Motivation as Negotiated Participation in a Collaborative Classroom: 
A Sociocultural Perspective

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AUTHOR’S DECLARATION

This is to certify that:
• This thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy degree.
• Due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used.
• No part of this work has been used as the award for another degree.
• This thesis meets Murdoch University’s Human Research Ethics Committee requirements for the conduct of this research.

Veronica Elizabeth Morcom
This research examined the development of motivation conceptualised as negotiated participation in specific instructional practices, providing opportunities for student leadership in the classroom. The study was conducted at two primary schools by the classroom teacher, who was also the researcher. The instructional aim was to build collaborative learning communities where democratic values were espoused and debated to promote holistic discourses that supported student learning. In Chapters 6-9 the findings are reported as case studies of focal groups of students, which are in the form of publications.

A sociocultural view of learning (e.g. Rogoff, 1992, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978) is at the heart of recent conceptualisations of motivation and framed the current research. Thus, motivation is conceptualised as emerging from the social context and is manifested through both collaborative and individual action. This view of motivation as a socially and culturally situated concept, is further developed in the current research. Motivation is conceptualised as negotiated participation, learning is conceptualised as developing mature participation and not separated from motivation, and emotion is conceptualised as integral to learning and motivation. Conceptualising learning as working within affective zones of proximal development (ZPD) (Goldstein, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978) highlights the role of emotions in learning and motivation. It is argued in this dissertation that
foregrounding affective elements of students’ learning in the classroom is critical to developing mature participation. This underpins students’ motivation to learn. Qualitative research methodology was adopted because the focus was to describe and understand the world of the participants. By situating the researcher, with all their values and assumptions in the world of the students, the teacher/researcher developed understandings of the students’ motivation as they participated in the classroom instructional practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The data collection tools were chosen to access the participants’ views and actions. Such tools included classroom observation, sociometric surveys and reflective accounts of the children, their parents and the teacher/researcher. The teacher/researcher used photographs of classroom activities during interviews to stimulate students’ recall of the classroom practices. Documents related to school policies and classroom instructional practices provided additional contextual data to situate the research.

To elaborate processes of motivational development, Rogoff’s (1995) personal, interpersonal and community psychological planes were used to analyse the data. Motivation, at the Community Plane, is described as developing ways for participation, where the teacher’s role is crucial to creating collaborative learning communities. At the Interpersonal Plane, interactions create possibilities for motivation as negotiated participation, through modelling and scaffolding values and ways of participation. Personal transformation of understandings was evident on the Personal Plane, with the motivational aspect presented as students being prepared to participate in subsequent similar activities.
The findings from the current research were that more interactive collaborative strategies developed aspects of mature participation that sustained the students’ motivation for learning. Further, students developed mature participation and motivation when working within the affective ZPDs. The instructional practices may provide a model for the development of collaborative learning communities in other schools where holistic discourses are supported and the social practices are negotiated with students.
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my late father Peter Joseph Cunniffe. He believed education was the path to a better life and future for his family.
PREFACE

The preface contains a list of the research publications (presented in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 respectively), followed by the conference presentations that contributed to the publications.

Publications

Chapter 6 (Paper 1)

Chapter 7 (Paper 2)

Chapter 8 (Paper 3)

Chapter 9 (Paper 4)
Conference presentations


Morcom, V., & MacCallum, J. (2010). *Getting personal about values: Scaffolding student participation towards an inclusive classroom community.* Paper presentation at The Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress (ISEC), Queens University, Belfast, U.K. *Peer refereed and published in conference proceedings.*


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