rossburgh
4072

Dear Sir

Re: Request for permission to do research at Mariannahill Junior Primary School, Pinetown District

I request for your permission to conduct a research at Mariannahill Junior Primary School. I am a student at University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood campus) in the Faculty of Education. As part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education, I am required to conduct a research with grade two boys and girls.

I intend to investigate how gender relations are constructed amongst grade two boys and girls at this school. My study is titled "Girls and boys in the early years: Gender in an African Catholic primary school in Mariannahill, Durban. The participation will be voluntary and boys and girls will be allowed to withdraw at any time during the study. Anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured. The names of the children and the

name of the school will be changed. Findings from this study will be used in writing my dissertation and will remain a property of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. It is anticipated that findings from this study will assist in understanding the disparities between girls and boys.

If you have any questions you may contact me on 031- 700 9710 (home) or 031 700 1759 (office) or 082 433 2613 (Cell). My supervisor is Prof D Bhana who can be contacted on (031) 260 2603.

Yours truly,

Phumzile Jane NZIMAKWE

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag X03
Ashwood
3605
21 May 2008

The Principal
Mariannahill Junior Primary
No 3 Abbot Francis Road
Mariannahill Mission
3610

Dear Madam

Re: Request for permission to do research at Mariannahill Junior Primary School, Pinetown District

I request for your permission to conduct a research at your school. I am a student at University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood campus) in the Faculty of Education. As part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education, I am required to conduct a research with grade two boys and girls.

I intend to investigate how gender relations are constructed amongst grade two boys and girls at this school. My study is titled "Girls and boys in the early years: Gender in an African Catholic primary school in Mariannahill, Durban. The participation will be voluntary and boys and girls will be allowed to withdraw at any time during the study. Anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured. The names of the children and the name of the school will be changed. Findings from this study will be used

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If you have any questions you may contact me on 031- 700 9710 (home) or 031 700 1759 (office) or 082 433 2613 (Cell). My supervisor is Prof D Bhana who can be contacted on (031) 260 2603.

Yours truly,

Phumzile Jane NZIMAKWE

RESEARCH PROJECT AT:_____

CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

Dear Parent

I am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu Natal (Edgewood campus). I am conducting a research in your child's school. I am interested in investigating how gender relations are constructed amongst grade two boys and girls. The participation of your child is voluntary. Children can withdraw at any time. All children's response will be treated in a confidential manner. In order to maintain anonymity the names of the children and the name of the school will be changed. To obtain information I will first observe children in class and in the playground, I will have conversations with children in single- and mixed-sex groups. Conversations with children will be tape recorded. Photographs will also be taken voluntarily and will be destroyed after the study. This study will help me understand how children make meaning of gender. I request your permission to include your child in this study.

Yours sincerely

Researcher

Mrs PJ Nzimakwe

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Edgewood Campus

Tel No: 7009710

Fax: 7004690

Supervisor

Professor D. Bhana

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Edgewood Campus

Tel No: 2602603

Fax: 2607594

DETATCH AND RETURN

I, _____ (your name),

The parent of _____ (your child's/ward's name)
fully understand the above.

PLEASE TICK

_____ I give permission of my child/ward to participate.

_____ I do not give permission for my child/ward to participate.

Signature

Date

Thank you for taking the time to fill this form.

DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the
research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so
desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....



MARIANNHILL

JUNIOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

ABBOT FRANCIS ROAD, MARIANNHILL MISSION
P.O. Box 11498, MARIANNHILL, 3624
TELEPHONE / FAX : 031 7001759

To: Ms Nzimakwe

Re: request to conduct a research

We are pleased to inform you that your request was considered by the institution and that we came into the conclusion that you can conduct your research on the condition that we will be updated with the development of the result/ findings

Thanking you for taking interest in this school

Yours truly,



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO

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Pietermaritzburg
3200

228 Pietermaritz Street
PIETERMARITZBURG

INHLOKOHOVISI

Imibuzo:
Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

PIETERMARITZBURG

Reference:
Inkomba: 0052/2008

HEAD OFFICE

Date:
Usuku: 22 October 2008

Mrs P.J Mzimakwe
P.O Box 1355
Pinetown
3600

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: GIRLS AND BOYS IN EARLY YEARS: GENDER IN AN AFRICAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MARIANHILL, DURBAN

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the attached list has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educator programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The investigation is to be conducted from 03 November 2008 to 03 November 2009.
6. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s) please contact Mr Sibusiso Alwar at the contact numbers above.
7. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal of the school where the intended research is to be conducted.
8. Your research will be limited to the schools submitted.
9. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Resource Planning.

10. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to

The Director: Resource Planning
Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3200

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards



R. Cassius Lubisi (PhD)
Superintendent-General



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI

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3200

228 Pietermaritz Street
PIETERMARITZBURG

INHLOKHOVISI

Imibuzo:

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

PIETERMARITZBURG

Reference:

Inkomba: 0052/2008

HEAD OFFICE

Date:

Usuku: 22 October 2008

Mrs P.J Mzimakwe
P.O Box 1355
Pinetown
3600

LIST OF SCHOOLS

1. Mariannahill Primary School

Kind regards

R Cassius Lubisi, (PhD)
Superintendent-General



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

The above matter refers.

Permission is hereby granted to interview Departmental Officials, learners and educators in selected schools of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal subject to the following conditions:

1. You make all the arrangements concerning your interviews.
2. Educators' and work programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, educators and schools and other Departmental Officials are not identifiable in any way from the results of the interviews.
5. Your interviews are limited only to targeted schools.
6. A brief summary of the interview content, findings and recommendations is provided to my office.
7. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers and principals of schools or heads of section where the intended interviews are to be conducted.

The KZN Department of education fully supports your commitment to research: **Girls and boys in the early years: Gender in an African Catholic primary school in Mariannhill, Durban.**

It is hoped that you will find the above in order.

Best Wishes

R Cassius Lubisi, (PhD)
Superintendent-General