

**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

ABSTRACT

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)

MacCallum, J., & Morcom, V. (2008). Making classroom social practices explicit: Developing motivation through participation in collaborative leadership opportunities. In D. McInerney & S. Van Etten (Series Eds.) & D. McInerney & A. D. Liem (Vol. Eds.), *Research on sociocultural influences on motivation and learning: Vol. 8. Teaching and learning: International best practice* (pp. 191-221). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Chapter 7 (Paper 2)

Morcom, V., & MacCallum, J.A. (2009). 'Motivation in Action' in a collaborative primary classroom: Developing and sustaining teacher motivation. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 34(6), 23-40.

Chapter 8 (Paper 3)

Morcom, V., & Cumming-Potvin, W. (2010). Bullies and victims in a primary classroom: Scaffolding a collaborative community of practice. *Issues in Educational Research*. 20(2), 1-17.

Chapter 9 (Paper 4)

Morcom, V., & MacCallum, J. (2011). Getting personal about values: Scaffolding student participation towards an inclusive classroom community. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1-12. doi:10.1080/13603116.2011.572189

Conference presentations

- Morcom, V. (2010). *Motivating mature participation: A sociocultural analysis of scaffolding the social practices of a collaborative classroom*. Paper (Summer School) and Poster (Main conference) presentations at The 12th International Conference on Motivation. University of Porto, Portugal.
- 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*.
- MacCallum, J., & Morcom, V. (2009). *"I know I can: Enhancing social development through leadership opportunities in the primary classroom*. Paper presentation at The AHDA Conference, Adelaide, July 5-8, 2009.
- Morcom, V.E., & MacCallum, J.A. (2008). *Motivation in action in a primary classroom: Using Class Meetings to develop and sustain collaborative practices*. Paper presentation at The 11th International Conference on Motivation, University of Turku, Finland. August 21-23, 2008.
- MacCallum, J.A., & Morcom V.E. (2008). *Professional learning as co researching in a primary school*. Poster presentation at The 4th EARLI SIG 14 Learning and Professional Development Conference, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. August 27th-29th.
- MacCallum, J., & Morcom, V. (2008). *Motivation as changing participation in classroom activities*. Paper presentation at symposium: Current and Future Trends in Motivation Research organised by Richard Walker, University of Sydney.
- Morcom, V.E., & MacCallum, J.A. (2007). *Improving interaction and participation: Leadership development in the collaborative classroom*. Paper presentation at The Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), Notre Dame University, Fremantle, Perth, Western Australia. *(Peer refereed paper published in conference proceedings)*.
- MacCallum, J.A., & Morcom, V.E. (2007). *Developing motivation through participation in collaborative activity*. Paper presentation at The 12th biennial Conference for European Association for research on Learning and Instruction EARLI, Budapest, Hungary, August, 2007.
- MacCallum, J.A., & Morcom V.E. (2006). *Motivation as negotiated participation in a primary classroom*. Paper presented at AARE (The Australian Association for Research in Education) Conference in Adelaide, November 29, 2006.

Morcom, V.E., & MacCallum, J.A. (2006). *Exploring the development of student engagement in a collaborative classroom*. Paper presented at The 10th International Conference on Motivation, Landau University, Germany, September 30, 2006.

Morcom, V. E. (2005). Mediating classroom culture based on democratic values: A sociocultural exploration of a teacher's facilitative role. Paper presented at The West Australian Institute of Educational Research (WAIER) Conference, Curtin University, WA.

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Chapter 7: PAPER 2

‘Motivation in Action’ in a collaborative primary classroom: Developing and sustaining teacher motivation.

Chapter 8: PAPER 3

Bullies and victims in a primary classroom: Scaffolding a collaborative community of practice.

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