

CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THE INQUIRY:

Children, citizenship and citizenship education in the global and South African context

1.1 Introduction

Are children citizens? Should they be? Do they understand complicated and abstract concepts of a political nature? What possible contribution to issues related to politics can children make? These are a few of the questions I encountered when discussing the topic of children and citizenship with people in general. Contradictory to these questions, politicians and educationalists maintain that the youth can play a role in sustaining the new South African democracy (Scholtz, 1999; Department of Education, 2001a). There is a growing realization that nation-states require their citizens to adopt a shared sense of nationhood as a prerequisite for the democratic and successful functioning of their state (Wilde, 2005:7-11). This is especially relevant for the newly democratised, multicultural South African state. The developing legitimacy for South Africa is dependent on the subjective sense of shared group membership among citizens for the establishment of effective democratic governance and civil stability (Eaton, 2002). Consequently, I started to think about the young children themselves in relation to 'citizenship' and deliberated on the following questions: How do young children experience the new democratic dispensation of South Africa? How do they experience and perceive their citizenship? How do they understand their identity in the South African democracy? The opposing perceptions on children's status and their role as citizens in democratic South Africa against the voices of the children themselves became the academic puzzle of this research project.

This study addresses the subject of children's citizenship and citizenship education in democratic South Africa by examining the life experiences of young children as citizens in the new democratic

South Africa. The statement made by Howard and Gill (2000:357), that children will only be able to appreciate the values and principles of a democracy as part of citizenship education if adults, politicians and educationalists in particular understand their life experiences, influenced my line of inquiry. The children's life experiences informed me on how they understood their citizenship in the context of democratic South Africa. The study drew on the findings of a case study of nine-year-old children as learners and citizens in and beyond the classroom to enlighten the research focus.

Chapter 1 offers an overview of the inquiry. I commence with a section describing the research purpose and rationale. I then contextualise the inquiry within the theoretical domain of citizenship, citizenship education and the historicity of citizenship education. Thereafter, I narrow the focus to citizenship education in South Africa. In the following section I define certain key terms and the context in which I employ them. The chapter concludes with a description of the nine-year-old learners as the unit of analysis and reference to the research design and methodology. In the conclusion of the chapter, I acknowledge anticipated limitations and outline the organization of the study.

1.2 Rationale

I have been working with very young children all my professional life and I have empathized with their being in a paradoxical position in society. The youth of South Africa can be seen as one of the largest groups in the South African community, yet seems to be marginalized (Lindström, 2004). This situation correlates with the position of children in other parts of the world (Stoken, 2005; Hart in Holden & Clough, 2000:27). Galeano (in Vally, 2005:31) writes about the abomination confronting children today, saying, 'almost never are [children] listened to, never understood'. In addition, Lindström (2004) agrees that the 9 to 12 age group is a very strong force in the marketplace on national and international level, but according to Holden (2000) and Stoken (2005) their voices about *hard questions* of a political nature are marginalized. According to Knutsson (1997) and Cohen (2005:22), children's political status leaves much to be desired; they cite children's limited ability to act in the capacity of citizens (for example in paying taxes) as a possible reason.

In spite of children's position as a marginalised group in the South African society, Asmal (in Department of Education, 2002a:8) views children as the hope for securing and sustaining the new

South African democracy. Children are regarded as agents for transforming South Africa into a peaceful and prosperous nation in which citizens will see themselves as members of the 'imagined community' that coincides with the boundaries of South Africa (Anderson in Eaton, 2002:46). Eaton (2002:46) explains the view that the youth have to be proud of that membership and should perceive themselves to be members of a national collectivity, and be willing to make sacrifices for the good of the 'nation', for instance through paying taxes and preventing diverse societies from being torn apart by conflict of interest.

The academic rationale for this study, which evolved from my personal interest and a survey of the literature, was to investigate and document young children's voices in a political or governmental context. There is evidence that children's voices are not often heard in research projects concerning the political, civic or governmental affairs of a nation (John in Holden & Clough, 2000). A reason for this apparent lack of research may be adults' perception that the notion of children's autonomy or participation in decision-making is a threat to their own rights (Bennett Woodhouse, 1999). A further motivation for this study was my interest in citizenship education as preparation for citizenship is a core task of state education systems (Osler & Starkey, 2005b).

I intended listening to children by exploring their expressions and perceptions about living in democratic South Africa and to understand how their experiences shaped their understandings of their citizenship. In addition I wanted to inquire how their everyday life experiences formed their democratic identity. Strengthening my mode of inquiry was research done by Howard and Gill (2000:357) and their insight that children's understandings of their citizenship is influenced by their interpretation of their surrounding world, whether in a democracy, autocracy or any other form of political dispensation. I anticipated that children's life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation of South Africa would inform me and others in extending current conceptions of citizenship education.

Citizenship education includes aspects such as participation and empowerment of the young child, features of the national curriculum as well as the role of the teacher and the social institutions that assume responsibility for the civic education of children: school, families and communities, and civil society. Brown and Harrison (in Holden & Clough, 2000:27) argue that children's personal experiences are a powerful force in learning about citizenship. How do children perceive themselves and others as citizens? What do they currently understand about the abstract notions of

democracy and the South African nation? What do young children need to participate successfully in the development of self-efficacy; enabling them to express their opinions and make informed decisions in the democracy? What knowledge, skills and values do they need to attain to achieve their full potential as citizens in order to meet potential challenges and threats to the democracy? Can young children be taught abstract values such as equality and respect? What are the principles and strategies underpinning the broader vision of the citizenship curriculum for the young child in general and in the South African context? Is citizenship education a means for the South African government to exercise peaceful authority over its citizens or is the government interested in the development of critical and participative citizens? For further clarification of my rationale for this study it is important to take cognizance of the subsequent background information.

In both new and long established democracies there has recently been a growing emphasis on the role citizenship education has to play in helping to secure peace and human rights in the modern world (Martin, 2003:2; Holden & Clough, 2000:13). Education for citizenship is crucial for the maintenance and enhancement of the skills, understanding, knowledge and the values presupposed in the democratic structures of civil society (Pring, 2001:81). The Council of Europe (in Holden & Clough, 2000:13) emphasizes that within the broader European context there are calls for young children to be educated in democratic processes and values owing to the groundswell of xenophobia and racism. At a global level the Council of Europe provides evidence of movements to involve children in actions to address issues of social injustice and environmental degradation. To fulfil the role of an active and responsible citizen, children have to be educated from a very early age in citizenship (Ministry of Education, 2001:3; Mahomed, 2003:118) and in the South African context, through a new national curriculum (Graham & Meyer, 2001).

Democratic South Africa was officially established in 1994 with the first democratic elections. With this new democracy a dream was born, a South African dream of one nation uniting people of diverse origins, cultures and languages. This dream became an articulated idea when Nelson Mandela signed the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996. The Constitution calls all South Africans, including young children, to build a just and free democratic society, reconstruct the inheritance of apartheid by nurturing the democratic values of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996). Developing and sustaining our newfound democracy are important matters that need to be addressed. In the words of the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, 'we need to educate our young people not only for the marketplace, but for responsible

citizenship; young people who will embrace the democratic values in their everyday lives'; and 'learners with knowledge, skills and values that will enable meaningful participation in society ... as good citizens' (Ministry of Education, 2001:10). The view taken by President Thabo Mbeki, was that if learners took pride in the values that led to democracy, they would come to what Mbeki called 'The New Patriotism' (Ministry of Education, 2001:9). See **Addendum 1** for a summary of the democratic values as described in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001).

For children to construct a democratic identity and acknowledge patriotism seems a complicated process, especially to educators who play an important role in shaping the citizens of tomorrow (Hicks & Holden, 1995). Concepts such as a civic and democratic identity linked to related rights and responsibilities have emerged in the literature (Eaton, 2002; Vawda, 2006). Young people's participation in casting their votes, as a civic responsibility, has often been a topic of discussion since the first elections in South Africa. Before the second general election apprehension was expressed in the daily newspapers about the fact that our young democracy could only be strengthened if the concept of democracy lived in the heart of its people, old and young (Scholtz, 1999).

Youth leaders, on the one hand, accepted their responsibility as being the 'foundation of our democratic society' at the Youth Congress at Muizenberg in December 2002 (Die Burger, 2002). On the other hand, in an article by Malan (Rapport, 2004) the youth was hardly mentioned in President Mbeki's speeches in the time before the 2004 election. According to Floris (Beeld, 2004b), who interviewed students on four different campuses during that time, students commented that no political party strove for the interest of the youth. Malan (Rapport, 2004) argues that general and official interest in the youth declined since 1994 when the National Youth Commission and a youth policy were established.

Ten years after the establishment of democracy, two young South Africans wrote some telling comments. Their views are reflected here.

To all adults in South Africa¹

There are three things I want to tell you. Firstly, please stop sports issues, which you over-emphasise. Secondly, please stop the race-issues. I am a White South African schoolchild and am friends with children of all races who go to school with me. I think it is the government who intimidates us with racial issues. ... Thirdly, our country has money for other nations like Zimbabwe, but not for our own people who suffer from HIV/AIDS. I am proud of my own language and my music. I know that young people like me are the future of our country, but I shall most definitely go overseas after completing school – not of my own free will but because of the alarming and negative example we get. Please secure our future!

A nine-year-old child (Participant 2 of Class 2 – data from my case study) wrote:

If I were Mr. Mbeki, I would change the world. I will take care of our country.

Both messages signify children's perceptions of some political roles and responsibilities and from these extracts I take it that children seem to feel that adults build a future, which the younger generation inherits and has to live with long after the older generation has passed on. I relate both messages to aspects associated with children and their contribution as citizens of the country. On the one hand, empirical studies indicate that young children (9 to 12 years) are concerned about environmental destruction, crime, violence, and social inequalities (Wood in Holden & Clough, 2000:35; Smith, 2005). Children wish to be active in working towards effective change to ensure improved environmental and social conditions (Hicks & Holden in Holden & Clough, 2000:15). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (Articles 12 and 13) gives children the right to seek information, to express their thoughts and feelings, to have these listened to, and to partake in decisions affecting them.

On the other hand, the literature indicates that paternalistic policies dictate that children be represented politically by their parents, leaving them vulnerable. In this regard Cohen (2005:221) comments:

¹ The letter was written anonymously and in Afrikaans (Beeld, 1 November 2005). The content has been translated and summarised.

... lacking independent representation or a voice in politics, children and their interests often fail to be understood because the adults who do represent them conflate, or substitute, their own views for those of children. ... Until democratic societies establish a better-defined and comprehensive citizenship for children, along with methods for representation that are sensitive to the special political circumstances faced by children, young people will remain ill-governed and neglected by democratic politics.

However, new emphasis has been placed on citizenship education by international organizations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe taking the lead on proposing initiatives in human rights and citizenship education (Osler, 2005:3). In 1989 the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, which acknowledged the freedom of children to express opinions and to have a say in matters affecting their own lives (Fountain, 1993:2-3).

Comprehensive research on citizenship and the young child and on citizenship education in general exists, mostly descriptive of nature (Bennett Woodhouse, 1999; Vally, 2005; Astiz, 2007). However, I found a small amount of literature of an exploratory nature related to the different facets of citizenship and citizenship education related to young children. Therefore, a South African-based inquiry may enrich the body of research related to citizenship and the young child, focusing mainly on the children's voices as citizens. I thus propose my critical research questions as follows:

- How do nine-year-old learners, born in the first year of democracy, experience the democratic dispensation in South Africa as citizens?

From insights gained from the learners' life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation, I hope to answer the following questions:

- How do learners perceive their democratic identities?
- How do learners understand their citizenship?
- How can the acquired understandings and identities extend generally held current conceptions of citizenship education?

As an interpretivist, I explored the life experiences of the nine-year-old learners as citizens living in democratic South Africa through their expressions, without predetermined ideas about their experiences. However, from the experiences I gained conducting two pilot studies and information I

gained from literature on citizenship and citizenship education related to young children, I was guided by underlying assumptions. One assumption was that nine-year-old learners do have a voice about the political world in which they live. Another assumption was that the political community and its everyday practices of discourse and communication provide a context for the developing cognitions and identities of the young child in a democracy. Thus, citizenship is not only about adults teaching young children topics like rights and responsibilities, nor is citizenship about adults prescribing to children how they must act in a democracy or adhere to democratic values. Citizenship is about young children constructing their own understandings of citizenship and a democratic identity in a democracy that offers a constructive life world and an educational system that will meet the needs of both child and society. This study focuses on the domain of citizenship and citizenship education related to the experiences of the participating nine-year-old learners of my case study against the background of a new national curriculum (Department of Education, 2002c).

With this research project I aimed to explore and present the voices of the nine-year-old learners as a marginalized group of citizens within the South African population. I chose the nine-year-old learners of an inner-city school in Sunnyside, in the City of Pretoria, in the metropolitan area of Tshwane (authentic geographical data) as the unit of analysis since the school reflected the diverse South African population. Furthermore, I used various data collection methods to ensure validity of my data in my attempt to reflect the children's voices. I constructed a conceptual framework, which guided my understanding. The postcolonial theorists, who believe that children as young as seven years could engage in deeper levels of meaning (Tobin in Viruru, 2005; Mac Naughton, 2003), guided me when interpreting and understanding the learners' voices.

What have I learned from this study? I learned that children are able to create their own understandings of their social and political worlds as citizens. Furthermore, I found that children are compassionate and want to make a contribution to society, especially in working towards social justice. I gained insight that the young children were deeply patriotic and identified with the South African democracy. They understood abstract concepts like democracy and the rights and responsibilities of the citizen. They demonstrated critical thought and problem-solving skills concerning democratic processes. They acknowledged the diverseness of the South African population and committed themselves to enhance unity by living democratic values such as democracy, social justice, equality, *ubuntu* (human dignity), accountability, the rule of law and respect.

I further learned that the young children were discouraged by examples of non-democratic processes and principles they encountered such as their unsafe neighbourhood and the social injustices regarding vulnerable people in their community. They viewed the political leaders as responsible for rectifying the lack of social security. These young children expressed a desire for change which would transform South Africa by securing their as well as other citizens' future.

The nine-year-old learners revealed that they were committed to being active and responsible citizens who wished to participate in the democratic dispensation of South Africa to make 'a better nation' (Participant 7 of Class 3). However, the learners expressed their participation only in an imaginative way for there was no evidence of authentic democratic participation involving them; neither did they express ample knowledge (relevant to their age group) of a political nature. If the young learners are perceived as the citizen of the future who has to sustain the democracy for further generations (Jeffreys, 2006), these nine-year-old children expressed the passion to do so but seemingly lacked the participatory skills they might need.

1.3 Contextualising this study

A review of the literature indicated that citizenship education and notions of the 'ideal' or 'good' citizen have been understood and practiced in different ways over the centuries and over the past few decades (Waghid, 2005:323). From a Western philosophical point of view, the education of citizenship of young children can be traced back from very early times to post-modernism (Dunne, 2005). Thus, citizenship has to be studied against the context of constant change of the political and social circumstances in specific societies and countries.

In the following section I outline the historicity of citizenship and citizenship education. This overview will place the South African citizenship issue in the context of time. I then provide a purposeful summary of citizenship education in selected long and recently established democracies like South Africa, to assist my understanding of the complexity of citizenship and citizenship education.

1.3.1 Historicity of citizenship education

In the time of the ancient Greeks, philosophers such as Aristotle (384-322 BC) wrote about the

importance of educating responsible citizens for the survival of the city-state (translated by Sinclair, 1966). Aristotle referred to the ‘good citizen’ living a ‘happy and full life’ (Magee, 2001:39). In the time of the Roman Empire, Cicero [106-43 BC] wrote about ‘civic training’ where the citizen has to acknowledge ethical and legal responsibilities and rights to uphold the ‘moral community’ (Heater, 1990). Citizenship in its modern form goes back to the American and French Revolutions of the late 18th century, which replaced the hereditary king with the sovereign will of the people, who were recognized as active citizens (Castles, 2004). The precondition for this change was the older notion of the sovereignty of the modern state, as enshrined by the 1648 Peace of Westphalia. The context for the evolution of citizenship to the system of economic and social inclusion of all, irrespective of class and gender, was the rise of industrial capitalism. The role of the state was to create the conditions for participation. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) linked the idea of the ideal citizen and citizenship education with nationalism (translated by Cole, 1978).

By the early 20th century the modern state was established in Europe and North America with the following core characteristics: state sovereignty over a specific territory; state autonomy in controlling the economy, culture, environment and society within the bounded territory, and state control over its borders (including people) (Castles, 2004). At this time Dewey argued that education was central in shaping a democratic nation, in the constitution of moral citizen-subjects who worked for equal opportunities and the moral justification of the democracy (in Ong, 2004:51; in Shklar, 1969; in Power 1970). Marshall (in Bulmer & Rees, 1996:4-5) contributed to the progression of civil, political and social rights of citizenship and the institutions most associated with the establishment of these rights. He regarded civil rights as rights necessary for individual freedom and political rights as the right to participate in an exercise of political power or political authority as an elector. Institutions concerning the establishment of these rights are the civil and criminal courts of justice. Marshall described social rights from a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to live the life of a full-civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society. The institutions associated with it are the educational systems and social services. According to Power (1970), education contributed to the shaping of a middle-class citizenry that was generally aligned according to basic values, attitudes, and competencies considered desirable in citizens during the nineteenth century. As a result ideological-social citizenship was attained by all middle classes, but economic-social citizenship remained minimal throughout this century (Marshall in Bulmer & Rees, 1996:12).

The modern state became the nation-state as a result of the successful struggle of the economically powerful middle class against absolutist forms of government, and the resulting emergence of democracy. The history of citizenship education in South Africa is linked to the rise of the modern nation-state. In the nation-states the emphasis was on educating the citizen as a virtuous member of society (Ross, 1984, Benson, 1987, Berman, 1997, UNESCO'S International Conference on Education, 2001). See **Addendum 2** for a description of the characteristics of a modern nation-state. Table 1.1 gives an overview of citizenship education over time.

Table 1.1: Citizenship education through time

Time frame	Aim of citizenship education
Ancient Greece	Educating responsible citizens for the survival of the city-state
Roman Empire	Civic training of the citizen to acknowledge ethical and legal responsibilities and rights to uphold the moral community
American and French Revolutions	Citizenship education linked to nationalism and the political and social freedom of the individual
Modern democratic nation	Citizenship education central in the formation of moral citizen-subjects to morally justify the democracy
Nation-state	Educating the citizen as a virtuous member of society. Through colonialism, natives and other people in the colonies were seen as subjects. In South Africa, during the British occupation, the aim of citizenship education was to assimilate all non-British people to their language and culture
Period after World War II and the migration of ethnic minorities into the nation-states during the 1960s and 1970s	Citizenship education delivered through one of the following approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>assimilation</i> aimed at immigrant communities attaining citizenship and at the dream of the nation-state to have all groups sharing one dominant mainstream culture • <i>differential exclusion</i> meant to exclude minority groups from citizenship education • <i>multiculturalism</i> aims to recognize members of minority groups as having equal rights in all spheres of society, without giving up their diversity
Globalization	Through the approach of <i>transnationalism</i> , there are claims for citizenship education to acknowledge different identities for the promotion of peace, in local and global contexts

If one could deal simplistically with a complex matter such as citizenship education, it is evident from the timeline that throughout the centuries, citizenship was a given (Grobler, 2005, personal

communication). From the time of the ancient Greeks up to post-modern times citizenship education was the instrument for preserving peace and upholding the society and democracy, although not inclusive for all citizens. In recent times citizenship is again seen as the medium to secure democracy through being responsive to diversity needs. The overarching aim of citizenship education is to sustain peace in local communities, in the bigger realm of the nation and in the global context. If this is the universal aim of citizenship education – why then the unrest, why September 11 and the conflicts in the Middle East and in Africa? Mahomed (2003:120) quotes Alvin Toffler in *Powershift*: ‘tomorrow’s flashpoints, the conflicts we face as the new civilization of violence, wealth and knowledge collides with the entrenched forces of the old fading industrial civilization’ and ‘the use of violence, wealth and knowledge as sources of power will not soon disappear’. Other philosophers like Rossouw (2005) warn of a bloody 21st century if democrats do not intervene. The youth of South Africa has to be equipped through citizenship education for living and participating in this century.

1.3.2 South Africa and citizenship education

For further illumination of my study I need to describe citizenship education in South Africa in the context of time. With the acknowledgement that the history of South Africa started many decades ago and cannot be described in a simplistic way, I chose the model of Kymlicka (2004) for his acknowledgement of historical negation of previous established citizenship models in South Africa. He commences with the Dutch, who later intermarried with Germans and Huguenot settlers and colonized South Africa. The descendants of this ethnically mixed population are Afrikaners. They became the dominant group in South Africa and through the creation of apartheid categorized the population into three racial groups – White, Black or African and Coloured. Apartheid became the official racial ideology and practice in South Africa, which on the one hand became the most racially oppressive and on the other hand the wealthiest nation in Africa (Kymlicka, 2004:157; Dorward, 2000).

The challenges to citizenship education in post-apartheid South Africa are unique. Moodley and Adam (2004:159-181) identify a sense of displacement rather than enjoying equal rights in the sub consciousness of many South Africans. With the establishment of a new constitution and the search for truth and reconciliation, South Africa is making steps to establish a democratic society. Aspects that complicate the implementation of democratic citizenship education are the fact that

‘... government blatantly contradicts the lessons taught at school’ (Moodley & Adam, 2004:172). Well-intentioned educational initiatives like the so-called Values Project (Department of Education, 2002a) are overshadowed by contrary government practices such as policies on HIV/AIDS, and the non-delivery of employment, safety, housing and other preconditions of a normal life that is consigned to the privileged elite (Jansen in Moodley & Adam, 2004). The constitutional values are also undermined by a political culture that often practices the opposite of what it allegedly promotes in civic education. Essential democratic values, like accountability, free debate, non-racism and non-sexism are often disregarded by political leaders. This hidden agenda or public curriculum contrasts with the new National Curriculum Statement, Grades R – 9 (Schools) (Department of Education, 2002c) and triggers alienation from politics instead of active engagement (see summary of sections of the national curriculum relevant to this study in **Addendum 3**).

Nation-building is seen by Moodley and Adam (2004) as a goal for citizenship education in South Africa to reconcile the still racially divided and unequal South African society. Fundamental to the language of nation-building are the official notions of political literacy, moral education and the teaching of democracy. Consensus that emerged from the South African debate since 1994 promotes the official notion of political literacy, which has to ‘produce’ active and participatory citizens that can act both as cosmopolitan internationalists and as locally effective reformers. The core values identified from the new Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) are promoted to be the foundation of nation-building by determining the quality of national character (Department of Education, 2002c). Moodley and Adam (2004) state that citizenship education in South Africa mainly means advocating the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

There is, however, current debate as to how far the national projects should go in promoting aspects of nation-building and a democratic identity. Projects like the promotion of English as a national language are launched at the expense of minority languages (Moodley & Adam, 2004). The recent debate about Afrikaans as medium of instruction in schools and universities illustrates Moodley and Adam's (2004) argument. For some, Afrikaans is their constitutional right in terms of teaching and learning and others argue that the promotion of Afrikaans is being used for marginalisation (Van Rheede, 2005; Du Toit, 2005). Degenaar (in Moodley & Adam, 2004:168) advises promoting democratic values rather than insisting on a national consensus, assisted by English as a common language. Jansen (in Moodley & Adam, 2004:172) asserts that it was never the intention of the government led by the African National Congress (ANC) to implement democratic education and

that the syllabus revision was mainly about establishing legitimacy for the new government, under criticism for its failure to deliver in education.

In South Africa the influence of civic associations like the United Democratic Front (UDF) played an important role since the early 1980's in mobilizing people of all ages and at all levels of society against apartheid (Moodley & Adam, 2004). South Africa has acquired all the ingredients of a formal democracy with periodic free elections in a multiparty system, but the content, quality, and extent of citizens' participation seems problematic. Mattes (in Moodley & Adam, 2004:176) states that South Africa now has one of the most passive citizenries in southern Africa. Ironically, previous state repression almost guaranteed a vigorous South African civil society and the new 'soft incorporation is inadvertently destroying the political culture of once lively grassroots association' (p 177). Based on recent qualitative research on political passivity, Moodley and Adam (2004:176) found, in line with global trends, that concerns about private lifestyle and consumerist interests have replaced political interests. Added to these concerns, some of the trends in modern South Africa are (Moodley & Adam, 2004):

- Socialization into democratic behaviour is under threat. People want to transform pressing local conditions rather than strive for the strengthening of the democracy. Democracy is evaluated in terms of economic delivery of which people in some areas see little of. During 2005 there were revolts and violence in many local communities against government's decisions concerning new structures of municipality regions (October & La Grange, 2005). This trend is linked to the role of voluntary civic associations in South Africa, which act as the voice of entire communities instead of offering people experience of democratic behaviour (Friedman in Moodley & Adam, 2004:178-179);
- Vigilance justice still occurs, no longer institutionalized, but spontaneously as a result of distrust in police competences. Examples of this distrust made highlights in the South African news during 2005. In one case police negligence led to the death of a five-year-old and community members took the law in own hands (Swart, 2005);
- A political culture of civic engagement is no longer fostered by the present government itself as a result of having party congresses only every five years and the fact that debate on controversial issues like the macroeconomic policy is not encouraged within the ANC

parliament caucus itself. The Leninist legacy of democratic centralism, cherished partly as dogma and partly as necessity in the ANC period of exile, is still carried over. The opposition, based in ethnic minorities, seems powerless and no threat to the ruling majority party (Moodley & Adam, 2004:179);

- ‘The South African discourse is person-focused and narrowly conformist, not issue oriented’ (Moodley & Adam, 2004:180). Identification with leaders or organizations goes with lack of knowledge about the policies that these persons or institutions pursue. This is evident in the recent debate between Mbeki and Zuma in which even the youth were involved (Sparks, 2005; Du Plessis, 2005). ‘People attach themselves to celebrities, regardless of the content of their fame’ (Moodley & Adam, 2004:180). According to surveys (Opinion 99 poll, HSRC surveys in Moodley & Adam, 2004:179) issues that are widely reported by the media and politicians are rarely cited by voters. An example is the issue of corruption. South Africa is rated 46th in Transparency International's 2005 Corruption Perception Index (Momborg, 2005). The four issues that do concern voters most are, in order of priority, jobs, crime, housing, and education. In South Africa unemployment stands at 45% and the income gap between highest and lowest earners is the third widest in the world (after Brazil and Guatemala) (Mahomed, 2003);
- As education is a major concern of this study, the following needs to be highlighted: Although huge progress is being made to address inequalities and the integration of all races in schools, Rademeyer quotes Jansen (2005), who argues that to make a real difference, teachers' knowledge base has to be expanded, textbooks have to be distributed equally and instruction time has to be better utilized. Duncan Hindle, Director-General of Education, reported on growth in delivery systems but announced that there were still nearly 4000 schools without running water and 3000 schools without basic sanitation (Joubert, 2005a). According to a nationwide audit, of the estimated 6,4 million South African children in the 0-7 age group, only slightly over one million are enrolled in ECD sites (Department of Education, 2001b). About 4,5 million children of school going age are not in school (Mahomed, 2003). Recent research done in alliance with UNESCO shows that primary school performance is lower than in some other African countries (O'Connor, 2005). Sixty percent of learners in rural areas have limited access to libraries and performance in Mathematics and Science is very low (TIMMS report). Most cases of

reported racism were recorded in the education sector (Mahomed, 2003). Racism in schools has to be seen against the frequent flare-ups of racism in other sectors of society, as was the case with racism and judges of the High Court in the Western Cape (Jeffreys, 2005) and Afrikaans-speaking students wearing t-shirts with discriminatory slogans (Joubert, 2005b);

- The ANC Freedom Charter of 1955, the inspiring precursor of the post-apartheid constitution, pronounced, ‘The people shall govern!’ After the euphoria of the first democratic elections in 1994, the disenchantment with politics and with the promise that the ordinary person would have a say in his/her future after apartheid resulted in much lower 1999 election participation (Moodley & Adam, 2004);
- Growing xenophobia towards the estimated 1 to 5 million illegal immigrants in South Africa, coming from the rest of Africa (although based on the competition for scarce employment, still an alarming trend) (Moodley & Adam, 2004);
- Giliomee and Simkins (in Moodley & Adam, 2004:177) theorize that South Africa is a ‘one-party dominant state’ and not a one-party state. According to Moodley and Adam (2004:180), movements towards authoritarianism in South Africa are evident. These trends do not originate from overwhelming governance but from the widespread crisis of authority and the inability to enforce order.

Moodley and Adam (2004) state that a fragile civil society in South Africa, held together by an interdependent economy and a weak sense of solidarity, is no guarantee that democracy will succeed. To support the abstract virtues of democracy, effective citizenship education requires concrete contextual analysis. Only by critical analyses of how a democracy functions in the everyday reality of the political community in which learners live, by comparing the ideals with the practice, can learners be motivated to become active and engaged citizens. According to Moodley and Adam (2004:172), little political education takes place and the little that does, is a decontextualized teaching of citizenship through the institutions of democracy. Nevertheless, they believe that South Africa's Constitution and culture of human rights provide the framework for the creation of a democratic and just society. They (2004:181) ‘hope that a deeper democracy education for active citizenship of a new generation will preserve the noble ideals of one of the most inspiring

constitutions in the world’ – a Constitution that ‘we admire’, in the words of Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein leader of Northern Ireland, during a visit to South Africa (De Lange, 2005b).

The goals set by Moodley and Adam (2004) are especially difficult within a nation-state in which democracy is in its infancy (Kymlicka, 2004). Democratic citizenship education must be aimed at all groups in South Africa. Gerwel, a political analyst (radio interview, 2005) sees the future of South Africa as depending on the balance between unity and diversity.

If this is the situation of citizenship education in modern South Africa, what are the current issues of citizenship education in old and established democracies and new or recently established democracies? What can we learn from this knowledge? I do not intend to give an in-depth examination of citizenship issues in these countries, but only to touch on major issues in a comparative way. Table 1.2 gives a comparative overview of these issues.

Table 1.2: Comparison of recent issues of citizenship education in selected democracies

Country	Old/new democracy (according to year of establishment)	Current issues related to citizenship education
United States of America (USA)	Old	Social cohesion as conservative ideology is becoming institutionalized. The aim is to integrate minorities into the mainstream. Citizenship education at present is outdated (Ladson-Billings, 2004:99-126).
United Kingdom (Britain)	Old	British society is characterised by deep diversity (class, region, age, gender, ethnicity) and inequalities among minorities. There is a concern with national identity and the tightening of immigration rules. A new citizenship education is being introduced (Figueroa, 2004:219-244).
Germany	Old	Germany attempts to maintain ‘ethnic purity’. Political education was introduced with little evidence of educating children for critical thinking. Luchtenberg (2004:245-271) believes in reforming citizenship education to detect and prevent xenophobia.
South Africa	New	A new negotiated Constitution and democratic values have to transform the still deeply divided South Africa. Nation-building is seen as a goal for citizenship education through a new curriculum (based on democratic values), which promotes citizenship education in an integrated way (Moodley & Adam, 2004: 159-184).

Country	Old/new democracy (according to year of establishment)	Current issues related to citizenship education
Brazil	New	Citizenship education is addressed by the constitution and by national education. However, the institutionalized myth of a ‘racial democracy’ contradicts it. Indigenous people (Blacks and Indians) and former slaves are excluded from participation in society. Working for social justice and equality forms the basis of citizenship education (Gonçalves e Silva, 2004:185-214).
Namibia	New	A policy of national reconciliation for the creation of a culture of peace was adapted in the diverse Namibia. A programme for Human Rights and Democracy is taught from the primary levels, and key teachers are trained. Student teachers are involved in pre-service and in-service training. The aim is nation-building and the belief that citizenship education starts at home (Sampson, 2003:83-89).

In all these countries there is proof of citizenship education being influenced by ethnic diversity. In countries like England and Namibia there is evidence of distinct citizenship education, reflected in their new education policies. Namibia is the only country with clear aims for training teachers in citizenship education. In South Africa, citizenship education is included in the new curriculum, but in an integrated way (see **Addendum 3**). In Namibia and South Africa (both new democracies) the emphasis of citizenship education is on nation-building. In the USA citizenship education has to be adapted to include the policy of social cohesion and the inclusion of minority groups. In Brazil citizenship education is written in the constitution and educational policy but is hardly implemented in practice. Here, citizenship education has to be adapted to include modern-day diversity needs and to rectify the deep-rooted divisions in the Brazilian society. In Germany there is political education but no distinct evidence of citizenship education aiming at critical thinking or including children of minority and ethnic groups.

To summarise my insights from the comparison in Table 1.2: The age of a democracy does not seem to make a large difference on citizenship education, except that the new democracies, like South Africa, accentuate nation-building in the pursuit of sustaining the new democracy. A common aspect of citizenship education illuminated by the comparison is the feature of diversity and unity, which emerged as a crucial feature in the expressions of the participating learners of my case study.

1.4 Explanation of core concepts

From the previous sections it is clear that there are various theories, concepts, issues and trends related to my research topic. This section clarifies the key concepts of the research topic and my interpretation thereof for application in this study. These concepts are the life experiences and understandings of children, children as citizens and democratic South Africa. In Chapter 2 I elaborate further on the core and related concepts as well as the theories associated with this study.

1.4.1 The life experiences and understandings of children

The study of the life experiences and understandings of children was done through the life-course perspective held by sociologists as described by Elder (in Hopkins, 2005:508-510). The life-course principles most relevant for this study are the emphasis that individuals are agents constructing their own understandings from participating in everyday life. Life is described as the existence and experiences of individuals; both the historical context and developmental age must be taken into account in understanding individuals' expressions about their lives (Elder in Hopkins, 2005:508-510). I studied the nine-year-old children as learners in and beyond the classroom and took cognizance of their developmental stage and the associated theories most applicable to the learners of my study, viz. building a learning community; compassion and imaginative action; postcolonial theory and the transforming society theory. I elaborate on the theories in Chapter 2 of this study. I interpreted the self-reporting of the nine-year-old learners through their own verbal articulation of ideas and their artefacts like drawings and letters as to what they have heard, saw, noticed, assumed, made sense of, interpreted, understood and apprehended as children living their lives. Therefore, I focused on the participating learners of my case study as citizens who attempted to shape and construct their own lives in the context of the contemporary democratic dispensation of South Africa.

1.4.2 Children as citizens

In the context of this study I perceived children as citizens, as 'child citizens'. Leaman has already used the concept 'citizen child' in 1994. To perceive children as citizens is a recent concept, according to Wood (in Holden & Clough, 2000:31) and De Freitas (2005:122). Children are citizens in their own right, and their relative immaturity and inexperience should not be regarded as

incompetence. This study places the focus on the political status of children born in democratic South Africa, each with the right to a South African identity. I acknowledge children as subjects in the Republic of South Africa not only as an ever-present segment of the South African civil society but also as powerful thinkers, active citizens and capable of learning about their rights and responsibilities. Citizenship in a legal sense is anchored in the rights and responsibilities deriving from sovereign nation-states (Osler & Starkey, 2005b). Therefore, I see children as citizens living their daily lives and not only as citizens of the future. Cohen (2005:221) argues that democracies tend to see children through adult representation, which results in children and their interest not being heard or understood. The concepts citizen and citizenship are elucidated in Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), as follows: ‘There is a common South African citizenship. All citizens are a. equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship; and b. equally subject to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship’.

Accordingly, I maintain that while children need opportunities and time to be children, they do also need an education, especially citizenship education, focused on their current state of being, as well as their process of becoming. According to Marshall and Bottomore (1996), the right to education is a social right of citizenship, because the aim of education during childhood is to shape the future adult. Through citizenship education children should be encouraged to become independent and autonomous learners, able to think creatively and critically, make decisions and participate responsibly and actively in their daily experiences (Hahn, 2005:24). Pring (2001:81) states that education for citizenship is crucial to the maintenance and enhancement of the skills, understandings and knowledge presupposed in the democratic structures of society. In addition, Johnson (2006) argues that citizenship education should entail a new value system when laying the foundations for a new democratic local and global citizenship.

1.4.3 Democratic South Africa

In a democratic nation-state (like South Africa) the concepts of citizen, citizenship and democracy are interrelated. I focused on the relations between the concepts citizenship and democracy by referring to the liberal vision of the Member States of the Council of Europe that foresees societies that are ‘free, tolerant and just’; and such societies can only be established on the basis of democracy (Starkey, 2005:25). In a democracy, freedom, pluralism, human rights and the rule of law are enhanced and Member States in particular are expected to have effective legislation in place

to promote equality of rights in diverse societies (Starkey, 2005:25; Banks, 2004; Kymlicka, 2004). The liberal vision of democracy is the true democracy, according to Steyn, De Klerk and Du Plessis (2006). In addition, a democracy requires the commitment of ordinary people who understand both the characteristics of a democratic way of life and the consequences of its potential loss (Steyn *et al.*, 2006). The performing of the citizen's responsibility relates to the civic republican vision of democracy (Osler, 2005). In any democracy, the government has a responsibility towards its citizens in terms of equal provision of services and protection as well as the enhancement of a democratic culture. There is a growing realization that a culture of democracy and 'human-centred values' can be achieved through education (Starkey, 2005:24; Ochieng (1972) in Department of Education, 2002a:11). This study places the nine-year-old participating learners of my case study as citizens in the new South African democracy where they are entitled to the rights proclaimed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), subjected to the responsibilities as proclaimed by the Constitution (1996). In Chapter 2 I elaborate further on the core and related concepts to democracy and citizenship.

1.5 Unit of analysis

This research project concentrated on one single case study, namely the nine-year-old learners in Grade 3 at one school, in order to explore their life experiences and understandings as citizens of democratic South Africa. I chose an inner-city primary school in the City of Pretoria for the study. The school is a governmental school, situated in a central-city neighbourhood consisting mostly of apartments. The population of this neighbourhood became more diverse after 1994 with families from Africa and the globe, e.g. Mozambique, Rwanda, Zambia and China, living there. Most of the school's children live in these apartments. Sunnyside is known for its crime and there are many homeless children living on the streets. In a Centenary booklet on the school the principal of the school said the following about the community:

The community we serve can be seen in one of two different ways:

- The sinister, dark dirty and negative side of crime, drugs and lawlessness; or
- The vibrant, throbbing society where true friends are made and where our school is charged to produce people who will be inspired to become leaders of tomorrow.

A further reason for choosing this school was that it reflected most of the diverse population of the residents of any mid-city in South Africa. The language of instruction of the school is English, which immediately implies in the South African context, that many but not all language groups (there are 11 official languages) were represented in the Grade 3 group. I focused on the nine-year-old learners, for they were in the last year of the first phase of school (Foundation Phase), thus being the mature group of the very young learners. There were 142 learners and four teachers in the Grade 3 group. When collecting data I was involved with the learners of a class for the last 30 minutes of every school day during a period of six weeks.

Another reason for choosing nine-year-old learners as partakers in the study was that these learners (who turned nine years old in 2004), were born in the first decade of the young South African democracy. Since they had been taught citizenship through the new national curriculum for the preceding two years, I assumed that the expressions of these learners as citizens of the new democracy could reveal valuable experiences and understandings of their citizenship and their democratic identity. By reporting my understandings I hope to extend the current conceptions of citizenship education held by others.

In exploring the nine-year-old learners' experiences of the democratic dispensation of South Africa as citizens, I was confronted with their conceptualisation of the abstract concepts of citizenship and democracy. Although these learners were in the final year of the first phase of school (Foundation Phase) and therefore supposed to have achieved a certain level of maturity, I still needed to know at what age learners possibly engage with the concepts related to my topic. According to Piaget (in Gordon & Browne, 2000:138; Morrison, 2006:277), the child in the age group 6-12 years cannot apply abstract reasoning as it only comes later, in the formal operational stage during adolescence. In addition, Piaget and Kohlberg are the leading proponents of a developmental stage theory of children's moral growth (Morrison, 2006:277-278). Piaget states that through exchanging

viewpoints, Grade 3 children determine what is good/bad and what is right/wrong and according to Kohlberg children (ages 4-10 and at moral stage 2) are motivated to make moral decisions when their needs are satisfied (Morrison, 2006:278). Are Piaget's cognitive and moral developmental theories and Kohlberg's moral development theory applicable to the nine-year-old learner in the South African context or is the postcolonial theory most relevant to my respondents in relation to learning and teaching of citizenship? In Chapter 2 I studied theories related to my research topic to address these questions.

To enable myself to answer the research questions, I focused my research primarily on the nine-year-old learners' voices as citizens on their life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation of South Africa against the background of current curriculum developments. I explored citizenship education in the global as well as in the South African context. This steered my investigation to study recent literature on citizenship education in general and as related to the young child. I scrutinized literature of empirical as well as theoretical nature. Consequently, as citizenship is a fluid and highly contextualised issue, I used popular media like newspapers, television and the radio as resources. In addition, I used a comparative approach. I compared citizenship education as presented in other democratic contexts, which gave me a richer insight into citizenship education in South Africa. Although the role of the teacher is decisive for the nature and quality of learners' experiences in enabling and empowering them as citizens, I chose not to study this area in depth as it seemed to be a research focus on its own. For the same reason I also chose to exclude other role players crucial to citizenship education like policy makers, the family and relevant social institutions such as the community and civil society although I acknowledged their influence on the experiences of the participating learners of my case study.

1.6 Research design and methodology

I chose to study the research problems via the epistemological perspective of the interpretivist paradigm. The search for understanding is relevant for this study as I attempted to interpret, understand and reconstruct nine-year-old learners' life experiences and understandings as citizens of the democratic dispensation in South Africa from their point of view (Verma & Mallick, 1999; Merriam, 1998). This paradigm is characterized by a 'concern to understand the other' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:2), a concern for the individual and an effort to understand from within the context

and perspective of human experience (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:398; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:149).

The interpretivist paradigm further posits that no single social reality exists when attempting to understand human behaviour (Merriam, 1998:4; Stake in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:440) as there are too many factors that affect or cause an outcome, which is unpredictable. This view of reality also influences my stance on the way knowledge is internalized and I admit to an inquiry that is qualitative and subjective in nature. With the lenses of the interpretive paradigm I assumed that children's subjective experiences and understandings are real and should be taken seriously; that I can 'make sense of' by interacting with them and listening to their voices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:3; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:123). I therefore rendered the children's voices as clearly as print permits in order to enhance my understanding of their experiences as citizens (Evans, 2005:15).

I made use of an instrumental case study to assist my inquiry: to understand and reconstruct nine-year-old learners' life experiences and understandings as citizens of the democratic dispensation in South Africa. I selected the nine-year-old learners of one school as a clearly defined unit of analysis. I used the instrumental case study both as process and as product of the inquiry (Stake, 1995:4-12; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:437). The instrumental case study emphasises the evolving nature of qualitative research that corresponds to the exploratory and descriptive approaches and the inductive and deductive interpretation. The purpose of the instrumental case study is to maximise understanding of the one case to provide greater insights into an issue or to improve a theoretical explanation. In an instrumental case study, some cases would 'do a better job' than others (Stake, 2000:4) but I found that the participating learners from my case enlightened my understanding of their life experiences as citizens beyond my imagination.

My case study allowed for primary data in large quantities from the 142 learners, which gave impressive insights and answers to my research questions. Through the instrumental case study I reflected complex relationships voiced by the children as learners. It allowed me to document the voices of learners at the young age of nine years, regarded by many adults as a minority and insignificant group in civil society. In addition, it allowed me to experiment with distinctive data collection methods. The documentation of the life experiences of the participating learners of my case study is a unique research result in the South African and international academic paradigm.

Since researching children's experiences, I described different perspectives of researchers within the sociology of childhood in Chapter 3. In Chapter 3 I justify my choices of data collection methods, acknowledge the strengths and limitations of my choices and comment on my actions to deal with these challenges. In the following sections I give an overview of the methodological choices and strategies, outlined in Table 1.3, deal with the anticipated research constraints or limitations of the study and provide an outline of the organization of the inquiry.

Table 1.3: Summary of methodological choices and strategies

Data collection methods	Instruments assisting data collection	Means of documentation as textual data	Means of data analysis	Trail of evidence
Observation	Informal observations	Field notes	Constructivist grounded theory analysis	Addendum 5
Focused interviews (group & focus group) for participatory conversations	Drawings	Photographs		Addendum 8
	Flag activity	Authentic product coded and categorised		Addendum 8
	Written role-play activities	Authentic product coded and categorised		Addendum 8
	Hot chair drama technique	Video and transcriptions		Addendum 8
	Slogans for posters	Photographs		Addendum 8
	Letters	Photographs and authentic product coded and categorised		Addendum 8
	Activity on children's rights and responsibilities	Audio tape and transcriptions		Addendum 8
	Discussions during group and focus group interviews	Audio tape and transcriptions		Addendum 8
				Summary & Citizenship Context Diagram

1.6.1 Data collection methods and instruments

The data from the two pilot studies indicated that I needed the expressions of many learners to understand their life experiences as citizens of democratic South Africa and consequently provide valid and trustworthy answers to my research questions. Therefore, I decided to use various data collection methods (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:127). I employed interviews as the primary mode for data collection where I used instruments or task-based activities, designed to be child-centred to facilitate self-expression (Mouton, 2001:99; Boyden & Ennew, 1996). The focused interviews allowed for participatory conversations where self-reporting empowered the learners as participants and also guided me in understanding their voices as comprehensively as possible (Mouton, 2001). Through self-expression the learners were able to construct their life experiences and understandings of the democratic dispensation in a creative and developmentally appropriate way. A detailed description of the design and application of the methods and instruments follows in Chapter 3.

The following instruments were employed for primary data collection in this research project:

- Drawings and interpretations of their drawings by nine-year-old learners in Grade 3 about their images and experiences of living in South Africa as citizens.
- An activity about the flag of South Africa where the learners wrote sentences about the flag, interpreting the colours of the flag.
- Two written role-play activities: one where the learners completed the sentence *If I were Mr. Mbeki I would ...* and the other where learners completed the sentence *If I were the president I would*
- The Hot chair or Hot seating (Goodwin, 2006:16) drama technique with a large group of children.
- Slogans designed for posters, meant for peers living in their neighbourhood, on how they should live as citizens in South Africa.
- A letter written by individual nine-year-old learners to the former president of South Africa describing their experiences of living in South Africa. They also made drawings in their letters, which served as data.
- An activity on children's rights and responsibilities where learners contributed through

expressions (group interview).

- Group and focus group interviews.

I documented all self-expressions as textual data in the following ways:

- Drawings and writings were coded, categorised and photographed.
- The drama activity (hot chair) was recorded on video and transcribed.
- Transcriptions of the group and focus group interviews were made.
- Activity on rights and responsibilities resulted from a group interview were audio taped and transcribed.
- A narrative schedule was based on observation and presented as field notes.

I offered the textual data as a trail of evidence in the format of addenda presented on a DVD compact disc.

The different data collection methods and data collection instruments enhanced validity and reliability of data. In several cases I verified learners' self-reporting by talking to them individually. From this I learned about their interpretations of their drawings or sentences, which I wrote on their contributions (see **Addendum 8** for examples).

I studied a corpus of texts (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004:117-118) relevant to citizenship and citizenship education to assist me in my understandings of the perceptions of the learners about their understandings of their citizenship. The literature revealed that knowledge, concepts and theories on citizenship related to the young child (Verma & Mallick, 1999:19) have mainly been derived from disciplines in the social and political sciences. The literature revealed significant numbers of legal documents, since citizenship relates to rights and responsibilities. I studied the following documents:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and other relevant documents such as the Bill of Rights and the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Ministry of Education, 2001).

- International documents like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), documents by the Council for Education in World Citizenship, and UNICEF, to name a few.
- The Revised National Curriculum Statement for the Foundation Phase (Department of Education, 2002c). In the Learning Area: Life Orientation (Department of Education, 2002b) the SAQA Critical Outcomes and the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards include aspects directly related to citizenship. The new national curriculum was implemented in the Foundation Phase in 2004 for Grades R-3 (Grade 3 – nine-year-old learners). The new curriculum was part of the restructuring of education after the dismantling of the earlier separatist policy in South Africa, directed at initiating fundamental transformation in the character and content of the learners and the education system (Evans, 2005:30).

1.6.2 Data analysis

As an interpretivist, I used both inductive and deductive data analysis approaches. I applied the systematic guidelines of constructivist grounded theory analysis as described by Charmaz (2000:509-535) in the analysis phase of my study (see Table 1.3). As a constructivist, grounded theory analysis assisted me in assuming the relativism of multiple social realities. This relativism concerned the learners of my case when recognising the mutual creation of knowledge by me, the viewer, and by the learners; the viewed; thus constructing meaning. In addition, grounded theory analysis strategies assisted me in identifying concepts from different perspectives (Charmaz, 2000:513), specifically from the perspective of citizenship. Concepts emerged in themes and relevant categories, which I have chosen for their applicability and usefulness in an attempt to answer my research questions (Merriam, 1998:156; Connelly & Clandinin in Merriam, 1998:157).

I employed several levels of data analysis:

- ❖ I interpreted and classified the learners' experiences in an inductive approach into four themes and relevant categories (see phases of data analysis and the Citizenship Context Diagram in **Addenda 10** and **11**).
- ❖ I presented the data collected in a narrative and descriptive way to present a holistic interpretation of the life experiences and understandings of the nine-year-old learners as citizens of the democratic dispensation in South Africa. I then interpreted the learners'

messages, across data sources and through inductive and deductive approaches, for final analyses where I answered my research questions.

1.7 Anticipated research constraints

Anticipated limitations of this study were clustered around the research design, issues about myself as researcher and quality criteria, which included my endeavours to enhance the trustworthiness of my research. My main concern related to the Grade 3 participating learners. As young children are regarded a 'vulnerable' group, I kept in mind that a common error was that the learners could easily be influenced by an adult, and the possibility that they could aim to please me with their responses instead of giving their own opinions and experiences (Mouton, 2001:107). I collected data over a short period of time, managed to build rapport with the learners but realized that a more sustained interaction with the learners, over a longer period, might have added to my insights.

Added to these limitations were others related to the choice of the instrumental case study that lacked generalizability of results with non-standardization of measurement (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:439; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:164; Mouton, 2001:149-150). However, the research design was planned according to my intention to focus entirely on exploring, understanding and explaining what learners have to say about their democratic experiences as child citizens and not to generalize my findings to other cases. I did not study other role players that may have contributed to the learners' construction of their citizenship such as policy makers, teachers and parents. That could inspire further research endeavours. Although a characteristic of a case study tends to be low transferability, I gave a rich description of the case studied for applicability of findings to other known cases (Seale, 1999). Therefore I do hope that some guidelines for citizenship education may be derived from it. The employment of a case study may also be detrimental to issues on quality criteria (Mouton, 2001), which I counteracted constructively by using multiple data collection instruments to enhance authenticity, reliability and the validity of findings. Although I researched nine-year-old learners' self-expressions, I was challenged to present this study on an adequate standard of research (Tertoolen, Bokhorst & Bosch, 2006). Relevant publications of high quality in the field of early childhood education (Holden & Clough, 2000; Viruru, 2005) guided me as to academic standards.

As the researcher I understood my position as being that of a biographically situated researcher who

went to young children with my own subjective background and perspectives to get what I visualised when working in my study, far away from the lives of these children (Merriam, 1998:153). Bearing this in mind, I acknowledged that I interpreted data from a Eurocentric point of view. I also recognised the fact that I, as an adult, had lived in and experienced the time before the establishment of democracy in South Africa in 1994 while the learners were born in the new democracy; this could have affected my interpretation of the data. Being conscious of the above, I used more than one method to collect empirical data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:4, 19). I became a participant observer and fed participants' comments and my observations into field notes to trace ideas as they developed over time and to shape the data collection and analysis. In addition, I aimed to continuously and purposefully rethink, revise, and verify my own practices and impressions during the research process and verified my findings with the learners themselves and the class teachers. These strategies enhanced the trustworthiness and authenticity of my study.

At the outset, I shared my stance about children, regarding them as noteworthy child-citizens and competent participants in the research process. However, I had to address the unequal power relationship between the child subjects and myself as adult researcher during the research process (Flewitt, 2005:1). I realized that I had to form a relationship with the learners and gain their trust (Punch, 2002:328) and one way was by knowing their names. As an outsider to the school environment I did not know the names of the learners. This situation was a significant challenge, which could have influenced my management of the learners in class and the data collection process. However, I managed to build excellent rapport with the children and their teachers by asking their names before I addressed each learner. In each class I commended both the learners and their teacher, which helped me to build trust. Most learners could speak and write in English and my anticipation that if children should have a problem with English, I would have to get a home language speaker to assist me, was unnecessary.

Recognising the vulnerability of children related to research, I conducted the research in a negotiated, ethical manner (Merriam, 1998; Johnson, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Flewitt, 2005) (see **Addendum 4** for official and legal documentation and procedures). In addition, I adhered to the following ethical principles throughout all stages of the research process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004:111-113; Flewitt, 2005):

- *voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants are competent and confident enough (Flewitt, 2005:3) to withdraw from the research at any time by choice.
- *informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the ongoing research.
- *safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents must not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children like the nine-year-olds of my case study.
- *privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents must be protected at all times.
- *trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

1.8 Outline and organization of the inquiry

This study focused on a single unit of analysis: the exploring and understanding of nine-year-old learners' experiences of democratic South Africa as child citizens. The study examined the research questions through the interpretive paradigm. By exploring the experiences of the young children of my case, I anticipated appreciation of their understandings of their democratic identity and their citizenship; an approach aligned with those of Howard and Gill (2000:357) and Smith (2005). In Chapter 1 I have given an overview of citizenship and citizenship education related to young children to contextualise this study. I did this by explaining the core concepts, the historical background of citizenship as well as the situation of citizenship education in South Africa. In Chapter 2 I present a review of existing empirical literature in the domain of citizenship education, in particular young children of South Africa. I explored the concepts and theories related to the topic of this study in order to construct a conceptual framework for justifying and understanding. In Chapter 3 I explain and justify the choice of my qualitative research design and outline the methodological strategies used to accomplish this study. This included a detailed discussion of my data collection methods and instruments as well as strategies for enhancing the validity of my investigation. Chapter 4 is a presentation of my data analysis by employing the constructivist grounded theory analysis. In this chapter I give an interpretive commentary resulting from the understanding of the self-expressed experiences of the learners. Chapter 5 offers the answers to my research questions, which I have aligned with statements and arguments made in the literature. In

Chapter 6 I provide a summary of conclusions arrived at through synthesis of the inquiry and a review of the literature. In this chapter I also offer my contribution.

As indicated by the research title, this study was set against the political context of the newly founded South African democracy and the implementation of a new national curriculum to which the Constitution is foundational. I have indicated the significance and the limitations of the study. I also invited scholars to further investigate this field by proposing possible lines of inquiry. All addenda and transcripts have been captured on a compact disc, which has been included as part of the thesis.