The Role of Hope in Enabling a Low-Income Under-Performing School in South Africa to Achieve Academic Turnaround

A Research Report

Presented to

The Graduate School of Business
University of Cape Town

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the

Masters of Business Administration Degree

By

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December 2013

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Abstract

This research paper seeks to explore whether increased levels of 'hope' serve as the core enabler in the successful turnaround of a low-income, underperforming school in South Africa. It begins by reviewing various theories of hope which have been developed over the years, and pays particular attention to the theory of hope developed by C.R. Snyder and scholars following his tradition of thought. This study is largely based on research which points to a significant positive relationship between levels of hope and academic achievement in people of all ages. As such, it considers the possibility that significant academic improvement, as found in turnaround schools in South Africa, is the result of increases in overall levels of hope in these schools. Hence, it examines the levels of hope present in a previously underperforming school which managed to turn around its matric (final year) results. This study found that while hope did indeed play a role in the academic turnaround of this school, it did not do so in the way expected. Rather than a general increase in levels of hope at the school, the study found that the turnaround owed to the presence of a high-hope leader, whose goals and vision for the school brought about a gradual increase in hope levels among the teachers and students at the school.
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Acknowledgement

Firstly, I want to thank my sister and brother-in-law for all of their support and encouragement throughout this MBA and particularly during this thesis.

I want to thank Dr. Nosakhere Griffin-El of the University of Cape Town’s Graduate School of Business for his time and valuable feedback throughout the duration of this study.

I want to thank the principal of Future Hope1 Secondary for making this research possible by taking time out of his busy schedule to share his experiences with me, and to arrange interviews with his staff and students.

Finally, I want to thank all my family for believing in me and encouraging me to apply for this MBA, which has proven to be a truly unforgettable experience.

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1 Not the school’s real name
1 Introduction

1.1.1 Research area and problem

1.1.2 Problem.

The aim of this research is to investigate the relevance of ‘hope theory’ to enabling academic turnaround in schools that are under-performing in South Africa. While research has provided substantial evidence that hope predicts a number of positive outcomes in people, this study focuses specifically on its influence on academic achievement. In particular, this paper seeks to understand whether hope is capable of spurring the significant academic turnaround witnessed in a series of underperforming schools in South Africa. As a result, it contributes to the discourse on hope as it relates to academic achievement, by investigating its potential to bring about turnaround in under-performing schools in the South African context.

Current status of education in South Africa.

Almost two decades into democracy in South Africa, the education system continues to be in a state of crisis.

A series of global reports bares testimony to this. South Africa was ranked last in the 2003 global Trends in International Mathematics and Science report (TIMS), performing below countries such as the Philippines, Botswana and Ghana. In 2006, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study report (PIRLS) revealed that 78 percent of all Grade 5 students in the country were below the level of performance described as ‘very low reading achievers’.

According to the Global Competitiveness Index of 2010/2011, South Africa ranked 125th out of 133 countries in terms of the quality of primary school education and 119th for the quality of higher2 education. In 2010, the chief economist at Econometrix, Azar Jammine, reported that as much as 60 percent of the pupils, who entered the school system twelve years previously, never finished high school (Mbeki, 2011).

These alarming statistics help to explain why the South African government now spends approximately 20% of total GDP on education. This is considerably more than any other African country where education spending contributes only as much as 5.4% of annual GDP (Mbeki, 2011). Despite this sizable education spend, the education system continues suffer.

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2 Secondary and tertiary levels
A look at the historical context of South African may help to explain many of the problems occurring in education today.

**Historical context.**

Many of the problems in the South African education system have their roots in the middle of the seventieth century, when English and Dutch settlers arrived in southern Africa.

While English setters maintained connections with their mother country, Dutch settlers lost contact with their motherland of Holland. As a result, the Dutch faced much greater “environmental pressures to learn, cope and prepare for an unknown future” (Abdi, 2003) in their newly adopted land. Without the support of their mother country, they recognized a need to defend and preserve their race (Rose, 1965). As a result, the Dutch settlers developed “an aggressive and predatory outlook to procure resources and livable space” (Abdi, 2003).

The local population of southern African, however, faced no such pressure for self-preservation, and had become accustomed to a communal way of life in the land which had already inhabited for centuries. With the local African culture being more passively orientated, and the Dutch culture, “more competitively shaped in its socio-economic and political arrangements” (Abdi, 2003), the Dutch soon embarked on a struggle for domination over the local African population.

A system of domination developed in which education played a key role in advancing the interests and development of the European settlers at the expense of the local African population. The post-settler education system was “designed to create a psychologically weak native” (Memmi, 1991). As a result, a severely unequal education system was established in which the local Black population was subjected to a substantially inferior standard of education compared with their European counterparts. According to Rose (1965), this desire to provide an inferior education to non-Whites, stemmed from a fear held by the Afrikaner (term referring to Dutch settlers) people that free economic competition with Black people would ultimately lead to their eventual overthrow by the local African majority.

This separate and unequal system of education was known as Bantu (derogatory Apartheid-era term referring to Black South Africans) education, and it formed part of a broader system of racial inequality in South African, called Apartheid³. In 1953 the Apartheid government

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³ Afrikaans term meaning separation.
passed legislation formalizing the racially segregated and unequal provision of education in the country, through the Bantu Education Act. Prior to this, the vast majority of Black children attended missionary schools, which provided a form of education based on the European model. This changed dramatically with the arrival of the Bantu Education action, which saw the government taking control of Black schooling out of the hands of the provinces and churches and placing it under the control of the central government (Murphy, 1992).

At the same time, the Christian National Education system was introduced, which promoted separate schooling for children of different racial backgrounds. The rationale given for the separate and unequal provision of education was that it would afford responsibilities and political opportunities in a way that was more appropriate to people of different racial backgrounds (Ocampo, 2004).

**Reasons given for Bantu education.**

The key architects of the Bantu Education system, Hendrik Verwoed (Prime Minster of South Africa in 1954) and Werner Eiselen, felt that there was a need for an education system which catered more effectively to the needs and interests of the Black members of society. When introducing the act in 1954, Hendrik Verwoed announced that mission schools were inadequate because they “lacked integration in local communities and were unsympathetic to the policies [of Apartheid] of the country” (Rose, 1965).

They contended that Black South Africans needed to be given a level of education that prepared the Black person for service in the White community. It was their view that providing a level of education equivalent to that of White South Africans would create the illusion among Black people that they would be accommodated into the White economy. They further argued that missionary schools were creating such illusions amongst Black youth by providing them with a level of education that was akin to the European model. “By blindly producing pupils trained on the European model, the vain hope was created among natives that they could occupy posts within the European community despite the country’s policy of Apartheid” (Rose, 1965).

Other authors argue that the key objective of Bantu Education was to promote the development of a low-skilled Black labour-force for White employers. According to Murphy (1992), Bantu education was aimed at “preparing Black children for subservient roles in society”.
In another view, Giliomee (2009) suggests that Verwoed’s promotion of the Bantu Education system formed part of a broader exercise in ‘social engineering’, which he had witnessed in the United States South, in 1927. ‘Social engineering’, as defined by the Cambridge dictionary is, “the artificial controlling or changing of the groups within society, usually according to particular political beliefs” (Cambridge University Press, 1999). Verwoed anticipated a major social conflict as a result of the continued dominance of Black South Africans by the White community. He thus sought solutions for this in social engineering, which led to his call for “a development divorced from each other” (Speech to Natives Representative Council in 1948).

The introduction of Apartheid education.

Following the De Lange Report of 1981, education in South Africa was administered by a series of national and provincial departments. Nationally, there were three own-affairs departments, one for Whites, Indians and Coloureds, (people of mixed-racial parentage) and a fourth general-affairs department catering to all races including Blacks (Sedibe, 1998). In total there were 19 education departments.

Such race-based education departments led to significant disparities in expenditure and resource provision across the different race-based public schools, with Black students receiving roughly one tenth the spending of White students (Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 2010). Consequently teachers, textbooks and other educational resources were all of an inferior standard in Black schools.

Differential spending on teachers also impacted on teacher-pupil ratios across the different racially-based schools. While White classrooms had a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:18, Indian classes had a ration of 1:24. This was followed by Coloured schools with 1:27 and at the bottom extreme were Black classrooms with a ratio of 1:39 (Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 2010). Once again, this severely impacted on the quality of education in Black schools.

Another consequence of poor education in Black schools was that the system produced far fewer qualified Black teachers compared to qualified White teachers. In 1991 approximately half of the Black teachers in primary schools lacked even high school diplomas. Furthermore, less than 20 percent of Black high-school teachers held university diplomas (Murphy, 1992).

Final school-year (Matric) pass rates provided a vivid reflection of the dismal state of
education in Black schools, with Black schools showing pass rates less than half that of White schools (Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 2010).

Apart from the physical problems, relating to resources and infrastructure, there were other education-based problems as well. According to (Sedibe, 1998), there was no “national core curriculum for all South African schools”. The curriculum was formulated by the department for White-schooling, and this curriculum was simply adapted for use by the remaining departments for all other race groups (Sedibe, 1998).

According to Abdi (2003), education was used as a tool for domination by the colonizer. This was evident in Bantu Education which was “used to entrench the superiority of Afrikaners”. Jansen (Mbeki, 2011), noted that the “Afrikaner curricula portrayed “its people’ as owning and representing everything that would enhance the self-esteem of learners” and that it served to “entrench the deliberate degradation of other representations, especially Blacks”. Hence, according to Kallaway (1985), the local African population was “not only conquered in the political sense”, but was “culturally dominated with colonial and Apartheid education serving as important agents for overall program of colonization”.

Further compounding the problem of inferior education in African schools was the issue of instructional language. While the majority of White students were taught in their mother tongue of English or Afrikaans, Black children were forced to study in a language that was foreign to them (Sedibe, 1998).

During the 1980s, education in Black schools underwent significant disruption with Black students protesting against the crude form of education they were being subjected to. Angry students increasingly took to the streets and put “liberation before education” (Murphy, 1992). This gave rise to “habits of non-learning” (Herman, 1995; Lemmer, 1993) and a lack of discipline developing in schools.

**Pre-democratic South African educational system.**

With the end of Apartheid in 1994 and the advent of democracy, the new African National Congress (ANC) government committed to overhauling the existing racially segregated education system to provide a single consistent level of education for all South African children, irrespective of their race. Thus, the previous array of nineteen race-based education departments was consolidated into a single national education department, which oversaw was responsible for overseeing nine provincial ones (Sedibe, 1998).
In its election manifesto, the new democratic government undertook to create a uniform education system with free and compulsory schooling for all children (African National Congress, 1994). This was soon followed by the South African Schools Act in 1996 which sought to align the education system with the principles enshrined in the constitution and to provide a uniform system for the organization, governance and funding of schools (Sedibe, 1998).

However, despite this strong commitment from the new ANC government, a series of significant and severe problems still remain in the education system today. A closer look at the events and conditions post 1994 may help to explain this.

**Educational situation post-1994.**

According to Jansen (Mbeki, 2011), there are a set of key problems which have led to the present crisis in education.

Firstly, he cites a lack of knowledge as being a major factor relating to the poor state of education in the majority of schools in the country. Jansen attributes this to a ‘knowledge problem’ among teachers. By knowledge, he refers to various forms of knowledge, such as knowledge of the subject matter, knowledge of teaching, knowledge of students, and knowledge about classroom organization and discipline (Mbeki, 2011). Selebalo (2012) attributes this to a severe lack of principals with leadership skills and qualified teachers. He further cites nepotism in the department of education as being a key factor in the lack of government capacity for education.

One could argue that this lack of knowledge and capacity in the current education system stems from the low numbers of qualified Black teachers produced by the Bantu education system (Murphy, 1992). This inferior system of education did not simply disappear when South Africa transitioned to democracy in 1994, but rather, continued to produce under-qualified and ill-equipped teachers well after the end of Apartheid. While the government adopted measures to address teacher education through its National Policy on Teacher Supply, Utilisation and Development (Sedibe, 1998), there remain significant deficiencies in educational capacity and teacher knowledge.

Jansen also asserts that “the majority of the schools do not enjoy the systematic routines and rituals that account for productive schools anywhere in the world” (Mbeki, 2011). He goes further to explain that “these routines establish productive teaching and learning cultures that
explain the significant gap in academic performance between the small minority of outstanding schools and the large majority of underperforming schools” (Mbeki, 2011). This lack of stability and routine in schools may be the result of ongoing disruptions in Black schools owing to the involvement of the students in the liberation struggle (Murphy, 1992).

Another significant factor, which Jansen (Mbeki, 2011) cites for problems in education today, is the substantial “bureaucratic and administrative ineptitude” present in government today. He elaborates that after 1994 much more focus was placed on policy-making rather than on planning. The new post-Apartheid government faced a mammoth task with regards to transforming education in the country when it came to power in 1994.

A series of well-intentioned policies and frameworks all serve to confirm the government’s commitment to create a more just and inclusive system of education for the country. The following policies and frameworks, introduced after 1994 serve as further evidence of this: The Education Act of 1996; The Schools Act of 1996; National Policy on Teacher Supply, Utilisation and Development; the New Qualifications Framework (NQF); Outcomes Based Education (OBE) (Sedibe, 1998). While each new policy or framework promised some new improvement on the old system of education, it also brought with it a number of challenges for which the existing members of the education system (teachers and principals) were not prepared. Jansen (Mbeki, 2011) contends that the government failed to account for the planning and capacity required for the effective implementation of all these policies (Mbeki, 2011).

Jansen (Mbeki, 2011) further highlights a severe lack of accountability amongst teachers in public schools today. While government provides substantial support in the form teacher education and training, there is little accountability on the part of teachers for their performance in schools. Jansen attributes this to “a general contempt for township (poor, informal, urban settlements) schools” (Mbeki, 2011), owing to the poor standard of education provided at such schools. Several factors could be cited as reasons for the poor attitude towards township schools.

A general “breakdown in order and authority in schools” (Murphy, 1992), resulting from extended student protests during the Apartheid liberation struggle could be one reason for the lack of a culture of learning developing at township schools. Another reason could be the absence of basic necessities (such as electricity, water, desks, textbooks and paper) at these schools owing to the low levels spending on these schools in old education system (Murphy,
Over-stretched teachers with high pupil-teacher ratios and inadequate resources could also contribute to a negative attitude amongst teachers towards these schools.

Further evidence of low teacher accountability can be seen in high levels of teacher absenteeism – approximately 20% on Mondays and Fridays (Selebalo, 2012) – and tardiness on the part of teachers. These teachers may be not be held accountable for this by their principals as they are generally protected by militant teachers’ unions (Mbeki, 2011).

These factors serve to explain many of the problems that exist in the education system today. A large majority of South African schools are severely hampered by such problems, and this study is primarily concerned with these schools. Hence, it focuses township schools, where there are significant problems of poverty, poor infrastructure, low educational capacity and inadequate resources. As a result, these schools display very poor academic performance as reflected by their dismally low matric⁴ pass rates.

1.1.3 Purpose.

The purpose of this research is to explore the role of hope in the academic turnaround of a low-income, underperforming school in South Africa.

1.1.4 Significance.

This research focuses on two particular areas of research, in order to understand how they relate to one another in the South African context. The first is the area of ‘hope’ for which there exist several studies indicating a positive relationship with academic achievement (Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, Rand, & Feldman, 2003). The second aspect of this research is concerned with school turnaround, as it relates to underperforming schools in South Africa. As such, this research adds to the discourse on hope, and academic turnaround, through exploring whether hope is able to foster academic turnaround.

Besides introducing a potential area for further research, this study may also offer new insights for educational practitioners relating to interventions aimed at achieving academic turnaround in under-performing schools. Education practitioners could take into consideration the role of hope in enabling academic turnaround and incorporate elements of hopeful-thinking and practice during the development of school intervention programs.

In addition, this research is primarily concerned with schools in the South African context where a large number of factors (as mentioned previously) contribute to very poor

⁴ Final year of school in South Africa, also known as Grade 12.
performance at schools across the country. It is hoped that this paper may provide some insights into ways in which academic turnaround could be achieved at such schools.

1.2 Research Questions and Scope

In order to answer the question of whether hope played any role in the successful turnaround of an underperforming South African school, this study will attempt to answer the following key questions.

- **How did the school manage to turn around its matric performance?**
  
  This question will provide insight into the key factors that enabled the academic turnaround of the school under study.

- **Was there any evidence of hopeful-thinking during the turnaround process?**
  
  *This question is directly related to the element of hope and its role, if any, in enabling the school to achieve its academic turnaround.*

- **What are the general levels of hope at the school now that it has achieved successful turnaround?**
  
  This final question will help to clarify whether levels of hope in the school have significantly increased, as suggested by substantial improvement in the school’s academic results.

In order to measure hopeful-thinking this study makes use of a number of questions relating to ‘hope theory’, which include questions addressing goal-setting, pathways-thinking and agency-thinking.

This research is limited to the experiences of members of a single low-income school, underperforming school that underwent academic turnaround in the Western Cape province of South African. By conducting a preliminary search, a small number of candidate schools were identified for the purpose of this study. Once a school had been chosen, a series of research participants were selected for interviews.

The scope of this research is limited to a single school that was able to achieve an academic turnaround. Hence, while the findings may or may not support the role of hope in school turnaround, these findings may not necessarily be generalizable to other underperforming, low-income schools in South African. However, for the purposes of transferability, the researcher has taken care to record any changes that occurred during the research process which could have influenced the final outcomes of this study.
1.3 Research Ethics

The following ethical issues were taken into consideration for the purposes of this study.

Before conducting any interviews or focus-groups, individual written consent was obtained from all participants or their parents/guardians if they fell below the legal age of majority, which is eighteen years of age (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Republic of South Africa, 2005). For sample consent forms, see Appendix D, Appendix E, Appendix F and Appendix G.

Individuals participated freely in the research and were not coerced into doing so. Furthermore, participants were informed clearly about the research process. The researcher also ensured that individuals were made aware of the fact failure to participate in the research would not lead to any negative consequences.

All information shared by interviewees was kept confidential. This served to protect the identity of the participants and to avoid any negative repercussions should their information become known to others within the school. Participants were informed of the confidentiality of the information they shared at the beginning of any interviews. Furthermore, the researcher took care to ensure that all information was protected and remained inaccessible to others. In addition, names of interviewees were not recorded in this paper in order to protect the identities of the participants of this study.

Another means of ensuring confidentiality was to ensure a private setting for interviews where there was sufficient privacy for interviewees to feel comfortable to share their personal experiences regarding the research topic.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Discussion

The following discussion provides insight into the theory of hope as developed by C.R. Snyder and scholars following his tradition of thought. This discussion, therefore, begins with a brief history of hope. This is followed by a discussion of the existing theories of hope. It proceeds to discuss Snyder’s theory of hope and examines the relationship between hope and academic achievement. Thereafter, it focuses on underperforming schools in South Africa. Lastly, questions whether hope played any role in the academic turnaround of an underperforming school in South Africa.
History of hope.

Historically, the view of hope has been somewhat negative. Going back to the ancient philosophers, Sophocles, Nietzsche and Plato, the common view of hope was that it was “all illusion, lacking substance” and, furthermore, that it “seduced humankind with a false promise” (Snyder, 2000).

In more recent times, the development of a new area in psychology, known as ‘positive psychology’, has led to a greatly improved attitude towards hope. While traditional psychology focused on psycho-pathology, or psychological weaknesses in people, positive psychology was more interested in those psychological strengths which led to improved health and greater wellbeing in people (Snyder, 2000).

In the 1950s and ‘60s, evidence grew in support of hope and its positive impact on psychological health and wellbeing. During this time hope was seen as follows: it was the perception of the ability to attain one’s goals (Snyder, 2000).

During the 1970s, research increasingly showed that negative thoughts and feelings correlated with poorer health, and a reduced ability to cope and to achieve medical recovery. Thereafter, in the 1970s and ‘80s, more research began to be initiated in the area of hope, and this gave rise to several varied theories on hope (Snyder, 2000).

Theories of hope.

While this paper focuses primarily on Snyder’s theory of hope – this is by no means the only theory of hope to have been developed. There are, in fact, approximately twenty-two theories of hope and fifty-four definitions of hope according to Webb (2013).

These theories and definitions characterize hope in very different ways, from being an emotion to a disposition and even a thinking process. This led Webb to argue that hope is a ‘socially mediated human capacity with varying affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions’ (Webb, 2013). As such, he regards hope as a human experience that differs based on the social context in which it occurs. Differences in context could relate to differences in culture, grouping, social class as well as the particular events and experiences affecting particular groupings at various points in time. All these differences in social context play a significant role in the way hope is experienced and perceived by people.
In light of the many varying theories of hope, Webb (2013) proposes five basic categories for theories of hope, namely that of: ‘patient hope’; ‘critical hope’; ‘sound hope’; ‘robust hope’ and ‘transformative hope’.

‘Patient hope’ refers to hope that allows human beings to continue on the journey of life, trusting in the belief that the journey holds meaning and that events in life occur for good reason. According to Danenhauer (1986) and Marcel (1962), hope is the human condition which allows human beings to progress through the journey of life toward realizing who one is meant to become. It allows people to withstand the trials and tests that are a normal part of life, all the while remaining aware of the fact that these events hold meaning in their lives. According to Marcel (1962) it engenders a ‘positive non-acceptance of life’s trials and tragedies’, since it involves responding to life’s trials and tragedies in a passive and patient way, knowing that these trials will soon pass. Failure to take action against life’s trials is not taken as a sign of acceptance, but rather, of passive resistance (Webb, 2013).

‘Critical hope’ resembles patient hope in that it refuses to define or capture an ideal future state and merely accepts that this future state will ultimately reveal itself to the human traveller during his/her life. However, unlike patient hope, it involves on-going criticism of the present and an attitude that actively and continuously questions conditions and problems of the present. Critical hope emphasizes that which is missing in the present situation in order to arrive at the better future - a utopian future (Webb, 2013).

Another theory of hope, described as ‘sound hope’ by Webb (2013), characterizes it as the perception of the likely attainment of a goal. Hence, it involves goal-directed thinking, in which the hoper feels some degree of confidence in being able to attain the goal (Lazarus 1999; Schumacher 2003). Hope of this form does not involve future goals that are unlikely to be attained, but rather, goals that are, based on the evidence, likely to be attained.

This research is primarily concerned with the form of hope as defined by Rick Snyder (2002), which is also referred to as ‘robust hope’ by Webb (2013). Snyder’s theory of hope is not reliant on evidence of likely goal attainment, and instead, goes against the evidence. It places significant emphasis on the human capacity to hope in spite of the surrounding evidence. According to Pettit, ‘hope is a positive piece of mental self-regulation which allows one to set aside evidence and assume that something is attainable’.
In another theory of hope, which Webb refers to as ‘transformative hope’, a slightly more radical characterization of hope is presented. This version of hope seeks to transform society through a collective desire of society to achieve a utopian future. In other literature, this form of hope is sometimes referred to as ‘audacious hope’. Audacious hope ‘demands that we reconnect to the collective by struggling alongside one another, sharing in victories and the pain’ (Duncan-Andrade, 2009).

**Why Snyder’s theory of hope.**

Of the many types of theories outlined above, this research is primarily concerned with Snyder’s theory of hope. This form of hope (2002) asserts that all people have the capacity to hope and that this capacity can be learnt. It highlights two basic elements - the will and the ways - for the attainment of any goal and ignores the presence of contextual factors which may undermine an individual’s capacity to hope.

Snyder’s theory has been criticized for overemphasis on the individual’s capacity to hope, at the expense of environmental factors that may negatively affect this. Webb (2013) argues that Snyder’s theory of hope could give rise to unrealistic or over-ambitious hope in individuals, and could therefore lead to frustration, disappointment and possibly, even embarrassment, when its objective is not achieved. As a result, Webb (2013) expresses concern that Snyder fails to account for ‘false hope’, an ‘overconfident probability estimate akin to wishful thinking and liable to lead to frustration, disappointment and despair’ (Polivy & Herman, 2000).

However, Snyder’s hope entails a number of strengths, as discussed below.

Unlike ‘Patient Hope’, Snyder’s theory of hope defies current circumstances and hardships, and compels the individual to seek out a better future. In this way, it resembles ‘critical hope’, as it remains critical of past and present conditions. However, it also differs from ‘critical hope’, which fails to outline or define an ideal future state, by virtue of its emphasis on goal-setting.

Snyder’s theory of hope also resembles Lazarus (1999) and Shumachers’ (2003) theory of hope which comprises clear future goal setting, together with a measure of probability that the goals are likely to be attained. Snyder’s theory, however, departs from this version of hope through its refusal to be limited to goals where there is a clear likelihood of goal-attainment. In this way, Snyder’s theory of hope affords a bolder version of hope, which is
not stifled by the surrounding evidence, but instead involves risk-taking to achieve even seemingly unattainable goals.

Thus, this research identifies with Snyder’s view of hope, as hope often comes across as irrational and unrealistic, owing to its apparent refusal to be grounded in the evidence of what is and isn’t attainable. It is this dogged version of hope which is thought to sustain human imagination, especially in times of great difficulty and hardship in human existence. It is also this form of hope which is thought to make dreams come true.

While ‘transformative hope’ (Webb, 2013) may appear to be the most powerful category of hope theory, it appears to be more relevant to a different context, than to the one present in this research. According to Gutierrez (2001), hope is ‘the driving force of a future-oriented history’ and ‘fulfils a mobilizing and liberating function’. According to Freire and Rossatto (2005), pedagogues of hope ‘cannot exist without being driven by fundamental visions of a utopian society’. These characterisations of hope appear to relate more strongly to situations involving some form of social liberation or restoration of social justice, which commonly occur during times of social oppression and injustice. Hence, this version of hope is thought to hold more relevance to a context akin to one that existed during Apartheid rule in South Africa. This form of hope draws on the collective hope of individuals to achieve a shared utopian dream, and often stems from a collective feeling of dissatisfaction with the present. It therefore, relies on some collective struggle in order to maintain momentum and to flourish.

Snyder’s theory of hope, by contrast, is not reliant on such a context. It caters for the pursuit of goals by individuals in society in its current form. Furthermore, while ‘transformative hope’ may appear more profound and far-reaching in its effects, it is also conceivable that Snyder’s theory of hope, while focusing on hope at the individual level, could eventually lead to the kind of collective change, targeted by ‘transformative hope’. As individuals strive to achieve improvements in their own lives, it leads to the collective improvement of society as a whole. Hence, Snyder’s theory of hope has the potential to achieve the same overall result as transformative hope, albeit, over a longer period of time.

Snyder’s theory of hope.

During the ‘90s, more focused research was conducted into the psychological aspect of hope, which eventually gave rise to a more comprehensive and formal theory of Hope. However, the research leading to this theory of Hope was not planned. It emerged by purely by chance, through earlier research being conducted by C.R. Snyder into ‘excuse-making’. During his
‘excuse research’ Snyder (2000) couldn’t help noticing that participants were not only attempting to distance themselves from their mistakes and failures, but were actively seeking opportunities to show off a better version of themselves. As such, they kept expressing a desire to make progress towards some positive future life event, such as a personal goal. Snyder sought an appropriate term for this phenomenon in people, and decided to call it ‘hope’.

Upon advice from a trusted friend, Snyder (2000) decided to investigate this phenomenon further. He held a series of conversations, in which he asked people to describe themselves during periods when they were engaged in hopeful thinking. During these conversations, he realised that the same three elements kept emerging. Firstly, people spoke about forming a mental picture of their goals. Then, they imagined the different ways in which they could attain these goals. And while pursuing their goals, people invariable spoke of an energy or drive to remain on course until they eventually reached their goals (Snyder, 2000).

While the original scholarly view defined hope as the perceived likelihood of attaining one’s goals, Snyder developed a more inclusive definition of hope which incorporated the two new elements which he’d observed during his conversions on hopeful-thinking. The original element of goal-setting remained a key part of the definition of hope, but was now accompanied by: 1. The ability to form mental routes to goals, called ‘pathways thinking’; 2. The energy or drive to begin and continue moving towards a goal until it is reached, called ‘agency thinking’.

In summary, Snyder argued that, “hope is the sum of perceived capabilities to produce routes to desired goals, along with the perceived motivation to use those routes” (Snyder, 2000).

Goal setting.

It is commonly assumed that all human behaviour is goal-directed (Snyder, Rand, & Sign on, 2002). Such goals can either be long-term or short-term. However, in order for a goal to occupy conscious thought for any significant length of time, it has to hold sufficient value for an individual. This ability to set goals that could be achieved at some future point is what is referred to as the goal-setting, and this represents the primary element of hopeful thinking (Snyder, 2000). It provides the all-important anchor upon which hope depends. Without a goal, hope cannot exist.
Pathways thinking.

Pathways-thinking, as explained by Snyder, involves the ability of the brain to generate mental-action-sequences (Snyder, Rand, & Signon, 2002). This allows people to form mental plans of possible routes to their goals. This capacity in humans is developed from an early age and can either lead to high hope or low hope in people. High-hope people are known to demonstrate “multiple-pathways thinking”, meaning that they are able to generate not one, but multiple pathways to any particular goal. Hence, when faced with obstacles to their goals, high-hope people find it easier to overcome the obstacles, as they are able to make use of several alternate pathways to their goals. Low-hope people, on the other hand, are only able to generate a few pathways to their goals, thus making it more difficult for them to reach their goals, especially when obstacles are encountered along the way (Snyder, 2000).

Agency thinking.

Agency-thinking is equally important to pathways-thinking, as it provides the all-important motivation required to begin and continue moving towards a goal. It becomes especially important when obstacles are encountered, as it helps a person to apply the necessary motivation to the best alternate pathway to a goal (Snyder, Rand, & Signon, 2002).

In summary, this more inclusive, three-pronged definition of hope is what has come to be known as “Hope Theory”. It involves three major elements, goal-setting, pathways and agency.

Furthermore, pathways and agency are said to be mutually reinforcing. This is because an increasing the number of potential paths to a goal, leads to a feeling of greater motivation and drive towards the goal, and, conversely, greater drive to achieve a goal, sparks new attempts to find more pathways to a goal.

One of the core premises of hope theory is that hope is not an emotion. Rather, hope is a thinking-process. As explained previously, hope involves the mental processes of goal-setting, path-finding, and self-motivation to attain one’s goals. Emotions, on the other hand, arise out of the perceived success or failure of goal-pursuit. When people encounter significant or repeated obstacles to a goal they are more likely to experience negative emotions. On the other hand, when people perceive that a goal is within reach, they are more likely to experience positive emotions. “Thus, emotions are a bi-product of goal-directed thought” (Snyder, 2000). Emotions, therefore, act as a positive or negative feedback mechanism into the overall hopeful-thinking process (Snyder, Rand, & Signon, 2002).
By virtue of hope being a thinking-process, Snyder (2000) asserts that hopeful-thinking is able to be learned. Hence, the loss of hope can be followed by its revival and restoration in people, causing them to become hopeful once more (Lopez, 2008).

Having established, according to Snyder (2000), that hope is a thinking process, the following sections explore the development and decline of hope in human beings.

*Development of hopeful-thinking in human beings.*

Research into the development of hope is essential to the understanding of those factors which serve to strengthen or weaken hopeful thinking in human beings. Such insight could prove useful in restoring hope to those who have lost it.

The first ingredients of hope emerge during infancy when a baby learns to form linkages between events that follow one another (the rudiments of pathways thinking). Between 12 and 21 months a child develops a sense of self and consequently begins to understand the role that it plays in causing certain events to take place. This marks the beginning of agency-thinking. Progressing onto the toddler stage, child discovers that he/she can initiate actions towards certain goals. This marks the onset of pathways thinking (Snyder, 2000).

Various other circumstances serve to facilitate and enhance a child’s ability to develop hopeful-thinking.

The first, and most significant of these, is the presence of a caregiver, such as a parent or guardian. The formation of a strong bond with a caregiver creates in a sense of security for a child, which fosters the growth of hope, since the caregiver plays a major role in guiding a
child in terms of the actions it needs to take (pathways) in order to reach its goals (pathways) and also provides the much-needed encouragement necessary for a child to keep making progress towards its goals.

Another significant part in the development of hopeful thinking is ‘scripting’. Scripting involves forming fixed sequences of actions to be followed under specific circumstances (Snyder, 2000). During scripting, a caregiver provides a child with a specific set of actions – such as a getting ready for bed routine - which they can follow to achieve greater order and predictability in their lives. These aid in hopeful thinking as children learn how to approach certain problems, follow pathways and overcome obstacles to their goals.

A third major element in hopeful thinking is reading. Reading bedtime stories to children plays a significant role in providing additional scripts that teach children how to learn goal-pursuit, pathways and agency thinking. Often these stories relate to heroes who have to overcome tremendous hurdles in order to achieve their goals. The ability to read is also a powerful means by which children can supplement their own scripts on how to develop new and alternate pathways to goals. Snyder reaffirms this by saying that “Children hunger for good models of hope” (Snyder, 2000).

As they grow older, children come to learn of how their own goal pursuit affects others around them. At this stage, their pathways thinking undergoes a change to take into account the interests and concerns of others around them, when planning toward their goals (Snyder, 2000).

**Loss of hope in human beings.**

As mentioned previously, hope is not a static attribute of human beings. Just as human beings are able to develop greater hope, so too is it possible for them to lose hope. This loss of hope can at times reach extreme levels where a person may feel completely bereft of hope.

Following his research into the loss of hope, Snyder et al. (2000) has proposed the following three major categories for the loss of hope in people.

The first category, is called ‘never hope’, and involves the lack of a proper caregiver in the early stages of a child’s life. This absence of a sound caregiver connection means that the child fails to achieve the feeling of security necessary to develop hopeful thinking. A child could also never learn to hope from a lack of a mentally stimulating environment during its early life (Snyder 2000). The second category relates to ‘abused hope’, wherein very early
abuse or neglect of a child sometimes negatively impacts on his/her ability to develop hopeful-thinking. The final category involves the ‘loss of hope’, whereby a child undergoes the loss of a caregiver, owing to various reasons, such as death of a parent, divorce or alternatively a change of residence. Loss of hope could also arise when parents are prone to undermining their children, often through negative comparisons with their (children’s) peers.

Having explored the different facets of hope theory, as well as the factors that lead to a growth or decline in hope, this discussion will now address the subject of hope and its relationship with academic achievement.

**Hope and academic achievement.**

A host of studies have shown strong correlations between levels of hope and academic achievement. These studies have been conducted across different age groups, ranging from children in junior-school (grades 0-7) up to college students. In all cases, they point to a significantly positive relationship between hope and academic achievement in school-going children.

One study reported that, “hope is consistently linked to attendance, and credits earned and academic achievement” (Gallup, 2009b). In another, hopeful middle-school learners were found to have better grades on core subjects than less hopeful learners (Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, & Lopez, 2009). Yet another study indicated that hopeful high-school learners had higher grade point averages than their less hopeful counterparts. Snyder, Wiklund & Cheavens (1999) also found that “hope significantly predicts high school and college academic achievement among non-athletes.

**Low-hope versus high-hope people.**

Research has shown that high hope people tend to perceive a probability of success during goal pursuit, and are therefore less prone to anxiety and stress when faced with test-taking conditions. In contrast, low hope people have been reported to show significant amounts of anxiety in test-taking situations (Lopez, 2010). Furthermore, low hope people were less inclined to use feedback from previous failures to enhance their performance in future tests (Onwuegbuzie, 1998). Snyder suggests that low hope learners may experience difficulty in coming up with alternate routes to goals when confronted with obstacles – the pathways component of hopeful thinking. When this happens, he explains that these learners tend to
become discouraged and to lose the motivation to continue pursuit of their goals. This
ultimately leads to “frustration, loss of confidence and lowered self-esteem” (Snyder, 1994).

Another feature of high hope people is that they have a strong tendency to socialise and
interact with other people. As noted by Snyder, “High hope children are social creatures, and
their ability to connect appears to come from early strong attachments to primary caregivers”
(Snyder, 2000).

These findings, among others not mentioned here, provide substantial support for a
relationship between levels of hope among school-going learners and their academic
performance. It can therefore be argued that schools showing severely low academic
performance are likely to be schools where general levels of hope amongst learners is low.

The following section will provide further insight into schools where academic achievement
is low as well as into the likely levels hope to be found in such schools.

**Underperforming and failing Schools.**

A return to the main question of this research will highlight that the fact that it is primarily
concerned with low-income, underperforming schools in South Africa. Such schools are
generally located in townships (informal housing settlement) and rural areas where poverty
and unemployment levels are high, and local resources, services and infrastructure are
severely limited. These schools commonly show low pass rates, poor literacy and numeracy
levels. In the Western Cape province of South Africa context, such schools are termed
‘underperforming schools’, while in the literature they are more commonly referred to as
‘failing schools’ (US terminology).

One of the major external causes of both failing schools in the US and underperforming
schools in South Africa, is low socio-economic status. Underperforming schools in SA tend
to be found in townships (urban and rural shanty towns) and poor rural areas, while their US
equivalents are “to be located in communities with significant concentrations of poverty (US

The concept of a failing school in the US is a relatively recent one, as is the concept of an
underperforming school in South Africa. The US version only emerged in the 1990s, when
schools began to be graded on student performance. Overall school performance was linked
to general student performance, with the result that student failure began to be linked to
school failure (Murphy & Meyers, 2008).
In the Western Cape an *underperforming school* is defined as one in which fewer than 60 percent of all grade 12 (final year) learners pass their matric (final year) exam (Grant, 2013). Learners in matric write a common national exam called the National Senior Certificate (NSC), a standardized assessment test that is held across the country in virtually all public schools. As such, the NSC exam pass rates serve as a relative measure of high-school performance in South Africa. Besides the NSC, other matric exams do exist, but these are generally limited to private and independent schools (Mouton, Luow, & Strydom, 2012).

There remains some contention around the use of the NSC exam as a measure of school performance, with some arguing that its basic pass mark of 35% fails to gain entry into university for degree-level studies. As such, they feel that while 35% constitutes a pass according to NSC rules, it is unlikely to be of much value to learners after school (Blank, 2013).

Nevertheless, this research adheres to the current definition of an underperforming school in the context of the Western Cape and uses this criterion when selecting an underperforming school for this study.

However, this research does take note of the fact that such a definition is inadequate for the purposes of identifying schools that are performing well. A school which is not designated as underperforming, may not necessarily be a school that is performing well, since this only implies that over 60% of its learners are passing. However, it does not necessarily reflect that the quality of the passes in grade 12 is of a high standard.

However, this research is not concerned with the quality of passes obtained, but merely those schools which went from having a majority of the learners failing their final year, to a majority of their learners passing.

*Low hope and underperforming schools.*

A major premise of this research is that *underperforming schools* are likely to have student populations in which general levels of hope are very low. Given substantial evidence to support the view that hope is a strong predictor of academic performance (See Hope and academic achievement.
, and the poor academic results in underperforming schools, it seems reasonable to infer that hope in these schools is likely to be low.

In addition to this, a series of other factors relating to underperforming schools could account for low levels of hope in these schools.

One of the greatest obstacles facing learners in underperforming schools in South Africa is high level of poverty in the areas in which these schools are commonly situated. High poverty levels imply that learners are faced with many additional challenges not commonly experienced by their better-off counterparts. These problems include poor school infrastructure, lack of running water and electricity, a lack of adequate learning and teaching resources, and sometimes, even inadequate nutrition. All these problems serve to increase the number and scale of obstacles faced by learners in these schools. Counsellors working with high-ability learners from poor backgrounds reported that “learners from poverty often had family responsibilities or family members who seem to resent the extra work required of their children” (Cross & Burney, 2005).

Faced with additional responsibilities, these learners are prevented from dedicating sufficient time after school to their studies. Coupled with this is the absence of role-models and family members with experience of tertiary studies (Cross & Burney, 2005). In many ways, these factors impact negatively on the ability of learners to develop pathways thinking, which is greatly aided by the presence of helpful caregivers and role-models who are able to guide and direct young people in their pursuit of their goals (Snyder, 2000).

Low overall teacher knowledge, as described by Jansen (Mbeki, 2011), also reduces the likelihood of learners gaining assistance and information relating to various career goals and interests. In addition to this, teachers lack the knowledge required to assist learners with problems occurring in their everyday lives. As a result, learners have even less opportunity to develop effective pathways thinking to overcome the many obstacles they encounter in their lives, a core part of hopeful thinking. Again, this lack of teacher knowledge owes in no small measure to the history of ‘Bantu’ education in South Africa, which, as mentioned previously, sought to provide a substantially inferior level of education to Black learners (Murphy, 1992).

Changes in the national curriculum have also played a significant role in disrupting learning in schools, with teachers going back and forth between alternative teaching approaches (OBE) (Sedibe, 1998). With the national curriculum in a state of flux, and teachers struggling...
to adapt to new methods of teaching, a large majority of schools have failed to establish regular routines and procedures, a vital component in the establishment of an effective learning environment (Mbeki, 2011). In addition, this undermines the creation of a secure, stable, and predictable environment, which is a significant pre-requisite for the development of hopeful thinking (Snyder, 2000).

Another factor severely jeopardizing hopeful thinking is the low level of teacher commitment and accountability within township and rural schools. High levels of absenteeism and tardiness on the part of teachers, means that learners have very little opportunity to develop strong connections with their teachers, and thereby, to develop positive engagement with their schools (Mbeki, 2011). As will be discussed in the next section, strong connections with teachers form a vital motivational component for learners and therefore play a major role in the development of the agency-thinking component of hopeful-thinking. Furthermore, teachers lacking commitment fail to set high expectations for their learners. This leads to the neglect of another other key element of hopeful-thinking, which is goal-setting (Snyder, 2000).

According to Hillard (2010), a number of social problems occurring in communities surrounding underperforming schools - such as low graduation rates, gang violence, drug addiction and teenage pregnancies - are all signs of a lack of hope among learners.

Given the litany of problems occurring in underperforming schools, it seems remarkable that some schools still are able to ensure the academic success of their students. Hence, the core question that this research poses is: what special quality allows these schools to transcend the significant obstacles facing them in order to demonstrate their significant academic improvement. This paper explores the possibility of a connection between levels of hope among learners at the school and the substantial improvement in academic performance at these schools. It seeks to understand whether hope presented the crucial lever by which these schools were able to overcome the overwhelming challenges they faced in order to enable improved academic turnaround for their students.

The following section draws on research from various scholars and educationists in order to understand how hope may be rebuilt in schools. These findings provide vital clues for the measurement and identification of hope within the school under study.
Re-building hope in schools.

According to Lopez (2010) two practices are necessary for growing hope in schools. The first is to create excitement about the future, through the setting of “big goals that get people excited and bring them together”. Such goals usually hold some emotional importance for people and are able to be tracked. Examples include school improvement initiatives which may initially involve only a few individuals, but could then quickly grow to include many more learners in the school as well as members of the surrounding community.

The second strategy for growing hope involves teaching learners strategies to obtain good grades and solve problems. He notes that while learners generally possess the will to pursue their goals and desires, they often lack the ways (pathways-thinking) to do so. Some strategies for improving learners’ pathways-thinking include showing them “the way to study for tests, prepare for the examination period, track grades over time, solve small interpersonal disputes, pursue career interests, interview for jobs, etc.” (Lopez, 2010).

In a study by Cross and Burney (2005), it was reported that learners living in poverty seldom had any family members with experience of tertiary education, or the knowledge of the types of jobs, careers and opportunities available outside of their personal experience. In fact, “schools were the only place that learners could learn the choices and rules of the middle class”. Hence, these learners lacked the family guidance necessary for goal-setting (envisaging future career goals) and pathways-thinking (planning pathways towards those goals). At a clear disadvantage to more well-off learners, learners from poor backgrounds require motivated and dedicated teachers to assist them in overcoming obstacles and to develop greater hope (Cross & Burney, 2005).

On the other hand, when young people do possess the pathways to their goals, especially in cases where it relates to solving problems in their own schools and communities, they should be encouraged to pursue these pathways, as Lopez (2005) believes that this is one of the most powerful ways of spreading hope.

According to Shepard et al. (2012), strong relationships between learners and teachers were key to the success of poor-performing learners at a high-school where the majority of the learners were from poor backgrounds. Learners of the school were known to be involved in gangs, violence and drug-abuse, which, according to Hillard (2010), are all symptoms of low hope. According to Cummins (2009), “Human relations lie at the heart of a schooling. The interactions that take place between learners and teachers and among learners are more
central to student success than any method of teaching literacy, or science or math”. When these poor-performing learners were able to develop meaningful relationships with their teachers, and thus, feel as if their teachers cared for them, their engagement in school increased, and with it, their overall academic performance. This emphasis on human relationships, recalls the “caregiver connection” highlighted by Snyder (2000) as being a key condition for the development of hopeful thinking amongst children. Hence, the formation of meaningful relationships with educators plays a key role in the establishment of a healthy foundation for the development of hopeful thinking in learners.

Furthermore, according to Snyder (2000), a high hope school is one in which all adults at the school assist children to develop the three key elements to hopeful thinking. He goes further to point out that, “this is accomplished most easily by adults who themselves are high in hope.” In addition, research findings indicated that “high hope is infectious”, while “low hope tends to beget low-hope” (Snyder, 1994). These findings highlight the need for high hope leaders in schools in order to foster greater hope among the students.

To conclude this discussion on the elements required to rebuild hopeful thinking in schools, Edna Olive (2005) offers a series of practical tips, which are related to the development of hopeful thinking in young people (See Appendix C).

**Turning around underperforming schools.**

“Turnaround in education is a new concept” (Murphy & Meyer, 2008). Very often, the literature speaks of ‘unusually effective schools’, which are schools that somehow succeed academically in spite low resources and high levels of poverty (Murphy & Meyer, 2008). According to the US Department of Education (2001), “research on the process of turning a low-performing school into an effective school is much less plentiful and more difficult to interpret”. In general, educational turnaround is regarded as the process by which failing schools are able to achieve dramatic improvements in academic performance. This is reaffirmed by Kowal and Hassel (2005), who assert that “in public schools, a successful turnaround produces a dramatic increase in student achievement in a limited amount of time”.

Returning to the Western Cape province of South Africa, school turnaround refers specifically to the ability of schools to bring their matric pass rates from below 60% to well above 60% in the space of a few years. Given that a limited number of schools have managed to achieve such turnaround, there is a paucity of research relating to school turnaround in the
South African context. However, some investigation has been conducted more recently, in the ‘Schools that work’ documentary series, conducted by Molly Blank (2013).

This series documents stories of 19 disadvantaged schools across the country, which has succeeded in becoming top-performers. These include schools in townships and rural areas where the local communities are poor, unemployment rates are high and often there is a lack of water and electricity (Blank, 2013). These problems are at times further compounded by a lack of support from government to improve the school infrastructure and to ensure the availability of learning materials such as textbooks (Blank, 2013).

Nevertheless, just like ‘unusually effective’ schools in the US, which face numerous problems relating to poverty and inadequate resources, these schools have succeeded in achieving significant improvements in their academic results. While many struggling schools achieve matric pass rates of approximately 30%, these schools show pass rates of between 60% and 70%, while some are achieving pass rates in excess of 90%.

While many argue that high pass rates don’t necessarily guarantee tertiary entrance, Blank (2013) believes that these schools have shown an important step on the road to greater success, and eventually university level passes for their learners. During her investigation, blank has observed a number of characteristics which she believes to be the key to the success and academic turnaround of these schools. She notes that these schools show strong leadership, discipline, high expectations of teachers and pupils, and significant emotional support for learners. Indeed, some learners have come to view the school as their home, and the teachers as parents. Another major factor in the success of these schools, is the determination shown by the pupils, who continue to push themselves and their colleagues to achieve more. Blank observed how these learners not only look to teachers for motivation, but to their fellow classmates as well as within themselves (Blank, 2013). These observations appear to highlight the presence of agency-thinking within these schools. Furthermore, the strong bond between teachers and learners also seem to indicate a strong caregiver connection for learners, thereby creating a secure environment in which to build hopeful-thinking (Snyder, 2000).

Blank further notes that principals and teachers are well aware of the power of education to improve their pupils’ lives. Thus, teachers are not only preparing their learners for academic success, but for becoming active participants in a democratic society. Given their significant
progress thus far, it appears that they are taking the right steps, and building the crucial element of hope, in order to make these goals a reality (Blank, 2013).

2.2 Conclusion

This research is primarily concerned with the reasons for the academic turnaround of low-income, underperforming schools in South Africa. In particular, using evidence from past research on the relationship between hope and academic achievement, it seeks to explore whether hope represents the underlying factor responsible for academic turnaround in these schools. In light of this, this study begins by examining hopeful-thinking in a school which underwent academic turnaround, with a view to understanding whether levels of hope correlate with the substantial improvement in matric pass rate of the school.

3 Research Methodology

This study seeks to understand the perspectives held by members of schools that underwent a turnaround in order to determine whether there were changes in hopeful thinking during the academic turnaround. At the same time it aims to explore the experiences of people during the turnaround process to ascertain whether hope played any significant role in enabling academic improvement. Given that this will involve school members sharing accounts of their personal experiences and thinking during the turnaround process, this study is more orientated towards a qualitative approach to data gathering and analysis.

The research is also deductive in approach as it questions the extent to which hope influences academic achievement and whether it is able to produce academic turnaround. This approach assumes that there is sufficient evidence to prove that hope leads to greater academic achievement. It further assumes that this phenomenon is also relevant in the context of low-income and under-performing schools. It proceeds to investigate whether academic turnaround in previously under-performing schools was as a result of increases in levels of hope in these schools.

3.1 Research Design, Data Collection Methods, Research Instruments

The research design will take the form of a case study and will focus on a single low-income, under-performing South African school which underwent academic turnaround. This school will be selected from the Western Cape for reasons of convenience for the researcher. In
order to identify likely candidate schools for the research, the researcher will approach members of the Western Cape department of education in order to recommend schools which have undergone a turnaround in the recent past (within the last five years).

The aim of this research is to further shed light on whether hope had a role to play in enabling the successful turnaround of a low-income school in the South African context. Relatively little research has been conducted to ascertain the role of hope in enabling academic turnaround in low-income, underperforming schools.

3.1.1 Methods.

The following methods will be used in order to carry out data collection for this research.

**Semi-structured interviews.**

The research entails semi-structured interviews with members of the school under study. These interviews are loosely structured and involve open-ended questions which revolve around the area of hopeful thinking and academic achievement. This will enable the researcher to maintain some degree of focus during interviews and to ensure that required information that is not forthcoming during the interview can be obtained through a series of interview prompts. By maintaining focus during interviews, the researcher hopes to avoid allowing his/her personal views from filtering into the research data as a result of gaps in information from interviews or focus-groups.

In cases where interview participants showed a willingness to share more information regarding their personal experiences, and where such information proved valuable to the research questions, these participants were engaged in more in-depth and less structured interviews, so as to further enrich the results of this study and to answer the core research questions more effectively.

For sample teacher interview questions, see Appendix A. Sample student interview questions are contained in Appendix B.

**Observations.**

A further method of data-collection which will be used is observations. This will allow the researcher to gather data that could provide useful contextual information, such as classroom settings, student-student interaction or student-teacher interaction. This will provide further
insight into behavior patterns, daily routines and relationships between individuals. The key advantage to observations would be its potential to unearth discrepancies between what school members say during interviews and what they actually do.

These observations will be recorded in detailed field notes as soon as the researcher leaves the school. This will ensure that details of observations are still fresh in mind of the researcher so that he/she is able to record them as accurately and thoroughly as possible. Care will also be taken to ensure that events are recorded in the order in which they occurred. Diagrams and maps will be used to provide further evidence to support the observations and to create a context for them. The researcher will attempt as far as possible to record events in a factual rather than a subjective manner. S/he will record his/her own feelings relating to observations in a separate file.

3.2 Sampling

This study made use of ‘random sampling’ in order improve the overall credibility of the information contained within this study. Care was taken to ensure that learners were randomly selected for interviews, so as to avoid sampling bias occurring through the selection of students based on academic merit or teacher favour. This allowed for a wide cross section of students to be interviewed, from grades 11, 11 and 12, and included students whose performance varied from poor to very good academic performance. As a result, student gender and age was also varied.

Convenience sampling was used for teacher interviews, given that teachers were preoccupied with exams and therefore not always available to be interviewed. This meant that the teachers interviewed also varied in the subjects and grades that they taught.

The entire sample size, consisting of the principal, teachers and students comprised a total of fifteen participants. Data comparisons between the different interview groups allowed for data triangulation to ensure greater credibility and dependability and confirmability of the research results.

3.3 Research Criteria

The quality of this research will be enhanced through the following criteria.
3.3.1 **Credibility.**
The credibility of this study will be enhanced through “member-check” (Tuoro University, n.d.), which will ensure that the researcher’s interpretations of events, as described by participants, are accurate. This will involve checking with research participants as to whether interpretations made by the researcher are an accurate reflection of what was said during interviews and focus groups. Shenton (2004) recommends the use of ‘triangulation’ whereby the data obtained from different research methods is compared for verification of the information provided by individual participants. Another method proposed is the use of random sampling in order to limit the effects of research bias through the selection of a particular set of research participants. Iterative questioning provides a third technique in which information provided by a participant could be verified through repeated questions relating to the same topic. This would allow the research to uncover any discrepancies in the participant responses which may reflect false information (Shenton, 2004).

3.3.2 **Reliability.**
The reliability of this study cannot be confirmed since it is uncertain whether the conditions under which this study was conducted will be identical in a future study. This study will therefore look towards satisfying the newer ‘Dependability’ criterion as described below.

3.3.3 **Dependability.**
Unlike reliability which requires that the results of the study be replicable, dependability requires that the results or conclusions drawn are reasonable and consistent with the data that was gathered (Tuoro University, n.d.). Dependability can also be reinforced through “overlapping techniques” (Shenton, 2004) such as “triangulation”, which involves comparing the findings between interviews and focus-groups to ensure that all the major issues have been covered by the research.

3.3.4 **Transferability.**
Transferability of the results of this study could be ascertained through the “rich, thick description” technique. This involves a clear and highly detailed description of the participants and setting under study so as to determine whether the research findings could be transferred to some other similar context (Tuoro University, n.d.).

3.3.5 **Confirmability.**
This refers to the extent to which findings reflect the experiences and thoughts of the research participants as opposed to those of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). Once, again,
“triangulation” provides a means to limit the amount of researcher bias filtering into the research outcomes, since it would lead to the reinforcement of the input of the participants through comparisons of their responses.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Methods

All data that is gathered during the study will be recorded via audiotape and thereafter, transcribed. The researcher will avoid using handwriting to capture information obtained during interviews and focus groups, as this could hinder the interview process and prevent accurate reporting of the information provided by participants. It will be necessary to inform participants of the use of and reasons for tape recording at the beginning of every session. However, if participants remain unsatisfied with the reasons given, the researcher will have no choice but to respect their views and will revert to handwriting to capture interview information.

Data analysis will take a ‘thematic’ approach. As such, the researcher will look across all the data that has been collected to identify common and recurring issues. These issues will be used to define broad themes. The manner in which this analysis will be conducted will be as follows:

1. All the transcripts will be read and annotations made for any preliminary observations.
2. These observations will be used to identify common themes, or summaries of what the data is actually saying. Lines will be numbered in order to make this process easier.
3. A coding scheme will be created whereby codes are used to represent each theme and sub-codes to represent sub-themes.
4. Thereafter all the data will be processed and codes assigned to the different themes as they occur. This will ensure a comprehensive analysis since all the data will be examined rather than just a few atypical cases.
5. Finally, once the data has been encoded, sections with the same code will be cut out from their transcripts and grouped into piles. This will enable the identification of patterns within the overall data. It will be necessary at this point to identify the source of each data cutting, and for this purpose, colour-coding will be used to label all the
interview and focus-group transcripts. The researcher intends to use a word-processor to facilitate this process.

6. Once a set of patterns and relationships have been identified among the different themes, the researcher will proceed to write up the research report.

3.5 Limitations

Some foreseeable limitations to this study include the following.

- School members from the period prior to the school-turnaround are no longer present at the school. This could result in insufficient data relating to hope levels at the school prior to its turnaround.
- Interview candidates having poor recall of events and experiences prior to and during school turnaround, thereby negatively affecting overall results. A possible mitigation strategy in this instance would be to embark on more focus group discussions in an attempt to allow the experiences shared by some members of the group to stimulate recall of incidents by other participants. Another method of improving recall could be to use events emerging from interviews to stimulate discussion in other interviews and/or focus groups.
- Should there be insufficient candidates volunteering for interviews and focus-groups, it could result in inadequate sample size. As a result, the researcher may resort to snowball or convenience sampling in order to increase sample size. Another possible mitigation measure could be to involve school leadership in recruiting interview candidates. However, the researcher acknowledges the potential for coercion and possible data distortion if learners are selected based on the types of responses they are likely to provide.
- A further possible limitation could be the presence of language barriers within the school at which the research will be conducted. With low-literacy at many low-income schools in South African, it is anticipated that learners may experience difficulty in communicating their feelings or experiences in a second language (English). This could be mitigated for through the use of everyday language during interview sessions and focus-groups rather than academic language or terminology relating to aspects of psychology such as ‘hope theory’.
• Fear of repercussions may prevent learners or teachers from answering questions in an honest and open manner during interviews. The researcher will therefore ensure that the reasons for the research are clearly explained to all participants at the beginning of any interviews and focus-groups so as to assured them of the confidentiality of their information.

4 Research Findings, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Research Findings

This paper seeks to understand the role of hope in enabling schools to achievement a turnaround in their matric pass rates.

The specific school selected for this study was Future Hope Secondary School, a high school in the township (poor peri-urban settlement) of Khayaletsha in Cape Town, South Africa. The reason for the choice of this school was twofold. Firstly, the school shows all the markings of a typical underperforming, low-income school. It exists in an area typically associated with such schools, such as a high level of poverty, high rates of unemployment and a host of social problems common to such communities. The second reason for the use of this school was its substantial turnaround in matric results, which rose from 46.4 percent in 2009 to 78 percent in 2011 (Grant, 2013). Not only has the school met the conditions of academic turnaround according to the Western Cape government definition (wherein, as mentioned previously, a school progresses from a matric pass rate of below 60 percent to a matric pass rate that exceeds 60 percent (Grant, 2013), but it has shown consistent improvement in its matric results ever since as given below.

As reflected by the table below, the vast improvement in matric results at the school was not owing to a drop in student numbers. On the contrary, the pass rate continued to increase over the years despite an increase in the number of students who wrote the exam in 2010 and again in 2012. As such, this paper seeks to explore the reasons behind such a vast improvement in the school’s pass rate, with particular reference to the levels of hope present within the school.

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5 Pseudonym used in place of the school’s real name.
A series of interviews were conducted with different members of the school to determine levels of hope at various levels of the school, and well as whether increases in hope had been responsible for the turnaround of the school’s matric pass rate between 2004 and 2010.

Through interviews and ongoing observations, it became apparent that Future Hope is endowed with a strong and hopeful leadership in the form of its principal of nine years (2005 to 2013), Mr. Rolihlahla Tambo⁶.

**Interview with principal, Mr. Tambo.**

When interviewed, the principal spoke at length of setting new academic targets based on the previous year’s performance. As such, he aims to set targets that are well above that of the previous year, even when there is significant skepticism from the teachers that such targets could be met. In saying that he said to his colleagues, “let’s set a target. The target is going to be 80%. Everybody at the department said, Rolihlahla, are you crazy? When we talk about improvement, are you saying we must go from 54 to 80 percent?” Tambo shows a strong tendency to focus on previous victories to drive the future success of the school. Tambo also sets high expectations of his teachers and learners, through his insistence that they aim for superior results, and not merely the basic pass mark. He continuously reminds both his teachers and learners that a passing grade is insufficient to warrant entry into universities. While he is well aware of the national minimum pass mark for Grade 12 learners, he is adamant that such results are unacceptable to him as a principal, since they hold little value for learners once they complete school. When speaking to his learners, Tambo says, “My children, do you see any half⁷ in me? If there’s no half in me, so don’t come and give me half. Go for 100. So if you fall, you fall btw 70 and 80. But if you only aim for 33, that means you are only on the border line.” Just like his own approach to studies, he encourages learners

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⁶ Pseudonym used in place of the principal’s real name.
⁷ By ‘half’ the principal is referring to a grade of 50% on a test or exam.
to aim for distinctions, so that if they happen to falter during their exams, their final grade will remain high rather than resulting in their failure.

Tambo notes that he is highly passionate about teaching, but that he is unable to spare any time for teaching on account of his significant responsibilities as a principal at the school. However, while he may be unable to teach, Tambo does his utmost to ensure that his teachers are properly equipped and highly motivated to teach their learners. This can been seen in the way he described the attitude of his teachers: “Look at Sam, he loves what he does! If I’m in the company of Changa, that woman, she’s passionate about life-sciences. So when you work with people like that, they bring passion in you. It’s like a soccer team, or cricket team. When you are able to bat at number one. You selected on merit. You deliver the goods. It’s the same with us.”

**Other signs of hope at Future Hope.**

A number of features provided immediate evidence of a more hopeful environment at Future Hope Secondary school. The first was all the students milling about the school entrance as they spoke energetically about the exam paper they had just finished. School teachers were also walking to and fro through the reception, engaging with different students and visitors in a friendly and helpful manner.

Up on the wall above the seating area in the reception, is a very large bookcase containing several large shiny trophies and plaques, which immediately pointed to the emphasis on academics at the school. This was in great contrast to the two other schools that were considered for this study, where the reception areas were bare, and had the minimum of decoration on the walls.

Another notable feature in the Future Hope reception, was a series of posters lining the entrance walls, which reflected the various activities that the students were involved in. One of these was a poster for the debating society of which the school is a member. One of the pupils in Grade 12 spoke proudly of the debating society and its achievements, with a school teacher even indicating that the school was called to represent the province in a recent debating contest.

Other indications of hope were to be found in the ongoing way in which students and teachers interacted throughout the school. Students approached teachers quite freely and were often addressed in a firm but helpful manner by the teachers. There was also much laughter and
joking, and this could possibly be ascribed to the fact that students were happy with their performance in their latest paper.

Outside visitors, such as parents or siblings of the students, were treated with equal courtesy and helped by various members of staff in a friendly and efficient manner.

**Significant challenges at Future Hope Secondary.**

However, despite the high levels of hope observed at the school, the principal does not hesitate to highlighting the many severe challenges that face township schools in South Africa. Many of these challenges relate to the previously poor standard of education provided in Black schools as a result of the Bantu Education Act of 1953(Cite). Furthermore, a number of additional social problems relating to high-levels of poverty and poor living conditions also pose significant challenges to education in such schools. As a result, the principal has had to formulate strategies and plans together with his deputy principal and senior teachers to try and overcome these challenges.

Key examples of this include a recent spate of gangsterism at the school last year (2012). In order to solve this relatively new problem at the school, the principal wasted no time in calling in the police to conduct searches of the learners. He also increased the levels of security at the school, by introducing higher fencing. Furthermore, he called in those learners who were known to be involved in the incidents of gangsterism at the school to have personal discussions with them, to understand their reasons for engaging in these kinds of behaviours, and in order to identify with them and explain the negative outcomes of such behavior.

In addition to this, Tambo decided to focus his own dissertation (as part of his Masters of Commerce in Leadership Studies) on understanding the role played by school leadership in the addressing the problem of gangsterism in schools. In this way, Mr. Tambo explored several pathways in order to find possible solutions to the problems of gangsterism at the school. In contrast, a low-hope leader may have settled for just the first measure, of contacting the police, in order to address the problem. In choosing to focus his research on the subject, he showed a desire to understand the problem better, his role as a leader in tackling the problem, in an effort to develop more effective ways (pathways) of dealing with the problem.

One of the major challenges to achieving turnaround of matric results was poor performance in Mathematics and Mathematics Literacy in Grade 12. As a result, the principal not only
appointed external teachers with the necessary skills to teach these subjects more effectively, but also called on a previous Grade 12 student, who obtained a distinction in Mathematics, to provide extra tuition to the learners after school. He cites these steps as being key to the improvement in Mathematics results in Grade 12 learners.

Tambo cited another challenge that significantly hampers his ability to improve teacher quality at the school. This is the fact that he is not allowed to dismiss any of his teachers, even if they show ongoing poor performance in their respective subjects. This goes back to the earlier mentioned problem of a lack of teacher accountability, as described by Professor Jonathan Jansen, owing to ‘militant teacher unions’ (Mbeki, 2011). In dealing with this obstacle to improving student performance in matric, Tambo implemented a new strategy of teacher rotation, in order to move the best qualified teachers to teach at matric and senior levels, and to move the less qualified, poorly-performing teachers to more junior grades at the school. He elaborated that this would give the poor-performers more time to develop their performance further, while at the same time ensure that this was not impacting students at the more critical senior levels. According to Tambo, this enabled the school to overcome a major barrier to ensuring better matric pass rates at the school.

From the very first day of arriving at Future Hope Secondary School I realised that the principal is a very busy man. He is not busy in the sense of being alone in his office, pouring over documents relating to school matters, but rather, that he is constantly interacting with different people around the school. If he isn’t talking to the school governing body head, then it is with some teacher or student about some concern or other. He is constantly moving in and out of his office, or around the school quadrangle, checking up on how lessons and various activities are running at the school.

This was confirmed by a number of students who reported that Tambo is invariably doing the rounds at the school and talking to various members of staff and students he happens to come across on the way. Furthermore, this interaction is not limited to staff and learners only, but extends to parents and other school visitors as well. On occasion there would be parents waiting in the school reception and the principal would happily engage with them to find out the reason for their visit and whether he could assist them in any way. With regards to my own visits, Tambo was invariably warm and friendly towards me, inviting me to speak with him in his office, cheerfully introducing me to various teachers and learners, and treating me no differently to anyone else at the school. I immediately felt a part of the family, just as he
described, that towards the end of my time at the school, I would begin to feel like “a part of the family”. This warm reception, and eagerness to engage with me and show me around the school was in significant contrast to another school which I approached for this study, where I received a less engaging welcome and was even treated with some degree of suspicion with regards to the my motives for my research. These observations had remained fairly consistent throughout my visits to the school, thus leading to the view that the principal at Future Hope is a highly social individual.

**Teacher findings.**

A series of interviews clearly demonstrated that teachers at Future Hope Secondary are well aware of the role of education in changing the lives of their learners. This is evidenced in the following remarks by one of the teachers interviewed: “So education is the … in terms of development. It plays a very leading role, particularly in communities that were previously disadvantaged.” And in regard to the learners, he said, “some of them, they are interested to go to highest level as far as education is concerned, university or college. And everyone is trying to improve their standard of living.” In referring to the problems the learners experience in their lives one teacher said the following to her learners, “And we tell them to, to learn to accept that the situation cannot change. The only way you can change that is through education.”

At the same time, the teachers are also well aware of and in support of the principal’s goals and targets for the school. In general they have a clear idea of what is expected of them as individuals in order to realise the collective goals of the school.

On the whole, the teachers show strong commitment to the school. According to student reports, the teachers show good attendance at school and generally report to their classes on time. One student mentioned that others learners are bunking school and claimed that this is because their teachers are not attending their classes; however, this assertion was not confirmed by any of the other interviews.

**Teacher-student relationships.**

Teachers are also reported by learners to be approachable, especially when it comes to assisting them problems relating to material covered in class. Furthermore, they are said to demonstrate a general willingness to stay behind during lunch breaks and after hours to assist learners. While teachers appeared willing and keen to assist learners with work-related problems, there was no consensus on their willingness to assist with personal issues that
learners may be experiencing in their lives. While some learners reported that relationships with teachers were limited and mostly negative in nature, as reflected in the following remarks, “‘But there are times, when I feel like, because there are not many learners who even have a relationship with their teachers. If they have a relationship, it is mostly negative and not positive.’, others spoke highly of teachers, saying they showed significant care and concern for them. This is evident in the following comments: “They teach a lot. They care about us. If you don’t understand something, you could go to them during break or after school and they would advise you.”; “I can say they are too much lovely. And they always commit themselves to us… ‘cause they are here, do not talk to each other. Chat with us, and help us every day. We must have knowledge, something new in our brains. And they caring a lot about us. They love us.”

Yet another student highlighted a change in the nature of student-teacher relationships between primary and high school, whereby he indicated that in primary school, teachers tended to initiate ties with learners, while in high school, such relationships were left to the learners to initiate with their teachers.

While the principal spoke at length and passionately about the various successes of the school over the years, the teachers were vocal about the significant and severe challenges they encounter at Future Hope Secondary. From interviews with teachers, it became evident that they, bare a very heavy burden during as educators at the school.

Severe obstacles facing the teachers.

These include several changes to curriculum over the years, for which they were not adequately qualified or trained. This was confirmed by the principal, in the following remarks: “They came with OBE\(^8\). That was a mess! We were not prepared for that. After Prof. Bengu\(^9\), they changed. Professor Kader Asmal\(^10\), “He came and changed. What became the Revised National Curriculum Statement. Then Naledi Pandor\(^11\). And they changed. Always Remember, who does this mostly affect. It affects the learners. You never get stability. You never get teachers who are well trained. You can’t say we are well-trained. Because some of us, where we graduated, you shouldn’t forget the legacy of apartheid.”

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8 Outcomes Based Education was a new education curriculum introduced in 2005
9 Minister of education from 1994 to 1999
10 Minister of education from 1999 to 2004
11 Minister of education from 2004 to 2009
According to the Principal, in 2005 the matric pass rate underwent a major slump, primarily due to the fact that many grade 11 learners who hadn’t passed were promoted to grade 12 as part of the national educational system’s policy of learner progression. The principal stated that the school “had 160 learners who did not pass grade 11, but they were pushed into grade 12.” This policy entitles the school to promote learners to the next grade irrespective of whether they’ve passed the current grade, provided that they meet a series of criteria. These include minimum-age, student co-operation and various other criteria unrelated to passing the previous grade. This represents a significant systemic problem which further increases the burden on teachers, who as a result of this policy, are required to teach learners who are often not qualified and insufficiently equipped to study at the next grade level.

Some teachers highlighted the issues of low levels of literacy and numeracy, saying that learners come to Future Hope from their hometowns in the Eastern Cape, and are frequently unable to read and write as reflected in the following teacher comments: “most of the students are coming from other schools. They are coming from the Eastern Cape. Some of them, they can’t even write and read.” As a result, teachers at Future Hope first have to focus on bringing new learners up to sufficient literacy and numeracy levels, before they are able to make any progress with the learners on the actual curriculum. Literacy and numeracy levels were mentioned previously as being at critically low levels in South Africa (See TIMS & PIRLS), and as is evident from interviews at this school, this is posing serious challenges to learners once they reach high-school.

In addition to these educational problems, a number of severe social problems further hamper teachers’ ability to educate learners at Future Hope. These include problems relating to gangsterism, alcoholism, drug-abuse, physical and sexual abuse. Teachers had the following to say with regards to these problems: “Last year, we just heard about this issue of gangsterism. You know it’s not a problem common in our township. You normally hear about it in areas like Grassy Park and that. But eh, since last year, 2011, it just blossomed “Education takes some of these children away from things like that, drugs. “;”Because you know, because most of them are evolved in risky behaviour, like drugs and alcohol. They drink publicly, in taverns.”; “Others they have been raped.” And “Others, you find that they are HIV positive”. A number of student as well as teacher interviews further highlighted the fact that many of the learners have lost their parents to due HIV-AIDs related illnesses, and are therefore either living with step parents or by themselves. They are what are commonly referred to as child-headed households South Africa. These problems significantly impact
learners who suffer poor parenting or various forms of abuse at the hands of their step- or foster-parents. One teacher stated that many learners “don’t have parents. They stay with relatives who are not looking after them. Most of them are living alone. Most of them are child-headed.” At times, learners are forced to fend for themselves and this means that they often come to school hungry and unable to concentrate on lessons.

However, in spite of these problems, teachers consistently asserted that they encourage learners to speak up about their problems so that they are able to help them to overcome them. Some reports from teachers and learners reflect an extra effort on the part of some teachers to reach out to their learners and to lend them a helping hand. The following comments reflect the extra efforts made by teachers to provide support to struggling learners.

In helping junior students to realise their full potential, a teacher had the following to say: “Like sometimes learners may be in gr 8 or 9. They come from other schools. So for two years you sit down with them. You show them that they have potential. You are like a parent to them.” Some learners lack adequate uniforms for which the teachers, “always mark those children who are suffering from school clothes. Maybe they are wearing torn jeans. They see their situations. They give them school uniforms, and shoes.” Moreover, some teachers stated that they “try to be social workers. We try to be doctors. What is wrong with you? And we refer them. We take them to clinics. Our cars are ambulances. And then we queue and queue.”

In spite of their ongoing efforts, teachers continue to bemoan the lack of adequate support for their learners. One teacher noted that there were only two school counselors for the entire district, far too few to service a population that is so fraught with problems. She explained that teachers are more than just educators, but that they often behave as ‘substitute’ parents to the learners. However, she went further to say that there was only so much they could do for the students.

Teachers also use their own lives in demonstrating to learners that there is potential to rise out of poverty. During interviews, they often spoke of informing learners that they themselves came from similar circumstances to the learners and fully appreciate the hardships they are experiencing in their lives as seen in the remarks made by one learner who said that, “teachers, they say we have to tell our stories, coz they know these things. They are coming from these things. So that they can help us.” But they continue to use this to motivate their
Learner findings.
Interviews with learners have produced mixed results with regards to hopefulness of the learners at the school. The majority of the interviews give the impression that there is greater hopefulness in the higher grades, (grades 10, 11 and 12) while very little hopefulness in the lower grades (grades 8 and 9).

Senior learners demonstrate greater hope.
When describing hope amongst the students, Future Hope’s teachers believe that the senior learners have more hope than the junior learners. In describing the commitment of the senior students, a teacher at this to say, “The big top (referring to senior learners) students, they do have hope. If you ask them to come after school, they will just be there. They will remain behind, and wait for you. We see them going home at 5 o’ clock.” Some senior learners take initiative and “go the extra mile, like forming study groups. And coming for extra tuition. And some interact with learners from other schools.”

The senior learners also demonstrate greater interest in studying further and potential careers that they could pursue. As reported by a teacher, “They will ask you all the questions about the different courses the universities are offering. They’ve love to go to UWC, UCT. To do social work, medicine. They are more serious in 10, 11 and 12.” Most of the senior learners interviewed had a fairly good idea of where they wanted to be after completing school, as reflected by the following responses: “When I’m older I want to be a doctor.”; “Next year I want to join any party, ANC Youth League. I would like to do Political Science or anything that deals with law.”; “When I finish matric, I want to study botany.” Learners also spoke of applying to different universities, as well as encouraging their peers to do so. I know I could apply anywhere in SA. I’ve applied to UWC and UCT. I pray I get into UCT. I want to be close to my family.” “I push them all to be there. I tell my classmates to make it to varsity. Just get there. We need academics in this country. We need Black academics in this country.”

Many senior learners also stressed the importance of education in order for them to realise their goals. Comments relating to education were as follows: “Without education, you have nothing. Education is the key to success. There’s nothing you can do without it.”; “But I always tell myself to focus on education…because I can’t find the money without education…in order not to become a thug or end up in jail. So I better focus on education.”;
“It is the key to succeed in life. Because we see that without a grade 12, you can’t get any job here in South African. So that’s why I want to complete education.”

Some students mentioned financial constraints as the key barrier to achieving their career goals. However, they listed a number of ways to overcome this obstacle. One students referred to bursaries, and said, “That is why I’m doing good in school, so that I can get bursaries.; like when you are in university, and you apply for a loan. Another student considered another option to obtain the necessary finances to study further, saying that, “If there is money so that I can go to school. If there’s no money, I can work so that I can go to school in the coming years.”

Teachers also emphasized Grade 12 a great deal, indicating that the school places special importance on this final year of schooling. A number of additional measures have been introduced to support learners in this final school year, such as student banding to determine student abilities, extra lessons and revision after school and on weekends to aid students to improve their grades.

**Junior learners demonstrate less hope.**

By contrast, the juniors are said to be severely lacking in hope. They also exhibit a number of signs associated with low levels of hope, such as gangsterism and drug abuse. One learner had the following to say about the juniors, “Grade 8 and 9. Those are very lost souls. They have no idea of where they want to be. There’s a lot of gangsterism”. A teacher reported that younger learners have little desire to pursue a career after school. She said, “You know the kind of students we have now, they don’t care much about being doctors or something like that. When you ask them what they want to be, after school. They say I’m just studying for my parents Even the president doesn’t have education. I’m just coming to school because of my parents, because I have to.” When asked which learners she was referring to, she said that it was, “The younger ones in grade 10. But it changes as they get older. In grade 12 they become more serious.” Another teacher spoke of the process required to get the junior learners to develop greater faith in themselves so that they could improve their academic performance. He reported that, “Sometimes, learners may be in gr 8 or 9. They come from other schools. So for two years you sit down with them. You show them that they have potential.”
Complete absence of hope.

It also came to light, during the study, that two suicides had been committed by learners in the recent past. The first student was a grade 12 male student who had no parents. His mother passed away when he was younger and his father remarried and moved away. He was left to fend for himself and took to using drugs. Teachers indicated that they were aware of his situation and that they often called on school counselors and nurses to assist such learners. However, for this student it appears as if their efforts were in vain. The other student was a sixteen-year-old female learner in grade 8. The reasons for her suicide were not known and it was said that she never approached the teachers for help with any personal problems. In reference to these suicides at the school the principal pointed out there are many social problems affecting learners at the school, and said: “You know my learners, two of them hanged themselves. Now that shows you the type of pressure that our children are in. Now if you actually decide to take your life, so you can imagine that when we take these learners into these schools, we take the whole package. With unemployment, inequality, crime, drug-abuse. All those things we carry them into the school.”

When queried about her views on hope, one teacher explained the significant difficulty of instilling hope in a community such as theirs, saying, “You know the world hope, it’s difficult to explain to a child. Where’s hope? It’s dark here. The word hope is so, it’s a difficult word to explain to a child. Because if you give somebody hope, you must provide, food, money…and you just tell them to have hope. And it ends there. It must not end there. But we try to go beyond, to be parents to these kids.” This teacher was referring to the fact that it becomes very difficult to offer hope when resources are highly scarce and opportunities greatly limited.

4.2 Research Analysis and Discussion

How did the school manage to turn around its matric pass rates?

It is clear from the findings of this study, that Future Hope was able to achieve a significant turnaround in its matric pass rates as a result of a clear vision as well as a systematic approach towards raising the performance of the students at the school. This approach involved the setting of ambitious targets by the principal, ongoing monitoring of matric performance, significant additional academic support to teachers and students, and most importantly, the sharing of a collective vision with all members of the school.
Was there any evidence of hopeful-thinking during the turnaround process?
The findings contain substantial evidence of hopeful-thinking during the turnaround process. However, this evidence of hopeful-thinking was mainly observed in the principle of the school, Mr Tambo. Moreover, the findings point to a leader who displays characteristics that are typical of high-hope individuals, and this is thought to be key to the successful turnaround of the school’s matric results.

High-hope principal.
The principal of Future Hope Secondary, Mr. Tambo, bares all the hallmarks of a high-hope individual, and leader. In addition the findings suggest that the school is undergoing a gradual change in overall levels of hope. This is because the hopeful-thinking demonstrated by the principal appears to be filtering down to the other levels of the school. This increased hopefulness even extends to the surrounding community, who are experiencing the effects of growing hope at the school. When asked how students demonstrate that they are hopeful, one teacher remarked that, “they take part in community activities. Because some of our projects are community projects. We encourage them to take part in their communities, whatever services are rendered in their communities.”

There are a number of attributes typical of high hope people that are clearly exhibited by the principal of Future Hope Secondary, Mr. Tambo.

Principal sets high expectations.
When Tambo spoke of his school’s matric pass rate, he explained that he bases the current year’s target on the previous year’s pass rate. As such, he aims to set targets that are well above that of previous years, even when there is significant skepticism from the teachers that such high targets are able to be met. In setting high targets and ambitious goals for his staff, Mr. Tambo demonstrates one of the key attributes of high-hope individuals, which is that they use previous successes to drive further success in later endeavours. Although often faced with doubt on the part of teachers and students in relation to his ambitious goals, Tambo is not dissuaded from pursuing them. Instead he pushes his staff to work harder in order to overcome the many obstacles facing them, so that they may reach their goals. In this way, Tambo promotes strong agency-thinking amongst his teachers, which represents a core of hopeful thinking.
**Setting of a common, collective goal.**

By communicating his goal of higher matric results to his teachers as well as students, the principal unites the entire school around a common, collective goal for the school. As such, both teachers and students are provided with clear goals that they have to meet in order to meet the collective goal of the school. Teachers are aware of the overall pass rates they need to achieve within their individual subjects, and students are urged to aim for results well over the minimum pass rate in order to qualify for entrance into higher education. This process greatly facilitates the goal-setting component of hopeful thinking and therefore further promotes development of hopeful thinking at the school. In uniting the school around a common goal, the principal is implementing a core strategy for rebuilding hope in schools (Lopez, 2010).

The principal also provides various forms of scripting (Snyder, 2000) to the school, by offering various pathways by which teachers and students are able to achieve their individual goals. Scripting provides a basic set of steps to follow in a given situation and, hence, aids people in creating appropriate pathways to their goals. Some of these scripts include extra tuition classes, extra revision, methods for resolving student problems, guidelines for increasing student motivation and many more. By ensuring that teachers are given substantial support, the principal enables them to develop multiple new pathways to their goals of raising student performance.

**Principal’s multiple-pathways thinking.**

Future Hope’s principal faces a number of challenges that come with schools located in townships and poor rural areas on South Africa. During his explanation of the various challenges faced by the school, Tambo showed substantial evidence of ‘multiple-pathways thinking’ (Snyder, 2000), which is cited in the literature as a key attribute of high-hope individuals. When faced with obstacles, high hope people tend to look for alternate pathways to their goals and this skill increases the overall likelihood of them attaining their goals.

In the recent flare-up of gangsterism at the school, this attribute of multiple-pathways thinking was sharply evident in the way that the principal handled the problem. He not only called in the police to identify the bad elements at the school, but also increased security at the school, attempted to engage with the troublesome students to get to the root cause of their misbehavior, and based his own research on gangsterism in schools. Such initiatives point to
a leader who is keen to tackle challenges and obstacles, in as many, wide-ranging ways as possible, and is strongly evident of *multiple-pathways thinking*.

The principals handling of poor mathematics in his school shows further evidence of *multiple-pathways thinking*. Not only does he appoint more qualified teachers to teach these subjects, but he brings in a former high-achieving math’s student to provide extra tuition to the Grade 12 learners, thereby creating an additional pathway to raise the overall mathematics results at Grade 12 level.

**Principal overcoming barriers.**
Another significant hurdle to improving grade 12 performance is the inability to dismiss teachers when their performance is poor. Once again, Tambo found an alternate pathway to raise the performance of his senior students, by creating a system of teacher rotation to shuffle teachers around so as to move the better performing teachers to the higher grades and the weaker teachers to the lower grades. While ensuring that senior grades had stronger teachers it also provided weaker performing teachers with more time to develop their skills and performance without the intense pressure that comes with teaching in the higher grades. Again, this shows evidence of effective *pathways-thinking*, since the principal was able to formulate an alternate pathway to overcome the obstacle of teacher-retention that was preventing higher performance of the senior students at the school. He had devised a strategy to make the most of a difficult situation.

**Principal is highly sociable.**
Another key feature of high-hope people is that they are highly ‘social creatures’ (Snyder, 2000). This is clearly reflected in the way Mr. Tambo constantly engages with everyone at his school, from the teachers to the security guard. Similarly, *high hope* people are said to engage frequently with other people and this greatly enhances their ability to form new pathways to their goals. This is because the knowledge and experiences they gain by interacting with others allows them to form additional pathways to their goals.

**Hope is infectious.**
Various findings of this study, support the assertion that ‘hope is infectious’ (Snyder, 2000) and that hopeful school leaders promote hopefulness throughout a school. At the same time, leaders who demonstrate low levels of hope are likely to produce less hope in their students (Snyder, 1994). In the case of Future Hope Secondary, there are clear signs of the high hope
demonstrated by principal filtering to other levels of the school, starting with the teachers and progressing to the senior students at the school.

However, this continued spread of hope through the school has failed to reach all members of Future Hope. While the senior grades (grades 10, 11 and 12) are showing strong evidence of hopeful thinking, the junior grades (grades 8 and 9) are showing evidence of low hope. The reasons for these significant variations in hope will be discussed below.

**Teachers promote hopeful-thinking.**

A series of interviews clearly demonstrated that teachers at Future Hope Secondary are well aware of the role of education in changing the lives of their learners. They also show a strong appreciation of the goals and targets that have been set by the principal for the school. Furthermore, the teachers interviewed understand their own individual roles in enabling the achievement of the collective goals of the school. As mentioned in the literature review, rebuilding hope in schools involves the key element of establishing a single, common goal that all members of the school can pursue together. This is strongly evidenced by the way that the teachers are aligned towards meeting the core targets set by the principal of the school. As the principal elaborated, just like in a 'soccer team' or 'cricket team', each teacher is seen as a member of a broader team, and he/she has to contribute towards achieving the goals of the whole team.

One key indicator of low hope in schools is tardiness and poor attendance on the part of teachers. However, on the whole, teachers were said to show good attendance and punctuality for their classes.

Teacher-student relationships also represent a significant component in the building of hope in schools. The findings on this regard were mixed. While most students reported that teachers were generally approachable and keen to assist with study-related matters, one or two reported that few students had relationships with their teachers, and that if they did, that these relationships were most likely to be negative in nature. In one finding, a student reasoned that junior students often came to high-school in anticipation of the same close relationships that they shared with their teachers in primary school. However, he noted that whereas in primary school teachers were the ones to initiate relationships, this was not the case in high-school. Learners were responsible for forging relationships with teachers. This could help to explain the relatively closer relationships that were reported by the older
students at the school, who had possibly, over time, managed to cultivate better relationships with their teachers.

While the findings do suggest that teachers make an extra effort to support those students who come to them for assistance, there are a number of educational as well as social problems that, together, present significant barriers to teachers achieving their goals of raising the results of their learners.

While the principal spoke at length and passionately about the various successes of the school over the years, the teachers were more vocal about the significant challenges they face while teaching at Future Hope. From interviews with teachers, it became evident that they bare a very heavy burden as teachers working in a township\textsuperscript{12} school.

\textit{Barriers faced by teachers.}

One of the major barriers to improved results arose with the introduction of the new OBE\textsuperscript{13} curriculum in 2005. Teachers felt ill-equipped and insufficiently prepared to educate the learners according to this new curriculum and this produced a major decline in results in the following year.

Furthermore, teachers face the challenge of teaching new students who show low literacy and numeracy levels when they arrive at Future Hope. In order to overcome these, as well as other obstacles, teachers employ a number of different pathways to improve the results of their learners. These include assigning students various additional tasks to offer them increased practice in the areas in which they are struggling, offering extra tuition to learners after school and on weekends, and arranging learners in groups to facilitate their learning.

Another key element in the rebuilding of hope, apart from establishing a common goal, is to provide students with strategies to improve their grades and overcome their daily problems (Lopez, 2010). This is because, in so doing, teachers will be providing additional \textit{pathways} to the learners to achieve their goals. In so doing, the teachers are contributing significantly to the development of hopeful thinking in the students at the school.

As mentioned previously, apart from educational obstacles, teachers are also greatly hampered by various social problems impacting learners at the school. The findings included problems typical of communities facing high levels of poverty and unemployment. These

\textsuperscript{12} Term referring to a shantytown in South Africa \\
\textsuperscript{13} Outcomes Based Education curriculum
include problems of gangsterism, drug-abuse, alcoholism, and physical and sexual abuse of the students.

According to the literature, problems such as drug-abuse and gangsterism often signal low levels of hope within a community (Hillard, 2010). However, the findings of this study reflect that these problems are more prevalent among the junior students (in grades 8 and 9) at the school.

Another major contributor to the low levels of hope among these learners is the absence of proper primary caregivers in the lives of these students. This is often due to the loss of parents, or poor parenting on the part of stepfather, stepmothers or other relatives of the students. The literature highlights the importance of primary caregivers in the lives of children in order for the development of hopeful thinking processes. These factors are in accordance with Snyder’s (2000) categories for the loss of hope in people, and may therefore help in explaining the low levels of hope shown by the younger students at Future Hope.

The categories hope loss include ‘no hope’, ‘loss of hope’ and ‘abused hope’. (Snyder, 2000). In each case, the loss of hope relates to the relationship of the child with its primary caregiver. In the case of this study, the ‘no hope’ learners would refer to those students who have never had a primary caregiver in their lives, such as a parent or guardian, and could therefore refer to learners belonging to child-headed households. Those learners who have lost a primary caregiver, such as a parent or guardian, would fall into the category of ‘loss of hope’. Finally, ‘abused hope’ refers to those learners who have experienced some form of abuse or ill-treatment at the hands of their primary caregivers, and in this case would refer to students who are not receiving proper care from their primary caregivers (Snyder, 2000).

The literature on hope theory explains the role of the primary caregiver in creating a safe, secure and stable environment for children to be able to develop hopeful thinking. The findings include substantial evidence of teachers showing the necessary care and concern in order for their students to be able to grow their hopeful thinking skills. In this way, teachers almost act as substitute caregivers to the students at Future Hope. The teachers provide support to students who are struggling with academics. They also support students in other ways, by offering them food, clothes, money and transport when they students appear to be in need of these things.
Apart from providing an environment that is conducive to hopeful thinking, teachers are assisting their students to develop the various elements of hopeful thinking, goal-setting, pathways-thinking and agency-thinking. They provide students with additional pathways to improve their grades by offering them extra tuition and revision classes. Like the principal, teachers continuously motivate their students to work harder and to achieve higher grades that would qualify them to study further. They also aid students in forming goals by focusing them on future careers and their potential to rise out of poverty.

Teachers at Future Hope also draw on their own experiences to demonstrate to students that they can achieve their goals and rise above their current living conditions. In his way, teachers are encouraging students to develop perseverance to achieve their goals, despite the many obstacles and barriers that they are be facing. In this way they are further developing the motivational component of agency-thinking in the students.

This caregiver connection offered by the teachers, combined with the various elements of hopeful thinking that they promote, could explain the higher levels of hope observed in the senior students at the school. In summary, Future Hope provides students with an environment and the opportunities to develop their hopeful-thinking and hence, their overall levels of hope. Students are encouraged to believe in themselves, and their chances of achieving their future goals,

**Complete loss of hope.**

Although hope levels appear to be growing at Future Hope, there are certain cases which would appear to indicate a complete loss of hope among students. The very recent occurrence of two suicides at the school creates the impression of very low if any hope being present in the school. The ability of a person to take his or her own life signals a complete loss of hope and could lead to the conclusion that levels of hope at Future Hope are on the are declining. However, in light of all the evidence pointing to greater hopefulness amongst the students, this study attributes these tragic events to outside forces beyond the control of the school.

While teachers make sincere and concerted efforts to help learners when they are in need, students inevitably return home to the daily community and domestic problems that come with living in conditions of high poverty. As one teacher explained, in order to provide hope to children, it needs to be followed up with concrete outcomes. And the major struggle that the school faces is that the external conditions of poverty make the ability to deliver positive outcomes immensely challenging.
Signs of hopeful-thinking.
In spite of the various signs of low hope amongst the students, there are a number of promising indications of greater hopefulness in the students interviewed for this research. On the whole, the findings show that students have a fairly good idea of where they want to be once they’ve completed school. Some intend to study further at tertiary level, while others plan to start their own businesses. This points to the existence of the goal-setting element of hopeful thinking among the students (Snyder, 2000).

Furthermore, the students showed a clear understanding of the pathways needed for them to achieve their goals. They highlighted the importance of education and working hard to achieve good results in order to qualify for entrance into tertiary institutions, and for financial assistance. While financial constraints were seen as the primary barrier, most students mentioned student loans, bursaries and part-time work as potential pathways for overcoming this barrier. They also indicated that they could easily approach teachers for guidance relating to work and careers that they could pursue following matric. In this way, students are demonstrating the pathways-thinking, which is another core element of hopeful thinking in people (Snyder, 2000).

Several additional measures to support the Grade 12 students, such as extra lessons and exam preparation, keep the higher grade students focused on their studies. This may help to explain the lower incidence of behavioral problems and poor performance in the higher grade students, as opposed to the grade students of Future Hope.

Transition of students from low to high hope.
This research proposes that the likely reason for the change in hope levels from lower grades to higher grades at Future Hope is due to the exposure of students to an environment which is substantially more conducive to hopeful thinking than the domestic environments from which the students come.

Through the strong focus on academics at the school, learners are gradually helped to increase their focus on their studies. Through the efforts of the teachers to provide additional assistance to students, students become aware of additional sources of support from alternate caregivers in the form of teachers. A series of school initiatives to help boost their results - such as extra tuition, extra lessons, additional activities and tasks - aid students in developing new pathways towards improving their grades and ultimately attaining their goals.
Unfortunately, the high levels of poverty found within townships leads to a series of social problems severely impacting the lives of people living there. And as seen in the case of the two youths at Future Hope, such problems can sometimes prove too overwhelming and can ultimately lead to suicide. In such cases, it could be said that hope has declined to such an extent that the chances of rebuilding it are virtually non-existent. Hence, it could be argued that the external environmental plays a significant role in the ability to rebuild hope in a school. In the case of these youths, it may have taken drastic measures before there was any chance of them regaining their hope.

This finding leads to one of the key criticisms of Snyder’s theory of hope, which is that it fails to account for external factors that could impact on the ability to build hope in individuals (Webb, 2010). Given that hope is a thinking process, Snyder’s theory (Snyder, 2000) asserts that hope can be learned and developed in all individuals. However, as seen in the case of Future Hope Secondary, sometimes efforts at increasing hopeful thinking amongst students, as displayed by the principal and teachers, are insufficient to restore hope that has already been lost due to external environmental factors. Sometimes external factors play a key role in the ability to rebuild and restore hope in people, and these need to be taken into account when planning strategies and initiatives to rebuild and restore hope in schools.

So, while the statement that ‘hope is infectious’ has proven true at Future Hope Secondary, it is also conditional upon the environmental factors that are present. The external environment could therefore be considered a mediating variable in the ability of hope to spread ‘infectiously’ from one individual to another.

In summary, the findings of this study significantly indicate the presence of hope in enabling academic turnaround in Future Hope Secondary School. However, hope did not envelop the entire school in order to bring about the turnaround. Instead, it was through the actions of a highly hopeful leader that the turnaround was made possible. This high-hope leader, in the form of the principal of Future Hope, created a central vision and goal for the entire school and helped to spread hope through the school by encouraging progress through creating the pathways and building agency necessary for achieving this common, collective goal.
4.2.1 Research Criteria Outcomes

Credibility.
This research employed the earlier-mentioned techniques of ‘triangulation’, random-sampling and ‘iterative questioning’ in order to maintain the credibility of the findings. As such, data obtained from the teacher interviews were compared with data from learner interviews and the principal interview. This allowed for the verification of information provided by each of these school member groups. An example of this is the case of the teacher interviews, which generally presented very positive self-reflections of the teachers and their commitment to the students. Hence, the research incorporated questions to students which related to the commitment of the teachers in order to verify the accuracy of these reports. As indicated by the findings, this strong teacher commitment was often, although not always, confirmed by the students. In another interview it was reported that learners tended to bunk classes because teachers did not attend their classes. However, through triangulation with other learner interviews, teacher attendance was not reported to be a problem at the school. Furthermore, data obtained from interviews were also compared with observations conducted during school visits to ensure that student and teacher self-reports correlated with the behaviors and attitudes that were displayed by them.

Dependability.
The dependability of the research was also increased via ‘triangulation’. This allowed for interviews to be compared so that new any information emerging from individual interviews could be further investigated in other interviews. This was to ensure that all major issues pertaining to this research were sufficiently covered. When it emerged in one interview that there were problems relating to drug-abuse, this was further explored in later interviews to verify that such a problem did indeed exist at the school. Further interviews confirmed its prevalence at the school.

Transferability.
In order to promote the transferability of this study, the process by which the research was undertaken was recorded in careful detail in order to allow for future studies to replicate this research.
Confirmability.
The confirmability of research findings was also enhanced through ‘triangulation’ so as to ensure that the findings accurately reflected the experiences and views of the research participants.

4.3 Research Limitations
The following limitations were identified as having potential impact on the results of this study.

Given that the research took place in the final stages of the schooling year there, was no opportunity to observe the school as it functions during its core phases throughout the year. The school timetable consisted of a series of exams and this meant that regular lessons were no longer taking place. As such, this study failed to verify the various self-reports provided by teachers and learners with regards to their interactions with one another during the year. Teachers generally present very positive self-reports, and these were not always confirmed by students.

Another limitation to this research was the inability to interview lower grade learners, (Grade 8 and 9) as they were not taking exams during the course of this study. Hence, all reports relating to the junior grades were obtained from senior level students and the teachers. As a result, it was not possible to verify the accuracy of those reports relating to the junior grade learners.

Finally, it is also uncertain whether teachers and/or learners were prepared prior to interviews in order to answer questions in any specific way. While the importance of a wide cross-section of learners was requested, it cannot be guaranteed that these learners were not influenced by their teachers or the principal to respond to questions in any particular way.

4.4 Research Conclusions
This research concludes that hope played a significant role in enabling the academic turnaround of the underperforming school under study. However, the turnaround in matric results at Future Hope owed more to the presence of a high-hope leader, than to an increase in overall levels of hope at the school. While there is substantial evidence of high hope amongst the schoolteachers and senior students, there is less evidence of hope at junior levels of the school. At the same time, academic achievement is also closely tied to the levels of hope
displayed by the different grades. Hence, higher grade students display better academic performance than their lower-grade counterparts.

This variation in hope levels between the senior and junior grade students is thought to be the result of the relatively greater exposure of the senior students to the hopeful environment provided by the school. By contrast, junior students have only just arrived at the school and have yet to learn the hopeful-thinking practices promoted by the principal and teachers of the school. With time, it is expected they will develop higher levels of hope, and that this will ultimately manifest as an improvement in their academic results.

The school turnaround is due in large part to the vision of a high-hope principal, who has succeeded in uniting his teachers and students around a common goal for the school. He demonstrates all the major characteristics of high hope people, and by modeling hope for those he leads, he succeeds in driving up hope levels for other members of his school. Teachers show clear evidence of hopeful-thinking as do the senior students. It still remains for this powerful enabler of academic achievement to trickle down to the junior students as well.

Despite the many barriers to success that it faces, Future Hope is succeeding in overcoming many of the challenges it faces as a township school. Not only has it pulled itself out of the ‘underperforming schools’ category, but it has continued to improve its matric pass rates ever since the year of its turnaround. Thus, Future Hope Secondary, is showing all the signs of developing into a high-hope school, and is therefore, clearly living up to its namesake of ‘Future Hope’.

5 Future Research Directions

This study presents the following possible areas for further research into hope and the turnaround of underperforming schools.

Further research could be conducted at the primary school level to determine the generalizability of this research to other school levels.

Another area for potential research could be an investigation into whether hopeful-thinking techniques could be incorporated into school leadership training in order to build more hopeful school leadership for greater academic success in schools.
A third possible research area could investigate the extent to which environmental factors impact on the ability to rebuild hope in underperforming schools.

6 References


### 7 Appendices

#### 7.1 Appendix A: Teacher Interview Questions

**Introductory Questions**

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher?
2. What do you consider to be the purpose of education?

3. What does hope mean to you?

   **Signs of Hope Questions**
   4. Can you describe some of the things students do to indicate that they have hope?

   **Goal Setting Questions**
   5. Describe some of the short-term and long-term goals of the students.

   **Agency Questions**
   6. How determined are students to achieve their goals?

   7. Why do you think the students come to school?

   **Pathways Questions**
   8. What kinds of plans do students make to achieve their goals?

   9. What are some of the ways in which students try to improve their performance in class?

   **Barriers Questions**
   10. Describe some of the obstacles students face that prevent them from achieving their goals?

   **Academic Achievement Questions**
   11. How are the students performing in their classes?

   **General Hope Questions**
   12. Are there any stories you’d like to share relating to hope at the school?

### 7.2 Appendix B: Student Interview Questions

**Introductory Questions**
1. What does hope mean to you?

2. What is the purpose of education?
**Academic Achievement Questions**
3. How would you describe your performance in school?

**Goal Setting Questions**
4. Can you describe some of your most important goals?

**Agency-Thinking Questions**
5. How determined are you to achieve these goals?

**Barrier Questions**
6. What kinds of obstacles do you feel stand between you and your goals?

**Pathways-Thinking Questions**
7. Describe any plans that you have made to achieve your goals?

8. What are some of the ways you plan to overcome any obstacles to your goals?

9. What do you do when you find yourself struggling with part of your lesson, or when you have not done as well as you would have liked in a test?

10. What sort of support or help are you getting from teachers to help you to overcome these obstacles?

**Signs of High/Low Hope in the School**
11. How would you describe the attendance of the teachers at the school?

12. Is there any difference between your last school and your experience here at Future Hope?

### 7.3 Appendix C: Strategies for Building Hope in Children

In his article titled “The Kid Underneath: Discovering Hidden Potential”, Edna C. Olive (2005) suggests the following requirements for adults to be able to discover the full potential of children. A number of these recommendations are closely related to the development of
hope, as mentioned in the literature. Strategies for restoring hope in schools, could therefore incorporate some of these suggestions as a means to effectively rebuild hope amongst students.

According to Olive (2005), adults need to:

1. Be willing to talk to young people about how they are currently feeling, and to show their belief in young people, even if they may doubt themselves.
2. Check up on them regularly and show care and concern for them (caregiver relationship).
3. Help them to find things that interest them and introduce them to new possibilities.
4. Help younger people to be more aware of themselves as well as their greatness.
5. Encourage them to have aspirations (goals-setting) which will lead to their success.
6. Encourage them to develop perseverance and to pursue their goals even when things get tough (agency-thinking).
7. Explain to them which behaviors help and which behaviors get in their way (self-inflicted barriers).
8. Involve their family to help support them, especially for when they experience challenging times.
9. Help the youth get involved in creative activities, art, music and sport. This will allow them to discover who they truly are. (potential new goals, for goal-setting)
10. Encourage some form of spirituality which will improve their overall well-being.

7.4 Appendix D: Principal Consent Form
Graduate School of Business
University of Cape Town
8 Portwood Road
Green Point
8005
Dear Principal

Re: Project - Hope Cultures in Turnaround Schools

My name is Jihaan Haffajee and I am currently an MBA student at the University of Cape Town, Graduate School of Business. I am doing a project about how young people develop greater hope in school and how it helps to improve their academic results. I would really appreciate your help with this project by allowing me to observe your classroom lessons and interactions with your learners.

I have planned to observe each classroom for the length of a lesson. I may tape-record the lesson to help me write my report. However, the observations will be confidential and the only people who listen to my recordings will be myself, my supervisor and my examiner, who will be checking my work. No-one will be named in the report.

If you are happy to take part, and to grant permission for your teachers and students to take part, I would be very grateful if you could sign the this form and return it to me.

If you would like to know more about the project, please contact me at the above address.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely

Jihaan Haffajee

I am happy to take part in the project, "Hope in turnaround schools".

- I agree that the interview can be recorded.
- I understand that the interview will be confidential.
- I agree to allow the teachers at my school to be interviewed for this project.
- I agree to allow the students at my school to be interviewed for this project.

Signed: ........................................

Full Name: ........................................

7.5 Appendix E: Teacher Consent Form

Graduate School of Business
University of Cape Town
8 Portswood Road
Green Point
8005
Dear Teacher

Re: Project - Hope cultures in Turnaround Schools

My name is Jihaan Haffajee and I am currently an MBA student at the University of Cape Town, Graduate School of Business. I am doing a project about how young people develop greater hope in school and how it helps to improve their academic results. I would really appreciate your help with this project by allowing me to observe your classroom lessons and interactions with your learners.

I have planned to observe each classroom for the length of a lesson. I may tape-record the lesson and to help me write my report. However, the observations will be confidential and the only people who listen to my recordings will be myself, my supervisor and my examiner, who will be checking my work. No-one will be named in the report.

If you are happy to take part, I would be very grateful if you could sign the attached form and return it to school.

If you would like to know more about the project, please contact me at the above address (to be inserted).

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely
Jihaan Haffajee

I am happy take part in the project, "Hope in turnaround schools".

- I agree that the interview can be recorded.
- I understand that the interview will be confidential.
- I understand that I can stop the interview at any time.
- I understand that if I do not want to take part, it will not affect me if help is needed in the future.

Signed…………………………………………Teacher
Please print your name……………………………………

7.6 Appendix F: Student Consent Form

Graduate School of Business
University of Cape Town
8 Portswood Road
Green Point
Dear Student

Re: Project - Hope in Turnaround Schools?

My name is Jihaan Haffajee and I am a business student at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, and I am doing a project for my course.

I would really like to hear about times when you felt more or less hopeful at your school and why you felt this way.

Our talk will be private. I will not tell your teachers or your family what you say. You can ask for the interview to stop at any time. It will take no longer than one hour. You can say yes or no. It is up to you whether you take part. If you would like to talk to me, I would be very grateful if you could sign the attached form and return it to school.

If you would like to know more about the project, please contact either me or the principle at the school at the above address (to be inserted).

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely

Jihaan Haffajee

If I talk to Jihaan about her project “Hope in Turnaround Schools”

- I understand that the interview will be tape-recorded.
- I understand that the interview will be private.
- I understand that I can stop the interview at any time.

If you would like to take part in the project, please circle ‘Yes’ below. Otherwise circle ‘No’.

I have decided that I would like to talk to Jihaan about her project on Hope in Turnaround Schools.

Yes     No

Signed:   _____________________________

Please print your name:   _____________________________

7.7 Appendix G: Parental Consent Form

Graduate School of Business

University of Cape Town
Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Project - Hope in Turnaround Schools

My name is Jihaan Haffajee and I am currently an MBA student at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business. I am doing a project about how young people develop greater hope in school and how it helps to improve their academic performance. I would really appreciate your help with this project by allowing me to talk to your son or daughter about how his/her experiences at school.

I have planned to talk to each pupil who takes part for up to an hour, depending on each individual. I will tape record the interview to help me remember what they have said and to help me write a report. However, the interviews will be confidential and the only people who listen to the interview will be myself, my supervisor and my examiner, who will be checking my work. No-one will be named in the report.

If you are happy for your son or daughter to take part, I would be very grateful if you could sign the attached form and return it to school.

If you would like to know more about the project, please contact me on 083 391 6243, or by email on: HFFJIH001@gsb.uct.ac.za.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely

Jihaan Haffajee

I am happy to let my son/daughter (print name) ……………………………………………..
take part in the project relating to hope in turnaround schools.

- I agree that the interview can be recorded.
• I understand that the interview will be confidential.
• I understand that my son/daughter can stop the interview at any time.
• I understand that if my son/daughter does not want to take part, it will not affect him/her if help is needed in the future.

Signed…………………………………………Parent/Guardian

Please print your name…………………………………………

Please return this form to school as soon as possible

7.8 Appendix H: Why was this study important to me?

Ever since high-school I have held a keen interest in education and the ways in which it could be improved in order to bring out the best in people. In my final years of high-school, I
realized that my school had put in significant additional effort, outside of core schooling time, to ensure that the students were able to obtain some of the top marks in the country.

However, I also realized that this school was able to achieve these results in spite of a lack of high-quality resources that were present in my former school, which was privately funded. There was something other than physical school infrastructure and resources that enabled this relatively poor school to consistently produce exceptional results over the years. I was intrigued by this and hence, decided to focus my report on discovering the reasons behind this superior performance.

In the years after I completed school, I maintained a strong interest in education, and more specifically on the factors that lead to greater motivation in school pupils. I looked back on my own personal experiences in high-school to try to identify the times when I felt most energized and motivated. On most occasions I felt my motivation levels to be at their highest when I felt inspired to create something new or different. I realized that I was especially motivated when the work involved varied from the daily monotony of taught lessons, and included varied activities and exercises that stimulate my interest.

I also noticed how these exercises prompted similar responses from my classmates, who showed equal keenness to give off their best and produce outcomes that were of a high standard. This lead to my interest in the ways it would be possible to motivate students to perform better in school.

At the same time, I grew increasingly concerned with the problems being experienced in education my country. I noted that these problems were largely limited to the poorer, under-resourced and ill-equipped schools found in townships and rural parts of the country. Daily reports in the newspapers and on television served to heighten these concerns, and this merely reinforced my interest in ways to improve school performance.

Given that a majority of the schools exhibiting poor performance faced a number of problems closely related to poverty, I was forced to look back on my high-school experience, which also involved a relatively poor school. In spite of a lack of resources and limited infrastructure, my former school still managed to produce consistently high matric results. I began to look for reasons for this, and more especially, for the special ingredient that made such exceptional performance possible.
While I couldn’t quite compare my own high-school experience to the experience of students in township schools, I noted that there could still be elements that were common to both. Unlike my former school, township schools suffer from an almost extreme lack of resources, infrastructure and educational support, and this got me to question whether it was possible to overcome such severe obstacles in order to obtain decent education.

When speaking to my supervisor, I was forced to articulate these feelings more thoroughly and this lead to the realization that my core interest was in how to promote greater hope amongst students who are faced with extreme challenges to their everyday educational experience. I grew increasingly interested in the potential to use hope as a means to develop student motivation and potential so as to overcome the problems the face and perform better in school.

I’m deeply grateful for having chosen this topic as it has significantly increased my knowledge and understanding of the problems in education in South Africa. At the same time, it has greatly broadened my understanding of hope, as a means to enable students who are underperforming to realise their true potential. I’ve also come to appreciate the power of hopeful thinking and high-hope people in fostering large-scale change in a schooling environment (and potentially beyond).

While the history of my country has created immense problems in our education system, I’ve come to realise that these problems are not insurmountable. As seen in the school in this study, as well as other studies in academic literature, I’ve come to see how the presence and development of hope, offers a clear means of overcoming the problems in our education system, and of enabling greater academic achievement for our schools.

This study strongly supported the view that education is generally considered to be the key to a better life, especially when it involves an emergence out of poverty. It further highlights the crucial element of hope in making this promise of education a reality for many people in my country.

7.9 Appendix I: Interview Transcripts
I: [background]

I: Why did you decide to become a teacher.

T: I like it. There are stuff that I love. I like the career. But initially it was about getting, it was not difficult for you to get a job. But I ended up loving the career.

I: What is the purpose of education?

T: Struggles to answer.

I: Can you tell me with their goals of the students are.

T: You know the kind of students we have now, they don’t care much about being doctors or something like that. When you ask them what they want to be, after school. They say I’m just studying for my parents. Even the president doesn’t have education. I’m just coming to school because of my parents, because I have to.

I: Is the all the students or the younger ones.

T: The younger ones in grade 10. But it changes as they get older. In grade 12 they become more serious.

I: Why do you say that?

T: Because they study very hard. They will ask you all the questions about the different courses the universities are offering. They’ve love to go to you UWC, UCT. To do social work, medicine. They are more serious in grade 10,11 and 12.

I: Can you describe the things that students do that shows that they are hopeful.
T: Yes, they do have hope, but not all of them. The big top students, they do have hope. If you ask them to come after school, they will just be there. They will remain behind, and wait for you. We see them going home at 5 o’ clock.

I: And those that don’t have hope?

T: I should think, once there was somebody who did very well. Those who don’t have hope, it’s because of the problems they have hope. Others they have been raped. Others the parents don’t look after them. You can see they don’t care. They look troubled. Others, you find that they are HIV positive. There are a lot of social problems, that make them lose little bit of hope.

Although we are trying by all means. Even yesterday the social workers, we call them, to come to the classes, where two students committed suicide. Sometimes we call them. Then they meet them, and talk to them. It helps the students a little bit.

I: Do the students talk about their problems to their teachers.

S: Some of them, but most of them, I don’t know. Maybe they are scared of us. I don’t know why. We are like family to them.

I: And how are the students performing.

S: They perform very well. Especially the commerce department, those doing business studies and accounting. Especially in grade 11 and 12. We’ve got a problem in grade 10 and 9.

I:

S: Especially grade 10. Because most of the students are coming from other schools. They are coming from the eastern cape. Some of them, they can’t even write and read. Especially those form the EC.

I: How do teachers deal with that, the students who can’t read and write.

S: The teachers are always complaining about that. We don’t have much time to deal with these students individually. But teachers are trying. Because there was one learner who couldn’t read and write in grade 10. He repeated grade 10. But they managed to pass grade 12.
I: Why did that change?

S: I think the teachers are working very hard.

I: What do teachers do that helps the students to pass and perform well.

S: Can I call somebody to help me with that, please.

I: [another teacher enters the room]

[Interviewer repeats the question to the new teacher.]

S2: There is more emphasis in grade 12. And in grade 12 there is individual attention. You whole teaching revolves around

And so, as soon as they come to class, you will have done proper banding, and the type of questions they must get used to. They are prepared. In gr 12, there is focus.

[new teacher leaves the room]

I: You know another thing, about the government now, because those students if they are not writing exams, they usually go home. But now, you see them, stay here. It makes them want to be here at school. Ja.

I: How is there attendance at school.

S: The attendance is 90%. They come here because they know that they will eat food.

I: Do they have hope for the future?

S: Yes, in gr 12, they do. But in grade 9 and 10. No. There’s huge problems there. I really don’t know. They still young. Maybe it’s because of that.

I: I think that’s about it. Thank you very much.
Interview Transcript: Teacher 2

I: Interviewer
T: Teacher

Interview: Male Teacher

I: Why did you decide to become a teacher.

T: It was actually a passion. But initially, I was interested in broadcasting. Radio Xhosa. When I heard that some of the presenters work as teachers. That’s what attracted me to teaching. The moment I entered the system, I….

I: And what is the purpose of education?

T: Its about enlightening our community. Trying to build responsible citizens. Because without education the country, cannot even grow. So education is the … in terms of development. It plays a very leading role, particularly in communities that were previously disadvantaged. So that globally we can be recognised. But education plays a very significant role.

You mentioned that there are some problems, like students involved in crime.

We just think of the learners who don’t have any education at all. There is high criminal acts, like gangsterism. Education takes some of these children away from things like that, drugs.

Last year, we just heard about this issue of gangsterism. You know it’s not a problem common in our township. You normally hear about it in areas like Grassy Park and that. But eh, since last year, 2011, it just blossomed. As educators in our school, we try our best. At least certain members are showing discipline. At least it’s not like other schools.

Ya, but at least it is a little bit calm this year. Last year, the learners were attacking teachers. But this year, we try to normalise these learners.

I:

T: Some were called, Some were suspended. With parents, we discussed the issue.
I: What is your definition of hope?

T: I can define it as: sometimes if you don’t have hope, you might not achieve. But if you have hope, against all odds,

Like sometimes learners may be in gr 8 or 9. They come from other schools. So for two years you sit down with them. You show them that they have potential. You are like a parent to them. Some of them arrive very early. They can’t even write. So there is action amongst our stuff.

Some moved from other schools, because they were not right there.

Because what we instilled in them, is that you know, you have the potential.

I: Can you describe some of the things that students do, that makes you think that they are hopeful.

T: Some of them, in terms of sports, they excel in .. soccer. In woman…they…

Sometimes, a particular learner is not excelling in academics, but in sports, they are doing well. And that influences their performance in academics.

Some, they play some leadership roles, like being part of the LRC.

I: Can you tell me about some of the long and short term goals that the students talk about.

T: [takes a quick call, Sam indicates that he’s doing revision with a class in the afternoon]

I: Repeats the question.

T: Long term goals, is that some of them want to know how to change where they come from. Because some of them are the only ones who have the opportunity to be at the level of grade 12. As well, in short term, they talk about, they want to make school

Each of the motivational things we do, are done with the results of the previous year. We set par on the high level. At least this year, we said, we hope you will make us proud. And they say, we will try our best to overcome what was achieved by our previous students.

I: And do they talk about any goals after school, after matriculating.

T: Yes, some of the them, they are interested to go to highest level as far as education is concerned, university or college. And everyone is trying to improve their standard of living.
As well as hope. Some of them, by looking at their background. They have financial constraints. So it’s not possible for them to go beyond gr 12. Others they have that high achiever, so they will go further., so they can do proud, their parents.

I: How do students plan to achieve these goals?

T: Some of them go the extra mile, like forming study groups. And coming for extra tuition. And some interact with learners from other schools. On the other side of the railway line. So that they can get all…

I: What are the some of the problems that the students face when they are pursuing these goals.

T: Some of them, some don’t come to school. They have been confronted by thugs who try to rob them. Some of them, they don’t have the space to further their studies. Whereby in the night,

The noise, there is a tavern next to his/her house. Sometimes even in our school, in terms of resources. Sometimes there is a lot of vandalism and burglaries. Because our computers have been stolen. So we don’t have computers any more. Even when we try to reinforce security, they use ropes. It’s like a prison.

Some of them, they are living with stepfather and stepmother.

I: how do they get around these problems. Are they able to get around them?

T: Some of them, some of them. They do. But some, but it’s through interaction, we try to give them some guidance. Some educators, try to speak to various families of these learners, to iron out the problems. But some, they end up not coming to school.

I: So the teachers actually drive out to

T: Yes, even when learners don’t talk about their issues. The teachers and counsellors notice that there is change in the pattern of the learner. So they make a follow-up with the parents to say, now we are experience this problem with this learners. Only then we learn about the problems, such as a stepfather or stepmother.

I: Do the parents come when they are called.
T: They don’t come when we wish. Maybe because the majority are working, and they are not staying close to the school. I’m not happy, because they are not attending meetings as we wish. Sometimes, 60 percent. Now we call parents on an individual basis.

I: How are the students performing in your classes?

T: Some of them are doing well. Some are struggling. But we are trying our utmost best to help those that are struggling. We give them extra tasks. I would say, general hours are good.

At grade 8, it’s not an issue, its alarming! The challenge of discipline.

I: with the older students, how motivated are they to perform well.

T: I think they are motivated, because what we normally do is, is call the former students to come to speak to them, to motivate them. Also, if you look at the history of that particular learner, their performance. Some of them look at that as their role-model and want to model that.

Amongst themselves there is some sort of competition. They compete amongst themselves. In March what we usually do, is give them some prizes. A certificate, for term 1, term 2. So, those are awards, it becomes a wake-up call for those who are relaxed. It becomes serious. They look at their colleagues…

I: More about the role-models.

T: [Teacher says he needs to go, as he has to give revision]

T: Using former students, those that at the workplace. Some, they are managers. Also, some of the prominent people in our community. It’s much better to use someone who is relevant to their situation. Not someone who talks about issues that learners are not familiar with.

It’s not always money that talks. You can study, only if you perform. We called one of our learners from last year. She’s studying at UCT. She explained how she arrive at our schools, and how she got to UCT, without having any money, but because she achieved good marks academically.

I: Thank you very much. That was an excellent interview.
Interview Transcript: Teacher 3

| I:      | Interviewer       |
| T:      | Teacher           |

Interview: Female Teacher

I: Can you tell me why you decided to become a teacher.

T: [Laughs] Its passion. Because I wanted to make a difference in my community. Because you know, there’s no educated individuals. So I wanted to make a difference.

I: What is the purpose of education?

T: The purpose is to make a difference. Is to improve the standard of living and the quality of lives. Is to promote people’s standards of living.

I: My research is about hope. So I’m trying to understand why the school was able to improve so much over the years. And the role of hope.

T: So you’ve heard the school is improving. I would say, our logo says, ‘rise for you have hope’

I: really.

T: What a coincidence. Our name is Future Hope. Means that, we’ve got hope. WE want to light the light in this community. Our student have hope, because they believe in us. That one day they will be better citizens of tomorrow. Because we train them to become better citizens, and to make a meaningful contribution in this community. So our school, we teach in very, very hard conditions, difficult conditions. The rate of unemployment is so huge, poverty is so high, crime and gangsterism. But because we instil hope in our kids, our kids manage to prosper. And in, as years go by, results improve, because we usually call the previous students to give them hope and to improve. We don’t want to drop the standard.

I: What are some of the things that students do, that indicates that they are hopeful.
T: Um, they take part in community activities. Because some of our projects are community projects. WE send them to community to find out how they do it. Repeat the question please.

WE encourage them to take part in their communities, whatever services are rendered in their communities. And we have different sporting, activities. Debate societies, and they usually come first. And at one stage our kids were sent to Johannesburg to represent western cape. So we try to expose them so much, although the lack of resources, but we try our best. We don’t have everything. But with the little we have, we are trying.

I: Can you describe some of the goals the students talk about.

T: Most of them want to improve their family’s standards of living, because they come from poverty-stricken families. And they want to change the way young people are living. Because they stay here and they have no recreational facilities. But they’ve managed to, to be successful. So, ja, they are trying their best to be someone one day. So they are goals are common. I want to take my mother out of poverty. There is no one working at home. So I want to make a difference to my community, to show other young kids how they should behave.

I:

T: Because you know, because most of them are evolved in risky behaviour. Like drugs and alcohol. They drink publicly, in taverns. Some of them they do that even here at school. On Monday this kid didn’t have enough sleep, or usually they sleep in class. But we motivate them as teachers. We talk to them. We try our best. And their parents always come here to complain about them. They trust us so much. Because we can penetrate and talk to them. They listen to us.

I: Do they believe that they can achieve their goals.

T: They do. There’s a lesson in gr 11 that talks about goals. The SMART process of goals. S means specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time. They do. They know that. Because we teach them here at school how to achieve your goals. And if you do not believe in yourself, you will not achieve your goals. You must believe in yourself. And you must dream. Goals start with dreams. You must dream while you are still in gr 8 or 9, that one day you will be somebody. Goals do come true. Because you believe in yourself. So that is what we instil in them.
I: How do they plan towards these goals.

T: It starts with attending school every day. If you don’t do your work, you won’t…. We teach them that. There’s short term goals. To pass they level that they are in. Medium and long term goals. You can’t achieve your long-term goals without starting with your short and medium.

I: What are some of the problems the children face that prevents them from achieving their goals.

T: Where do I start. A lot! Recently, we are sitting at two children, who hanged themselves. A 16 year old girl. Gr8. And 23 or 24 year old, in gr 12. He hung himself. They’ve got a lot of problems. As I’ve alluded, there’s great unemployment. Their parents are not working. So those things disturb them in class. Poor parenting also plays a big role here. They stay most of the. They don’t have parents. They stay with relatives who are not looking after them. Most of them are living alone. Most of them are child-headed. Then we provide them with nutrition that we are given as education dept. Because we’ve got overcrowded classrooms. So if you are a very observant teacher, because these two never talked to us. At least the matric…we knew his problem. He was living alone. His mother passed away. His father got remarried. So he got into drugs. So he hung himself.

You know the make us to feel guilty, as if we are not doing enough. But we are trying our best. We call the school nurses for counseling, and for referrals in everything. But even their hands are also tied. If the child has reached a certain age, they can’t cater for them. Until 24/25. So that child is out of the system for help.

I: What is the maximum age that they can..

T: WE can admit, The social workers. Maybe up to 18/19/20, perhaps at times. So they are facing a lot of problems, a lot of challenges in their way. Last year we were 86%. That was not easy.

I: This student, the teachers knew about the problems. Is that because he came and spoke about it to the teachers?

T: Hmm, he came and spoke about it. But he becomes careless. He doesn’t come to school. And Mabetha, when last did you see him. But he just vanished. He never finished

14 Not student’s real name.
the trial exams. Ms Naledi\textsuperscript{15}, when she heard Mabetha\textsuperscript{16} hurt himself, she talked to me. When we found out that the first paper, he was not here. So we couldn’t go and check for him. So he must have been frustrated that he could not complete matric, and decided to take his life.

I: Did he show signs during the year.

T: Ja, he showed signs. And we called the nurses to talk to him. It’s painful. I don’t like to talk about it.

I: Some of the problems that that students are facing, how do they overcome them.

T: You know in grade 12, the first assignment is about stressors. The first part is to identify your stressors. So we encourage them to be genuine about that. And coping mechanisms. That assignment is not done by lower grades. So for me, I can easily pick up those that have problems. And I encourage them to, come to me, whenever you feel down or… and that is very much … we haven’t been trained for that. We’ve been trained for the curriculum. And we’ve got big numbers. But we try to be as diverse as we can. You know. And that’s how we pick them. And we tell them to, to learn to accept that the situation cannot change. The only way you can change that is through education. Through perseverance… so they listen. Some they don’t. But most of them, we manage to win them.

T: Because if the education department can provide some facilities, like health-workers to be in schools. That’s what we’ve been crying for all these years. I’ve been here for 20 years. That’s what we’ve asked for, counsellors in schools, like white people, We’ve got only two social workers for the whole district. They cannot do everything. They cannot conquer everything. So we try to be social workers. We try to be doctors. What is wrong with you? And refer. We take them to clinics. Our cars are ambulances. And then we queue and queue.

I: How many of the students make it all the way to grade 12. A majority or?

T: The majority. The education system allows them to pass. You know, the progression conditions. Age and if the student, you know the problem, if the student co-operates. So it’s not much that stays behind.

And drop outs:

T: Ja, just 2%. Not that much.

\textsuperscript{15} Not the student’s real name
I: Is there anything else that would describe student hope, stories or.

T: You know the world hope, it’s difficult to explain to a child. Where’s hope? Its dark here. The word hope is so it’s a difficult word to explain to a child. Because if you give somebody hope, you must provide, food, money.. and you just tell them to have hope. And it ends there. It must not end there. But we try to go beyond, to be parents to these kids. It’s difficult. It’s pathetic, it’s a shame, if you can teach in this community. I’m sure if you were me, you would have resigned a long time ago.

I: So why are you still here.

T: I do want to go, but when I think about these kids, most of us are about to retire. We always say, oh these young teachers. They won’t have the that we have. It’s a pity that we have to leave. Because we have done so much, and we have to leave. I’ve got 3 years. Because these young kids that are entering the education system, won’t cope.

There’s a lot of strain in teaching. Old teachers are better than new teachers. These young teachers don’t have perseverance. I’m not saying they are not enthusiastic. But it doesn’t end there. You have to love them, you have to be there to give them hope. You have to be empathic. You have to put yourself in their situation.

We are giving the new teachers support. When the come here, they realise teaching is no child’s play. Because we have huge numbers. The ratio is 60: 1, 55: 1. 55 kids to one teacher. That’s unfair.

Is it in all the classes.

It is only this year that the huge classes may be 50. The largest class has 52. Most of them are 38, 45. WE don’t have twenty-something.

And as I’m sitting here. I’ve got ten classes. I’m teaching isiXhosa and life-orientation. Three papers, and two classes. 8 classes in l0. Grade 12s and grade 11s.

T: Are we finished mam.

I: Yes, I think we are. You’ve been very helpful. You’ve answered all the questions.
Interview Transcript: Student 1

I: Interviewer
S: Student

Interview: Female in grade 10

I: What does hope mean to you?
S: Hope: It means, my tomorrow. It gives me, what can I say. Hope, it means inspiration. Everybody must have hope for tomorrow.

I: What is the purpose of education.
S: Without education, you have nothing. Education is the key to success. There’s nothing you can do without it.

I: Can you tell me about some of your future goals.
S: When I finish matric, I want to study botany. To do with plans. But I don’t know what I’m going to do, because my mother is not working. But I’m going to work hard.

I: Whey botany?
S: I like plants.

I: How determined are you to become a botanist.
S: Ok, let me start by saying, as a child, when I was in grade 7. We were doing something, where you had to research about your career. I came across this career on the internet. I became interested in it. Because many black young women, does not like that particular thing. They don’t do it. So I just became interested and wanted to do it. So, I looked which subjects I need to do to be a botanist. Life Science, Physics and Maths.

I: What are some of the problems that might prevent you from achieving this goal.
S: Money. It’s only money. When it comes to school, I do my best. That is why I’m doing good in school, so that I can get bursaries.

I: Have you thought of any other ways, besides bursaries, of achieving.
S: A gap year. Or a school loan, like when you are in university, and you apply for a loan. Student loan.

What sort of help and support do you get towards achieving these goals.

S: Extra classes for maths and science. So I attend every Saturday. And every day, when I go to bed, I look at my books.

I: And other support.

S: In school not everyone wants to be a botanist. So my career is different… so I would do my own research.

I: How would you describe your teachers attendance.

S: They teach a lot. They care about us. If you don’t understand something, you could go to them during break or after school and they would advise you.

I: And punctuality?

S: They arrive, they are good. Not rude.

I: If you have any other problems, at home or in your personal life.

S: I don’t like discussing my personal life. As you can see me, I’m very shy.

I: If you struggling with something in class, with a particular subject or concept. How helpful are the teachers in explaining it to you.

S: If I don’t understand it, I go to my teacher again. If I still don’t understand it, I go to another teacher. And if I still don’t understand, I will go to another learner and see if she understands what the teacher was saying.

I: Before Future Hope you went to another school. Is there anything different about the two schools?

S: I went to Kingston\textsuperscript{17}. There in Kingston, there, the parents have money. Here, people don’t have money. But here, they have courage. They want to do more at school, So they can become something. There in Kingston, they are just studying so they can pass. But there, the

\textsuperscript{17} Not the school’s real name
matric results are increasing, but there, they are not doing very good. That is why I came here, because I see they are doing well.

I: What type of school is Kingston.

S: It’s a private school in Woodstock.
Interview Transcript: Student 2

I: Interviewer
S: Student

Interview: Male student in grade 11

I: [Gives interviewee background on project]

I: What does hope mean to you?

S: Hope means to have confidence, and to be passionate about what you do. And if you are studying, study hard, so that your marks will be top achiever.

I: And do you feel you have hope?

S: Yes, I have hope. Because I’m reading my books, ad when I’m writing my exam, I feel no heavy for the paper. I just write what I know and what I studied.

I:

S: Nobody is born clever. And the purpose of education, is to make our minds more clever and to be superior, so that we can achieve everything. Because if you are not education, the list of Are those things that you can achieve illegally. But if you are educated, you can achieve those things legally.

I: And what are those things?

S: Those things, they are, like if you want to be the president of the country, first you have to have a matric on your hand. And you have to have further education. Because there are things in the country, geographically there are, nutrition and uh, Gross National Product, things that come from another country to our country. So we have to know those things. And if you are uneducated, you won’t know those things. Yes. And education is the power of success.

I: Do you believe that your education is going to give you those things.
S: Yes if I study, and commit myself to my books.

I: What are you own personal goals. Long term goals.

S: Right now my short term goals is to finish my matric. My long term goals is to carry on with my career.

I: Have you thought about that?

S: Yes, every night before I sleep, that please, let me be what I want to be.

I: And what are those careers?

S: Well, I like being around people, and I love people. So, fashion, designing, coz I can draw, and my principal knows that. Last month or last year, we went to Robben Island. I drew Mandela. Coz Mandela is the one. So I like to draw and to sing. I love music. I’m an artist and designing go the same way. Coz artists have to look stunning at the end of the year, coz they are celebs.

I: And have you thought about how you are going to get there.

S: I always pray. What must I do right now, that focuses on where I want to be.

I: And what is that?

S: You know internet is the most powerful thing that helps us. I always go to the internet and check, other artists what they are doing. And I watch TV. You know the Link. It is a show. It includes fashion. So I love that show. And the other thing is that I always tell my brother, he must understand me, for who I am. I don’t have to go the same way as other people go. I have my own way. That’s what I told him. Yes.

I: And is there anything that is standing in your way from reaching these goals.

S: No. It’s finance. Coz my mum is not working. And then, I’m living with her only. It’s me and my brother and her. But I always tell myself to focus on education. Because I can’t find the money without education. In order to become a thug or end up in jail. So I better focus on education.

I: And what are some of the ways that you can overcome the financial problem?
S: No. I don’t like to always beg for the money to people, to relatives, to everybody. And My mum taught me, to admit it. Just because I see someone has something, I can admit it and accept it.

I:

S: I have to talk to artists. Artists of music and artists that are drawing. Coz I’m multitalented. That’s all I can say.

I:

S: In school, my 3rd term report. I pass, and I passed really well. But there are subjects, sometimes are really hard for me. In UCT, I always go for maths, maths literacy. Other subjects I just read at home.

I: Is there some sort of help at school with your subjects and to improve your performance?

S: Yes, my teacher always tells us that we have to arrange us in partners, and go for Saturday schools, and sometimes go for afternoons schools. To improve our marks, coz in university there must be higher marks, in order for us to get there. But it not easy if you want to pass.

I: Is it easy to attend these extra classes?

S: No, it’s not easy, coz, some of us, who are living far away from the school We reach home late. But it’s easy if we want to pass.

I: Do you generally go for these classes? Are you able to attend?

S: At first I find it difficult, but now it’s easy. Coz right now I’m writing exams. And I thank my teacher, that he told to attend these classes, so that I can improve my marks. But I don’t know how I will do this term, coz I’m still writing.

I: I’m going to ask you some question about the teachers? How would describe the attendance of the teachers

S: The teachers are pretty good. They don’t want us to be alone in class. They always want us to be in class, not outside.

I: Can you describe some of the problems facing students in school?
S: Um, I think a person is bullying himself sometimes. Coz our teachers are giving every minute to us. So like, I can’t tell those problems coz I don’t know. Coz I’m in grade 11 and I know what to do.

I: Problems students struggling outside of school, or even yourself.

S: Yes, we are living in an unsafe environment. Some of them get robbed, and some of them, their neighbours are playing music out loud. And they struggle to study. Yes, so, there are those problems. And others are getting peer pressure from their friends. But now you don’t have to read, its still early to read. But when he wants to read, they are watching generations.

I: So how do you get around those problems, the disturbances?

S: You have to make your own time. I always go to UCT for the lectures there. And they assist me with my work. And they always encourage me to come and come. So I can improve my marks. So the learners, must do the same, because it’s a good thing. Because at the end of the year, they come with their mothers, saying how can my baby fail. And it’s a mum’s responsibility to look after his children. Is he studying or what. And some of the mothers, I don’t know. But my mother always ask me, when I am going to read my books. And I must put the phone away, so that I can concentrate on what I’m told. But there are other mothers, their children are under Bully-ism.

They are being bullied by their step-mothers, maybe her mother or father passed away. And he’s living with his sister. But she isn’t nice to him. So those challenges, people have to fight for themselves so that they can get out of it themselves. And is there any way that the school is helping them to overcome those challenges.

Our teachers are always calling us to talk about our problems in school. And they always mark those children who are suffering from school clothes. Maybe they are wearing torn jeans. They see their situations. They give them school uniforms, and shoes. All of them at Future Hope school.

I: What do you think the teachers attitudes are towards students at the school?

S: I can say they are too much lovely. And they always commit their selves to us. Coz they are here, do not teach to each other. Chat with us, and help us every day, we must have knowledge, something new in our brains. And they caring a lot about us. They love us.
I: Are you aware of a suicide in school?

S: Yes, one of our schoolmates killed herself. I don’t know why. Maybe it’s the situation at home. But she didn’t tell it at school. But, he decided to keep it a secret. Teachers they say we have to tell our stories, coz they know these things. They are coming from these things. So that they can help us. If you are suffering from transport. They can organise a bicycle for us. There was a year they did that. Coz some of us were losing a train, car, transport.

I: And how is your attendance at school.

S: I’m always present. I’m in grade 11, and it’s not an easy grade. It’s like being in grade 12. Coz I’m doing the same thing as grade 12. I always be present, and for afternoon classes. And capture what the teacher was teaching earlier.

I: do other students attend classes?

S: Some take the day off, just for one day. Not the whole week. And next day we ask why they didn’t come and she/he will tell the story. And if you don’t feel healthy for studying, that won’t get your brain. Most students do come to classes. To improve their marks. Of which it is a good thing. Last year, my school was the top achievers. The matriculants\(^{18}\), in the western cape. I think and that impressed me. Coz I’m one of Future Hope school.

I: Have you had any old school Future Hope pupils coming back to school. The ones who have finished.

S: Yes, they come to school, to thank teachers. Where they are right now, is because of the teachers.

I: have you met any of them? Tell me more?

S: Some of them are student teachers and they come to thank teachers.

I: The last question. So you’ve come from another school before Future Hope. Is there anything different between the two schools?

[Teacher enters room, and interview says he doesn’t mind if he stays.]

S: No, there are no difference. Coz the school I was from, even won the school for western cape.

\(^{18}\) Students in their final year of school
I: In terms of house, the environment, and the atmosphere in school.

S: Yes, I can tell because of the school here, it always bring trains. It causes noise.

I: In the way that the students interact with one another and the teachers?

S: Yes, here, are focused too much. More than the last. Because, the teachers here told me the marks for the university must be high. They are clear about it, unlike my previous school. Our teachers let us exercise, during lunch time. Even right now, they are playing soccer outside. Some of my schoolmates. Girls are playing, some of their games. I don’t understand their games.

I: And to the teachers also engage in sports?

S: Yes, for L.O. we go outside and practice there.

I: Thank you very much.
Interview Transcript: Student 3

I: Interviewer
S: Student

Interview: Female student in grade 9

I: [background to the study]
I: So what does hope mean to you.
S: Um, hope tells me that I should be very very confident to express. And in school, I must keep hope in everything. I must have a vision of what I want to be.
I: What is the purpose of education.
S: To achieve your goals, to achieve what you want and a good mark in school.
I: Will you be able to achieve your goals in this school.
S: Yes
I: How would you describe your performance in school.
S: You must focus, and keep confident and try all the time, Then you can be what you want.
I: So you feel your marks are improving.
S: Ja.
I: What are some of your goals, short term goals?
S: Um, what I want to be. To improve my good marks. In the community, I have to do something like, if I see something that’s wrong. I should tell people that it’s not right.
I: So have thought about how you can achieve your goals.
S: to study, and you must have time for your books. Then you can achieve.
I: Do you get any help from the school to be able to achieve your goals.
S: Yes, from the teachers and the principal. He does that all the time. He tells me, you’re brilliant.

I:

S: They always tell me, if I have low mark. The principal says, I don’t like what you did. You must pull up your socks.

I: Does he do this with all the students and all the time?

S: Yes, all the students.

I: What are some of the problems that might stand in your way of achieving your goals.

S: Ya, its financial things. My sisters, others, they achieve what they want. But, because of the financial.

I: What are some of the ways you can overcome those problems.

S: When you talking to people, you must share your things. People can help you. If you always talking about your education. If you have a problem. Someone can tell you to go to Wits, you can get bursaries, and a loan.

I: Which people do you normally go to for help.

S: The teachers, the principal. And all my sisters at home.

I: What are some of the ways in which you get help from your teachers and your family.

S: I talk to them, and they will tell me what to do.

I: Is it easy to get access to your teachers?

S: Yes

I: If you struggling with any of your subjects, or work that you are doing. What sort of help are they able to offer you to improve your performance.

S: I used to attend. If they have Saturday classes, or afternoon classes. Then I can do that, attend those classes. To see what I’m struggling with.

I: Do you find it easy to talk to teachers about problems you’re having in class or at home.
S: Yes.

I: What’s rot of problems.

S: If we in class, and someone always want to be in control.

I: Are the teachers able to resolve your problems.

S: Yes

I: How do you describe the hope of the other students in your classes? Do you think they are hopeful, or not very hopeful.

S: Some of the students do so. Others, they say they will fail. Most of them are hopeful.

I: And the teachers, how would you describe their attendance at school.

S: Some of them attend classes. Others, they go to the class, tell us what to do, then he/she is gone away.

I: Do they come back to class.

S: Yes, when its period time, then they ask, did you do the work.

I: Do teachers come to class on time, or are they late?

S: They come on time.

I: You’ve been to another school before Future Hope. Is there any difference?

S: Yes, I was studying there by Magnum Heights\textsuperscript{19}. I was struggling with isiXhosa. Then I said, I don’t like this school, black school. Future Hope is the best school for me. My family said there are lot of schools that are good schools. But I said, Future Hope is the best school, because it has a high pass rate in gr 12.

I: from your experience of your last school, is there anything different about the two experiences.

People are the same, teachers are the same?

S: Yes.

\textsuperscript{19} Not the real place name.
Interview Transcript: Student 4

I: Interviewer

S: Student

Interview: Male student in grade 10

I: [background]

I: What does hope mean to you?

S: Hope means that I must stand up and have the strength to do something.

I: Would you say you are hopeful?

S: Yes, because I hope that in a few years’ time I will be in university.

I: What is the purpose of education?

S: It is to teach me and to give me a career and work in big fields in future.

I: Example of what careers.

S: In engineering or hospitality.

I: What are your goals.

S: Yes, when I’m older I want to be a doctor. Even with big land with a big house.

And I want to improve my parents’ house to be big also.

I: How determined

S: I work very hard. Every day, when I come from school I have a timetable telling me when to study my subjects.

I: Is there anything preventing you from reaching your goals?

S: No.

I: What sort of plans have you made to reach your goals.

S: I’m planning that every day at school, I must concentrate, to achieve, better results.
I: Anything else you need to do eventually become a doctor.

S: I must also go the library and the extra information.

I: Is there any other ways that you think you can find out about your goals.

S: I must go to a doctor and interview him.

I: Are you having any difficulties at the moment.

S: Yes, sometimes, because I have to go to the church and soccer practice.

I: Anything at home, affecting your studies.

S: No.

I: If you experiencing difficulty in class, understanding concepts. Is it easy to speak to the teachers. What are some of the things they do to help you improve your performance.

S: Yes, the talk to me if I am failing my subject, also if I don’t understand. They said I must stay after school to give me that information.

I: What happens after school.

S: the teachers come and teach us what we learnt in class, to get us to understand. Not all the subjects, physics, maths and consumer studies, life-science.

I: Are these classes helping?

S: Yes, they are helping a lot.

I: How would you describe your reading.

S: I’m not that good, but I try my best.

I: How do teachers help you with reading.

S: They give me to read for the class, concepts and notes, and sometimes newspapers.

I: How would you describe the teachers attendance.

S: It is very good. Only late by 5 minutes. If they don’t come, there is a problem. They are generally in class.

I: How would you describe your performance in class.
S: I am very good in class, because sometimes when there is a bursary, I am the one that will be chosen. It’s called go-for-gold. And the Saturday class, I’m there also.

I: How do they select you for bursaries.

S: According to marks.

I: Why do you think you are able to achieve good marks.

S: I catch information very fast. And I perform good.

I: Before Future Hope, you were at another school.

S: Yes, Sweetvale\textsuperscript{20}. Sweetvale, I was not performing well, but I was passing. But not like here. I’m performing good.

I: and the way the teachers and pupils interact with one another.

S: Yes, in Sweetvale, if you don’t understand, they don’t assist you. But here they make sure you understand.

I: Any difference between the pupils here and there.

S: And also, periods here are 1 hour, but Sweetvale its 30minutes.

I: In general, do you think the students are more hopeful or less hopeful than Sweetvale.

S: They are less hopeful here. They are running around, doing nothing. Some are bunking class. Getting out of school. A lot of students.

I: Why do they do that.

S: Sometimes they say there is no teacher in class. Some come here just for playing. After they are tired, they go home.

I: And what do they do? They just go home?

S: How do they perform in class. They don’t perform well.

I: You say they say sometimes teachers are not in class.

S: I have not experienced that.

\textsuperscript{20} Not the real school name
Interview Transcript: Student 5

I: Interviewer
S: Student

Interview: Male student in grade 12

I: [Background]

I: So can you tell me your name again.

I: What is your idea of hope?

S: To me it is the passion, a composure, of doing everything to succeed. Because I like education, because I want to be successful in life. I want to improve my standard of living, those conditions people are living under in the community. And I want to make my mother proud of me.

I: Do you think you can achieve those things?

S: I am able. There is nothing that can stop me. Because I have hope. And there’s something that I tell myself, that I want

I: What is the purpose of education?

S: It is they key to succeed in life. Because we see that without a grade 12, you can’t get any job here in South African. So that’s why I want to complete education. I want to finish grade 12 this year.

I: What are some of your goals.

S: Next year I want to join any party, ANC, Youth League. I would like ot do political science. Or anything that deals with law.

I: So the subjects that you are taking.

S: History, business studies, tourism and maths lit.

I: How determined are you to achieve these goals.
S: I need to stay calm, to have time to deal with all my problems and all my books, so that I can achieve what I want to achieve. I need to go with people who have passion, who are role-models who can motivate me to do what I want to do in life.

I: Do you have role-models?

S: First of all the teachers of Future Hope. Most of them are motivating us to do well in our books. And If you didn’t come to school, they will come home and fetch and take you back to school. And they tell your mother that this person is brilliant and can do well. This person has not come to school. I don’t understand why they do not come to school on a daily basis.

I: What sort of plans have you made to reach your goals?

S: I have many plans. because next year I can study. If there is money so that I can go to school. If there’s no money, I can work so that I can go to school in the coming years.

I: To get into law or political science, what sort of plans have you made for those goals.

S: To stay away from bad things. And is to get information from people who have been there, even the counsellor in the township, or the people who are doing law, or anything that deals with law or political science. So that I can collect the information and see the points, the points I need to do it.

Points means to collect the information.

I: Why law and political science.

S: Because SA has been changing recently. Even the politicians themselves don’t deliver to the community. They don’t think about the poor. They make them rich, to be worth it themselves only. Even education. There are provinces that are not good in terms of facilities and infrastructure. Those are the things I would do if I became a politician.

I: I would make sure that the infrastructure are good. Most of the people are from the Eastern cape. Most of the voters of other political parties are form EC, but they cannot benefit. Mostly it’s the big cities, that they deal with.

I: Is there anything standing between you and your goals?
S: Yes, friends. Sometimes friends want to take you, whether you want to read or what. They will fetch you from your home and take you somewhere, or bad friends who interrupt you. And say let’s go somewhere and enjoy what.

I: How do you get around this?

S: Sometimes I don’t go with them. But If I say that, they will say bad things about me, or think I hate them. But to keep away from them, I will stay at home. That’s how I deal with them.

I: Is that the only problem you see in getting into political science or law?

S: Yes, I don’t get the information that I would like to get. I don’t know where to get the things.

I: Do your teachers help?

S: Yes, if they know how to make it or do it, so that you can succeed.

I: What inspired you to want to get into politics, Specific or something you wanted to do for a long time.

S: It’s something I wanted to do for a long time. But first I wanted to do law. Many people around me say they like law because lawyers do this and do that. My older brother is doing law at Unisa in EC.

I: How likely are you to get into law?

S: There is a possibility I can do law anytime, if I make good with my studies. Maybe I can get a bursary to study next year, if I do well in my books.

I: How would you say you performing in school?

S: Recently, In the last few months I was not doing well. Because I was not reading my books. I was just going to write. But Now I realise, I must do well for next year. If I can fail, that means I wasted the whole 12 years to be a student.

I: How did you think you did in your exam.

S: Well, the question papers are not so difficult. I read the questions with understanding.

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Yes, I improved my marks, when I come from school, I read my books. If I don’t understand something, I ask another person. And she/he will tell me, this is doing like this or that.

I: If you are having problems in class, can you speak to the teachers?

S: Yes, we are able. They told us if we don’t understand something, you must ask. And they going to tell you if it can be done like this. Must not be shy of other pupils in class. Must raise up your hands and ask the question.

I: How would you describe the teachers attendance.

S: I cannot complain about them. They make sure that are in class each and every morning and each and every session. That’s why the school is doing well.

I: Okay, it came up in one of the other interviews that, some of the students are bunking school.

S: Yes, because the fence that is here, there were many break-ins. There was no fence, so it was easy for them to bunk school.

I: Is it because the teachers are not coming for class.

S: I experience that in 2010. But the teachers walks around the school. And if the teacher is not there, he will send for them.

I: Would you say the other students in the school are hopeful, or not so hopeful?

S: Some of them are not hopeful. They say next year, I will stay at home. Because education means nothing, because each and every year I fail.

I: Is this students in gr12, or the younger grades. Pupils in grade 12 have no passion to study. I would like to work next year. I’m tired of school. I’ve been studying for 12 years. I don’t want to study. I want money. That’s the problem of the grade 12s.

I: Why do they come to school, if they don’t like being here.

S: They want to have grade 12 against their name.

I: You’ve come from another school before this.
S: Yes, I went to Lighthouse secondary school, Grade R to Grade 8. So here I attended Grade 10, Grade 11, Grade 12.

I: Is there anything different between the two schools.

S: There is a difference. There, the secondary, they were not care about pupils. It was about them only. Even sometimes, the teacher didn’t even know your name. She will only know your name when she marks your paper. But there is care in both Lighthouse and Future Hope both schools.

I: Are the students in Gr 11 and Gr 12 hopeful or not hopeful.

S: Most of them are hopeful, but there are those who are not hopeful. Some of them, you will see them bunking the classroom. Some of them are smoking at the stairs. Some of them are hopeful. Because of Gr12, it’s their time. Maybe they can do well and increase the percentage of the school. So they are hopeful.

I: Is there anything the teachers do that makes students more hopeful.

S: Yes, they say, this is the percentage of the school Let’s see if we can increase the percentage, let’s go beyond the percentage. This year.

I: Does the school give out awards.

S: Yes if a pupil is doing well. They get certificates.

I: Sensitive question. Suicide in the school. Do you know anything about it.

S: It was a grade 12 pupil. He was smoking drugs. It was one of the things that made him hang himself. Something must have stressed him.

I: Are there lots of students taking drugs?

S: Yes, there are lots. Even girls, are smoking outside school. Sometimes they come here inside school with drugs. The teachers don’t see them. But pupils don’t tell them.

I: Are the any other problems the students are experiencing besides drug-abuse.

S: I wouldn’t know.

I: Thank you very much.

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22 Not the school’s real name
Interview Transcript: Student 6

I: Interviewer
S: Student

Interview: Male student in grade 12

I: What does hope mean to you?

S: Well, there are different definitions of hope that I have, depending on how I view life. If I view like in a selfish way, I believe hope is using every challenge around me as an individual and turn it into something positive, from an adverse situation, into something that will better me.. and my surroundings. Because I believe that most of the time we hear, stories. Our lives are narrated by us. Hopes is that in that, even throughout those stories that are narrated to us, about life, one thing that is symbolic, there is always hope. That is what life is about. Life is not about success. It’s about human endurance. How the human spirit is much more than that. It’s about the soul, about dreams, about the things we cannot see.

If I take a societal view, I believe, practically, my community, suffer from a lot of social devils… and truly speaking it is very hard, because as an individual, I’ve always strived to be, I’ve always had this dream of being a super intellectual, where I’m very well educated. And my community is not about that. And we are facing a lot of challenges. And It’s not us who caused those challenges.

I’m not as different from the gangster, that tries to stab me. The difference is how I challenge those challenges. I understand there are a lot of things we are faced with. We are facing the same challenges. It’s just that we always look at life in a long view. Looking at the future. Even if we are living today, there is hope for the future.

Even the young man,

Truly speaking our fathers were never there. Our fathers are not there right now. Its messing us up. Its messing society up. Because society begins at an individual level. Once individuals
break, the whole system collapses. The whole notion, its seems it’s a trend, not to have fathers supporting their children, and this is killing our society.

Right now we have a lot of angry young men, and I’m part of them, I’m very angry as a person. I seek attention. I just want someone to listen me. Just someone, not my family. A lot of times we don’t find someone to listen to us as young men.

A lot of time we don’t find those opportunity where someone listens to us, as young men in the township. At the end of the day, because we are misguided we end up taking the wrong choice.

But I believe there is a lot of hope for tomorrow. Because as an individual there is something we live for and I live for my family. My mother died when I was eleven. My father was never there. I lived with my younger sister, and I’ve lived with her as I’m living today and it seems as if..

I: How old is your sister?

S: She’s 31 years old.

And it seems as if, things are deliberately there to put you down, but it’s not that. And I’m serious, that there is a lot of anger out there. And I’m very angry too. But the way in which I acted towards my anger, is turn it into hope, and construct myself.

[Interruption]

I: With your parents not being there, who did you turn to? Who were you able to speak to?

S: I spoke to the book. I like to write a lot. I believe I’m too young to write, but still I write. Sometimes people misunderstand you as a person. Sometimes you need someone to listen to you and not response. I usually write letters to the African Scholars Fund, and they’ve sponsored me since from primary, from since gr7 or gr8. And they are the ASF, my sponsors are Christian and they go to church, the Rosary Methodist Church23.. I’m proud of them. They make me be myself. Because I write letters to them and they read them. They do not respond. They just read them. And

I: How do you know they read them?

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23Not the real name
S: Because the administrator writes back to say they’ve received my letter and forwarded it to my sponsors. I’ve met them in the past and enjoyed our time. And went to their place. And it was fun and different from the place where I am and its very different to here, where there is no support structure for you. And one thing that is very … even there is no support structure for you, people are looking up to you, as if you’ve been sent from heaven. Because they see you are the one who will save them.

I: Who are these people?

S: My family. My friends and the community. And it’s kind of, tough to try and juggle all that. For example here at school. I have 5 friends, best friends. And my best friend. When we came from primarily school to high school I told him, that we need to own it. We need to make it our own. And we tried to do that and we owned it.

I: What do you mean by own it?

S: What I mean by own it, is: make our impact felt. Make sure that.. we didn’t want ot be popular with students. WE wanted to be popular with teachers. Because teachers, students are not beneficial to us. That’s the king of view I have in life. Always surround yourself with people who are going to contribute positively to your cause. Whether your cause is, trying to get a beer right now. That’s your cause right now. So it was me, that I thought in life you surround yourself with people who are going to give you what you want, and where there are things that are going to be mutually beneficial to both of you.

I said to my friends, we need to go and excel in our books. Make sure we are well mannered. There has never been an incident where any of my friends were called to the principal’s office. And we ended up being role-models to the whole school. And, not that we had major wrong things that we did, it’s just that when people are looking so much at you, they are quick to be harsh at you. Sometimes it’s unfair, because I never said I was perfect. I just acted in a, nearly perfect way. And people judge and criticize you, as if you are perfect. It is just an illusion that there is perfect.

People are looking up to you. My sister is unemployed. She tried to build a house for me, my younger brother and she lost her job. And she said, now it is up to you to take it from here. And my brother, he was a heavy thug. And I was never that close to him. And comparing me and my best friend.
He has a family, a mother, father and brother and sister…and from all of us…he’s the one different, the odd one out. He has all the things you need in a decent young man. He’s perfect. But he know is it. He enjoys it. As in our culture, it’s kind of hard to praise someone for what they are. And I tried to tell everyone, that if I love you, I tell you. If I love my brother I tell him. And it felt strange when I did that. And I just stand up at home and tell them.

No, I wake up every day and tell them, hey I love my family and I’m proud. I try to construct myself. I try to do things that are not currently done in my system.

I: These things that you do. Where does it come from?

S: Well, I think a lot. I think a lot. I believe that in thinking, I come up with these…they are not new or strange. I think of way of implementing what’s not being done in my life. It think if what a lot of people should do, and I try to implement it in my life. I think my life is complex, I say that. I know I’m a young man, and I’m confused about where I want to go. But at least I have an idea. If I have an idea, I can build from there. I don’t have to have all the answers right now. Sometimes it’s very confusing and very overwhelming. The fact that I am the person I am, has helped me deal with a lot of these things.

Last year, I went to circumcision, part of tradition in the Eastern Cape. And there I was not in tune with their systems. Because I’m a township boy from a school in the Western Cape in cape town and I like to speak a lot of English. And that’s one confrontation I’ve had with people in the township. There, I found some time and peace. And land and the green grass and trees, and you can think and think a lot. I try and find that every day of my life. I learn every single time. Learn from every single situation. People have a mistake in saying, in order to gain experience in life, you have to live through life. But I think, sometimes a lot of people have lived enough in life that there’s a reservoir of information for me to extract and learn from.

I: Do you feel that school plays any role in your hopefulness? Were you hopeful to being with, before you arrived at Future Hope.

S: I was very hopeful. One thing that was different, was that I really love reading. I chose what I read. And I read things that other learners would neglect. That’s what set me different from other learners. It’s how I manage to be a good write to some extent and it’s how
actually I became this sort of a young man seeking to be an intellectual of some sort. And my primary, it was one of the best primary schools in the Western Cape. Or maybe it was us who made it the best back then. I don’t know about right now. The competition was tight there.

I: Where’s this? What’s it called?

S: It’s at cross roads. It’s called Excelsior. Competition was very tight. And in my class, 9D it was full of very clever learners. It was junior high school. And you had to make sure every day, you had a new complex word that no-one understands. And most of the time learners are lazy.

I hate writing what’s in the memorandum. Because I believe that I can actually better in my own understanding and in my own way and I know how to construct sentences and have paragraphs and all that. And that’s what I love about. I hate being confined to what you think is write. Because I also know what is right, it’s just that I have my own way of putting it. Just because I have not writing what you have put down there, doesn’t mean I am not right.

I did not sleep the whole night. I was up until 1am. And in those docs I learn a lot of document

Invest time. Not money. That’s what I do. I invest my time. I’m watching the news with them. I understand things better than them, because prior knowledge helps. And I’ve always said to my brother, that never be complacent. Never be naïve. Always take all the information that’s in front of you, all the information that you have access to.

That you choose a specific path in your life. That you master it. Once people are looking for the master of it, they come to you. And they pay you hot bucks. I believe in that. But I also believe that in life, we need to be generally aware of our surroundings. Because we live in this round world and everything is around us. And one thing today is that young people, have given their lives to the digital world. It’s not a bad thing. It’s a great thing. But that’s not life, because it creates an illusion that you are living life, whilst you not. It’s just an illusion. It creates feelings that are not necessarily there. Because I would sit down with my friend. They started being on Facebook on 2009, I would mock them and say that dud you can’t talk to a girl like this. It can’t happen…and it was actually true, because once my friend was actually

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in front of that girl, he could not say what he was actually saying. Which actually means that those conversations, those emotions, those feelings, actually ended there, on the phone.

So I never kind of focused on social networks. I do have a Facebook account. I’m not a regular. I’m not obsessed. I believe I have not lived my life, practically, or as I should. But I believe I’m grooming myself for something big, that’s out there. And I want to be always humbled. I don’t want to be ordinary. I don’t want to be like everyone else. I don’t want to jump on the bandwagon. I’m unique. So I can make an impact on the world. And my dream is to go and talk at the United Nations. That’s my dream lately. I don’t know how it came about.

A lot of people have contributed towards me. The teachers have actually helped. Having such close relations with my teachers has actually made me appreciate who I am, and excel at my books, because once they do something good, they appreciate you. And my principal is the best. I’m serious when I say that.

I: You mentioned the African Scholar Fund, if it hadn’t been for that foundation, do you think you’d still be where you are now. Would you still be as hopeful?

S: I’d still be as hopeful. The organisations I’ve been with are not ordinary. Sometimes they feel pity for people. No, I don’t want that. I don’t want someone to feel pity for me. I’m not disabled, and even disabled people are not disabled, they are just differently abled. I’m not a charity case, I’m a person. I just want them to listen. And most of the time, it’s not that I need financial assistance. I need someone to listen to me. Someone to give me time.

Broadway in South Africa. Those guys are one of the most amazing. Because, when those guys come here, they give us time to talk. They organize a camp for us. Last year, it was, in Nelson Mandela Rd. And guys in Johannesburg and we converged there. We actually had a great time. We’d sit around and talk, and just talk. They would just listen. They very good at listening. They give us a different perspective to life.

I: Why did you like that they listened to you, rather than spoke.

S: I think it’s kind of therapeutic. There are days when I feel like my mind is about to explode. Many young many in the township, are gangsters, that are drug users, addicted to
tik, that are criminals. Also want that. They have not found the language to express themselves. That’s the only way they could express themselves. IT is very unfortunate, when we lose our brothers, just because they needed therapy.

I: To what extent to you feel that school is listening to them. Future Hope in particular?

S: I believe that Future Hope in particular.. I’m kind of saddened by how our school. Schools in the townships are so similar, the only different is the school uniform. They face the same challenges. They are so similar, they are one school, only different uniforms. The one mistake they have made is they have let go of a lot of extra mural activities, to focus on academics, so that results improve. The results have improved. They have sacrificed a lot of extra mural activities, the soccer, the debating. I was in debating. I stopped this year since I was in matric.

I: Do they have debating in other grades.

S: They have let all of that go to focus on academics and books. That is the positives and negatives. The results are improving. The negative is that, a lot of school children don’t have things to do after school. Sometimes as young learners, they don’t know what’s important and not important to them. Teachers sometimes assist them in finding out what’s important to them. Now I find that, students don’t have anything to do. They just come to school, learn what they learn in class and go out of school. I would sacrifice, and debate. Sizwe was my mentor. He’s at UCT. He was a student year in 2011.He made be very proud. He always said I’m a superior debater than him, but I knew that he was superior than me. It was just something to make me feel good.

I: Have they cancelled it altogether. I was the backbone, once I quit, I believe it went down. A lot of extra-mural activities have went that way. When the core have moved on, there’s no backbone. Which means there’s no succession going on. There’s no teacher running with it. They are so focused on getting the students to pass. That’s why I excelled at it. This was one of the best schools in soccer, in the township and in choral music. There’s no music. There’s no choir. There’s a piano, but it’s broken. I like classical music. I’d like to learn to play piano. The resources are not there to cater for the things that we so desperately need. That’s another thing. To a certain extent, the school is limited in terms of resources. But I believe they will do a lot better. Next year, starting from now, I want to be involved in some kind of organization. I just want to bet involved in.

25 Not person’s real name
I: What sort of organization.

S: I’m not sure. I clearly want to devote my time to something. I want to give my time to someone. And I’ve not been able to do that in my life. That’s what I want to do. I know I’m not very prosperous. But from now on, I know I have the time. I need to dedicate my life to a certain cause from now on. I don’t want to say give back. Because they have not taken anything from me. It will make me feel very proud of myself.

My sister gave birth to a young healthy boy and in March this year, he will be 8 months. His name is Ernest26 which means pure. And I live for him and my younger brother. I want them to be proud. I want Ernest to have a better opportunity than me. I want to be able to read him a book before he goes to bed. I want him to go to a better school. My dream was to go to a white school. But, I was young and she tried. I’m proud of the fact that she tried.

One thing I’ve been very proud of is women. One thing I’ve is my mother, my sisters, and my grandmother. All the women in my family and my community. They have been the backbone of us, and so they are the bb of the community and nation as a whole.

My sister is not married, but her husband passed away, long ago. I was 10 years old. I’m very proud of her. I’m so stressed out, that I won’t be able to be the person who provides everything for her. I’m so scared that she has She has made me a better person I am, and I won’t be able to fulfill her dreams. Because she is such a great person to me. And I believe there’s no way I could ever repay her. And the only way I could repay her is to take care of her son. Her son is mine, and I’m very proud of him and I live for him right now.

And there’s also Junior27. I mentioned my brother, but I did not speak about him. My brother was a thug, a criminal, a gangster, and he died in 2006. He was stabbed and passed away in a shebeen28. He was older than me. He was 19 years old when he died. I never had a close relationship with him. Our systems were definitely not the same. I think in John Kani’s story, in ‘nothing but the truth’, the play, I felt like he was Sipho, where everybody would come report to my home about him, and I would be relegated to this young little kid.

I never got much time to spend with my mum. I was very young when she passed away. I have so many questions I would love to ask her. And it’s kind of unfair to hear about your mum from second-hand information from other people, even if they’re reliable.

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26 Not his real name  
27 Not his real name  
28 Tavern catering to low-income communities
I: What is your relationship with the female teachers?

S: The female teachers are the ones I’m very close with. [Mentions all his female teachers names]

They’ve devoted their time towards me. I’m proud of them. They saw that there’s this potential that’s still lurking inside me and they’ve invested their time, they’ve done all they could in their scope, which is teaching. They are the other people I don’t want to disappoint. And I’m very scared that I will disappoint everyone. I always people don’t fear. Fear limits you. But I’m doing that. But my kind of fear is propelling me to be the best I could be. And they’ve actually paid for my matric ball. The teachers. My sister could not. They paid for the clothing. I’m very honoured and humbled to have teachers like them.

I: Outside of teaching you content, the curriculum. How close are you to your teachers. Your personal issues.

S: Since I’m a young black African man, I know that I’m the hindrance. I know that I’m not open towards them, but their arms are always open for me. To cry, and to feel free and be myself. But if I’m not acting towards that, and freeing myself towards them. It’s a cultural thing.

But there are times, when I feel like, because there are not many learners who even have a relationship with their teachers. If they have a relationship, it is mostly negative and not positive.

I have 5 friends and 2 others friends. They are girls. Me and my best friend, we would study them. I went to our life-orientation teacher to ask her if we could use the library to study and prepare for our exams. And she allowed me to study there. And I was the only one who was given the sole rights of the keys. Because a lot of the time there are break-ins at school, and a lot of the time its these same learners who use the facilities who do the break-ins because, no thug, will actually know every detail about where everything is at Future Hope. So they trust me and I trust them. And they would actually bring fruits for us while we were there. All weekends, and in winter in June, put on a heater there. And we would study in peace and tranquility. The female teachers.
One person who made me excel the most is Ms Caring the English teacher. She let me be who I am. The first essay, I don’t like to say essay. I call them stories. The first story I wrote to her was about the death of my sister, and my eldest sister, was born in 1975, and she passed away in Feb this year. And we were broke and there was no money to bury her. A lot of people helped us to pull through and assisted us. The ASF, the teachers and my community.

And I know that my sister is very emotional. She’s quick a cracking up. I always give her the perspective that you’ve got to live life. There are challenges, but the challenges are there to for me to live life. So there’s no dead-end in life. I wrote the essay and my teacher, she was very proud and that’s when I knew that okay, I was on the right path. And one day I would continue this writing thing.

Explains the trip to the hospital before the death of his sister. And the shocking announcement of his sister’s death on the way back.

The world seems to have shut down. That’s how it is. The world shuts down for a few minutes, and then it starts again.

I try to narrate my personal experiences. I wrote a story today about how SA is an amazing country. I try to narrate things from my own perspective,

What’s the next person going to say when they read it or listen to it. I do it for me, for who I am. I’m proud of who I am. I always strive for perfection.

By being a star, or being the moon shining there, I can allow others to open up and shine for themselves. Because once you are free, you can free others. And I know that if I will be successful.

I would also free a lot of people, once you free, you free others. You live life for yourself, but indirectly, you live life for others.

I don’t know, sometimes I feel. I think I’m a short tempered person. A lot of people think I’m hard, its not that I’m very hard. Its hard for me to be impressed by many things. People take me as if I’m stubborn or arrogant. But I’m not, I just that I question things.

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29 Not her real name
It’s a long way home. And we would see girls, beautiful girls. And I would look at her, and
my friends take me as a leader of the group, because I always come up with these complex
things that they don’t understand. So they’ve given me that respect. They listen to me. I’m
very good at constructing sentences. And I would look at her and say something that would
put off their interest. And my best friend would say to them, that If you had to listen to him,
you would never live life. And I will debate with them. And they are extremely intelligent.
And I would turn things around that they would find it so hard to understand. I feed off from
them and they feed off from me.

One of my best friends, wants to be a chartered accountant. The only thing is he didn not pass
the NBT. They require you to pass it. And I narrowly passed with 66. It was not necessary for
me to write the English one, because of what I’m going to study. All my friends did not pass
the NBT test.

So if you pass matric with a good result, and fail the NBT, would you still qualify?

He still has a chance, he’s been granted financial assistance.

I have a backup plan. I know I could apply anywhere in SA. I’ve applied to UWC30 and
UCT31. I pray I et into UCT. I want to be close to my family. There are lots of things
happening in the township. And my friends are always there for me. My friends are
organizing a braai, but they were waiting for me.

I know that you’ve got very clear vision for where you want to be, but what about your
friends. What about your class?

The others want to get into physics and all related fields, engineering and all that stuff.
They’ve all applied. It’s just this NBT test. I know that they have a lot of potential. They have
solid backup plans. Me and my best friend, were the first to apply. My English teacher helped
us to apply. We supplied all the relevant docs. I had to push my friends to apply, because they
were not as close to our teachers. I would wake up and take them to internet café, and
sometimes there would be hindering factors. My friend had to change his field of study 3
times. So he chose physics, but not the one he wanted. So I told him the deadline is only in

30 University of the Western Cape
31 University of Cape Town
Dec. And my other friends, Tiny\textsuperscript{32}, the baby of the group, he needs support. I believe that he’s on the spiritual I was in 2007. He takes us all as if

My frineds like house music, one likes basketball,

I push them all to be thre. I tell my classmates to make it to varsity. Just get there. WE need academics in this country. We need black academics in this country. And just because we are not doing courses that are perceived to be superior.

The other one got accepted to CPUT. I’m actually proud of her. My English teacher would go with us, to collect those forms. She told me she got accepted. I always told them, even if you’re not studying that is perceived to be superior. Master it and specialize in it. And you going to get big bucks. Specialisation has helped big businesses to prosper. I want to be a lawyer, a tax lawyer. I want to specialize in the legal field. I want to master it. There’s space for everything that is out there.

Most of the time our girls, are not so much focused. Are not pushing themselves as well do as boys.

Why do you thing that is?

I believe there’s still that thinking in our society that women need to depend on men. And I hate it. I hate it. I don’t want to marry a wife that’s going to be dependent on me. I want a woman is independent, someone that will challenge me every day, or when I look at her, hear her speak, I can say wow, this is why I married this woman. Because she is so intriguing, an so different from me and similar at the same time. That’s not what you fin din the township. Women are very similar.

In the township, girls choose soft careers, administration and office management. It’s not bad. I know that there are lot of jobs in that. But its soft careers, and we definitely need lots of women that are going to make a strong impact in strong careers.

I: What is the schools attitude towards that?

S: Since … we hate statistics. WE don’t take it at school. Girls actually choose a lot of soft careers. And once you speak about mathematics, physics and engineering, they shy away. One thing I do when I talk to a girl, I put so much of emphasis on education. Actually that has

\textsuperscript{32} Not his real name
turned off a lot of them. I believe I’m a wreck in education. I know the value of education. It can change our country, and how women are treated in our country.

I: Does the school that girls are capable.

S: the school treats us all equal. Teachers do. It’s just psychological. There’s something in the minds, in men, women, teachers, educators. We relegate girls into these people who unavailable to realise their dreams. They are just women, to satisfy the needs of society and men. That’s how they see themselves. I have a lot of female friends. It’s hard to change. But the school does make sure they feel they can do it.

Grade 8 and 9. Those are very lost souls. They have no idea of where they want to be.

There’s a lot of gangsterism, In grade 8 and 9. It’s hard to study, contemplating your journey home. Being stabbed on the way home. I walk through those streets.

There’s also misquotation in high school is the place where you get your freedom. That misrepresentation, or illusion, is perhaps, at primarily we are more in sync with our teachers in primary. But no so much in high-school. You create a relationship, unlike in primary where they take initiative to create relationship.

Fighting in school, chasing teachers with a knives. That’s how it is. Yesterday a man was beaten in front of me. Because he was thought ot have robbed some money. But was did not.

I: When did you join Future Hope?

S: In grade 10. The values of the township, have slowly infested in him. When you are not in the same mental level, as the person you are close with, he relegated himself into being this rascal, this rude boy. He felt like he could not sync with me and my younger brother. I try to influenced my younger brother a lot. He relegated himself into the township, and he was involved in lots of fights, drinking, stabbing. Once in te township, you are seen as an educated person, you are respected. WE live in the same place, but our ideologies are not the same. We not in the same social apparatus. I’m so extreme, I’m a perfectionist. Things don’t always go the way you want them to. Most of the time that’s not the case. And people believe I’m extreme. I’m a young man, and I’m going through lot of the phases of a young man. I like to be rebellious. I don’t believe I’m rebellious, just challenging the status quo. It’s my time to challenge it. There are a lot of influences in life, a lot of changes. I don’t fear change. I take it as something to advance me. Never fear change. Even if it threatens your system of
life, resist change. Once you resist it, it turns into something negative. I try to adjust to change. Go with the flow.

There are all these strange ideas, about South Africa. One day, there will be no black and white south Africans. Only Coloureds\(^{33}\). I know in days coming, it will be like that. Maybe a thousand years from now, or two billion years. We headed that way. All these visions I see of south Africa. It’s very hard to say them in public. People are quick to squash them.

\(^{33}\) Apartheid term referring to people of mixed race
Interview Transcript: Student 7

I: Interviewer
S: Student

Interview: Male student in grade 12

Introduce the topic to the interviewee

I: What does hope mean to you?

S: You have a self-esteem. Hope is the one thing, that ..what can I say… Hey, I’m not talkative too much

I: Why do you think education is important?

S: Education..its the care of our life, because if you are uneducated, you won’t be able to… to… cause cost of living is too high. So it’s a must to be educated.

I: And, what are your goals? Can you tell me more about your goals?

S: My goals, neh? I just want to… Next year I think I will just take a gap year, and find a job.. coz I don’t think I will study further…my performance is not very well…I noticed that…so 2014, I’ll be back at school and I’ll prepare to stay at res. So next year, I ‘ll just be doing piece jobs. I’m 100%. I’ll be back at varsity.

I: Have you thought about what you want to In the future?

S: I just want to work with media studies.. I just want to work with people. Social studies… My second choice. I just want to help those young… youth… I just want to advise them.

I: Why do you like media

S: Hey, some of them are doing negative things. Some of ended up in gangsterism. Some of them are not educated. So I just need to advise them.

I: Do you find that you are helping students now. Do you give young students advice. Do you

S: Yes, especially those who are doing standard five. What grade is that?
I: Grade 7.  
S: ya, I think on Friday, I asked some young girl, that you know what you going to do after you passing standard 7. And then she replied that she’s not sure. And then I asked her which subject you are good. Then she said she understand a lot of EMS. So then I said she must prepare to do economics, accounting. 

I: So have you made any preparations for social work or media studies. 

S: Well, it will have to be media studies. Because most of the time, I like to Google, media studies. I remember yesterday I was, just checking apiece job. Traffic. And then I just received it. And now I will just receive feedback from them. 

I: Um, and have you applied anywhere? 

S: Not at all. 

I: Why not? 

S: It’s just that.. er, my performance is poor. I have hope that I will pass my grade 12. But, not with flying colours, 

I: Ok and, what do you think will prevent you from getting into media studies or social work. Is there anything that’s blocking you? 

S: Ja, I grew up so hard. So I just want to do the things that I experienced in life. 

I: What were some of the problems you experienced while growing up? 

S: I can say it’s my parents. They don’t do good things. 

I: And how would you describe your relationship with teachers in the school. 

S: It’s awesome. They are talkative, even…like our parents. Even today, I’m not having the money to go back to Khayelitsha, coz I’m staying in Khayelitsha. I go to the principal and tell him, father can you just give me a 6 Rand. So he gave me R10. So it’s good. 

I: And do the teachers help you if you have any other problems, like at home, or problems with friends. Or is it difficult to really speak to them? 

S: No it’s not difficult. Because some of these teachers are priest. So it’s easy. Hey, it’s easy. Not even pretending, it’s very, very easy.
I: And have you spoken to your teachers about your goals. About what you’d like to do in future?

S: Ja, I think it was Mr. Gotchá, Maths teacher. He does give me advice about hope, about what I want in life. And I must follow my heart.

I: And did he give you any practical advice on what you need to, to get into those two fields?

S: No, it was Miss Johannes, the one who’s doing life science in this school. I think it was Sept when we go to Open Week. We see, the things that we going to do next year, to the facility.

I: And now did she help you? How did she explain? Did she tell you more about the careers?

S: Ja, we saw, how to learn theatre, for example, when you don’t even have the money to study. There is this company, NSFASA.. company… we found all information, about .. [local] a loan. Lot of things. Borrowing a loan. Bursary.

I: So why didn’t you apply?

S: I’m not performing well.

I: Do you think you won’t get accepted.

S: Yes, but I’m studying in 2014. 100%. 100%. I’m sure!

I: Have you applied to somewhere to study.

Yesterday, I just registered online.

I: So, you’ve come from another school before Future Hope. Is there anything different this school and that school.

S: Ja, in this school there is a lot of friendship. This school is better.

I: Do you think the students in this school are hopeful about their future, or are they not so hopeful?

S: They are hopeful. This school is a top one. Did you watch the news last year?

I: No, but I’ve seen a lot of articles about this school.

34 Not his real name
S: Yes, this school is a top school. There is hope. Because everyone wants to go to the varsity.

I: And u, I hear that there is some gangsterism in this school.

S: Yes, those boys doing grade 9, grade 8.

I: Why do they join gangs?

S: I think it’s a conflict between the girlfriends. I’m not sure. And also, these boys are smoking drugs.

I: Oh, ok. Do you think they have hope, in their future? Why do they come to school?

S: Just for eating, feeding. They taking things for granted, these boys. Especially boys, because girls, they don’t even do these things.

I: And how do the teachers manage this problem.

S: Yes, because principal, all the time, the police, come into school and search their schoolbags.

I: Ok, and can you tell me a bit about the teachers. How is there attendance. Do they come to all their classes.

S: Yes, every day. They are even boring for us. Serious, that’s why I’m laughing. Especially mathematics teachers, and English, and geography. No absence.

I: And is it just a few teachers, or do all of them come every day?

S: All of them.

I: And how is the relationship between the other students and the teachers. Are they close?

S: It’s the same thing. We are all close. We are all friends. We have a lot of relationship. I don’t know. Maybe we are blessed. I don’t know. You can even come to visit during January. You will see what happens. You know that I’m a learner wearing these earrings. The principal, he doesn’t mind. Ay, the code of conduct, doesn’t allow these things. I’m just taking chances. (smiles) But it’s that relationship, we have with our teachers.
I: And you said your performance is not so good. And if you are struggling in some of your subjects, like Geography or mathematics, um, how are you able to improve your grades? Is there any way you can improve?

S: I think I can take a gap year.

I: While you were in school, maybe you were not understanding something, or not doing as well in a test as you would have liked. Do the teachers do anything to help? Do they provide any help?

S: Yes, the Saturday classes. And afternoon classes.

I: And is it regular, or just now and then?

S: Regular.

I: And do the students attend regularly, or not?

S: Some regular, some not.

I: Are you happy that you came to Future Hope? Can you tell me why.

S: There’s a lot of fun in this school. Even, the relationship, is too good. It’s too good. How can the learner be a friend to a teacher. So you can even imagine. So its...how can I say.

I: Its special?

S: Yes.

I: And did you have any problems that any of your teachers helped you with. Maybe some problem that was really make life difficult for you, or it was affecting your work, or at home. Is there anything that one of your teachers helped you with?

S: No.

I: Conclude. Thanked interviewee and wished him everything of the best for the following year. Also encouraged him to apply to do media studies, so that he could work in an area that he loved, and was passionate about.