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‘Motivation in Action’ in a Collaborative Primary Classroom: Developing and Sustaining Teacher Motivation

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Abstract: This paper examines how the process of scaffolding students to solve their social issues developed mature participation for both the teacher and students. A sociocultural perspective framed the research as the underlying assumption is that students learn from each other, mediated by the teacher or more capable peers. The study provides evidence that teachers play a significant role in mediating positive relationships amongst peers, which in this case, sustained the teacher’s motivation to engage in the challenging and at times exhausting process. The teacher used weekly class meetings to negotiate with students how to share ‘power’ and model democratic decision-making. The ‘bottom-up’ approach of this research, links not only to teacher motivation but contributes to much needed research on how teachers can effectively cater for the diversity of students in their class, through their professional learning and development.

‘Motivation in action’ was chosen as the title for this paper because the teacher (first author) used an action research process (Grundy, 1995; Tripp, 1995) as a vehicle to engage in innovative practice and ongoing professional learning. The research was conducted in a metropolitan school in Western Australia. A process of planning, implementing, collecting data and reflecting (Burns, 2005) to respond to students’ social and emotional needs is a cycle that complements the teaching process. The explicit teaching of the social practices of the classroom included teaching leadership skills because students scaffolded each other in how to be a leader. These data provided evidence that collaborative practices were becoming well established in the classroom (Morcom & MacCallum, 2007). Teacher motivation was sustained to continue to develop these skills because the teacher’s professional understandings were developing which enriched the teaching experiences with the students. She was able to meet the complex demands of parents, students and the school administration as well as innovate in her classroom (Morcom, 2005; MacCallum & Morcom, 2008).

Theoretical Perspectives

Sociocultural theory is historically related to the work of Vygotsky (1978) and provides an account of learning and development as culturally mediated processes, where motivation is not usually separated from learning. A sociocultural perspective was chosen as a theoretical framework for the study because it highlights the social

nature of motivation and classrooms as essentially social environments where learning takes place (Daniels, 2001, Renshaw, 1998). According to researchers taking a sociocultural perspective this necessitates use of the activity or event as the unit of analysis (Rogoff, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998), and thus moves the focus of research away from either the individual or the environment towards the mutuality of the individual and the sociocultural environment. Rogoff (1995) argues that “each is inherently involved in the others’ definition” (p. 140) with none existing separately. There is now an emerging body of research that gives primacy to the social and cultural aspects of motivation and its relation to learning (Pressick-Kilborn, Sainsbury & Walker, 2005). In this paper two assumptions are made about learning and motivation: (a) Learning is conceptualised as primarily a social activity and motivation emerges from the social context that is manifested in both collaborative and individual action; (b) Motivational development is conceptualised as the transformation of participation towards more mature participation (see Rogoff in explanation directly below) in the collaborative classroom for both the teacher and the students (MacCallum & Morcom, 2008).

Vygotsky (1978) used the concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD) to theorise the kind of pedagogy likely to promote significant learning and therefore motivation. He recognised the relevance of interpersonal interactions between the learner and more capable others and defined this ZPD as the distance between a child’s “actual development as determined by independent problem solving” and the “potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). If the tasks are adjusted to the learner’s level, with appropriate scaffolds and support in place, then the learner is not only challenged but highly likely to be successful, as they develop strategies to cope with ‘challenge’ and the anxieties that may arise. The bi-directional exchanges occurring in the ZPD illustrate the ‘dynamic interdependence between the social and individual worlds’ and the fact that ‘they are distinguishable and qualitatively different from each other’ (Walker, in press).

‘Learning’ and ‘motivation to learn’ are viewed as being mutually interdependent with both arising from the social context of the classroom. In order to keep the focus on the ‘social origins of motivation’ Rogoff’s (1995) personal, interpersonal and cultural/community psychological planes are used to examine the processes of motivational development in the analysis of the data. Lave & Wenger’s (1991) notion of legitimate peripheral participation as ‘a descriptor of engagement in social practices that entails learning as an integral constituent’ (p. 35) is further developed in this paper as a result of the innovative instructional practices that were implemented (MacCallum & Morcom, 2008). The term ‘mature participation’ refers to students who further developed their problem solving skills. It is important to realise that there are two complementary processes at play for the teacher and the students respectively as they become mature participants in the classroom. Firstly, the teacher was using strategies with the students to facilitate their development to ‘fuller’ or ‘mature participation’ in the classroom by explicitly teaching the values that underpin a collaborative classroom. Secondly the teacher was also developing and refining the instructional strategies to understand her role as a facilitator, to develop expertise as a mature participant in the classroom. In this paper the focus is on the teacher’s motivational development from partial to mature participation as expertise was developed.

Aim

The focus of this paper is to examine the teacher's motivation to develop and sustain innovative classroom practices that gave students a 'voice' and some 'choice' in a context where traditional methods were encouraged to address behaviour issues.

The research specifically involved the first author as the classroom teacher and the 32 Year 4/5 students aged 9-11 years in the class. The purpose was less about 'fixing' student behaviour and more about 'negotiating' an inclusive classroom environment. The underlying assumption is that learning is socially constructed so primacy was given to the social context where student and teacher participation was occurring. The two examples used in this paper illustrate how a group of students resolved their social issues and provided feedback and evidence to the teacher that they were taking personal responsibility for their actions. Students were scaffolded by the teacher to solve their social issues during the weekly class meetings which were conducted throughout a school year. It could be argued that the student action then scaffolded the teacher as she continually developed her practice.

The Context of the Research

The profile of the school is summarised in Table 1 with details about the student profile, academic performance, class composition and school priorities. This school provided challenges for the teacher to develop the students' social and academic skills with an increase in antisocial behaviours across the school. Class sizes were at the maximum, so the students' desks used most of the floor space which created problems when arranging the furniture for group work.

| Elements | Details |
|---|---|
| Student Profile | Majority of students with 'English as an additional Language' |
| State Standardised Testing For Literacy And Numeracy | Poor results with many students at or below state benchmarks |
| Class Composition | 'Composite' year levels e.g. year 4/5 |
| School Priorities | Values Education to support pastoral care 'Bullying' intervention school-based programs Literacy and Numeracy support programs for students at educational risk |

Table 1: Profile of the school

Plan, Act, Monitor and Reflect

An action research process was used to provide a systematic procedure by which the journey of negotiating a collaborative classroom could be documented. As the teacher and students integrated new knowledge, the data collected provided

evidence of changes in behaviours (Grundy, 1995; Tripp, 1995). An inductive approach was used to inform both the teaching practice and the research outcomes. Reducing raw data and identifying the themes was an inductive, ongoing process. The variety of data sources from all stakeholders, including the students, parents and teacher, provided a rich source of evidence that could be triangulated to improve validity when using qualitative research methods (Patton, 2002). This is an important aspect of qualitative research to create an interchange of ideas to develop understandings between researchers and make clearer the usefulness of the findings to practitioners.

Table 2 provides a summary of the main topics for discussions at the class meetings. Column 1 provides a timeline of the school terms in which the major class meeting discussions arose (column 2) and the emerging themes for the major research project at school 1 (column 3). The challenge for the teacher was to develop strategies that would make a difference in a situation where there had been little positive change in student behaviour for the past few years despite pastoral care programs implemented at the school.

| Timeline | Class Meeting Discussions | Major Research Themes |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|
| Term 1, 2 | <p><i>Facilitating Relationships</i></p> <p>Lift students' awareness of their behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual respect • Bullying/teasing • Personal empowerment • Parent support | Relationships |
| Term 2, 3 | <p><i>Facilitating Leadership</i></p> <p>Meet the challenges of leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and social networks for Tribes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 • Leadership criteria | Leadership |
| Term 4 | <p><i>Facilitating Friendship</i></p> <p>Lift students' awareness of discriminatory behaviours that constrain inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' construct of friendship • Cliques • Contingency friendships • Discriminatory behaviours (inclusion and exclusion) | Friendship |

Table 2: Timeline of the teacher's facilitative role for a school year

Each week the students and teacher wrote the agenda items for the class meetings. After the items were prioritised for discussion all students were encouraged to actively participate and offer their ideas. The teacher constantly sought clarification from the students during the meetings and through their reflection logs and informal interviews. The phases of the study identified critical periods whereby emerging themes surfaced, such as student leadership in term 2. These phases were not linear in the sense that each emerging theme was exclusive to that phase but at the time student leadership emerged the teacher observed that students were displaying more cooperative behaviours. Students also realised that effective leadership also assisted the process of developing harmonious relationships and friendships. By the end of term 3 deeper levels of engagement amongst the students resulted in the issue of sustaining and maintaining friendships as the focus for class discussions. The two exemplars used in this paper occurred in this phase and will be discussed later.

Methods

Qualitative research methods were chosen primarily because they were flexible enough to accommodate different viewpoints, without predetermining the content or themes of what would emerge from the data gathered in the naturalistic setting of a classroom (Patton, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Research taking a sociocultural perspective needs methods that allow documentation of participation in authentic activities such as classroom meetings, encompassing the personal and interpersonal actions of the participants. It is important to also understand the wider institutional and community context in which these actions are occurring. A range of qualitative data was collected from multiple sources to gain the perspectives of all stakeholders. These included written reflection logs of the teacher and the students, and interviews and surveys of parents about their child's social and emotional development to provide evidence of behaviour outside the school context.

The teacher's reflective journal was used to examine evidence from multiple sources of data to understand the development of mature participation for the teacher in collaborative instructional practices. In Figure 1 the phases of the study are organised to position data sources within a timeline provides the term dates, emerging themes and data sources over the school year.

| 2004 | Emerging Themes | Data Sources |
|---|-----------------|---|
| Term 1 2.2.04-9.4.04 | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing teacher observations and documentation of instructional practice Parent night discussions- Week 4 Sociometric survey 1- Week 4 1st class social groups- Weeks 5-10 Sociometric survey 2- Week 10 1st parent survey |
| Term 2 26.4.04-9.7.04 (11 Week Term) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd class social groups -Weeks 1-6 Sociometric survey 3- Week 6 3rd class social groups -Weeks 7-11 Sociometric survey 4- Week 11 2nd parent survey |
| Term 3 (10 Week Term) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4th class social groups-Weeks 1-10 Sociometric survey 5-Week 10 Third parent survey |
| Term 4 (9 Week Term) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5th class social groups-Week 1-7 Individual student interviews- Week 4 Parent night-Week 7 School records: student behaviour; state testing for literacy and numeracy. |

Figure 1: Phases of the study to position data sources within a timeline

The emerging themes also reflect the discussions that were happening during class meetings. Students selected different peers, using sociograms, to form new social groups each term. They also selected leaders and vice leaders to lead their groups. Different leaders were selected for each new round of groups that resulted in most students experiencing a leadership role.

Using Rogoff's Planes

So that the parts of an activity or event can be examined, Rogoff (1995) proposes three planes of analysis, corresponding to the personal, interpersonal and community processes. Rogoff's (1995) three planes were used to foreground different elements that became important to developing and sustaining the teacher's motivation to implement collaborative practices. Rogoff maintains that development occurs in all planes, for example, children develop but so do their partners and their cultural communities. She argues that it is incomplete to consider "the relationship of individual development and social interaction without concern for the cultural activity in which personal and interpersonal actions take place" (p. 141). Thus in this kind of analysis, each plane in turn is foregrounded with the other planes in the background allowing "active and dynamic contributions from individuals, their social partners, and historical traditions and materials and their transformations" (p. 140). The teacher identified key areas of professional development that were undertaken to support the teacher and students' development to mature participation. Student interactions with each other and the teacher are important at the interpersonal plane and the school and wider educational issues are important at the community plane. Table 3, see below, provides a summary of Rogoff's three planes of analysis; the metaphors/ terminology used; the focus; the purpose and the links to data sources.

| Planes of Analysis | Metaphor | Focus | Purpose | Data |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| Cultural/ community | Apprenticeship | Active individuals participating with others in culturally organised activity | Teacher's development of innovative practice leading to mature participation for the teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher's reflection log • Teacher observations • Parent interviews and surveys |
| Interpersonal | Guided participation | Focuses on the processes and systems of involvement between people as they communicate and coordinate efforts. | Reciprocal relationship of teacher and students guiding each other to fuller participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly class meetings-agendas • Parent interviews and surveys |
| Personal | Participatory appropriation | Individuals transform their understanding and responsibility for activities through their own participation | Teacher's understanding of the developing instructional practice "... a process of becoming, rather than acquisition" (Rogoff, 1995, p. 142). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and student reflection logs |

Table 3: Rogoff's (1995) three planes of analysis, focus, purpose and data

Rogoff's planes are used as a means to organise data and are elaborated upon in the following sections of this paper, starting with the community plane.

Community Plane

In this section, the community plane foregrounds the historical and institutional aspects that contextualise the educational system in Western Australia in which this teacher was developing innovative instructional strategies to develop collaboration and mature participation. Values education was a priority at the school, which reflected a wider call by the Australian community that state schools become more proactive to dispel the growing 'values neutral' stance that was evident during the 1990s and early 2000s. 'Values for Australian Schools' programs were funded by the Australian Government (2009) to facilitate values education being taught in a planned and systematic way to develop student well being and future Australian citizens (Lovat & Toomey, 2007). General and abstract ethical principles, such as 'justice for all' and 'beneficence', were in the government policies about social justice and equal opportunities. Values education was viewed as a complex process and partnership between the school, family and the community.

Our values provide the framework for our whole lives- they shape our thoughts, feelings and actions. The development of values is a complex, ongoing process but the formative processes occur in our early lives- through the dominant influences of home, family and school. (Australian Government, 2009, p.1)

Therefore values education was not only viewed as fundamental to a great education but a means for students to develop protective factors through positive relationships with their family, school and community. The evidence also supported 'that values-based education can strengthen students' self esteem, optimism and commitment to personal fulfilment; and help students exercise ethical judgement and social responsibility' (Lovat & Toomey, 2007, p. xiii). After consultation with the wider community the Western Australian government agreed on legislation that five core shared values would be used as a general framework for teachers to foster democratic principles in their classrooms (Curriculum Council, 1998). Values such as 'mutual respect' provided the foundation to create a safe, caring, inclusive and democratic classroom and develop mature student participation. Funding was also provided by the WA government to provide teacher professional development to develop student centred research based pedagogies such as cooperative learning and collaborative learning to improve student outcomes (Ashman & Gillies, 2003; Bennett & Rolheiser, 2001; Gillies, 2003; Gillies & Ashman, 1996). Teachers need to be motivated to take risks, which may not always be supported if traditional pedagogies are embedded in the culture of the school and supported by the parents and school administration. Staff at the research school agreed to prioritize 'Values Education' for a four year period and this teacher was the school coordinator. It was important that all stake holders had evidence of changes in their children's attitudes towards each other to gain parents' support and maintain teacher commitment to the processes.

It is evident from Australian and State government initiatives that values education was a vehicle to promote active citizenship but also supported the social and emotional needs of students (Lovat & Toomey, 2007; Lovat, Toomey, Clement, Crotty & Nielsen, 2009). The next section will examine the interpersonal plane and the relationships that developed in this classroom between the teacher and the students as they guided each other during class meetings to develop mature participation

Interpersonal Plane

Rogoff (1995) uses the term 'guided participation' to emphasize the mutuality of individuals and their social partners as they communicate and coordinate their involvement and participation in socioculturally structured, collective activity such as a class meeting. She argues that 'participation requires engagement in some aspects of the meaning of the shared endeavors'. The teacher and students were developing understandings to seek common ground as part of the process of communicating and coordinating with each other. Rogoff (1995) asserts that this process is how participation in a community grows between members within cultural activities:

Communication and coordination with other members of the community stretches the understanding of all participants, as they seek a common ground of understanding in order to proceed with the activities at hand. The search for common ground as well as to extend it involves adjustments and the growth of understanding. (p.148)

The teacher was maturing in her understanding of how to seek common ground with the students in her facilitative role through fuller participation with the community. As the year progressed more students chose to become active participants in activities which motivated the teacher to continue to develop understanding how to continue the implementation of collaborative instructional practices. The teacher was facing similar challenges to the students in adapting to students' changing social and emotional needs and being proactive to promote positive values in the role of a facilitator. The teacher's facilitative role developed with the students as they participated in class meetings which is summarised in Table 2.

At the beginning of the year, the teacher focused on building positive relationships which required students to be aware of their behaviour and how it impacted on their peers. The teacher supported this focus with 'team building' activities to assist students to develop a caring attitude towards each other. The class discussions changed from a focus on building relationships, to 'how to be a good leader'. Students were making many friends and this provided the foundations for students to support each other in leadership roles. Once many students had experienced leadership roles their relationships matured and became more complex because there were members of a wider social network. These social networks created new contexts and opportunities for new partnerships and alliances. When there were social problems in the playground, there were often more students involved and this may have increased the time taken to resolve issues so other solutions needed to be created. The teacher's aim was to maintain positive social cohesion and establish a process that was manageable for all participants. The teacher noted in her reflection log during term 3:

Cooperation does not follow a linear path. The issues of sustaining friendships are becoming more important. I have noticed that this term the item 'getting along' has reappeared. This reaffirms for me that the majority of students value pro social attitudes and behaviours because they are looking for other ways to solve these problems. I still have concerns about how to manage the really large friendship group that has developed amongst the year 5 girls. There are many strong personalities and some students such as Angela are jealous of the attention that Eileen receives. I have noted the body

language of Angela when she is not partnered by Eileen because Eileen chooses or is chosen by someone else. The increasing use of reflection logs to assist students to take responsibility for their behaviour seems to be working well, as I have had fewer complaints from the students. Maybe this could be used when there are playground issues that remain unresolved... (Teacher reflection log, Term 3, Week 6 - 2.9.04)

The teacher was encouraged by fewer complaints in term 3 from students, with group work progressing well. This reduced the stress often associated with the emotional aspects of interviewing parents and students when social issues arise. It was usual practice to hold a discussion with the whole class and write in reflection logs what students were learning. During Term 4, two incidences occurred involving the same group of five year 5 girls, who returned to class upset after lunch. This group used the strategy of writing the 'facts' in their reflection journals after such disagreements and then reading what they had written to each other. It was a process that allowed everybody to have their 'say' and encouraged honesty to maintain friendships (which the students stated was their personal goal). The teacher had scaffolded and supported the students with discussions about friendships and issues of inclusion and exclusion to develop shared knowledge and understandings. The following extracts are from the reflection logs of Susan, Helen, Angela, Margaret and Eileen and describe incidents that took place in the school yard during lunch.

Incident 1

I accidentally hit Helen on the arm and then I said, "Sorry". Then she whacked me in the eye. Then she walked off. Then Angela and Claire and I told the teacher. (Student reflection log, 9.11.04, Susan)

Susan whipped me and she said sorry. I said, "Don't hit me again!" Then I was doing a move off and it hit Susan in the head. I said, "Sorry. Are you ok? She said, "Get lost!" They told the teacher but I refused to go to the teacher so I got my name in the book. (Student reflection log, 9.11.04, Helen)

Susan was skipping and accidentally hit Helen on the shoulder. Then Helen got mad and hit Susan on the face and then realised what she had done. She went to say sorry to Susan but Susan told her to go away and Helen was upset and she ran off to me. Helen had a mark on her shoulder. (Student reflection log, 9.11.04, Angela)

Susan was skipping and Helen was behind her. The skipping rope had hit Helen on the shoulder. Susan said sorry then Helen said, 'That hurt!' Then Helen folded her rope in half and whacked Susan on the cheek. Helen dropped the rope and ran off to Angela. I was next to Susan. Susan had a big red mark on her cheek. Helen had a mark on her shoulder. (Student reflection log, 9.11.04, Margaret)

I heard a whip and then I heard Susan say, "Ow!" Then I saw Helen go over to Angela and Susan was crying and there was big mark on Susan's face. Susan was saying that Helen purposely hit her". (Student reflection log, 9.11.04, Eileen)

The underlying values of mutual respect and honesty are clearly illustrated in the girls' words. It was evident that Helen accidentally hit Susan during a skipping game and Susan overreacted by hitting Helen deliberately in the eye. Susan walked off and refused to see the teacher, leaving Helen crying. When the girls returned to the classroom they were still upset about what had happened. Once they read their versions aloud to each other Susan apologised to Helen. Helen forgave her and there were more tears and hugs. The girls admitted their responsibility so they could maintain their friendships. The process took about 10-15 minutes of class time and the students resolved their issues without blaming each other. One could argue this process saved many more minutes/ hours in follow up calls and notes to parents (Teacher reflection log, term 4, 9.11.04).

The teacher reviewed her reflection log (26.11.04) and noted that tensions between Angela and her friends had escalated in Term 4. Angela was visibly upset when the class were voting for the faction captains and Angela wanted to be a captain. Angela was in the same faction as Eileen. Eileen was the most popular girl in the class with both genders, as evidenced in sociograms and teacher observations. Angela had struggled all year with the fact that Eileen had so many friends as she wanted Eileen to be her 'special/ exclusive friend'. In the developing collaborative context Angela needed to resolve these issues as she risked losing all her friends including Eileen. In the second incident, Angela became verbally abusive towards Susan, Helen, Margaret and Eileen in the playground as described in the following extracts from the student logs?

Incident 2

We were putting up our hands then Angela walked off. Then she said, "I feel left out!" Then Angela said to Eileen, "You are so mean!" and much, much more to her. (Student reflection log, 25.11.04, Susan)

Angela said to me that she didn't want to play with Eileen so they were talking and then Eileen and Angela were crying. I said to Eileen, "What's wrong?" She said that Angela had called her a spoilt brat and a b... (Student reflection log, 25.11.04, Helen)

Well at lunch me, Eileen, Angela had a fight and Angela called Eileen a spoilt little brat and said she has no feelings and doesn't care about her friends... (Student reflection log, 25.11.04, Margaret)

Well first Angela thought that it was unfriendly to ask what is wrong if she walks off. She yelled at me and called me a spoilt little brat who doesn't have feelings and she hates me and a lot of my friends... (Student reflection log, 25.11.04, Eileen)

I was feeling left out and I wanted to just play with Susan and Helen so I told Eileen and I said, "Every time I run somewhere Eileen says to me, 'Why are you upset?' and I say, 'I am not!'" (Student reflection log, 25.11.04, Angela)

Again a similar process ensued where the students used their reflection logs and shared what they wrote. The students managed this process with minimal teacher intervention and took responsibility for their behaviour, which provided evidence that they were moving towards 'mature participation' in the classroom community. The next day Eileen's mother came to the classroom for an informal chat.

Eileen's mother explained that Eileen had to deal with Angela's emotional outburst since pre-primary and the tension between them is a result of her daughter's large friendship group. She encouraged her daughter to be patient with Angela and walk away when Angela threw a tantrum. But Eileen had also stated that she kept forgiving Angela but doesn't know if she wants to do it anymore (Teacher reflection log, 26.11.04).

This situation resulted in a subsequent class meeting where the teacher facilitated discussions about negative emotions such as 'jealousy', 'feeling hurt and rejected' 'anger' and the role of 'forgiveness' to scaffold students' understandings towards mature participation. The teacher wrote in her reflection log that 'Angela realised that she risked losing all her friends if she persisted with this behaviour (Teacher reflection log, 11.12.04).

These two incidents illustrate the development of mature participation for the students but also the teacher as she scaffolded complex social situations to develop positive relationships with and amongst her students. The reflection logs provided a 'safe place' for the students to write their observations and feelings and gave the teacher clues about the 'scaffolds' that would support the students. It was usual practice for students to read orally from their logs but not to read each others' logs. They always had the 'right to pass' if they did not want to read their logs out loud but students were always willing to participate. The sharing of the student logs amongst the group allowed all students to hear each other's perspective without interruption and engage in a shared endeavour to make meaning of the situation. The class meeting provided the 'safe space' for students to express their perspective and negative emotions so they could make choices that promoted their well being. They could make adjustments and growth in their understanding and seek common ground as part of the process of communicating and coordinating with each other.

At the interpersonal plane the teacher and the students were guiding each other. The students were providing information about their thinking and behaviour in their reflection logs and at class meetings. The teacher was integrating professional learning that included the wider view of values education and philosophy, cooperative and collaborative learning to implement innovative instructional practice. These approaches were not only being integrated in the classroom practice but also being used for the teacher's research about her facilitative role in this process (Morcom, 2005).

The next section, the personal plane, will examine how the teacher developed her understanding of changing her practice as she participated in these cultural activities in a school climate where teachers were feeling overburdened with increasing workloads. The personal plane will examine why this teacher was motivated to increase her workload further and continue to conduct classroom research.

Personal Plane

As students developed mature participation with each other, as evidenced in respectful behaviour and growing friendship groups, the teacher was encouraged to develop and sustain classroom practices that scaffolded their further development. Modelling high expectations to students through the class agreements: 'mutual respect, participation and right to pass, no putdowns and appreciating others, attentive listening and personal best' based on Tribes (Gibbs, 2001) and the 'You Can Do It' program! (Bernard, 1996) students were left in no doubt that the teacher valued respectful relationships. As the teacher's expertise to implement innovative practices in the classroom developed so did the students' ability to model these behaviours to each other. The teacher used cues from the children to continue to develop the practice and observed how their participation was changing as the social practices in the classroom were becoming established. The class meetings and reflection logs became important strategies that provided evidence of how the dynamic and complex process unfolded.

This process of using weekly class meetings occurred over a school year and when considering 'participatory appropriation' it is important to realise that 'time' is an inherent part of the event. It is not divided into 'past, present and future' but the event 'is an extension of previous events and is directed towards goals that have not been accomplished' (Rogoff, 1995). This development was part of a dynamic process that involved changes over time. There is an assumption that learning occurs from the interdependent relationship between the individual and the social context and that in this process, active participation itself, is how the participants gain facility in an activity. Rogoff (1995) stated that when a person participates in an activity they are a part of that activity and not separated from it.

The participatory appropriation view of how development and learning occurs involves a perspective in which children and their social partners are interdependent, their roles are active and dynamically changing, and specific processes by which they communicate and share in decision making are the substance of cognitive development. (Rogoff, 1995, p.151)

The teacher recognized that the reflection logs allowed students to think through how they were going to express their feelings to their peers when an incident needed to be resolved. Students matured in their interpersonal relationships and their desire to cooperate and maintain their growing friendship groups. After reviewing the transcripts of student reflections, as in the exemplars in this paper, it became evident that students were developing a growing awareness of their need to take personal responsibility for their behaviour. The teacher developed her understanding of how to facilitate and scaffold future activities, in response to student needs by implementing professional learning in the areas of collaboration, cooperation, philosophy and values education. The process was intellectually challenging but also a source of motivation. She was regularly surprised and excited by the students' development towards mature participation and their ability to respond to teacher scaffolds. In order to make explicit how to maintain friendships the teacher listed 'annoying' and 'positive' behaviours with the students. She noted how easily the students understood the purpose of such activities and used the charts as visual cues with each other (Teacher daily work pad notes, November, 2004).

There were challenges to address the multiple ZPDs so students were sufficiently challenged but not overwhelmed in the process of developing mature

participation. The active participation of the teacher in the process with students developed her skills and appreciation from students in the form of handwritten small cards on a regular basis that provided evidence that students were making progress with friendships. One comment 'thank you for teaching me friendship stuff- awesome' was typical of the cards received (Margaret, 24.11.04).

Discussion

One of the challenges of investigating from a sociocultural perspective how motivation was changed is that of capturing the 'process of change' rather than 'static points over time' (Valsiner, 2006). Thus dynamic participation needs to be identified, and events and interactions examined over time. 'Motivation in action' was evidenced in the dynamic interplay between the teacher and her students which was sustained through classroom meetings and developing mature participation. This view of learning recognises the dynamic interplay of the teacher within the institutional, interpersonal and personal planes with the focus 'on the active changes involved in the unfolding event or activity in which people participate' (Rogoff, 1995, p.151). The exemplars about a group of girls who resolved their conflicts with minimal teacher intervention, as the year progressed, was possible because the teacher scaffolded a process that provided a framework. This framework had been negotiated with the students to develop a shared understanding of a democratic classroom where students had choices. The outcomes may have unfolded differently if the teacher had not developed communication and decision making skills to allow students to negotiate their participation.

The teacher's focus on her actions with the students and how they modelled and negotiated the classroom culture required her to examine her own beliefs and values. She was cognisant that her words and actions had an impact on the students' learning; her issue was the quality of the difference she wanted to make in these students' lives. As the teacher and students transformed their behaviour and learning the teacher was encouraged and motivated to sustain this rigorous process. Parent and student feedback from interviews revealed a growing awareness that they were active participants in a process that was making a positive difference in their lives, outside school. This is evidenced in the following extracts from parents' surveys:

Huong has been getting along with people he didn't like before. It has helped him see how easy it is to work together and be nice to each other. There are lots of changes. He has been vacuuming the house, cleaning it, washing windows.
(Parent survey- Huong, 20.10.04)

I totally agree with groups in the classroom. It helps build understanding of each other, respect and communication skills. The friendship groups have grown bigger. He has gotten to know more people. (Parent survey- Dean, 20.10.04)

The critical friend to the project was also the deputy principal who provided another source of feedback and motivation for the teacher. She wrote an unsolicited note after an open night in November for parents that she attended:

Students have developed very sophisticated understandings of friends and how friendship groups work. Leadership skills have developed which facilitates collaborative work. Some

students have developed PPK- they have transferred to outside the classroom (playground and at home) in order to use their skills to solve problems. All are very happy to be at school. There is a huge change in the number of students from class arriving at the office due to playground disagreements. Some students were regular offenders and have recognised the change in themselves by saying they are rarely in trouble and rarely go to the office. When students are interviewed by the Admin. staff they are polite, assertive and honest which allows the problem to be sorted out rapidly. (Critical Friend/Deputy Principal, 7.12.04)

Researchers interested in a sociocultural perspective recognize the challenges of examining motivational development in a classroom context (MacCallum & Morcom, 2008; Pressick-Kilborn, Sainsbury & Walker, 2005; Hickey, 1997). Models such as Rogoff's planes of analyses help to unravel this complexity because they allow aspects of the institutional, interpersonal and personal to be foregrounded while keeping the 'whole' in view. The class meetings allowed the teacher to focus on how the students were participating and the reflection logs provided additional evidence and understanding of how students were developing during this dynamic and complex process. Rogoff (1995) would argue that a focus on the planes and how students are participating and developing is useful for understanding change and how people learn.

...focusing on how people participate in sociocultural activity and how they change their participation demystifies the process of learning and development. ...we look directly at the efforts of individual, their companions, and the institutions they constitute and build upon to see development as grounded in the specifics and commonalities of those efforts, opportunities, constraints, and changes. (p. 159)

This was an empowering process for all participants that developed mature participation and teacher motivation to sustain the process. (MacCallum & Morcom, 2008; Morcom, 2005; Morcom and MacCallum, 2007). The cyclical and dynamic process of changing participation was not linear and it is difficult to isolate particular events that were the catalyst for the changes that did occur, as the process was gradual and complex. The teacher was transforming her understanding of and responsibility for activities through her participation with her students, as the students' actions scaffolded her understanding of their needs. ZPDs were further extended with peers leaning from peers, providing opportunities for multi tiered scaffolding (Cumming-Potvin, 2009). All students had opportunities to experience the support of peers in their leadership roles which broadened their views about the range of skills leaders needed to possess such as, 'being able to listen to others' and 'having a caring attitude'. The classroom teacher was 'motivated by these actions' to continue to model these qualities for her students.

The two incidents described in this paper could have been a source of student and teacher stress if structures had not been implemented to cope with ongoing issues. As the participation of the students improved and matured, the classroom context was changing and the teacher could focus on the students' learning and maintain positive student cohesion. Collaborative learning strategies provided the framework (Hart, 1992; Friend & Cook, 1992) and the impetus for class meetings to be conducted to develop and sustain teacher and student collaboration.

An outcome of this research for the teacher was improved morale and motivation to further develop planning that facilitated students' educational needs within a collaborative classroom. The teacher's facilitative role was a critical aspect that sustained participative decision making and personal growth for all participants. The teacher's motivation was developed through professional development and striving for excellence in the classroom. Teacher motivation to engage in the particular social practices such as class meetings (Glasser, 1969) was the result of reflecting on pedagogy that supported collaborative practices. Teacher motivation emerged from the sociocultural practices of the classroom and was sustained through ongoing engagement with these practices which included observation of the changes in students' patterns of participation to maturity.

Conclusion

Although this paper is about a small sample of students and the analysis is limited to one classroom and one teacher, there are wider implications for research relating to teacher motivation. Teachers are motivated and reinvigorated with a sense of purpose and meaning in their teaching when they connect with their students and this reciprocal process improves educational outcomes for the long term (Lovat *et al.*, 2009; Van Oers & Hännikäinen, 2001). Research supports 'that teachers are the most important factor in student achievement' (Carey, 2004; Hattie, 2003; Haycock, 1998). Teachers also shift and sort information for its usefulness and are not always willing to adapt to new ideas for a variety of reasons (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992). Therefore understanding what motivates teachers to try new ideas and change their practice is a key to facilitating this process. One could argue that for this teacher, the research process was a source of motivation because she became more skilful at facilitating students' problem solving skills so they took more responsibility for their behaviour (Morcom, 2005). Student leadership roles became the catalyst for changing students' participation and confidence to behave in ways that translated into mature participation. The teacher developed and sustained motivation to engage in this challenging process because the students demonstrated that they valued mature participation as a worthwhile goal.

This research provides evidence that teacher motivation is linked to teacher wellbeing which is promoted by values-driven, visionary and responsive teaching. The 'bottom-up' approach of this research, driven by the teacher in response to the needs of her students, links not only to teacher motivation but builds on much needed research on how teacher' professional learning and development can effectively cater for the diversity of students in their class,

there exists comparatively little research that has explored how teachers actually understand, engage with, and respond to diversity in the classroom... what is currently lacking in the literature in this area is research which takes a broader view of diversity and explores the experiences of teacher in different contexts. (Humphrey, et al, 2006, p. 307)

Teachers are constantly meeting a diversity of demands from students, parents and the community. Understanding how a teacher's motivation to teach is developed and sustained may address the issue of how to make classroom teaching more accessible to attract and retain teachers. This teacher would argue that the process is empowering and validates the passion to educate!

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