EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE MANAGEMENT OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL

By

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DEDICATION

I DEDICATE THIS THESIS TO MY MOTHER FREDIA JABISIGUGU NHLAPO WHO NEVER WOULD HAVE IMAGINED THAT ALL HER HARDSHIP AND SACRIFICES WILL PAVE A WAY FOR HER DAUGHTER TO BECOME A DOCTOR ONE DAY.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to develop the educational strategies for the management of a culture of aggression in a Grade 10 class constructively in a secondary school in the Sedibeng District of the Gauteng Department of Education.

A qualitative, exploratory, descriptive and contextual research design was used to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a Grade 10 class in the secondary school in the Sedibeng District of the Gauteng Department of Education. In order to achieve the study objectives and coherence, this study was organised into three phases. Phase one focused on the first objective namely: to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a Grade 10 class in the secondary school in the Sedibeng District in the Gauteng Department of Education. Phase two focused on the development of a conceptual framework. Phase three focused on the second objective namely: to develop the strategies for the management of a culture of aggression in a Grade 10 class in the Sedibeng District of the Gauteng Department of Education.

In the first phase an ethnographic approach was followed. Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants who met the inclusion criteria. Data were collected using group and individual interviews. Tesch’s method of qualitative data analysis was utilized to identify themes. From the findings of the study the researcher and the independent coder identified the following patterns from the individual and group interviews with participants.

- Pattern 1: Patterns of anger
- Pattern 2: Patterns of bullying
- Pattern 3: Patterns of fighting
- Pattern 4: Patterns of challenges to moral values in education
Based on the study findings a conceptual framework, which guided the development and description of the educational strategies for the management of a culture of aggression, was explained in chapter four of the study. The educational strategies for the management of a culture of aggression in a Grade 10 class were described according to the objectives and a strategic action plan was outlined in chapter five of the study. The educational strategies for the management of a culture of aggression in a Grade 10 class in the secondary school were evaluated in chapter six. The challenges, recommendations, conclusion and review of the study were discussed in chapter seven.
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CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW

Human reality as such is an interpreted reality, a social construction given shape and meaning by various cultural discourses that circulate within it. Those texts that carry the weight of cultural authority as “reliable knowledge” or “objective information” exert powerful influences on how common perceptions are formed and common sense is made (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006:19).

The rationale behind conducting this study on the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education is emphasised by the formed perceptions on the culture of aggression in the classroom. There is a general lack of research on the culture of aggression in South African’s secondary schools; particularly in a grade 10 class. The need to conduct a study on the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in secondary schools sets the stage for the overview of the thesis that follows.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter of this thesis, attention will be given to the overview and rationale of this thesis. The problem statement, research questions and aims of the research will be formulated, as well as the paradigmatic perspectives that are important for the contextualisation of the study. The overview of the research design, which includes the research method, data collection, sampling and data analysis, ethical rigour and trustworthiness, will be described. The chapter will end with a brief outline of each of the chapters to follow.
1.2 RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW

The purpose of this research is to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education. The main focus of this research is on the ethnographic study of a grade 10 class from a particular secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education. A grade 10 class exhibiting a high degree of reported incidences of aggression in the secondary school was identified by the secondary school principal, heads of grades, heads of departments, class teacher, subject teachers, school governing body and the School-based Support Team (SBST) as exhibiting a high degree of reported incidences of aggression.

The school-based support team then collectively decided, in line with the Department of Education White Paper 6 (2001:16), to refer the reported incidences of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class to the inclusion and special school unit of the Sedibeng district office in the Gauteng Department of Education. The purpose was to further intensify interventions that can assist the secondary school staff members in managing the propensity of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. Among other responsibilities of the Gauteng Department of Education, was the analysis of referred reports. The department is tasked with the responsibility of analysing the referred reports of incidences of aggression received from the different schools in the Sedibeng district. The outcomes of the analysis by the Gauteng Department of Education revealed that the grade 10 class identified for this research is rated extremely high with regard to incidences of aggression when compared to other grade 10 classes of all the other secondary schools in the Sedibeng district.

A culture of aggression that is reported as an extreme concern in a grade 10 class may have the potential to harm any positive learners’ daily interaction with peers, as well as the school community. It may also have the potential to
harm the learners’ mental health. It may further have the potential to harm the coping skills of learners in a grade 10 class.

Allen (2009:103) asserts that aggression is a social act: “We reinforce various forms of socially acceptable aggression on a daily basis through media, public discourse and teaching”. Grossman (2010:309) states that society inadvertently desensitises vulnerable learners to aggression and socialises them to accept it as a means of coping with their social environment and life’s challenges. He believes that this cultural shift accounts for much of the tragic learner aggression that is occurring in schools.

As a microcosm of society, a grade 10 class in a secondary school is not immune to aggression portrayed by society. The above-mentioned statement is supported by an article on aggression (Stolley, 2009:4) “There is a lot of aggression in South African schools’, a University of Johannesburg Professor said. ‘Such aggression was a reflection of what is happening in our society; remember we are the most aggressive nation in the world’”, said Professor Marie Poggenpoel of the University of Johannesburg Nursing Department. Professor Poggenpoel made this comment following the sword attack on learners and staff at Nic Diederichs Technical High school in Krugersdorp.

Various explanations were offered as to why South African learners are disproportionately involved in aggression and crime. Some of these accounts relate to the vestiges of South Africa’s past and to the high level of political and other forms of aggression to which learners are exposed. The current context of high levels of violence in South Africa furthermore creates an opportunity, as well as an incentive, for learners’ involvement in aggression and crime in secondary schools (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2002:27).

The world report on aggression and health (WHO, 2002:29) outlines risk factors for learners’ aggression at different levels that impact on secondary schools and society at large. The different aggression levels include, for example, the individual level, relationship level and community level.
The individual level focuses on self-esteem and a history of early aggressive behaviour. The relationship level focuses on poor supervision of learners by teachers, combined with the often harsh physical punishment of learners by their parents. The community level focuses on the socio-economic statuses of families, cultural and societal levels, for an example, the presence of gangs, guns and drugs in the community, low levels of social cohesion, income inequality, poor law enforcement and normative use of violence to resolve conflict. The aforementioned factors have the potential to increase a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

Other than being part of the ongoing furore about aggression in society, schools are also perceived as breeding grounds for this aggression, as epitomised by the 1976 students’ uprisings and other uproar that followed thereafter in schools. The researcher observed many instances of patterns of aggression taking place in the various parts of the secondary school yard, for example, in the classroom, school assembly, school corridors, school tuck-shop, school play fields and in the school toilets.

The researcher observed other hot spots for aggression in the secondary school, namely next to the school yard and when learners are walking to and from school. Some of the aggression that the researcher observed in the grade 10 class was the result of the school culture, for example, initiation rituals, social class and gangs. It is to this extent that schools are seen to be more and more unsafe for learners (La Grange, 2006:112).

The nature of the organisational culture of a secondary school cannot be overlooked when exploring and describing a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. In this context, Finnan and Levin (Altrichter & Elliot, 2000:23) emphasise the importance of acknowledging the secondary school’s organisational culture explicitly, as it may have profound effects on a culture of aggression in a secondary school environment.
Moreover, the development of educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class has to take place at deeper levels of the secondary school as an organisation. It is imperative to examine the shared meaning of grade 10 learners regarding their classroom and other places in the secondary school such as the play fields, tuck shop and assembly. The shared meaning of the grade 10 learners may be reflected by their moral values and attitudes, to which the grade 10 learners give meaning in their daily interactions in the school community (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2000:26).

Most present day school aggression problems come in the form of verbal and non-verbal abuse, gangs, disrespect, bullying and disorderly behaviour (Gilbert, 2010:65). Weapons, such as sharp objects like self-made knives, guns, pieces of broken bottles, blades and scissors, are still a bone of contention in secondary schools (Gilbert, 2010:65).

The cross-cultural mixture of learners, as a result of the opening of schools to all, also resulted in many instances in a culture of aggression, some of which are gang related. The North West Province learner who stabbed another learner with a pair of scissors and the Rosettenville secondary school shooting are examples of a culture of aggression in South Africa’s secondary schools (South African Broadcasting Corporation 1(SABC), 2006); many other incidences of aggression leading to violence are reported by the media on a day-to-day basis.

Banks (2003:10) says that grade 10 learners find themselves without structured activities that are meant to absorb their energy, as well as to give them direction and a sense of self-worth in the school environment. Such learners spend a lot of time drifting on the school premises, until they come into contact with youth gangs. The aggression observed in the secondary school environment influences a grade 10 class adversely.
The repercussions of teacher redeployment were heart felt by a number of learners who were left in the classroom unsupervised and without tuition. The disintegration of a culture of learning, teaching and service (COLTS) added to a number of idling learners in a grade 10 class. A learner’s idling mind is often the breeding ground for a culture of aggression and aggressive behaviours (McGrath, 2010:21). The said period was marred by numerous teachers’ strikes, which exacerbated a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The disintegration of a culture of learning, teaching and service is a recipe for lawlessness. Lawlessness becomes a fertile soil for a culture of aggression that leads to violence, together with other forms of behavioural problems in the classroom environment. The aforementioned statement is supported by McGrath (2010:21) who states that a culture of aggression gives rise to violence, bullying, truancy, fear, anxiety, retaliation, theft, disrespect, lack of self-respect, gangsterism, learners leaving school prematurely, lack of interest in schooling activities and the decline in academic achievements of the learners in general. It is as a result of this that MacDonald (2004:27) is convinced that learners in schools are exposure to extreme forms of aggression.

Leff (2001:343) is of the opinion that extreme forms of aggression are reflected in the learners’ own tolerance, conflict resolution styles, decision-making and behaviour. Sprague (2000:16) stresses the accountability and commitment of the learners, teachers, parents, the school management team, the school governing body, the community, the Department of Education, as well as other interdepartmental stakeholders, for incidents of aggression that occur in a grade 10 class. Unfortunately, however, these entities (Department of Education, school management team, school governing body, school-based support team and educators) seem to be in denial about the existence of a culture of aggression in the classrooms (Pellegrini, 2004:121).

It is in the light of the aforesaid that the researcher chose to conduct an ethnographic inquiry to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a
grade 10 class in the secondary school where, as an active participant, the researcher became submerged in the culture of the grade 10 class for a long duration. It is unfortunate that very little is known about a culture of aggression. Yet, as a district official in the Gauteng Department of Education, the researcher receives numerous reports that are based on a variety of aggressive behaviours taking place in the grade 10 classroom and other parts of the secondary school environment. The Sedibeng district office of the Gauteng Department of Education frequently attends to such reports. The development of educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class will enlighten this thesis.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In view of the aforementioned, a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school is a phenomenon that is not fully understood. Although aggression is prevalent in a grade 10 class, there is still little being done to manage aggression constructively. This, seemingly, is in part because the teachers, the school management team, the school governing body, the school-based support team, parents, community leaders and the learners cannot manage the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class constructively.

As a senior education specialist in the Sedibeng district office of the Gauteng Department of Education, one of the researcher’s tasks were to analyse numerous incidences of aggression emanating from a grade 10 class in order to devise intervention strategies. The reports on aggression were forwarded from the secondary schools to the Sedibeng district office of the Gauteng Department of Education on a weekly basis. Some of the incidences of a culture of aggression forwarded to the Sedibeng district office of the Gauteng Department of Education were complex in nature, and were, as a result, referred to relevant stakeholders; this is in line with The Department of Education White Paper 6 (2001:21), which advocates for multi-sectoral collaboration in order to manage the culture of aggression constructively in schools.
There are ways in order to impact significantly on the secondary school as an organisation, and particularly on a grade 10 class, in terms of how to manage a culture of aggression constructively in the pervasive context of situational and educational changes in the secondary school environment (Pena, 2009:171). While working at Sedibeng District office I received reports from a specific secondary school that learners in an identified grade 10 class demonstrated a high level of aggressive behaviour.

The research questions arising from the problem statement are as follows:

- what is a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the secondary school in Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education;

and

- what could be done in order to manage a culture of aggression constructively in a grade 10 class in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education?

1.4 PURPOSE

The purpose of this research study is to undertake an exploration and description of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class with the view to develop educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives will form the focus of this research study:
• to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education;

• to develop a conceptual framework as a frame of reference for the educational strategies. The conceptual framework will be developed from the results of the research study on a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class; and

• to develop, implement and evaluate the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

1.6 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE AND ASSUMPTIONS

It is acknowledged that researchers have different paradigms, views and understandings in terms of issues they research (Bass, 2005:165). Neuman (2000:515) defines a paradigm as a general organising framework for social theory and empirical research, which includes basic assumptions, models of scientific research practice and theory and methods for finding the answers to questions. It is thus a whole system of thinking; a basic orientation to research the theory – the window through which the researcher views the world (Haber, 2006:49).

The paradigmatic perspective of this study will be discussed under meta-theoretical assumptions, theoretical assumptions and methodological assumptions. While doing this, the researcher will constantly adhere to the aim of this research study, which is to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education.
1.6.1 Meta-theoretical assumptions

The meta-theoretical assumptions of a person have their origin in philosophy. Meta-theoretical assumptions can be described as the intellectual climate that is accepted as being valid in a particular juncture in time (Mouton & Marais, 2001:51). The assumptions and values guiding the conduct of this study are deeply rooted in chapter 2 of the South African Constitution (1996:11), which discusses the Bill of Human Rights.

Five definitions are directly related to and based on the meta-theoretical assumptions defined below, namely person, environment, educator, education and mental health (Moleli, 2012:13).

1.6.1.1 Person

In this research, the word “person” will be used to refer to the learners of a grade 10 class who are participants in this research and who have an understanding and perception of, familiarity with and insight into a culture of aggression. The learners in a grade 10 class are spiritual beings and function in an interactive manner with the environment. Peck (2010:56) puts it as “a psycho-socio-somatic” manner. This is a holistic understanding of humans’ interaction with the environment.

A person in this context is seen as holistically embodying the dimensions of body, mind and spirit (University of Johannesburg, Department of Nursing, 2009:5). A person functions in an integrated, interactive manner with the environment.

1.6.1.2 Environment

The nature of a person’s internal environment is body, mind and spirit, and that of the external environment, physical, social and spiritual (Van der
Merwe, 2004:14). The environment includes both the internal and external dimensions of a person.

In the context of this research study, the external dimension will include the staff members of the secondary school, the Department of Education, the community members, the multi-sectoral stakeholders, family members, and values and practices of the grade 10 learners. The internal environment contains the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions. Interaction between the external and internal dimensions is necessary for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in the classroom environment.

The learners in the grade 10 class do not exist in a vacuum; they form part of a vibrant, living environment that manifests in the daily human activities, beliefs, attitudes, values, as well as an understanding of natural, political, social and economic spheres. Learners are representatives of the environmental social climate that influences the physical environment and, in turn, is influenced by it (Fried, 2010:67). In this research, the word “environment” refers to the school environment.

### 1.6.1.3 Teacher or Educator

A teacher is somebody who is trained in teaching in a school situation. A teacher is somebody who takes responsibility for the learners up to adulthood; somebody who is expected to know more than the ones being led (Fraser, Loubser & van Rooy, 2010:5).

According to the South African Schools’ Act (2a of 1996), an educator is defined as any person, excluding a person who is appointed to exclusively perform extracurricular duties, who teaches, educates or trains other persons, or who provides professional education services, including professional therapy and education psychological services at a school. The word educator is synonymous with teacher.
The researcher prefers to use the word “teacher” and views a teacher as an appropriately qualified person who provides professional educational services to teach at any age and in any acknowledged school setting.

1.6.1.4 Education

Education is effected when a teacher delivers knowledge, skills and information to learners. It is the process of becoming an educated person. Being an educated person means one has access to an optimal state of mind; regardless of the situation one is in, one is able to perceive accurately, think clearly and act effectively to achieve self-selected goals and aspirations. Education is a process of cognitive cartography, mapping one’s experiences and finding a variety of reliable routes to optimum states when one finds oneself in a non-optimum state (Berg, 2010:74).

1.6.1.5 Mental Health

According to Burke (2010:129), mental health describes a level of psychological well-being from the perspective of “positive psychology” or “holism”. Mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life and procure a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience (Stewart, 2007:214). Mental health can also be defined as an expression of emotions, and as signifying a successful adaptation to a range of demands (Segal, 2011:113).

The World Health Organisation (2002:19) defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and be able to make a contribution to their community".

Poggenpoel (1994:53) states that “the psychiatric nurse focuses on the patient’s mental process that influences his or her patterns of interaction
between his or her internal and external environment. These mental processes include intellectual, volitional and emotional processes and because the person is whole, his or her mind will influence his or her body and spirit and *visa versa*. In this frame, the following are viewed as direct consequences of mental health: self-awareness, self-acceptance, assertiveness and self-motivation. This is why mental health is associated with virtues such as friendliness, kindness, love, tolerance, warmth, understanding, responsibility, empathy and gratitude (Kreigh & Perko, 2010:24).

1.6.2 Theoretical Assumptions

The researcher will enter the field of research without any preconceived ideas. After completing the research, the researcher will recontextualise the findings in literature.

1.7 DEFINITION OF CENTRAL TERMS

Terms are defined to clarify concepts or terms that could cause confusion and misunderstanding in terms of their use in this research, in order to enable comprehension, logic, ease of communication and elimination of controversy.

1.7.1 Aggression

Kaplan and Sadock (2009:154) define aggression as an intention to harm or injure another person. According to Bushman (2009:299), aggression refers to an intention to harm another person, a feeling of hostility that arouses thought of attack. Madison (2008:303) adds to this definition by categorising aggression into instrumental, emotional, psychological, verbal and non-verbal. Anderson and Bushman (2009:23) expand the definition of aggression by indicating that aggression is an act of harmful behaviour that the perpetrator expects will have the desired or intended effect on a victim. These types of aggression are usually categorised in terms of verbal aggression, non-verbal...
aggression, physical aggression and emotional aggression (Anderson & Bushman, 2009:23).

Verbal aggression refers to spoken words or verbal statements that are motivated by anger, as well as to verbal behaviour used to express aggression (Hawkins, 2008:496). Non-verbal aggression includes gestures such as passive resistance, rolling of eyes, using a middle finger and throwing one hand in the air. Non-verbal aggression is usually understood as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages. Physical aggression involves hitting, punching, kicking and the use of weapons by individuals towards their victims (Baron & Bryne, 2010:464).

In this thesis the researcher views aggression as a form of human behaviour that is undesirable, antisocial, influential and directed with the intention of harming other persons or their belongings.

In this research, aggressive behaviour will also be defined as

- the act of initiating hostilities,
- the habit of launching attacks,
- a disposition to behave aggressively,
- violent action that is hostile and usually unprovoked, and

1.7.2 Strategies

Strategies are the set of principles put forward to determine or chart forward a course of action (Hanks, 2009:650). Mintzberg (2010:12) states that a
strategy emerges over time as intentions collide with and accommodate a changing reality. Thus, one might start with a perspective and conclude that it calls for a certain position, which is achieved by way of a carefully crafted plan, with the eventual outcome and strategy reflected in a pattern that is evident in decisions and actions over time. Andrews (2009:89) points out that “strategy” can be used in several ways, the most common being those cited below.

A strategy is a method of dealing with a problem; it is a plan of action for getting from here to there. A strategy is a pattern evident in action over time; it is a position that reflects a decision to offer particular services in particular instances. A strategy is a perspective, which is vision and direction that can assist in the management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

1.7.3 Facilitation

According to Meyer (2004:24), facilitation is a process of enabling things to happen, such as helping people to identify the cause of a problem, as well as the solutions, in order to simplify matters, actions or processes, with the purpose of identifying goals and objectives and improving work effectiveness.

Facilitation is a dynamic interactive process for the promotion of mental health by means of creating a positive environment, mobilising resources as well as identifying and bridging obstacles in the promotion of mental health (University of Johannesburg, 2009:7).

1.7.4 Constructive

Constructive refers to helping to improve, helpful, useful, beneficial, productive, practical and positive (Christian, Roberts, Samuals, & Wotherspoon, 2009:70). In this thesis, the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class will
be beneficial to improve the management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

1.7.5 Management

Mahoney (2010:11) defines management as the unifying and coordinating of activities that combines the actions of individuals into meaningful and purposeful group endeavours. Gray (2009:17) views management as the facilitation of the learning process. Hall (2010:2) describes management as an activity that is primarily concerned with the determination of the overall policy of the institution. Squelch and Lemmer (2009:10) opine that management is essentially the process of planning or organising, motivating and leading.

Badenhorst (2008:7) understands management as a functional task to be performed in order to achieve the set objectives. He further indicates that in the management of learners’ aggression, encouragement, inspiration and motivation are of significant importance, while Bush and West-Burnham (2004:12) stress values, vision and mission. In this thesis, the facilitation of the educational strategies will assist in the management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

1.7.6 Learner

In this thesis, learner refers to secondary school learners who receive education from a teacher (Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata & Squelch, 2010:vi).

1.7.7 Methodological assumptions

Methodological assumptions are based on a functional approach that Botes (2009:19) describes in her research model in terms of the functional approach, which emphasises that any knowledge generated in a research project should be used in and applied to everyday interaction. In this research,
the researcher suggests the possibility of including the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, in the life orientation curriculum for the benefit of the grade 10 learners, in order to facilitate their mental health. By exploring and describing a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, the development of educational strategies and the recommendations will add to the body of knowledge in managing a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class constructively. Measures to ensure trustworthiness will be applied to ensure rigour of the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:346). The post-modern principles of logic and justification will be applied (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:340).

1.8  RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

1.8.1 Research design

A qualitative design is chosen to explore the field. The qualitative research method is largely an investigative process where the researcher makes sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, cataloguing and classifying the object of the research study (Miles & Huberman, 2009:104). Mouton and Marais (2001:124) strongly support the view that a qualitative research design begins with specific observations and builds towards general patterns. The idea of embarking on the qualitative method in this research study is to use the open-ended questions to gain insight into the research topic.

An exploratory research design is used, where a qualitative research method will be followed to explore a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. This design is chosen because very little is known about this subject and very little research has been done on this topic. Therefore, such a design would assist in understanding the phenomenon under study. The collected information will explain the phenomenon from the participants’ perspective (Brink & Wood, 2006:119).
Descriptive designs are predominantly aimed at describing the phenomena rather than explaining it. The intention of such a design is to give an in-depth clarification of a specific individual, situation and group of people or organisation (Mouton & Marais, 2001:43).

The context of the research study is a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education. This context was identified as being suitable to describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

1.8.2 Research method

This research will be carried out in three phases. Phase 1 will focus on the first objective, namely to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school in Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education. An ethnographic approach will be used in phase one.

In phase 2, a conceptual framework will be developed as a frame of reference for the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, which will be developed in phase 3.

Phase 3 will focus on the third objective, namely to develop the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The results of the findings that will be obtained from phase 1 will be used in phase 2 to develop the conceptual framework as a frame of reference for the development of the educational strategies to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class will be developed in phase 3. Figure 1.2 illustrates the phases of the research method.
FIGURE 1.1 - Phases in the research method

THREE PHASES

PHASE ONE
- Explore and describe the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, using empirical information and literature control

PHASE TWO
- Develop a conceptual framework as a frame of reference

PHASE THREE
- Develop educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class

RESULTS OF THE FINDINGS OBTAINED
1.9 Phase 1: Exploration and description of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class

A culture of aggression in a grade 10 class will be explored by using ethnography. Ethnography is the study of social interactions, behaviours and perceptions that occur in groups, teams, organisations and communities. Ethnographic research means learning from people rather than studying people (Spradley, 2009:189). It is an activity that attempts to understand another way of life or another culture.

The application of an ethnographic research method will be used to build a holistic picture of this phenomenon. According to Flick (2008:45) and Higgs & Schinewind, (2005:90), one of the advantages of an ethnographic research method is that it is pragmatic and interpretative in nature. It is embedded in the central starting point of researching and rediscovering a reality that is based on social interactions and socially constructed meaning systems (Neuman, 2000:77).

The population and sample will be discussed as part of phase 1 of this research, followed by the sampling criteria, data collection, observation, observational notes, field notes, individual interviews, data analysis and literature control.

1.9.1 Population and sample

The accessible population is grade 10 learners in a specific secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education.

Sampling criteria is used to assist the researcher in determining the target population for the research. These are based on the research problem, research purpose and research design (Burns & Grove, 2009:403). In this study, the participants who met the set criteria were therefore selected.
The first phase of this research study was discussed on page 21.

The learners in a grade 10 class in the secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education, who were guilty of aggressive behaviour, should have been reported to the school-based support team (SBST) and referred to the Sedibeng district Office in the Gauteng Department of Education for further intensive interventions because of their aggressive behaviour.

The reports should detail the incidences of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class and the evidence contained in the reports should be significantly higher than other grade 10 classes in all the secondary schools in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education.

1.9.2 Data collection

According to Wolcott (2009:41-44), one of the “unsung features” of ethnographic research is its embrace of multiple data collection techniques. Accordingly this ethnographic inquiry does not depend solely on one source of data collection, but instead it embraces multi-method data collection.

The multiple data collection techniques will be employed in this research. The focus will be on the researcher’s observations. The fieldwork will be conducted by a prolonged engagement in the secondary school with the grade 10 learners. The focus will be on participant observation in order to determine the “rich points” in a culture of aggression. The artefacts and the other school documents will be taken into consideration. The wall pictures, language, graffiti, reports and field notes will also contribute towards the exploration of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The multi data collection will ensure that this ethnography works towards providing a qualitatively, insightful and triangulated description.
The observations will be conducted in a variety of places in the secondary school. Individual in-depth face-to-face interviews will be used. In this research, face-to-face interviews with the participants will assist in understanding a culture of aggression from the individual’s perspective. The researcher will create an atmosphere in which the individuals will be able to narrate their stories in the manner in which they perceive them (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, Poggenpoel & Schrurink, 1998:126).

Individual interviews play a major role in this research because of the in-depth exploration of the phenomenon in question (Service, 2010:4). Individual interviews will be conducted as an open conversation on a specific topic (Service, 2010:5). In this research, the interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed verbatim.

As soon as the researcher observes any “rich points” pertaining to a culture of aggression, she will follow up by conducting interviews with learners, parents, the principal and teachers to explore the meaning of the “rich points”. The patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class may be identified from the observations and the interviews. For the purpose of this research study, the school’s discipline book, the school code of conduct, the school’s news letters, the learner’s books, mark schedules, attendance register, drawings, graffiti on the walls, furniture and pictures that are available in the secondary school, will form the source of great interest.

1.9.3 Data analysis

Data analysis brings order to the piles of data an ethnographer accumulated. It turns the big piles of raw data into smaller piles of summarised data. It permits the ethnographer to discover patterns in data in order to link them to other patterns. Analysis then turns raw data into results. Results are descriptions of the outcomes of the study; they mark the critical steps of the end product – interpretations and implications for more research, intervention or action.
During observations, certain dimensions will be documented and the interviews transcribed verbatim. According to Bonta (2009:142), the ultimate goal of analysis is to produce from the mass of data collected, the identification of threads that can be woven together to tell a coherent, focused and comprehensible story of the social life that was observed and recorded.

The method of descriptive data analysis by Tesch (Creswell 1998:155) will be used in analysing data in this research, and this method will be fully discussed in chapter 2. The identification of patterns will allow the researcher to pull different pieces of the observations and the interviews together into one place. Consequently, verbatim quotations from the transcribed individual interviews, as well as the examples of the representations of a grade 10 class dynamics, will be interweaved into this account.

Hence an attempt will be made to convey the participants' understanding of their day-to-day encounter in the school as an organisation (Neuman, 2000:149), as given expression through their own symbols, language, concepts and subjective theories (Merriam, 2002:48). Furthermore, examples of photos and pictures will also be included to provide a more holistic and contextual understanding of the most visible level of the organisational culture depicted in the classroom's physical environment and behavioural norms (Neuman, 2000:155). The interpretation of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class will further be obtained from the school's website, the school assemblies, sports and cultural activities.

1.9.4 Literature control

Following the completion of data analysis, the literature from relevant and similar research studies will be used to justify the trustworthiness of the results (Creswell, 1998:20). Conducting a literature control is a vital component of the research process (Donaldson, 2007:7). The aim is to build a body of accepted knowledge on the topic and to enable the reader to gain further insight from the purpose and results of this study.
1.10 Phase 2: The description of a conceptual framework to facilitate the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class

Based on the findings presented in phase 1 and the literature control, a conceptual framework will be derived and described as basis for the development of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The survey list of Dickoff, James and Wiedenbach (1968:422) will be used as basis for the development of the conceptual framework.

1.11 Phase 3: The development of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class

The description of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education will be derived from the conceptual framework. The educational strategies will then be implemented and evaluated.

1.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Rigour is important in qualitative research; therefore careful consideration must be given to the trustworthiness of the research. Guba’s model of trustworthiness, as outlined by Krefting (1991:221), describes the following four criteria: truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. Truth value is ensured by the strategy of credibility, applicability by the strategy of transferability, consistency by the strategy of dependability and neutrality by the strategy of confirmability (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:346).

The application of trustworthiness will be described in chapter 2.
1.13 Ethical considerations

Dhai and McQuiod-Mason (2011:40) draw attention to the importance of the ethnographer’s enactment of an ethical code. “Ethnographers do not work in a vacuum; they work with people. They pry into people’s innermost, sacred rites, achievements and failures. In pursuing this personal science, ethnographers subscribe to a code of ethics that preserves the participants’ rights, facilitates communication in the field, and leaves the door open for further research”.

Therefore, in order to ensure that the researcher continuously upholds ethical principles (Dhai & McQuiod-Mason, 2011:41) and is at all times engaged in a principled pursuit characterised by a sense of professional responsibility (Dhai & McQuiod-Mason, 2011:42), the researcher abides with the following ethical measures stated by Strydom (2010:24):

- before conducting the research, the researcher will obtain a formal consent from the Gauteng Department of Education;

- approval will be obtained from the Academic Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg (See annexure 1);

- the researcher will give the school principal and the parents of the participants, as well as participants, a written letter of information on the research and request consent and assent from the participants under the age of 18 years of age;

- the principle of autonomy and confidentiality will be applied to this research; this principle takes self-determination into consideration and is the basis of informed consent and respecting confidentiality in research. Therefore the letter requesting consent will assure the school principal and the parents that the data obtained during the fieldwork
would remain confidential and that the participants will remain anonymous;

- the researcher will request permission from participants for audio-taping interviews; these tapes will be kept under lock and key in the research office in a cupboard. Only the researcher and supervisors will have access thereto, and it will be destroyed two years after publication of research;

- the researcher will obtain permission to take photographs in the secondary school from the school principal and the participants;

- the principle of non-maleficence will be applied to this research. Non-maleficence is defined as the principle of avoiding harm or doing as little harm as possible. If any learners experience psychological discomfort during this research they will be referred to the volunteer educational Psychologist at the nearby facility for counselling;

- the principle of beneficence will be applied. This principle requires the researcher to act in the best interest of the participants and to aim at promoting their positive welfare;

- the researcher will be open and will not deliberately misrepresent facts about the research in order to get learners to participate in the research;

- the researcher will remain objective and refrain from making value judgments with regard to the participants; and

- the researcher will communicate the results of the study with the participants with the aim of minimising misunderstanding.
The grade 10 learners who participate in this research are protected by the South African Constitution (Act no. 108 of 1996) as human beings. Therefore the researcher will endeavour to uphold their basic human rights. The researcher will respect the human dignity of all the participants at all times. In this thesis, the grade 10 learners are viewed as possessing human dignity. The human dignity of the learners functions in an integrated bio-psychosocial context that is constantly interacting holistically with the learners’ internal and external environments. Learners are also viewed as part of a community, which functions as the basic unit in a school environment.

Ethical principles will be complied with, as it serves to safeguard the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all the participants in this study (Anderson, 2011:21; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:522; Burns & Grove, 2009:209; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:97).

After the completion of the research interviews, the researcher will rectify any misconceptions that may have arisen in the minds of participants, by reflecting on the interactions.

1.14 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class are currently not incorporated in the school curriculum. At present, the systematic referral method, from a secondary school to the Gauteng Department of Education, is the only method of intervention available to grade 10 learners who exhibit a culture of aggression in a secondary school. The systematic referral used by the Department of Education is not designed to manage a culture of aggression constructively. The researcher perused most of the outcomes of the referrals that come back from the Department of Education to the secondary school. Most of those outcomes endorsed the expulsion of learners who exhibit a culture of aggression; the researcher observed this particular phenomenon as a method of treating only the symptoms but not the root of the problem, which is a
culture of aggression in a grade 10 class that needs to be managed constructively.

The secondary school seems to erroneously assume that the referrals made to the Sedibeng district Office of the Gauteng Department of Education are adequate action. The reality, however, revealed the escalating culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, contradicting the notion of the systematic referral method. This proves that the referral system to the Sedibeng district Office of the Gauteng Department of Education alone is inadequate.

The researcher therefore suggests that the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class be incorporated in the life-orientation learning area as part of the curriculum in a grade 10 class. The researcher will therefore propose to Government, through the ministry of education, that the National Education Policy should cater for the addition of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in the curriculum for a grade 10 class. In reality, the culture of aggression escalates at an alarming rate in a grade 10 class and it still continues to do so. This reawakening calls for pro-activity in putting long-term measures in place in order to address a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

1.15 CHAPTER DIVISION

It is necessary to outline a synopsis for each chapter in order to create a quick overview of the direction that this study will follow in terms of its chapters.

Chapter 1: Rationale and overview
Chapter 2: Research design and methods
Chapter 3: Ethnographic description of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school
Chapter 4: Conceptual framework
Chapter 5: Educational strategies to manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school constructively for the sake of learners’ mental health

Chapter 6: The evaluation of the implementation of educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the secondary school of the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education

Chapter 7: Review of the research process, conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

1.16 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher provided a broad outline of the conceptualisation of this research study. Firstly, the researcher presented the rationale and problem statement; secondly, the researcher stated the research aims and research questions of this study. Thirdly, the researcher asserted the paradigmatic perspective. Thereafter the researcher presented a brief overview of the research design and method used to provide the qualitative framework in which this study was conducted. Lastly, the reader was provided with a chapter division.
CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

"Where no plan is laid, where the disposal of time is surrendered merely to the chances of incident, chaos will soon reign"

(McQuick, 2002:30).

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 1, the rationale and overview, the problem statement, the ethical considerations and an overview of the research design and method were described. Chapter 2 will embark on an explanation of the research design and method applied to this research study. The researcher will clarify how an ethnographic research method will be used to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education.

2.2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The purpose of this research study is to undertake an exploration and description of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class with a view of developing educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The following objectives will form the focus of this research study:

- to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education;
• to develop a conceptual framework as a frame of reference for educational strategies. The conceptual framework will be developed from the results of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class; and

• to develop, implement and evaluate the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

2.3 Research paradigm

The overarching epistemological stance, as conceptualised by the researcher in this research study, is rooted in a post-modern constructivism and further underpinned by a hermeneutic perspective (Neuman, 2000:77; Atkinson, 2001:29). The ethnographic approach as stated by Fetterman (2008:12) will enable the researcher to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education.

The aim of this approach is to help the researcher to understand and interpret the meaning of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education from the learners’ perspectives. In order to accomplish this, the researcher should be able to enter the participants’ life fields and to gain the cooperation and acceptance of the participants that are being studied (De Vos & Fouché, 2011:80).

As mentioned earlier in paragraph 2.1, the interpretive standpoint of this study is embedded in the central starting point of researching and rediscovering a reality that is based on social interactions and socially constructed meaning-systems (Neuman, 2000:89). From this viewpoint, the researcher accepts that people always experience the world through a mediated framework of symbols and cultural meanings (Taylor, 2002:4), and therefore further
assumes that social reality is inter-subjective, dialectic and interpretive in nature (Flick, 2008:18).

In this paradigm, ethnography is a qualitative research method that is rooted in the notion that reality and meaning are socially constructed and contextually bound (Flick, 2008:17). Meaning is therefore deeply embedded in the participants’ daily activities as they are located and consequently interpreted in a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education. Thus the reconstruction of the subjective viewpoints of the interacting participants becomes the primary instrument for analysing such a socially constructed reality (Atkinson et al., 2001:29).

The ethnographic perspective, which underscores this research study, is rooted in the emphasis of the research field of the researcher as a field worker (Coffey, 2009:39). This is characterised by the description and exploration of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000:36).

As such, this study explores, naturalistically, a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, its patterns, perceptions, values, beliefs and subjective meanings. These include the patterns embedded in the social interaction, patterns of behaviours and shared experiences of both the researcher as participant observer and the participants as social actors in the field (Coffey, 2009:36).

It must be pointed out that the reality described in this research is context-dependent and situation-bound, and that this is underscored by a process of reflexivity (Alvesson, 2003:171). Thus the researcher is additionally acknowledged as forming part of the social world that is being studied. This places further emphasis on the investigative processes of exploration and description.
In line with the aforementioned notion of reflexivity, another distinguishing factor of this research is the acknowledgement of both the researcher and participants as inter-subjectively linked in a mutually reciprocal process of interpretation and meaning-making (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000:39).

The researcher further states that reality is always already interpreted (Higgs, 2005:224). Such meaning cannot be ascribed without theory or paradigm; thus the mutual dependence of theory and data should be recognised (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000:47). The data in this study was thus approached inductively (Taylor, 1995:15).

### 2.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual research design was used in the research. The research design refers to all the decisions that the researcher makes about how to conduct the research. The research design is intended specifically for the study that is going to be undertaken; the research design is a plan that will minimise the factors that could interfere with the trustworthiness of the findings (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:55; Burns & Grove, 2009:141).

However, before expanding on the method and analytical techniques used throughout this research study, it is imperative to first position this study specifically in terms of its research paradigm, which is based on the ontological and epistemological principles.

#### 2.4.1 QUALITATIVE DESIGN

As Denzin and Lincoln (2001:11) note, the word “qualitative” implies an emphasis on process and an in-depth understanding of perceived meanings, interpretations and behaviours. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2001:2), qualitative researchers study phenomenon in their natural settings, attempting
to make sense of and interpret the phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Qualitative research involves the studies used of a variety of empirical material-case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives. The emphasis on deriving an understanding of how people perceive and construct their lives as meaningful processes, how people interact with one another, to interpret those interactions in the context of the social and natural worlds, and the importance of observation in natural settings are key. As such, the central methods of qualitative research include interviewing people through various techniques and recording what they say, observing people in the course of their daily routines and recording their behaviours.

Qualitative research requires the researcher to spend considerable time with the group under study, to develop contacts with key participants, to learn the language, norms, values and attitudes of the group and to build trusting relationships. The qualitative aspect is mostly concerned with the process rather than the outcome (Krefting, 1991:214).

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding social or human interaction, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of participants from a naturalistic setting (Creswell, 1998:2; Leedy, 2005:105; Merriam, 2008:6; Sherman & Webb, 2008:7). Denzin and Lincoln (2001:5) state that the qualitativeness of a study can also be explained by the fact that it focuses on finding answers to questions that centres on social dynamics and interactions; how those interactions are created and how they give meaning to human live.

What one knows about a particular situation is only valid for that specific situation or context. Qualitative research evolved from the behavioural and social sciences as a method of understanding the unique, dynamic and
holistic nature of humans. The intent of the research is to give meaning to the whole (Burns & Grove, 2009:36; Mouton, 2010:130). It is of special significance when relatively little is known about a phenomenon; hence inductive reasoning is predominant in this research.

Qualitative data is in the form of words and are analysed in terms of individual responses or in terms of descriptive summaries (Burns & Grove, 2009:37; Marshall & Rossman, 2005:112). The data, however, needs to be dense in the complexity of the specific situation and should be explored exhaustively. Qualitative research attempts to describe, interpret or reconstruct the depth, richness and complexity of an identified phenomenon in order to gain an understanding of it (Burns & Grove, 2009:67).

In this research, the researcher will spend prolonged time in the field observing the participants’ behaviours and interactions; most of the events observed will be noted in the field notes. Follow-up interviews will be conducted with the participants in order to explore the observations and to interpret the stories, events and knowledge. The participants’ non-verbal communication will play a pivotal role in the description of events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001:2); as a result, the researcher will include them in the field notes.

Merriam (2008:5) clarifies the qualitative research method by outlining the characteristics of the researcher. The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. In this study, the researcher interacts with the participants, collecting data from them mainly through participant observation and interviews. In this manner, the researcher does not intend to gather information for the sake of quantifying what is “out there”, because, as argued above, no singular account is the truth. Rather, there are many possibilities for interpreting any practice (Merriam, 2008:14).

According to McClafferty (2001:73), a qualitative research method is a process of systematic inquiry into meanings that people employ to make
sense of their practice and to guide their actions. Denzin and Lincoln (2001:111) contend that qualitative research is a multi-perspective approach to social interaction, aimed at describing, making sense of the interpretation of or reconstructing this interaction in terms of the meanings that the participants attach to it. This means that people use practice to create meaning for themselves; thus multiple truths can emerge from a single concept.

The aim of this research is to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education. The inquiry will be conducted in a naturalistic setting (Creswell, 1998:15; Merriam, 2008:6). As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the researcher will spend a substantial amount of time in the natural setting during the field study, with direct participant contact (Merriam, 2008:18). For the purpose of triangulation, the researcher will bracket preconceived ideas about the phenomenon in order to understand it through the voices of the participants (Creswell, 1998:54).

Based on the above arguments, qualitative research appears to be the appropriate approach to answer the research questions of this study.

2.4.2 Exploratory

The exploratory and descriptive study of participants is often done in a field in which not much is known about that phenomenon (Mouton & Marais, 2010:45; Denzin & Lincoln, 2001:268). The objective of an exploratory research is to gain insight into a situation or phenomenon that is relatively unknown in the research domain. Because of the relatively unknown field of this research, the researcher works from a position of not knowing. This enhances the broadness of the information collected from the participants.

An exploratory approach is vital for this research, as very little is known about a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education. To employ this approach, the researcher
enters the research field with curiosity, which is from the point of not knowing (Burns & Grove, 2009:28).

The exploratory nature of qualitative research leads to the development of new concepts or theories. Since qualitative research is usually conducted in smaller areas with fewer participants, but in greater depth and over a longer period of time, it is of prime importance for the researcher to undertake this research as comprehensively and accurately as possible (De Vos et al., 2011:337-356).

The researcher is willing to remain open to the perceptions of the participants by using specific strategies such as “bracketing” and “intuiting” (Burns & Grove, 2009:80; Mouton, 2010:72). The findings will assist the researcher in order to develop the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education.

The researcher’s aim in this research is to gain a deeper insight into a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education. This phenomenon will be discussed in a descriptive manner, which will be an in-depth description of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education.

2.4.3 Descriptive

The purpose of a descriptive design is to describe complete and accurate information about a phenomenon, the manner in which it is manifested and other factors to which it is related (Brink & Wood, 2004:11). According to Creswell (1998:145), in descriptive research, the researcher is interested in the process, meaning and understanding gained through words, gestures and pictures. In this ethnographic study, the description is more likely to refer to an intensive examination of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a
secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education, thus leading to a dense description of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class (De Vos et al., 2011:109).

The researcher will embark on a descriptive analysis of the results obtained from exploring the deeper meaning of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, which will be achieved through observations, in-depth interviews and field notes. In a qualitative and explorative observation process, the main aim is to obtain undisrupted descriptions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:273). Kvale (1996:32) indicates that participants describe their social interaction or portrait and reactions as precisely as possible.

A conceptual framework will be developed from the results of the interviews as a frame of reference for the development of educational strategies to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education.

2.4.4 Contextual

Understanding the meaning of the phenomenon in a particular context forms a frame of reference for understanding a similar phenomenon in a similar context (Mouton, 2010:33). The immediate meaning and contextual significance must be derived from the data collected (Mouton, 2010:133; Mouton, 2010:52). The context of the phenomena is considered part of the phenomena itself and it is therefore important to understand these contextual factors (Field & Morse, 2002:11).

The life events, with their particular meanings, are relevant to the participants in their environment, and this is the basis of the contextual nature of a grade 10 class (Field & Morse, 2002:106). The researcher therefore aims to describe and explore the particular phenomenon in the context of the participants’ specific environment.
This study is context-bound because, by conducting research on a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education, a culture of aggression could be explored and described in the participants’ context.

In this study, the researcher interprets what a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education is, based on one central question that will be asked during the interviews, namely, “Tell me about aggression in this class”. In fact, direct quotations from the audiotapes of the interviews will indicate a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school (Burns & Grove, 2009:71).

2.5.4 RESEARCH METHOD

According to Leedy (2005:104), the method is merely an operational framework in which the data is placed so that its meaning may be seen more clearly. Doob and Sprott (2001:23) posit that methodology is concerned with the logic of method. The research method focuses on the research and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. The point of departure is a specific task, data collection or sampling at hand. It focuses on the individual steps in the research process and the most unbiased procedures to be employed (De Vos et al., 2011:75).

The research method will be conducted in three phases. In phase 1 the situation analysis will be done. Since the purpose of the study is to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education, specific attention will be given to the method, measures to ensure trustworthiness of the research, prolonged participant observation, interviews, field notes, data-gathering process, analysis of the data, data interpretation and literature control.
The results of phase 1 will form the basis for phase 2, which is the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework will form the basis for phase 3, which is the development of educational strategies to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education. Recommendations will be made thereafter.

2.6 Phase 1: An exploration and description of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education

Ethnography will be used as research method in phase 1. Ethnography is a research method that aims to explore and describe in order to interpret the place of culture in participants’ affairs. Ethnography is, primarily, not characterised by the method adopted, but by the subject matter of a research study that is embedded in ethos that are strong in terms of the cultural perspective. The characteristics of the different types of ethnography were categorised by Silverman (2011:17) as integrative ethnography, which is participatory in approach, narrative ethnography and combinative ethnography.

Dobbert (2009:21) further states that the “central” core of ethnography is a concern with the meaning of actions and events of the participants that the researcher is trying to understand. It always implies an understanding of culture. Culture is learned by observing other people, listening to them and then making inferences. The notion of culture is central to ethnography. Culture is that collection of behavioural patterns and beliefs that constitutes standard; it is something that the researcher attributes to a group when looking for patterns of behaviour. Ethnography is devoted to describing ways of human kind; a social-scientific description of a people and the cultural basis of their personhood.
Ethnographic inquiry takes as its central and guiding assumption that any group of people interacting with one another for a period of time will evolve a culture. Typically, this group is one that has been together for an extended period of time, so that their shared language, patterns of behaviour and attitudes have merged into a discernable pattern. The primary method of ethnography is participant observation. This means intensive fieldwork in which the researcher is immersed in the culture under study. The ethnographer begins the study by examining participants in interaction in ordinary settings and by attempting to discern pervasive patterns (Patton, 2002:81).

In exploring and describing a culture of aggression using the ethnographic research approach, inferences will be made from three sources: 1) from the way people act; 2) from what people say; and 3) from the artefacts people use (Spradley, 2009:123). This research method employs a range of observational and interpretive techniques to explore the observable behaviours of people with the aim of describing the culture of those who are studied.

The primary method of ethnographic research is participant observation, exploring rich points, follow-up interviews and field notes. This procedure consists of spending time in the field with the participants, taking part in their daily routines, listening to them and asking questions. The researcher is interested in all aspects of human behaviour: roles, opinions, perceptions, interactions, rituals, language, religion, food, dress code, history, physical environment and culture (McCafferty, 2001:64).

For the purpose of this research, the discipline book, the school code of conduct, the learners' school books, mark schedules, attendance register, graffiti and artefacts, will form a source of great interest. Ethnography is characterised as a research inquiry aimed at exploring and describing a phenomenon in order to interpret the place of culture in participants’ affairs. The characteristics of the different types of ethnography were categorised by
Silverman (2011:17) as integrative ethnography (which is participatory in approach), narrative ethnography and combinative ethnography.

The term ethnography has a wide range, with different associations and traditions in different disciplines. Many scholars (Taylor, 2002:34; Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland & Lofland, 2001:109; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000:209; Silverman, 2011:112; Wolcott, 2009:200; Flick, 2008:18; Merriam, 2008:129 and Denzin, 2006:123) agree with the central notion of ethnography as the principled and humanistic exploration and reconstruction of the social world from the perspectives of the interacting individuals.

In this context, it becomes apparent that ethnography is deeply rooted in the qualitative and interpretive paradigm of research method, as it essentially seeks to discover multiple truths that operate in the social world of participants. In such an interpretive paradigm, it cannot be disputed that truth and facts are socially constructed and that ethnographers essentially establish patterns from observations and interviews in their endeavours to collect and retell the multiple versions of the so-called truth (Denzin, 2006:123).

An ethnographic study may be applied for its basic nature. The applied ethnographic method is used in this study and seeks to offer views of how ethnographic understanding of a phenomenon could shed more light on the study.

An ethnographic inquiry is characterised by three approaches, as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2001:392). The first ethnographic research method was attempted by the British colonial administration in Africa. They wanted to gain insight from what they termed the “native’s point of view”. As a result, they were able to obtain valuable information that assisted their inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001:394).

The second approach was brought about by the integration of cultural concepts and the ethnographic data obtained by the British colonial
administration (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001:398). The value of this was even more obvious, given the multi-cultural outlook of the British colonies. The third approach embarked on participant observation as a mainstay of the ethnographic research method. The three aforementioned ethnographic approaches applied by the British colonies did not have a differing stance; instead, these approaches interlinked with each other in order to portray a holistic perspective of their inquiry.

After viewing the approaches of applied ethnographic studies, the cognitive approach of ethnography derived from Denzin and Lincoln (2001:399-400) tends to focus on a research population that is part of a large group that would have been otherwise too large to study. The relevance of this approach in the current research is even more appropriate, given that the cognitive approach to ethnography requires a research problem that is, at least, defined by some larger social “problem” (Taylor, 2002:113; Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland & Lofland, 2001:222).

In this regard, the cognitive approach applied to ethnography derives much of its relevance and practical value from the fact that it tends to focus on failures of communication that may have occurred over time, or on societal breakdowns. Given that communication in the school environment tends to be lower than desired, the tension could be such that the environment breeds mistrust.

The researcher selected the applied ethnographic research method; in addition to the strengths already characterised, the fact that this method provides a holistic focus through the understanding of a culture of aggression in the grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education, makes the purpose of this method increasingly attractive. This method is also an objective account of the phenomenon under study, which will be typically written in the third person’s point of view and reported in an unbiased manner, by means of which the rich
points will be explored and described in order to determine the nature of aggression as narrated by the participants.

The objective of phase 1 is to obtain as much information as possible about a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education. In order to achieve this purpose, the researcher has to decide on the intended group of individuals that will be interviewed. This will be done in the manner as set out in the paragraphs that follow.

2.6.1 Population and Sample

As mentioned in chapter 1, population is the collection of all individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities that the researcher is interested in finding out more about (Mark, 2006:19). A class with grade 10 learners was identified by the district office of the Gauteng Department of Education as having a propensity to aggression-related behaviour when compared to all the grade 10 classes in different secondary schools in the Sedibeng district.

The school-based support team (SBST) coordinator refers cases related to aggression to the district office on a monthly basis by Department of Education (2008:94). Thus, for the purpose of this study, the population will consist of learners in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school in Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education.

2.6.2 Purposive sampling

In qualitative research, sampling becomes not random but purposive (Borg & Gall, 2009:121). The “multiple realities” of any cultural context should be represented. The researcher for instance, in studying a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, will never be satisfied with observing only the learners in a grade 10 class. Teachers, the principal and the school governing body will
also be observed during their interaction with the grade 10 learners. For the purpose of this research, the sample will be purposefully selected from the population (Polit & Hungler, 2003:235) and the sample size will be determined by the saturation of the data of the phenomenon under study (Talbot, 2005:255) as the interviews continue. According to Agar (2007:20), data saturation refers to repeating information during interviews.

2.6.3 Data collection

The multiple data collection techniques will be employed in this research. The focus will be on the researcher’s observations. The fieldwork will be conducted by a prolonged engagement in the secondary school with the grade 10 learners. The focus will be on participant observation in order to determine the “rich points” in a culture of aggression. The artefacts and the other school documents will be taken into consideration. The wall pictures, language, graffiti, reports and field notes will also contribute towards the exploration of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The multi data collection will ensure that this ethnography works towards providing a qualitatively, insightful and triangulated description.

Data will be collected by means of observation and field notes, interviews, documents and audio-visual material.

2.6.3.1 Observation and field notes

One of the most common methods for collecting data in an ethnographic study is direct, first-hand observation of daily participation. This can include participant observation. Observations will commence as a grand tour observation. As a grand tour is taking place, the researcher will record every aspect in the school environment and the activities that are going on. The remaining field observations will be focussed on researching smaller aspects of the grand tour observations.
The purpose of data collection and analysis is to enable the researcher to understand the patterns of a culture of aggression (De Vos et al., 2011:305; Merriam, 2008:72). During phase 1 of this study, data will be collected through observations in order to explore the rich points. The follow-up on the rich points will be conducted by means of in-depth interviews with participants and other mediums stipulated in paragraph 2.6.4.

As the researcher enters the culture of the participants, the ethical principles will be adhered to, as stipulated in chapter 1. The researcher will document the patterns of a culture of aggression as observed. The participants’ verbal and non-verbal communication, behaviour and setting will be observed during the prolonged fieldwork and the reflections of the rich points documented in the researcher’s field notes.

Field notes are a means employed by the qualitative researcher whose main objective with any research is to attempt to understand the true perspectives of the participants being studied. Field notes entail the observation and description of activities, as well as the meaning of the activities in the context in which they are observed (Patton, 2002:202). They also allow the researcher to access the participants and to record what he or she observes in an unobtrusive manner.

The researcher will make field notes as part of the data collection throughout the observations. The field notes will detail the recordings of a variety of information collected in the field that the researcher will document as part of the data-collection process (Talbot, 2005:479). The field notes will include both the empirical observations and interpretations.

In this research, the researcher refers specifically to observational notes, theoretical notes, methodological notes and personal notes (Wilson, 2009:430). In the interest of clarity and congruency, the observational and theoretical notes will be tabulated. In this way, it will be clear which theoretical
inferences were made for each observational note. The last section of the field notes will deal with methodological and personal notes.

Observational, theoretical and personal and methodological notes will be discussed below.

   a) Observational notes

Observational notes are descriptions of events through watching and listening (Wilson, 2009:435). Observational notes will be vital to the researcher in documenting what is observed during the participants’ interactions in their setting; the “who, what and how” of the participants’ situation, as well as the cryptic interpretations that will be observed in the grade 10 class under study.

   b) Theoretical notes

Theoretical notes are purposeful attempts to derive meaning from the observational notes (Wilson, 2009:435). Here the researcher will interpret what was observed and make inference in order to build an analytic scheme.

   c) Methodological notes

These are instructions to the researcher - critiques of one’s procedure and processes and reminders of approaches that may enhance the methodology (Wilson 2009:436). The researcher will create a space in which the participants can freely express themselves. The researcher will reflect on the responses of the participants in order to understand and ask for clarifications where it is not clearly understandable. The researcher will refrain from asking leading questions. The researcher is entering the research field from the point of not knowing.
d) Personal notes

The researcher will keep a field journal to write down her own reactions, reflections, observations and experiences (Wilson, 2009:436).

2.6.3.2 In-depth interviews

Another common method for data collection in an ethnographic study is interviews. As soon as the researcher observes any “rich points” pertaining to a culture of aggression, she will follow up by conducting interviews with learners, parents, the principal and teachers to explore the meaning of the “rich points”. The patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class may be identified from the observations and the interviews. For the purpose of this research, the school’s discipline book, the school code of conduct, the school's news letters, the learner's books, mark schedules, attendance register, drawings, graffiti on the walls, furniture and pictures that are available in the secondary school, will form the source of great interest.

Interviews are based on the researcher’s observations and aim to clarify interactions and events. Interviews may include conversations at different levels or in different forms, which may involve casual conversations, small talk to long interviews and a particular approach to transcribing interviews. This is a set of procedures by which ethnographers discover and record patterns of a culture of aggression and connections of kinship, behaviour, attitudes, language, interactions and descent using diagrammes and symbols (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001:367).

Interviews are based on the researcher’s observations and aim to clarify interactions and events. Interviews form an integral part of the data collection. The researcher used Kvale’s (1996:88) seven stages of the interviewing process, namely thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysis, verifying and reporting, to develop educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.
Semi-structured interviews will be conducted without imposing any prior categorisation that may limit the field of inquiry (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:374). The goal of semi-structured interviews, one-on-one and group interviews is to understand the phenomenon. It is therefore of utmost importance for the researcher to establish rapport. Thus the researcher will put him- or herself in the role of the active participants and attempt to see the situation from their perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001:367).

The researcher will use empathy to understand the participants’ views, feelings, knowledge of their reality and the special meaning they attach to their social portrait (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:362). Bracketing will be used to bracket the researcher’s personal views (see paragraph 2.6.4).

2.6.3.3 Documents

The department of education policy documents, school news letters, artefacts, school discipline book, the school’s code of conduct, the learners’ books, mark schedules, attendance register, symbols and the minutes of meetings held at school with the parents, inter-sectoral stakeholders, teaching and non-teaching staff members, the school governing body, the Department of Education, which will include district, provincial and national offices, will form part of the data collection.

2.6.3.4 Audiovisual Materials

The pictures, graffiti, drawings, recorded information, school’s website, face book and photographs will form part of the data collection.
2.6.4 The Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative ethnographic research, it is more appropriate for the researcher to impose a minimum structure, such as relying on unstructured methods of data collection, to provide participants with the opportunity to reveal information in a natural way (Polit & Hungler, 1993:253). In order for the data collection to be successful, the researcher will follow the steps below.

- Use own personality

The use of the researcher's personality is a key factor in qualitative research (De Vos et al., 2011:305). The researcher's ability to identify with the participants or to empathise in order to show acceptance and understanding will be used.

- Create an open atmosphere

Field and Morse (2002:56) state that the researcher must establish relationships with the participants, but must avoid becoming too friendly with individual members, in order to obtain objectivity. In this study, relationships will be facilitated by being receptive and listening non-judgmentally. Mouton (2010:58) adds that the advantage of a strong interpersonal relationship between the researcher and participants is that it neutralises initial distrust and builds rapport. It can also serve as a control for role selection and context effects. De Vos et al. (2011:305) state that the researcher must always treat participants with respect and courtesy.

- Use of communication techniques

Creswell (1998:162) states that for the data collection to be successful, the researcher, as the primary instrument in the collection of data, will use
communication techniques. The participants will be motivated to contribute spontaneously and will be stimulated by means of communication techniques.

Techniques such as reflecting, clarifying, paraphrasing, probing and summarising will be used to encourage participants to freely articulate their views (Okun, 1992:76). Benner (2004:108) adds that listening to their stories with as minimal response as possible gives participants an opportunity to narrate their stories as freely as they have occurred.

- **Probing**

Probing refers to the researcher’s ability to help participants elicit more useful information in an interview than was volunteered in the first reply (Polit & Hungler, 1993:650). “Go on” and “Tell me more …” are some of the examples that the researcher will use for probing (Okun, 1992:70).

- **Reflecting**

Reflecting refers to the researching communicating to the participants that their concerns and perspectives are understood (Okun, 1992:70). The researcher will reflect the stated or implied feelings, the observed non-verbal messages and what was omitted or emphasised: “Sounds as if you are really unhappy about …”; “You really enjoyed …” and “Let's discuss …” are examples.

- **Paraphrasing**

Okun (1992:70) defines a paraphrase as a verbal statement, although the words may be synonyms of words used by a participant.
• **Clarifying**

The researcher will attempt to focus on or clearly understand the basic nature of an individual's statements. Examples are: “I am having trouble understanding what you are saying. Is it that ..?” “I am confused about ..; could you go over that again, please?” “Sounds to me like you are saying …” (Okun, 1992:70).

• **Summarising**

By summarising, the researcher will synthesise what was communicated and highlight major themes (Okun, 1992:71).

### 2.6.5 Data analysis

The collected data will be analysed qualitatively through observations, field notes, interviews, documents and other audio-visual material (Agar, 2007:66). Ethnographic data analysis requires that the researcher continuously moves from rich points from the fieldwork to analysis, to literature control, back to fieldwork, exploring rich points further, to analysis, to literature control. In this study, the data that needs to be analysed will consist of the transcribed interviews and field notes. The researcher applied Tesch’s method of data analysis (Creswell, 2011:155) to this study to ensure trustworthiness, organisation of raw data and integration of findings that is supported by the literature. The data will be collected during the interviews until data saturation is reached.

For the purpose of this research, the school discipline book, the school code of conduct, the school’s news letters, the learners’ books, mark schedules, attendance register, drawings, graffiti and pictures that are available in the secondary school, will form a source of great interest. The interpretation of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class will further be sought from analysing
the school’s website, face book, school assemblies, sports and cultural activities.

An independent coder will verify the findings based on the prescribed protocol. The independent coder and the researcher will reach consensus to confirm and change identified patterns. Finally, findings will be described using the actual words of participants, in the form of quotations, in order to describe a culture of aggression.

2.6.6 Literature control

The ethnographic approach uses the literature inductively towards the end of the study, placing literature to be compared to and contrasted with the outcomes of the study (Creswell, 2011:37). The study will thus compare and combine the findings from the study with the literature to determine current knowledge of the patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. The researcher will conduct a literature control after the data collection and analysis so that the information in the literature will not influence the researcher’s objectivity (Burns & Grove, 2009:118; Creswell, 2011:23).

2.7 Phase 2: Description of a conceptual framework

In phase 2 a conceptual framework will be described based on the findings from phase 1. The results and concepts will be compared, enriched and recontextualised in the available literature (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003:37). During this step, findings from the data collected from the participants will be used as a basis for describing a conceptual framework to be employed in order to manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class constructively.
The survey list of Dickoff, James and Wiedenbach (1968:423) will be used to formulate the conceptual framework. The following questions will be answered:

- who is the agent;
- who is the recipient;
- what is the procedure;
- what is the dynamics;
- what is the context; and
- what is the end point of activity?

Marshall and Rossman (2005:188) indicate that the researcher must determine for whom the conceptual framework will be generated, as this determination can provide structure to the content of the conceptual framework.

2.8 Phase 3: The development of educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school

In phase 3 the strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression are described, based on the conceptual framework. Educational strategies consist of objectives as well as actions that need to be taken to achieve the aims. These strategies were implemented in a grade 10 class and evaluated by the participating learners.
2.9 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Researchers need alternative models appropriate to qualitative designs that ensure rigour without sacrificing the relevance of the qualitative research (De Vos et al., 2011:348). Therefore, in this study, the model of Guba and Lincoln (1985:290) is used to ensure trustworthiness. They identified four criteria for ensuring trustworthiness of interviews and findings. These are truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality. For each of these criteria a different strategy is used.

- Truth value, using strategies of credibility.
- Applicability, using strategies of transferability.
- Consistency, using strategies of dependability.
- Neutrality, using strategies of confirmability.

2.9.1 Credibility

Credibility addresses the issue regarding whether the research established confidence in the truth findings, and deals with the question of how the researcher’s findings match the reality. One of the assumptions of qualitative research, and also of naturalistic inquiry, is that the reality is holistic, multidimensional and ever-changing. The findings should try to portray the world as it appears to the people in it (Merriam, 2008:167). The truth value is usually obtained through the discovery of human interactions as they are perceived by participants (Krefting, 1991:215).

Babbie and Mouton (2001:160) discuss three issues that relate to credibility in a qualitative study.

- Rigorous techniques and methods for gathering high-quality data that is carefully analysed, with attention to issues of validity, reliability and triangulation.
• The credibility of the researcher that depends on training, experience, track record, status and the presentation of self.

• The appreciation of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative methods, inductive analysis and holistic thinking.

Although there are no rules regarding the length of time that the researcher should be engaged in the fieldwork, there is an inherent danger that not spending enough time on this important facet of the research could lead to impoverished results. According to Krefting (1991:218), credibility requires adequate submersion in the research setting in order to enable recurrent patterns to emerge.

In this process, Krefting (1991:217) warns that, on the other hand, the researcher should guard against becoming too personally involved in the results of fieldwork. Glesne and Peshkin (2011:46) call for a continual alertness even while sharing in the interpretive process, and caution researchers to be aware of their limitations.

Credible findings and interpretation will be produced by the aspects discusses in the paragraphs that follow.

• Prolonged engagement

A period of more than 12 months was spent in the field observing the participants in their context before starting with the interviews, in order to establish rapport with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:301). Some time will be spent on data collection activities to test for misinformation and distortion (Talbot, 2005:488).
• Peer examination

The researcher’s peers will be used in this regard. Their task will be to explore and question the researcher’s biases and to have meanings and bias regarding interpretation clarified (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:308; Talbot 2005:488; Creswell 2011:168; De Vos et al., 2011:331).

• Member checking

Data, interpretations and conclusions will be assessed with the participants in order to correct errors, collect additional information and to give them an opportunity to summarise the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:314; Talbot, 2005:488; Creswell, 2011:202).

• Reflexive journal

Field notes will be taken that will include the researcher’s experience, observations and catharsis in terms of her own values and interests (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:327; Polit & Hungler, 2006:108; De Vos et al., 2011:331). Field and Morse (2002:81) add that these notes may include subjects’ portraits, which involve describing physical appearance, mannerisms or style of talking, the observer’s feelings, problems, hunches, impressions or prejudices, as well as any ethical dilemmas.

• Authority of the researcher

Credibility will be ensured by the fact that the researcher previously wrote a minor-dissertation at masters’ level using a qualitative research method. In addition, the researcher is supervised by supervisors who are renowned in the field of qualitative research methods, coupled with extensive experience in the said field.
• Triangulation

Data will be collected from multiple sources to ensure credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:305; Talbot, 2005:488; Creswell, 2011:202; Maxwell, 2006:75). Observations and field notes, interviews, documents and audiovisual material will be used for triangulation (Dias, 2000:363; Creswell, 2011:202; Lincoln & Guba, 2011:305; Silverman, 2011:75).

According to Ragin (2004:186), triangulation is a technique of checking different data against each other to elaborate, refine or evaluate a particular interpretation of evidence or an inference drawn from evidence. Triangulation, according to Krefting (1991:210), is based on the idea of convergence of multiple perspectives for mutual confirmation of data to ensure that all aspects of the phenomenon were investigated.

2.9.2 Transferability (applicability)

Transferability allows someone other than the researcher to define whether the findings of the study are applicable to another context or setting (Streubert & Carpenter, 2009:25; Talbot, 2005:488). Willig (2001:143) describes this transferability as the opportunity to allow readers to explore the extent to which the study may or may not have applicability beyond the specific context in which the data was generated. From a demographic point of view, this research is aimed at learners who are in grade 10 in a secondary school. This, however, does not mean that the results can be exactly transferred to other learners in similar secondary schools.

This will be accompanied by providing a dense description of the participants’ demographic information and a rich description of the results necessary to enable someone interested to evaluate the applicability of the data to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:216; Talbot, 2005:485; Creswell, 1998:168; Polit & Hungler, 1993:362). The realisation of the sample will be described.
The results of phase 1 will be described and supported by the direct quotations of participants.

2.9.3 Dependability

In this study, dependability will be ensured by stepwise replication of the research method, the code and recode procedure and dense description of research methodology. In the context of qualitative research it is perhaps more fitting to explain dependability by referring to the way in which data could be deemed consistent, if and when the researcher should revisit and reinterpret the same data and come to the same conclusions (Krefting, 1991:221; Grobler, 2007:34).

To enable someone else to logically follow the process and procedures used in the study, an audit will be done to inspect the inquiry and determine its authenticity. Peer examination will be also be employed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:317; Talbot, 1995:488; De Vos et al., 2011:331; Polit & Hungler, 1993:363). Consistency will ensure that the findings would be reliable. A consistent research method will indicate whether the inquiry could be replicated with the same participants in similar contexts.

Variability can be expected in qualitative research due to the fact that the instruments assessed are the researcher and participants, both of whom vary greatly in the research project. Because variability can be expected in qualitative research, consistency is defined in terms of dependability (Sliep, 2004:61).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:76), dependability implies traceable variability, meaning variability that can be ascribed to identified sources. Variability should therefore be explained in terms of either the informant, the researcher or the context. The key to qualitative research is to learn from the participants rather than to control them. Krefting (1991:221) is of the opinion that the exact methods of data gathering and analysis, as well as the method
of interpretation, must be described, as this would be deemed an indicator of how repeatable the study might be.

Glesne and Peshkin (2011:146) begin their discussion on trustworthiness by underlining time as a major factor in the acquisition of trustworthy data. This refers to time spent interviewing and building a trusting relationship with the participants, as they then less readily feign behaviour or feel the need to do so; moreover, they are more likely to be frank and comprehensive about what they tell the researcher. This in turn results in the greater dependability of data interpretation, to be subjected to independent coding to verify the data, thus linking with the idea of confirmability.

2.9.4 Confirmability (neutrality)

Janesick (2011:120) suggests that conclusions drawn in a study should be based on gathered data, with detailed information trails maintained and evidenced. Neutrality is the freedom from the research procedures and results (Krefting, 1991:216). It refers to the degree to which the findings are a function solely of the participants and conditions of the research, and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives (Krefting, 1991:216).

The researcher needs to ensure neutrality by decreasing the distance between the researcher and the participants. The value of the findings increases when the distance between the researcher and the participants is decreased.

Lincoln and Guba (1985:300) state that it refers to the objectivity of data and to the inter-relational confirmability. A technique for establishing confirmability is the audit trail. This strategy ensures neutrality and objectivity. The findings, conclusions and recommendations must be supported by the data. An external auditor will attempt to follow through the natural history or progression of events in a project in an attempt to understand how and why decisions were made (Krefting, 1991:221; De Vos et al., 2011:331).
Audit strategies, like an inquiry audit, will be conducted. Records that ought to be included in the audit are raw data (field notes, tape recordings), data reduction and analysis products (condensed notes, summaries), data reconstruction and synthesis products (outcomes and conclusions), process notes (procedures, designs, strategies) and materials related to intention and disposition (field journal) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:319).

The trail contains details on how data was collected, how categories were derived and how decisions were made through inquiry. All the data and supporting documents will be available for the auditing procedures.

Table 2.1 shows a schematic representation of the strategies of establishing trustworthiness with their criteria and implementation in this study. Table 2.1 indicates how the measures to ensure trustworthiness were applied to this study.
Table 2.1 Application of the measures to ensure trustworthiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>APPLICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CREDIBILITY</td>
<td>Prolonged engagement</td>
<td>The researcher spent a period of more than 12 months in the field observing the participants in their context before the interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member checking</td>
<td>After each interview, the interview will be played back to the participants for reflections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td>Field notes will be taken all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persistent observation</td>
<td>The researcher will constantly observe the non-verbal communication of participants, for example laughter, silence and tone of voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer reviews</td>
<td>Two supervisors who are experts in the field of qualitative research. A doctoral committee composed of experts in the field under study. Presentations given during seminars in the course of this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRATEGY</td>
<td>CRITERIA</td>
<td>APPLICATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSFERABILITY</td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>Different methods of data collections will be used: observations, interviews, documents and audio-visuals in all phases. Discussions will be held with relevant peers, colleagues and participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dense description of the results and conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Detailed and dense description of results, including literature control. The results of phases 1 to 3 will be described and supported by direct quotations from the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPENDABILITY</td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>Field notes and audio tapes of all participants will be kept for a period of two years. The researcher will spend an extensive period with the participants - up until data saturation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dense description of the research method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The research method will be fully described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>Research protocol will be discussed with relevant parties and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRATEGY</td>
<td>CRITERIA</td>
<td>APPLICATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>independent coder.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code-recode procedure</td>
<td>Raw data will be sent to an independent coder.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFIRMABILITY</td>
<td>Peer group discussion</td>
<td>The findings will be discussed with the supervisors. Again the findings will be presented during seminars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmability audit</td>
<td>Continuous contact will be maintained with the supervisors throughout the study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>A literature control will be done. The use of individual and group interviews, field notes, a journal and observation of the learners will ensure triangulation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.9.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Conducting research is an ethical venture, thus containing a system of morals and rules of behaviour (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:522; De Vos et al., 2011:64; Medical Research Council, 2002,120; Struwig & Stead, 2001:66).

All ethical measures will be applied consistently throughout the research process, as described in detail in chapter 1. The researcher will seek consent...
from the parents of the participants and from the Gauteng Department of Education (refer to appendix A). All the ethical aspects of the research will be stipulated in the letter of consent. The findings of the research will be made available to the departmental authorities and the participants on request.

2.10 CONCLUSION

A qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual research design was described as a method chosen by the researcher in phase 1 of the study, in order to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education.

Individual in-depth and face-to-face interviews as data collection methods were fully described, as well as Tesch’s (1998:117) steps for data analysis. Lincoln and Guba’s model (1985) to establish and maintain trustworthiness of this study was also described.

The results of phase 1 of the study were used with a literature review and control to describe the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.
CHAPTER 3

DISCUSSIONS OF THE PATTERNS OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION IN A GRADE 10 CLASS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the focus will be on a culture of aggression as perceived by the grade 10 learners in their classroom, and on the entire physical environment in their secondary school context. Observations, interviews, field notes, documents, audio-visual material, reflections and verbatim quotations will be supported by a literature control.

The researcher observed the grade 10 learners as they interacted with peers, teachers and their environment. Other events and reflections were recorded by the researcher in the field notes. The researcher conducted follow-up interviews with learners, teachers, parents and the principal that allowed an in-depth study of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class (Louw & Edwards, 2011:584).

A culture of aggression in a grade 10 class is described in terms of the following patterns: the patterns of anger, patterns of bullying, patterns of fighting and patterns of a lack of moral values in education, as indicated in figure 3.1 below.
3.2 DATA COLLECTION

This was an ethnographic study of the patterns of aggression in a grade 10 class at a particular secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education. This is one of the 12 districts in the Gauteng Department of Education, situated in Gauteng South. The said district stretches from Grasmere to Vanderbijlpark. There is a secondary school in
this district that has a history of learners exhibiting mammoth aggressive behaviour.

A grade 10 class in this secondary school was identified by the school-based support team (SBST) and referred to the Gauteng Department of Education as the most aggressive class out of all the grade 10 classes in the secondary school. The Gauteng Department of Education established that the said grade 10 class rates uppermost in terms of the cases of aggression reported among all the other schools that are under the jurisdiction of the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department; a substantial portion of which is accounted for by a number of learners under the age of 18 years who use weapons in order to settle their disputes. The said secondary school is situated next to an informal settlement. According to the researcher’s observations, the informal settlement exacerbates a culture of aggression in the secondary school, particularly in a grade 10 class (see Photo 3.1).

The researcher observed the transition of the aggressive behaviours from the informal settlement to the classroom environment. As was mentioned in chapter 1, schools are the microcosm of a society; the learners in a grade 10 class mirror the demographics of their area.

Photo 3.1 - Depiction of the actual area
The targeted secondary school for the study is situated next to the area depicted in 3.1. This school was reserved for coloured learners pre-1994. The status quo changed post 1994; the school is expected to accommodate all racial groups. This translates to education for all as stipulated in the South African School Act (1996:7). Currently there are substantial numbers of diverse learners, emanating from different racial groups, who reside in different areas, enrolled in this secondary school.

The sample of this study includes the grade 10 learners from this particular secondary school. This secondary school comprises black and coloured learners of both genders. There are five grade 10 classes in this secondary school that are categorised as grade 10 A, B, C, D and E. Due to the vast number of reports compiled by the school-based support team (SBST) and forwarded to the district office of the Gauteng Department of Education and Training, citing a culture of aggression that is on the increase in the secondary school, and more especially in a grade 10 (A) class. As a consequence of those compiled reports, the grade 10 (A) class was chosen for the purpose of this research.

Grade 10 (A) is the biggest of the five grade 10 classes in this particular secondary school. This classroom accommodates 52 learners. The other four grade 10 classes, which are categorised as grade 10 B, C, D and E, accommodate 40 to 48 learners respectively. The name of the school and the identity of the participants will not be divulged due to the ethical considerations that were stipulated in chapter 1 of this study.

The data for this study was collected by means of observations of participants in different areas of the secondary school, follow-up individual interviews and the perusal of other supporting documents and items of interest that were mentioned in chapters 1 and 2. The purpose of the follow-up individual interviews in an ethnographic study is to clarify the events that the researcher observes.
The researcher spent more than 12 months in the field observing the participants and conducting the follow-up interviews. The focus was on a culture of aggression in the identified sample in this particular secondary school until the realisation that the same events and stories kept on recurring. It is at this stage that data saturation was realised. However, it must be noted that no data collection schedule was used, as in true ethnographic tradition, the researcher does not have any preconceived notions of a culture of aggression in existence in a grade 10 class (Agar, 2007:76).

A number of unstructured and semi-structured interviews were conducted for 45 min twice a week for a period of six months. All the interviews were conducted in English. To enhance the quality of data collection, learners, teachers, parents, the school governing body and the school management team were interviewed. See the schedule of interviewing and conversations conducted in table 3.1.

Table 3.1 - Schedule of interviews and conversations conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS AND CONVERSATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEARNERS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENTS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHERS</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data collected was captured by means of observations, audio-visual material, artefacts, graffiti, viewing of other documents, follow-up interviews and field notes. The school’s website, face book, the school assembly, sports
and cultural activities will add to the body of knowledge regarding a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

### 3.3 DISCUSSION OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION IN A GRADE 10 CLASS

The researcher will explain the dynamics of a grade 10 class that contribute to the existence of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class as observed by the researcher. The researcher opines that a grade 10 class does not exist in a vacuum; therefore the circumference of the circumstances of a grade 10 class should be explained, as observed.

It became evident during the researcher’s fieldwork that the secondary school in this study is situated in an area that is extremely congested with an informal settlement and dense population. The congested informal settlement is the melting pot for a culture of aggression, which is mirrored by the learners in a grade 10 class in their secondary school environment. The lawlessness in the surrounding area is on the increase; police raids are almost impossible, as it is cumbersome for the police to navigate this congested area. The researcher observed that a culture of lawlessness diffuses quickly from the community level to the secondary school premises. The researcher observed that the aggressive lifestyle of the community members is reflected by a culture of aggression that is identifiable in this grade 10 class.

The community members are constantly occupied by frequent heated verbal exchanges. Those heated verbal exchanges escalate into fights. In some instances, the community members’ heated verbal exchange and fights occur next to the secondary school; fights occur inside the school premises.

The secondary school fence does not have a lock-up gate; it is short and broken, with a number of holes. The state of the school fence makes the accessibility of the secondary school premises effortless to members of the
community who fight verbally or sometimes physically. The community members sometimes use the secondary school premises as a hide out. There are filed reports in the principal's office conveying the use of the school premises by community members as a hide out; especially when they are chased by police officers. The majority of people in this area are unemployed; their livelihood depends on criminal activities such as drug peddling, gambling, car hijacking and gangsterism. During the interviews, the researcher established that this neighbourhood has no positive role models. The community members who work themselves up the cooperate ladder soon desert the area for more affluent areas.

When the fights erupt at community level and reach the school premises, the learners in the grade 10 class will desert their classroom activities in favour of cheering on the fights. The researcher witnessed the aftermath of the community fights with great sadness. When these fights come to a halt, the grade 10 learners will be reluctant to go back to their classroom for the continuation of the rest of the day's tuition. They will, instead, openly disregard the school's authority by roaming around outside the classrooms daring the teachers by ignoring the teachers' instructions to go back to the classroom for the rest of the day's tuition. The researcher observed the learners laughing at and teasing the teachers.

As seen in the above discussions, the habitués of this area are devoid of moral life, rules, rights, duties and obligations. When orienting the observations to the subjective meaning of everyday life in a grade 10 class, the researcher observed a complex array of learners' understanding that serves to structure the boys' and girls' aggressive behaviour in their daily interactions.

The observed dynamics should be considered, for instance the high unemployment rate of most families in this area impacts negatively on the behaviour of the learners in the grade 10 class in terms of the following basic
needs that are interrelated: financial, physical and psychological needs. The financial needs of the learners in the grade 10 class are compromised to a degree that there are very few learners who bring along food or lunch money to school. Sometimes fights erupt because the learners who do not possess the aforementioned food or lunch money will steal from those learners who do possess such resources. When the learners who steal are caught, major fights may erupt; the effects of the fights may spill over for weeks on end.

The question of the “haves” and the “have-nots”, as they are often categorised in the grade 10 class, further leads to issues of bullying. What actually happens is that those learners who do not have food or lunch money may bully those who have those luxuries. The bullying activities, as observed by the researcher, are unpredictable. Sometimes the learners who have money or food bully those learners who do not have money or food. The researcher can infer such bullying as a matter of attitude and low self-esteem rather than the phenomenon of the “haves and the have-nots” per se.

During the interviews, the researcher noted another phenomenon as a cause for concern, namely the financial deprivation of the grade 10 learners’ schooling needs, notwithstanding the fact that, according to the South African School Act (1996:13), education is free for all. During the interviews, the researcher established that the secondary school cannot sustain itself with the government grant, albeit the allocation is termed the top slice, meaning that the secondary school in this study receives a bigger grant from Government compared to other schools that are categorised as affluent (Circular 19 of 2008). It is puzzling to learn that all learners in this secondary school are bound to pay school fees in order for the school to stay afloat, regardless of the learners’ financial status and constraints.

When the parents cannot afford to pay the school fees, the learners become frustrated and project their frustrations on other learners by humiliating them. The school does not help the situation either, as the learners who cannot
afford to pay for tuition are chased away from the school. This practise leads to a confrontation between the parents, the secondary school and the Gauteng Department of Education, as depicted in the Photo 3.2 below.

**Photo 3.2 - Parent’s demonstration of anger towards the school**

The learners in the grade 10 class are aware of the advantages and the disadvantages of their socio-economic status and the lifestyle associated with it. It has an impact on the learners’ daily routines, activities and levels of aggression. Furthermore, it was interesting to note that the socio-economic awareness of the learners played a major role in the learners’ formation of friendships (cliques). The researcher observed that socio-economic status and fame are further used as one of the measures to distinguish different gangs.
The sound or unsound financial standing of the learners determines their social class. There is a vivid gap between the majority of poor learners and the minority of middle class learners; the gap becomes wider when the middle class learners bring along gadgets like cell phones and iPods to the classroom. The positive schooling ethos is compromised due to the use of those gadgets during lessons. Those gadgets are further used for unhelpful activities; in a separate instance, a video-recording was made of a female learner while using the toilet. Such video-recordings are mostly targeting the girls’ toilets. The researcher observed a trend in the grade 10 class of learners pasting aggressively provocative statements on the face book wall of the secondary school; such statements are met equally by aggressive responses, including foul language and intimidation. The battle lines are often drawn on the face book wall.

The learners are pressured to buy prescribed books and stationary, as the free resources provided by the Department of Education are not sufficient. A culture of aggression arises when the learners without the prescribed books and stationary steal from those learners who do posses such resources. Another phenomenon observed by the researcher was learners without the prescribed textbooks tearing pages from the textbooks not belonging to them in instances where they cannot steal the entire prescribed text book. Stealing in this secondary school compromises the moral values in education. The researcher observed that the grade 10 learners in this study do not respect themselves, their peers or the possessions of their peers. Lack of respect among the learners in this grade 10 class propagates a culture of aggression.

The majority of learners do not possess the learning materials that are a prerequisite in the secondary school; they cannot keep up with the school’s financial demands, due to their parents’ financial constraints. Consequently the learners give up hope and begin to idle inside and outside the classroom. The learners who idle promote a culture of aggression. The researcher
observed gambling, fighting and money laundering during school time; such conduct by learners disregard the moral values in education.

Moral values in education should be a belief system that upholds the management of aggression in a classroom environment. This belief system should be based on an environment that manages stress, promotes effective interaction, positive attitudes, tolerance of diversity, respect of the rights of individuals and the responsibilities of the learners, parents and teachers in the school community. The researcher observed the learners resorting to substance abuse and other forms of misbehaviours due to frustration, resulting from the lack of financial support. The different forms of misbehaviour exacerbate a culture of aggression in the grade 10 class that impacts negatively on the moral values in education.

The physical needs of the learners are deduced from the manner in which they groom themselves. Some learners are well groomed from top to toe and some learners lack in that respect. The level of challenged grade 10 learners is exhibited by old and torn school uniforms that are substituted by wearing any colour jerseys, shoes or socks to school, which does not comply with the school’s dress code. Such disparity in appearance subjects the challenged learners to vulnerability and humiliation by the well-groomed learners. The researcher observed the physical needs of the learners impacting negatively on their self-image.

There is a disparity in perceptions between the learners who are well groomed and those who are “shabby”. The learners who look “shabby” perceive themselves as inferior and they display a low self-concept that makes them more vulnerable to those learners who are well groomed. This phenomenon is elicited by what the researcher calls the lack of assertiveness. The researcher further observed that the learners who are not well groomed are unable to assert themselves effectively; they are unable to voice their
concerns, likes and dislikes - especially on occasions when they are picked on by the well groomed learners.

This is a reality in the grade 10 class; most of the time the well-groomed learners pick on the “shabby” learners for a variety of reasons that the researcher perceive as minute. When the researcher reflect on some of the fights that were due because of who is wearing what in terms of the latest trend, brands and hair styles, the researcher can only deduce that some of the fights are merely caused by frustration. The learners who are not well groomed, as purported by the other learners, are easily frustrated when provoked and resort to aggression as a defence mechanism.

The financial and physical needs of the grade 10 learners have a psychological effect that is interpreted as the lack of care and love from their parents. When reflecting on the aforementioned statement, the researcher can deduce that the learners retaliate to such perceived conditions by eliciting aggressive behaviours.

The psychological needs of the learners in the grade 10 class are further compromised by the secondary school environment that they perceive as hostile and not caring about providing them with protection. The grade 10 learners perceive their secondary school environment as threatening and insecure. The researcher observed that a culture of aggression is sometimes exacerbated by the high stress levels of the grade 10 learners and the intimidating secondary school environment.

The presence of a number of taverns in the vicinity of the secondary school encourages substance abuse in the school. The researcher observed four taverns that were conspicuous in the vicinity of the school. This implies that the grade 10 learners have easy access to alcoholic beverages. When the researcher referred back to the field notes, she noted several recorded instances where some aggressive acts were at play as a result of substance
abuse. A number of distressing instances of gang rape took place on the secondary school premises in full view of other learners. The researcher later learnt from the minutes of staff meetings about instances of gross aggression among the learners.

Substance abuse was also cited for episodes of school vandalism. Frequently when there is a disagreement between the teachers and the learners, the learners retaliate by vandalising the school premises. A culture of aggression is visible in the artefacts, such as the work of art, articles, statues and trophies that are destroyed when the school is vandalised. The researcher may cite an example of a memorial stone that was erected in front of the administration block. The learners destroyed the memorial stone; what is left of the memorial stone after the school has been vandalised, no longer serves the purpose. The memorial stone was supposed to detail the history of the school. Vandalism is glaring at the stairs leading to the administration block. The stairs are marked with pot holes due to the missing bricks.

The trophies that were once won by previous learners are broken and some are missing. The old photos that were perused by the researcher still exemplify a number of trophies intact. The photos and autobiographies of previous principals are torn. In the foyer of the administration block stands a wooden display cabinet – empty, with its glasses and handles broken and graffiti on the sides.

When the researcher examined the minutes of previous meetings, it was clear that, at some stage, the issues of school vandalism were discussed, although the minutes reflected no way forward. The researcher compared the minutes of previous meetings to the discipline book. The discipline book has numerous names of the grade 10 learners who committed different acts of aggression and the recourse thereof. Some of the names of the grade 10 learners appear more than once for a variety of aggressive behaviours committed.
The researcher also observed different types of fights between the grade 10 learners. The fights observed differ in terms of what they are about; sometimes the fights comprise heated conversations leading to cat fights; sometimes the fights are one on one; sometime they are group fights involving boys only or girls only, and at times the fights may involve a mixture of both genders. In some instances weapons are used during fights. Non-verbal communication, including facial expression and gestures, also contributes to a culture of aggression.

According to the class register, the girls outnumber the boys. The researcher observed that the frequency of fights is high in both genders, although the girls’ aggression may seem higher in incidence than the boys’. When the researcher observed closely, the frequency of the girls’ fights seemed higher because of the disparity in ratio between the boys and girls in the grade 10 class. The grade 10 class register further reflects the high rate of learners’ absenteeism. The teachers’ time book is not different from the learners’ class register, as it reflects a high frequency of late coming and absenteeism among teachers.

When the researcher further examined the grade 10 class register, it reflected that the learners in the grade 10 class are above the age group that is stipulated by the South African School Act (1996:13). The learners’ ages reveal some interesting perceptions that are held by the community. The grade 10 learners are perceived as adults in their community, expected to take up certain adult roles. On the other hand, the same learners are perceived as children at school level, expected to abide by the school rules. The two perceptions are conflicting; the learners’ internal turmoil is illustrated in their aggressive daily interaction with their teachers and peers. Such negative daily interactions perpetuate a culture of aggression.

Most of the grade 10 boys have recently graduated from circumcision school and are calling themselves men. These boys are lamenting about finding it
extremely difficult to respect the female teachers because, according to their understanding, those female teachers are only girls, as they have never set their feet in the circumcision school. These kinds of perceptions cut across genders, including some of the male teachers who are said to not have graduated from circumcision schools. Those male teachers are also viewed as just boys. The grade 10 boys who are circumcision school graduates, find it extremely difficult to uphold the cornerstone of the moral values in education, which is respect.

The inability to uphold the moral values in education is elicited by an array of aggressive behaviours such as a number of bloody fights that were perpetuated by the graduates from the circumcision school. During these fights, all sorts of sharp weapons were used, including broken pieces of bottles, purchased knives, home-made knives and spears. Some of the other sharp objects used during these fights were not familiar to the researcher; the researcher observed those weapons for the first time. During the casual conversations, some boys mentioned that the fights originated from bragging. When the researcher probed, it was discovered that the bragging was all about the quality of the circumcision schools. Some boys claimed that their circumcision school was much better than the other circumcision schools in terms of the quality of education offered and the calibre of the tutors.

In July 2008, the situation in the grade 10 class became unbearably aggressive, as consensus could not be reached between the two antagonistic camps. The Department of Education and the school governing body were left with no other option than to temporally close down the secondary school until the power struggle between the two antagonistic camps was resolved. It was recommended that the secondary school be closed down for a period of one week, giving the school boys time to cool off.

The researcher observed that the school break was effective, as it managed to weaken the bonds of the members of the two antagonistic camps. The one-
week school break further assisted in separating the group members of the two camps, as the school was used for regrouping, which was difficult to manoeuvre outside the school premises due to the dynamics of the proximity of the areas in which the fighting boys resided.

During field work, it was disturbing for the researcher to observe that these types of fights possess different kinds of agendas that exacerbate the patterns of a culture of aggression. Some of these fights are fuelled by the financial muscle that is flexed by the circumcision school supervisors. The researcher also noted that these fights took longer to come to a complete halt. It was further mentioned during the interviews that some of the boys were on the payrolls of the supervisors of the circumcision schools for the purpose of marketing their circumcision schools. The marketing strategy applied has a potential to widen the gap between the boys and to perpetuate further fights up until the next circumcision season. The consequences of the pending fights and the unresolved issues between the fighting boys in the secondary school leave the learners and the staff members fearing for their lives.

When the researcher examined the discipline book all over again, truancy was found to be a cause for concern; the grade 10 learners’ movements are not restricted by time. Learners move in and out of the classroom as they please. The presence of teachers in the classroom does not bother the learners at all. According to the researcher’s observations, those learners are responsible for a number of aggressive behaviours occurring in the different parts of the secondary school. As a consequence, their names appear frequently in the discipline book.

According to the discipline book, punctuality is also a thorny issue; the grade 10 learners in this study are habitual latecomers. The researcher took an interest in examining the teachers’ time book as well. All the teachers are required to sign in when they report for duty and to sign out when they get off
duty in the time book on daily basis. The researcher was appalled at what the teachers’ time book represented.

The teachers’ time book revealed that the teachers were not an exception to the tendency of reporting late for work and leaving early - before 15:00- which is the stipulated end of school day. Some parents perceived that, in essence, the sense of urgency in this secondary school is lost. Some of the teachers have a tendency of not signing the time book at all - whether they are early, late, punctual or absent from work. When reflecting back on the teachers’ inability to be punctual for work, the researcher can understand the principal’s failure to discipline the learners on the same issue. Failure to manage time effectively by both teachers and learners defeats attempts to uphold moral values in education.

The researcher observed that late coming in the secondary school, by both learners and teachers, is a breeding ground for a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The researcher observed that after a 45-minute lunch break, the grade 10 learners do not rush back to their respective classrooms for continuation of tuition; instead the researcher will observe the learners shouting rudely in the tuck-shop area, instructing the tuck-shop owner not to close shop because the learners still want to buy stuff.

In an event where the tuck-shop owner stands his ground, the boys from a grade 10 class will scream and shout in an attempt to threaten the tuck-shop owner. The researcher overheard the grade 10 boys suggesting that the tuck-shop should be burned down or boycotted in order to send a strong message to the tuck-shop owner, which spells out that the tuck-shop owner’s arrogance can no longer be tolerated. Without a doubt the grade 10 boys do not breach their word. Three weeks down the line, just before the end of the first semester, the tuck-shop was boycotted. The level of aggression in the secondary school rocketed to violent incidents. Learners who did not support
the tuck-shop boycott were injured and the tuck-shop windows were smashed (see photo 3.4).
Photo 3.4 - Vandalised tuck-shop block

The walls of the tuck-shop were spray painted; the situation got out of hand and, as a result, the police was called in for intervention. Some learners were arrested; the arrests did more harm than good, as the demands for the release of the arrested learners grew more violent. The learners were angry, and as a consequence the levels of aggression escalated; the focus shifted from the tuck-shop owner - the learners now insisted on the immediate release of the arrested learners. The ramifications of this kind of aggression were appalling, as even the school premises were left vandalised (see Photos 3.5 and 3.6).
Photo 3.5 - Vandalised staffroom

Photo 3.6 - Secondary school’s smashed windows
An additional act of aggression was observed by the researcher at the tuck-shop on a separate occasion. The learners were preventing the tuck-shop owner from closing the tuck-shop after lunchtime. On that eventful day, the tuck-shop owner decided to be firm and exerted force in order to close the tuck-shop outlet. There was a serious power struggle between the learners and the tuck-shop owner; the learners prevented the tuck-shop owner from locking the tuck-shop outlet. Fortunately the tuck-shop owner managed to overpower the learners and closed down the tuck-shop outlet; he put on a padlock.

The next day, the researcher overheard the teachers talking in the staffroom about the tuck-shop and the padlock saga. The stuffed sticks in the padlock made it impossible for the tuck-shop owner to open the padlock with a key. The researcher suspects that this kind of retaliation from the learners was aimed at cautioning the tuck-shop owner. The tuck-shop owner was highly inconvenienced the next morning when he was supposed to open the tuck-shop and run the business as usual. The tuck-shop owner was left without any other option than to break up the padlock that was too damaged to be opened with a key.

When the researcher looked at the adjacent corner of the tuck-shop, there were approximately six boys just standing there watching this episode. These boys were not only watching, but they were giggling too. The researcher wrote in her field notes that one wonders whether those boys were not responsible for the padlock saga. Even if they were responsible, they will never be brought to justice for their deeds, based on two reasons: the teachers are too scared to confront the boys, and learners in general are also too scared to volunteer the information against their classmates; there is a tacit agreement not to tell on their classmates.

The vendors who sell food stuff on the secondary school premises are sometimes exposed to the wrath of the grade 10 learners. Gang leaders
usually grab the vendors’ goods aggressively or grab the food that is sold and run away giggling, without any intention of ever paying the vendors for the goods taken. Sometimes the grade 10 learners will pretend that they are fighting and cause a commotion next to the vendors; while the situation is still confusing, the learners will seize the moment and steal the vendor’s goods.

On this particular day, three boys sat in a playfield, regardless of the teaching that resumed in their grade 10 classroom. These boys were crafting a plan to attack the antagonist gangs. I overheard them as I sat reading a cartoon book in an adjacent corner of the play field. As I listened intently, boy 1 firmly asked boy 2 to try and steal ammunition from his brother. Boy 2’s brother was a famous leader of a notorious gang in the secondary school. Boy 2 explained the impossibility of such a request. Boys 1 and 2 became sarcastic; their sarcasm unfolded and became a major argument that escalated into swear words. The researcher observed a number of instances that start and end exactly like the story of the abovementioned three boys in a grade 10 class.

When the researcher casually mentioned the story of the three boys to the school-based support team facilitator, the facilitator became amused and added that it was a familiar story. The researcher narrated the event to the grade 10 teacher. She too recognised the events and, indeed, exclaimed that she could predict exactly how the story between the three boys was going to unfold.

The familiarity did not as much serve to trivialise my observations with regard to the story of the three boys, as it suggested that the school-based support team facilitator and the grade 10 teacher were picking up on the “systematics” of what happens regularly, without paying close attention to a culture of aggression that is at play among the three boys and the entire grade 10 class.

The patterns of aggression do not only emerge from the planned fights, verbal and non-verbal communication, unexpected altercation, attacks and counter-
attacks. The graffiti observed on the school walls also contribute to a culture of aggression. The graffiti are located in various areas of the school. For instance, the graffiti are conspicuous on the learner’s classroom chairs and tables; they are visible all over the boys’ and girls’ toilets. The graffiti dominate the internal and external walls of the secondary school (see Photo 3.7).

Photo 3.7 - Graffiti on the secondary school walls

After examining some of these graffiti, the researcher established that the graffiti differ from each other in expression; one thing, however, that was common about the graffiti, was that they contribute to a culture of aggression, as observed in the grade 10 class.

It is imperative to explain the different types of graffiti seen in different parts of the secondary school. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the graffiti are found outside the secondary school walls, toilets and inside the classrooms; mainly on the learners’ desks and chairs. Surprisingly enough, there are no
remarkable graffiti on the classroom walls. When interviewed, the learners cited two disadvantages of having the graffiti on the classroom walls: firstly the surface of the classroom walls is not even, and secondly the risk of being caught in an act is too high.

The graffiti found on the external walls of the secondary school are big and colourful; they depict big strong men holding chains, knives or guns. The researcher, in her field notes, pondered about the significance of those big men and what they represent. The walls of the secondary school are further dominated by graffiti of the different models of the latest expensive cars. The different types of cigarettes and alcohol are also dominant on the walls. The researcher also observed what appeared to be flowers at a glance; the researcher took a particular interest in those rare flowers. After interviewing some grade 10 learners, the name of the flower was revealed to the researcher: those flowers were called weed.

The graffiti observed on the furniture in a grade 10 classroom represent males with speech bubbles. A few speech bubbles read by the researcher (on the learners’ desks) were more like the praises of different gangs and their leaders who were represented as heroes; some of the speech bubbles elicited uncouth language. Some of the graffiti on the learners’ chairs demonstrated brawls that took place before.

The graffiti on the walls of the boys’ and girls’ toilets are not the same. The graffiti on the girls’ toilets consist of hearts, love quotations, stories of who was dumped by who and who is going out with who. There is a lot of name calling on the doors of the girls’ toilets. Meanwhile, in the boys’ toilets, there are graffiti of girls’ private parts and vulgar words attached to girls’ names. The researcher noted the frequent use of the word “kill” in the boys’ toilets. The names of other learners are attached to the word kill in a pattern that resembles that of a hit list.
The researcher observed that the gangs use the graffiti when they challenge other gangs. The popular method is to draw a cartoon with an insulting speech bubble that is directed at the antagonistic gang. The provoked gang may respond by wedging a fight. Apart from using the graffiti, the symbols are also a source of a culture of aggression; they play a pivotal role in instigating provocation in a grade 10 class. Different gang members and their supporters have different symbols. The researcher came across the following symbols: cross, horse-shoe, hearts, hair cut, tattoos and a whistle. The most popular symbols are portrayed by fingers, for example fingers forming a fist; sometimes a finger will be pointing in different directions in a different sequence. The interpretation of the symbols by different gangs leads to aggressive behaviours.

During the interviews, the researcher was made aware that the symbols mark the history of the gang members and their supporters. It was emphasised by the participants that symbols distinguish one gang from other gangs; it was further mentioned that symbols were an identity to be reckoned with. These symbols exacerbate a culture of aggression; the researcher witnessed a gang attacking an unsuspecting individual because the individual wore a symbol different from a particular gang’s. This tendency victimises the majority of learners; the researcher observed that when most learners are off guard, they fall prey to such attacks.

Language used forms another feature in the observed culture of aggression. When the learners in a grade 10 class interact with each other they use certain codes. The learners explained the vital role that the language codes used plays, and the importance of that vital role in maintaining the group dynamics. The vitality of the language codes is its exclusiveness. The language codes could only be cracked by the particular gang; the language codes are used as a strategy to slander other gangs. The situation becomes aggressive when those language codes are cracked by other gangs.
The grade 10 class is divided into gangs and cliques. Some gangs enjoy more the spotlight than others. The gangs in the spotlight are most envied; there is a belief system that those gangs are ultimate. There is always a power struggle among the gangs for a place in the spotlight. The following conspicuous dynamics are found in the gangs: there are no mixed genders in the gangs; the gangs are categorised from strong, moderate and weak; and, what is peculiar about the girls’ gangs, is the focus on social class rather than boldness.

The researcher observed that a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class changes; aggressive behaviours are no longer restricted to the same classmates. Other incidents were observed where the learners in a grade 10 class were fighting with learners from different grades (see Photo 3.8).

**Photo 3.8 - Grade 10 learners fighting with learners in different grades**

On a separate occasion the researcher observed some of the grade 10 learners in conflict with grade 11 learners over territory. This territory was meant to be a no-go area for grade 10 learners. Fights over territory are
increasingly becoming common; competition is mostly based on the territory that is highly desirable and spatially concentrated; the contest is over dominance.

The researcher observed that a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class is not stagnant. The learners who were bullied previously are now retaliating by bullying others. A culture of aggression in a grade 10 class is evolving and also encompasses sexuality issues. The researcher also observed a culture of aggression between the “homosexuals” and “heterosexuals”. The phenomenon of trans-dressing is gradually kicking in to form a feature of a culture of aggression. The researcher observed boys who preferred girls’ outfits being rebuked by boys who could not tolerate the difference in choices.

While it is not easy to identify passive aggressive behaviour, the researcher observed the grade 10 learners forgetting homework and other obligations, especially those of a recurring nature, and making excuses when confronted by the teachers. The learners’ behaviour says the school rules do not apply to them. When the learners are given group work, they display disrespect and attack the weaknesses of other learners in order to disrupt the close working conditions and a common goal.

The researcher observed a phenomenon that is escalating at an alarming rate in a grade 10 class; learners have a tendency of storming out of the classroom and banging the door behind them when reprimanded by teachers.

Some learners are in the habit of causing a scene when reprimanded by teachers; they shove the desks to the front as if they are throwing the desk away, causing excruciating noise in the classroom. The researcher observed that aggression in a grade 10 class is drastically perpetuated by learners’ inventions of aggressive behaviours; the researcher suspects that there is a silent competition based on “who was the first to pull such a fuss” or “who is the ‘man’ when it comes to chatting back”. The researcher’s suspicion is
created by the emerging aggressive behaviours she observed during the fieldwork.

The researcher identified many different areas in the secondary school environment as high-aggression zones. The classroom is one of them; more specifically when the teacher is absent from the classroom. The worst case scenario is when the teacher is present in a classroom and the learners are aggressive towards each other as well as towards the teacher; to summarise, the teacher is unable to address the aggression that dominates the classroom ambience.

The lack of classroom management skills is highly evident in the newly appointed teachers; the researcher observed that the newly appointed teachers are easily overwhelmed by many different acts of aggression such as violence, gangs, fights, assaults, disrespect, verbal abuse, bullying, substance abuse and money laundering that are at play in a grade 10 class.

The different types of aggression and aggressive behaviours observed in a grade 10 class can be highlighted as initiation rites, fighting, stealing, gangsterism, challenging authority, bullying, contravening the law, intimidating school environment, anger, membership of learners in different political organisations and lack of tolerance. These different types of aggression will be clustered together to streamline discussions of a culture of aggression into a few main patterns, namely patterns of anger, patterns of bullying, patterns of fighting and patterns of a lack of moral values in education.

Limited setting conditions such as classroom space, classroom furniture, understaffing and playfields also contribute to a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.
The observations and field notes, documents, audiovisual material, structured and unstructured interviews, casual conversations, together with the verbatim quotations from the patterns of a culture of aggression are described below:

3.4 PATTERNS OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION

The patterns of a culture of aggression are reflected in patterns of

- anger,
- bullying,
- fighting, and
- challenged moral values in education.

3.4.1 PATTERNS OF ANGER

The patterns of aggression in a grade 10 class are defined by external expression of anger that can be found in facial expressions, body language, physiological responses and, at times, in public acts of aggression. Learners in a grade 10 class seem to be angry with peers, teachers, parents and the schooling system. Their anger is based on different issues like lack of resources, lack of parental financial support, meeting of physical needs, meeting of psychological needs, unsafe school environment, rigid school rules, being bullied, not getting their way and the teacher’s humiliation.

The grade 10 learners are not the only angry people in the school environment; the teachers and parents are also angry. Teachers are lamenting about the following issues: disrespect from learners, aggression in the classroom, learners’ attitudes, the new curriculum statement, the inappropriate learner-teacher ratio and the school governance; sometimes the
teachers’ anger is projected in their daily interaction with the learners and the school community. The parents are angry about the learners’ aggression, learners’ attitude, learners’ disrespect, learners’ disrespect of private property and the demands from the school, such as meetings, finances and other prevailing socio-economic factors.

It is important to indicate that one of the salient views expressed by both the teachers and the school management team (SMT) was that:

“Angry learners are more aggressive than their peers. Angry learners are on the increase lately, on daily basis angry learners are seen banging the classroom doors and chatting back to the teachers”.

The teachers mentioned that:

“Anger gives birth to aggression and anger does play a role in sustaining aggressive behaviours, angry learners always do bad things to hurt others”.

During one of the staff meetings I attended, a teacher made the following remark:

“Children are full of anger; sometimes I wonder what can one do? We are powerless under these calamities”

In addition to that remark, another teacher said:

“I have taught grade 10s as long as I can remember and it is like night and day. The children seem to be angry and their parents are very disrespectful and talk rudely to their children and teachers. Heil! But everyone is angry here,
the children are always complaining about this ‘n that and the teachers are also disturbed. Ei! Here there are some issues”.

The departmental head said:

“This without doubt indicates that learners’ anger and its management is of concern at the school. Parents, it seems are not helpful in this regard as they too exhibit the same symptoms of anger”.

During empirical data collection at the secondary school, anger was not only talked about, but was also modelled by parents, learners and teachers. The teacher will enter a grade 10 class and start saying things like:

“Listen! You idiots”.

The learners will laugh out loud in an uncontrollable manner, as if they do not care. What is surprising, is what happens the following day. The learners will confront the teacher with heated anger. You will hear the learners saying to the teacher:

“Heyi (you) apologise you were out of order yesterday”.

The learners in the background will be saying:

“Withdraw ... apologise ... apologise ...”

The pandemonium will ascend to such an extent that the female teachers will be highly scared to calm down the learners. The male teachers will be forced to intervene. Unfortunately the male teachers are also scared; they are unable to approach the rampant class individually. The male teachers normally use the strategy of arranging themselves in a group, in order that they can
approach the learners collectively when attempting to address the aggression. The researcher regards this kind of approach as a bad idea, as the learners perceive the teachers’ approach as gangsterism, meaning that the teachers are ganging up against the learners; the learners interpret the teachers’ actions as tantamount to provocation.

After such a pandemonium, one teacher shook his head and said, thinking aloud:

“Iya … ne (yes it’s true) here we run our own Weskoppies”.

During the interviews with the learners, the researcher ascertained that the learners did not understand the meaning of the teacher’s utterances the previous day. A few of the learners were curious. They searched for the meaning of the word “idiot” from their older friends and parents. When they arrived at school the following day, they quickly convened a meeting in the absence of the teacher, who came in late for tuition.

These are some of the highlights of the meeting:


(The first speaker conveys that the teacher is humiliating the learners. She is referring to them as stupid.)

Second speaker: “Sy’s mal, we’ll show her, laat sy kom, phela simumele futhi ulate altyd, thina siyizikhokho”
(The second speaker says that the teacher is mad; she should come, they are waiting for her; they want to show her who’s the boss; she is even late as usual.)

When interviewing the teachers about the occurrences of such incidents, they stated that:

“Since the inception of the new curriculum statement (NCS) and many other policies … (They quote the old cliché) ‘spare the rod and spoil the child’, we cannot discipline them anymore; what can we do, they have rights; apart from that they are too many learners in this classroom for one teacher to handle”.

Teachers are no longer allowed to use a rod in a school environment as a disciplinary measure (South African School Act, 1996:13). Unfortunately, when the policy was promulgated, the rod was no longer allowed to be used as a disciplinary measure in the classroom; no other measures were put in place to replace the rod. The teachers were not capacitated to meet the new changes. The researcher observed that the teachers are currently found wanting when it comes to alternative ways of disciplining the learners.

According to Asmal (2001:17), the teachers’ morale is at the lowest. They complain about a lot of things since the inception of the new curriculum statement (Department Of Education (DOE), 1996). These complaints translate into anger, and some of the anger is projected in the execution of their job and in interacting with the learners. As such, teachers’ anger compromises their commitment and dedication to the learners and to the efforts of coming up with the educational strategies that will manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.
On several occasions the researcher observed school gates being closed right in the face of the learners who were rushing to the assembly before it could commence. It was unfortunate for the researcher to observe that not only were the learners late, but the teachers were late as well; sometimes the researcher will watch while the teachers and the learners push and shove in order to gain entrance to the school premises. Utterances of swear words are heard repeatedly as the struggle for entry to the school premises continues. The pressure will heighten and fights will erupt; casualties from a stampede involving learners and teachers were observed by the researcher. Unfortunately that kind of tension translates into aggression that lasts for weeks on end. When a learner was interviewed about the reasons behind such a display of anger, she responded by saying that:

“Some learners are always angry because they do not do so well in class that is the reason they display anger and I just think that some learners are just copy cats or they just choose to carry the world in their shoulders, you know sometimes people must learn to accept the things you know as they come”.

She further said:

“As for me, I do not worry about a lot of things, I choose not to get involved, and just stay out of trouble or just pretend as if things are not happening to me you know like name calling, I don’t care because they call me names like bookworm … nerd … geek and so”.

The researcher observed that most of the grade 10 learners take offence when they are provoked; more especially when the provocation relates to name calling. Some learners do not like to be called names like “bookworm”, “nerd” or “geek”. Such name calling becomes a recipe for fights or bearing grudges that are fertile soil for an incessant culture of aggression.
During the interviews, the school management team reported that many aggressive learners in a grade 10 class face academic challenges. The researcher was also given some supporting documents, such as the mark schedules, to peruse. Several educators lamented about the fact that the academic expectations of the grade 10s increased to a degree that triggers aggression, as learners act out of academic frustrations.

One teacher said:

“In my 10 years of teaching grade 10 classes, I have seen a marked increase in aggressive behaviour and these learners are not ready for the transitional period of adolescence stage”.

Erikson (1994:107) explains that “at this stage adolescents are in search of an identity that will lead them to adulthood. Adolescents make a strong effort to answer the question: ‘who am I?’”

Another teacher said:

“On the other hand I have witnessed curriculum markedly increasing! This adds to learners’ frustration and brings out aggressive behaviour”.

Initially, researchers thought that being unable to achieve some goal increases people’s readiness to behave aggressively. This led to the “frustration-aggression theory” (Myers, 2011:576). Frustration creates anger, which may generate aggression. When social psychologists later realised that physical pain, personal insults and other unpleasant events also instigate aggression, they saw that frustrations are simply instances of aversive events (Myers, 2011:578).

Another teacher said:
“We are pushing too much academically and causing frustration in some children which leads to aggression because of this new curriculum statement (NCS) that the learner needs to overcome”.

According to the DoE (2007:23), the national curriculum statement has three curriculum design features, namely critical and developmental outcomes, learning outcomes and assessment standards. Curriculum 2005 had eight curriculum design features, namely critical and developmental outcomes, specific outcomes, range statements, assessment criteria, performance indicators, phase organisers, programme organisers and expected levels of performance.

This indicates that the national curriculum statement is better than the curriculum 2005 in terms of workload. Based on that, it is assumed that all learners will cope because the curriculum is simplified for the teacher.

The head of the department said:

“It is unfortunate that teachers do not feel confident with teaching the national curriculum statement because in their training there was no national curriculum statement; the only thing that is there is the little training on national curriculum statement that inconvenienced them during the holidays; I don’t think that the holidays training is effective because of little time”.

Another teacher commented:

“It won’t work; holidays is our time we want to relax, but no! They tell us about training. Well we just go there to be marked present but my heart
and mind is not there. What kind of training is done during my rest; it’s like a punishment”.

Clearly teachers are not happy about being trained during school vacations. They complain about many issues: they want travelling allowances to the venues where training takes place; they want to be provided with lunch money and overtime allowances.

One teacher said:

“Dare they call us again for training during our holidays; we will take it to the streets”.

The researcher observed a certain pattern of anger among the teachers. When the teachers are angry, they resolve their problems by demonstrating outside the school premises in an unruly manner, without engaging in negotiation with the principal or the Department of Education. A similar pattern is observed among the learners in a grade 10 class.

The researcher observed that if the learners do not get what they want, or things do not go their way, for instance eating outside the school yard or the locking of the school gates throughout the day, they resort to anger that leads to aggression. The learners who abide by the school rules become the victims of anger outbursts that are aimed at threatening and compelling the learners to conform.

According to Buie (2004:89), anger and frustration gives birth to aggression, which in turn may give rise to a phenomenon called bullying that forms a culture of aggression in the grade 10 class in this study. According to Small (2005:56), anger is an automatic response to ill-treatment. It is the way a person indicates that certain types of behaviour will not be tolerated (Callister, 2007:197). Stemmler (2010:21) says that anger is a feedback mechanism in
which an unpleasant stimulus is met with an unpleasant response. Haque (2004:37) states that anger is an emotion related to one's psychological interpretation of having been wronged and a tendency to undo that by retaliation. Haque (2004:39) states three modalities of anger: cognitive, somatic-affective and behavioural. DeFoore (2004:17) describes anger as a pressure cooker; one can only apply pressure against one’s anger for a certain amount of time - then it explodes.

3.4.2 PATTERNS OF BULLYING

There is a wide range of possible bullying behaviours in a grade 10 class - from individual to group bullying. The bullying behaviours listed below were observed by the researcher; they form the patterns of aggression. They are as follows:

- verbal bullying that includes derogatory comments and name calling;
- non-verbal bullying through threatening looks, signs and signals;
- anonymous bullying by means of text messages, graffiti, unsigned notes, drawings with speech bubbles and face book;
- bullying by means of social exclusion or isolation and hostility;
- physical bullying such as hitting, kicking, shoving and spitting;
- bullying by means of lies, bad mouthing and false rumours;
- having money or other valuable items taken forcefully or damaged by learners who bully;
• bullying by means of extortion; and

• bullying by means of coercion, being threatened or being forced to do things against your will by learners who bully.

The grade 10 learners who are bullied in the classroom or in the secondary school environment do not see the school as a safe or healthy place. The researcher observed the patterns of bullying manifest itself in different categories in a grade 10 class. There is bullying by social class, bullying by status, bullying by revenge and bullying for affiliation.

Bullying by social class is common between the poor and the middle class learners; social bullying is extremely noticeable in girls. Bullying by status is perpetuated by the popularity of a particular dominating gang that bullies the up-and-coming gangs. Bullying by revenge is created by a vicious circle of bullying. The learners who were bullied before tend to bully others as time progresses. Bullying for affiliation takes place when the representatives of different gangs canvass for new members to join their gangs.

Different gangs possess distinctive symbols; as a result, bullying is sometimes encouraged by those symbols. Learners engage in bullying activities in an attempt to uphold their status symbols, for instance, the learners who wear tigers will tend to be the bullies in order to uphold what their symbol represent.

During the interviews, one learner mentioned that:

“I stay at home at least twice a week because I’m being bullied, I am afraid of them and I do not want to show that I am scared; sometimes I am afraid that I will be suspended from school if I am caught involving myself with the bullies or retaliating”.
There is also considerable evidence to show that psychological disorders, low self-esteem, low self-confidence and poor social skills are among the many problems developed by learners who are bullied (Hamilton, 2010:13). The effects of bullying are often demonstrated by poor academic achievement, lack of engagement in the class, disruptive behaviour and antagonistic peer relationships (Hamilton, 2010:13).

During the group interviews, three girls had something in common that they perceived as social isolation. They mentioned that when they try to join the company of other girls, those girls will either walk away or ignore them in their discussions by directing their conversations to particular individuals in their clique, by mentioning their names; for instance:

Girl A will say to girl B:

“Hey B do you still remember the weekend drama when we were just about to enter the cinema ..?”

Girl B:

“Eina Chomi! Drama … drama … drama ..!”

Then other girls will butt in, showing a high level of curiosity. They will say:

“Iyo B and A, details … details … Oh pleeese … from the roots …”

Other girls who belong to the clique will join in and shout:

“From the foundation. Chomi from the bottom!”
One of the girls who feel isolated says:

“Then these girls they will go on and on about their juicy gossip from the weekend as if their lives depended on it; in the meantime it seems as if we are not there; they really make an effort to make one feel that she does not exist”.

“They call themselves divas”.

Said one of the girls who feels isolated:

“Divas this divas that I swear they think they are all that”.

“They are”.

Another girl who feels isolated responded:

“I mean we’ll never look like them; things they own like monthly fashion magazines the Seventeen. No wonder they have such style; they learn it from the magazines; factually they try and imitate everything that is in that Seventeen magazine. I swear to God if one of them can rebuke me again there is no telling what I’ll do”.

The researcher reflected on her field notes about the seriousness of a statement such as, “I swear … if one of them can rebuke me again there is no telling what I’ll do.” The researcher wrote on the field notes that such a trail of thought is deeply rooted; it has the potential for a culture of aggression. Debriefing of learners will be necessary after this research.

One of the girls who feels isolated responded.
“It seems as if you are envying them hee ..? Shame you will never clique … or maybe just maybe in your dreams so dream on … girlfriend … and oooon!”

Then the argument among the three girls who feel isolated will ensue:

“No I’m not, I am not envying anyone?”

“Let’s just drop it”

“Say whaaat! You started it”

“What ever!”

“Don’t you whatever me; can you hear me … right, right .., don’t you whatever me ever.”

The researcher observed that the argument will persist among the three girls for a long time. Arguments like that have a tendency to turn out ugly. The heated conversation will be carried forward for future feud. The girls keep grudges, and they can resurrect at the slightest provocation. For example, a cat fight may break out the following week among the three girls who said they were isolated by the other girls in the grade 10 class, and their argument will refer back to the altercation that they had the previous week pertaining to the divas.

When interviewing the three girls about the meaning of the word “divas”, they said:
“Mam (referring to the researcher) looking at me; man the divas are the it, they are always up to date, they can afford the nails the hair, trendy clothes I mean all the trends in fact their trend setters … no … nooo … no they are the trend you know. Mam the future they are the future, they have the latest gadgets I mean like the … latest cell phones, the iPods the works. Oh Mam, they got it all and the boys too! What can I say? They are all that”.

It was clear to the researcher that these three girls wanted to hang out with the so-called divas.

One of the girls said:

“I do not attend any civvies days organised in the classroom or at the school for fundraising because the girls are gonna laugh and tease me and make fun of me or of whatever outfit I’m wearing.

If the divas don’t make fun of your clothes they find a way of saying something about your outfit like, ‘Oh no, yellow and white; oh it just doesn’t go’, or they will say stuff like ‘oh you didn’t wear those shoes you just didn’t, they are so 2002!”

“Divas can say such things cause they can back it up, this is so frustrating because you can’t really tell anyone about it, the teachers will just say you are petty and they won’t do anything about this, I am uncomfortable, about telling my mother about this you know I don’t want to sound ungrateful; never mind she likes to remind me that ‘I am a single parent you know’ sometimes this situation about these divas makes me really frustrated and angry. O! I hate them. Period”.

Another girl mentioned that:
"I have been receiving nasty notes and nasty things were said about me via cellular phone and internet. They are nasty, other girls were used and involved for an example spreading malicious lies and rumours eish, eish about me and I was not wanted in their groups for whatever reason …” (She shrugged her shoulders.) “I don’t know! But what is not on about the social media is that negative things about someone they circulate so fast, within a short space of time you are a laughing stock to a lot of people at school”.

She continued:

“Most of the time I didn’t know what to do I always fear what may happen next because I’m just standing this, sometimes I fear what can happen next I’m so scared that I will loose it, what if I do?”

One learner remarked:

“Ag! Bullies must be shot”.

The implication was that the school must get rid of the bullies.

She further commented:

“These bullies know nothing because they are failures - they don’t do well in class, they are always scheming and plotting on how to start the bickering and fights, how can they study if they are not in school for learning but to be on our case, you wonder why is the school not doing anything about this? Actually what is the reason for being here at school surely we’ve lost it. It is just the same if I go to school or not … in fact I come to school to be degraded, it can't be happening".
A learner in a grade 10 class mentioned that they developed an immense sense of fear and that they are scared because they are always uncertain of what might happen next. The participants also mentioned that they perceived their situation as “not nice”. The bullying episodes that take place in their classroom are not “right”.

Learners perceive that their personal safety and the safety of the teachers are at stake. The teachers are adults among non-adults; they are the people who are supposed to provide and ensure a safe environment with a zero rate of bullying in the school environment. But it becomes such a calamity in a grade 10 class, and the entire secondary school, for the teachers to manage a culture of aggression.

A learner concluded.

“There is neither beginning nor end in the bullying episodes in our classroom”.

Another learner mentioned that:

“Some learners resort to withdrawal as a defence mechanism some they just walk away if there is a fight”.

“Staying out of trouble”, so they say.
Some learners say:

“Turning a blind eye in order not to get into trouble is the best, although other teachers sometimes called us ‘responsible bystanders’, whatever what that means!

Ross (2003:123) suggests that indirect bullying is characterised by forcing the victim into social isolation. This isolation is achieved by a wide variety of techniques, including spreading gossip, refusing to socialise with the victim, bullying other people who wish to socialise with the victim and criticizing the victim’s manner of dress.

Following Lane’s (2009:67) discussion of bullying-induced fear, Tattum (2009:223), says that bullying may involve a desire to cause a person stress “not only by what happens but by the threat and fear of what happens”. Thus, it can be argued that long-term fear may be brought about by bullying incidences. Fear is sometimes a poisonous emotion; fear can torment us, rob us of sleep and restrict and distract our thinking (Myers, 2011:391).

According to Smith and Thompson (Quinn, 2003:1), bullying is an intentional behaviour and causes physical and psychological harm to the recipient. “It involves repeated oppression, either physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful one” (Dunn, 2001:2; Hirschstein, Van Schoiack Edstrom, Frey, Snell & MacKenzie, 2007:3). It is this imbalance of power between the two individuals that depicts the dynamics of bullying and distinguishes it from other forms of aggressive behaviour (Quinn, 2003:1; Hirschstein et al., 2007:3).

During the interviews, bullying was described as a pernicious challenge in the grade10 class; the participants viewed it as an aggressive behaviour distinguished by unequal power (Smith & Sharp, 2000:2). The power may be
derived by physical superiority arising from relative size, strength or numerical outnumbering and from mental strength (Smith & Sharp, 2000:23) with the intention to cause physical, social or emotional harm to others (Olweus, 2003:134; Smith & Brain, 2000:335).

O'Moore (2000:224) asserts that the effects of bullying can be serious and even lethal. O'Moore (2000:90) further states that there is a growing body of research that indicates that individuals, whether children or adults, who are persistently subjected to abusive behaviour are at risk of stress-related illness that can sometimes lead to suicide.

Suicide often occurs not when the person is in the depths of depression, when energy and initiative are lacking, but when the person begins to rebound, becoming incapable of following through. Teenage suicides may follow a traumatic event such as a romantic breakdown or antisocial act (Myers, 2011:457).

A substantial body of research exists on the risk factors for youth violence. The world report on violence and health (WHO, 2002:23) outlines risk factors for youth violence at individual level, for example low educational achievement, history of early aggressive behaviour; relationship level, for example poor supervision and harsh, physical punishment of children by adults, low socio-economic status of families, associated with delinquent peers and community; cultural and societal levels, for example the presence of gangs, guns and drugs in the community, low levels of social cohesion, income inequality, poor law enforcement and normative use of violence to resolve conflict.

While female learners may look more vulnerable to bullying and aggression, the researcher observed that bullying was predominant in both girls and boys in a grade 10 class. Gender plays a significant role in a variety of acts of aggression and patterns of fighting.
The fact that bullying occurs more often in school rather than on the way to or from school, as many people expected, indicates that secondary schools need to play a more proactive role in eliminating bullying (Olweus, 2003:103). There is a common belief that a positive school environment disallows bullying and harassment to flourish (Olweus, 2003:103). Effective classrooms encourage learners to have positive interaction with teachers and set up tougher sanctions against bullying (Barone 2007:123).

Michael (2010:78) says bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour manifested by the use of force or coercion to affect others, particularly when the behaviour is habitual and involves an imbalance of power. It can include verbal harassment, physical assault or coercion and may be directed repeatedly towards particular victims, perhaps on grounds of gender, sexuality or ability (Levinson, 2004:56).

The "imbalance of power" may be social power and/or physical power. The victim of bullying is sometimes referred to as a "target." According to Kumpulainen (2008:108), bullying consists of three basic types of abuse: emotional, verbal and physical. It typically involves subtle methods of coercion such as intimidation. Bullying can be defined in many different ways. Michael (2010:98) says that bullying ranges from simple one-on-one bullying to more complex bullying in which the bully may have one or more "lieutenants" who may seem to be willing to assist the primary bully in his bullying activities.

3.4.3 PATTERNS OF FIGHTING

Oppositional and defiant fighting, temper tantrums and antagonistic behaviour form the patterns of fighting observed by the researcher in a grade 10 class. The learners are being oppositional and defiant towards everything in the secondary school. Learners always fight; sometimes they do not even know
the reasons for their fighting. The more the teachers intervene in order to resolve the learners’ fights, the more the learners act defiantly. It is common for the learners to start their fight by being verbally abusive; that is how they strike out at each other’s nerve. The antagonistic behaviour between the learners occurs sometimes when the learners get angry at being provoked by peers and retaliate in hitting them. Sometimes two or more learners will have an argument that escalates into an exchange of punches. Some of the learners are too quick to exchange punches, as they fail to manage their anger effectively. As stated before, the researcher observed that the fights are frequent and high among both genders. The differences in fights only depend on the nature and the cause of those fights.

The researcher also observed that the fights among the grade 10 learners differ according to gender. Sometimes the girls will engage in a heated conversation leading to a cat fight. Sometimes the fights are one on one; sometimes there are group fights involving only girls. The fights will rarely be a mixture of girls and boys. Commonly the boys will engage in their boys-only fights that will include weapons and fewer insults.

Fights among girls may sometimes start off by swearing, screaming and shouting at each other; those screams and shouts may escalate into other girls stepping in. In most cases the voices will grow louder and the fingers will be pointing at each other. In the blink of an eye, two antagonistic camps will be formed. These newly formed camps will aggressively confront each other. The girls will throw their books aside and the camps will draw closer to each other. There will be much pandemonium, and the next thing the researcher will notice is the oozing of blood and the fallen hair or braids on the ground. The girls’ school uniforms will be torn. Some girls will run away, some attack and some cry and scream. The teachers will try in vain to stop the fights.

When these fights erupt, the pandemonium in the school yard increase. Other grades will disregard the tuition taking place in their classrooms and storm out
to watch the fighting. This phenomenon indicates that a culture of aggression is not only confined to a grade 10 class, but it affects other grades in the secondary school as well.

The researcher observed pushing and shoving at the tuck shop and at the assembly turning into a heated verbal exchange; one learner will get aggravated and retaliate physically to avoid being labelled as a “sissy”. The learner's friends will be notified that one of their own is in a fight; they will all come charging to throw in punches and kicks. Aggression can also be picked up at assembly; sitting on a seat that was already eyed by another learner will start a fight. Nobody wants to be seen as frail; everyone is out to prove a point, and unfortunately this turns out to be a clash of the titans.

The graffiti that are conspicuous on the school walls and in the toilets are used for different fighting purposes, which include provocation and retaliation by the different gangs in a grade 10 class. When these fights are finally over, the challenge will be to bring the situation back to normal; the learners will disregard the school rules and the values in education by staying away from the classroom. The researcher observed learners gambling; this practice leads to more fights between the winners and the losers of the gambling.

It became clear when the researcher perused the discipline book that the frequent use of weapons was perpetuated by the grade 10 boys. The researcher perceived the girls' aggression as less violent than the boys', as with girls there are at least no weapons used; the teachers are able to intervene without calling the police. During the boys' aggressive episodes, however, the police will be called in for intervention and the district and provincial offices of the Gauteng Department of Education will be notified instantly.
When asked about differences between boys’ and girls’ patterns of fighting, four teachers and one head of department agreed that both boys and girls are aggressive; they fight frequently; however, they also reported an increase in the number of girls found in possession of weapons during the class raids. The teachers are sensing danger; in the near future, girls will also use weapons when they fight.

One teacher said:

“Girls tend to bicker and cry and tattle. Boys tend to be more aggressive and physically violent” and “Boys are a lot more physical and girls use their mouths”.

Another teacher added:

“It used to be exclusively boys who fight. But nowadays there are many more girls now who are behaving aggressively”.

The principal reported that:

“Our number of aggressive girls is increasing. In general aggression rates are definitely going up. Passive aggression is also going up. It used to be boys who were more aggressive, but not anymore. Yesterday a couple of girls instigated a fight on the playfield. The girls and the boys were all fighting physically”.

The researcher also observed patterns of fighting manifesting in different ways; sometimes in the form of indirect aggression, particularly in girls. Girls in a grade 10 class were likely to use indirect forms of aggression such as social exclusion, verbal insult, gossip and non-verbal gestures; sometimes their heated name calling and verbal insults mounted to cat fights, gang fights and gang attacks, but the use of objects with an intent to harm someone else
was a rare phenomenon among the girls in a grade 10 class. Individual fights were found to be common among girls in a grade 10 class and included tearing clothes and pulling hair. One participant who was once involved in a cat fight showed the researcher the patch on her head.

She said:

(Pointing) “You see here … here … look, (her voice sounded forceful) my hair is no longer growing and it will never grow again” (her voice sounded sad).

The only consolation is that the girls’ altercations start and end in the same venue and the duration of the fights are not drawn out; there are no rollover fights, unlike the boys’ fights. The researcher observed that the patterns of fighting are increasing on Fridays, in the afternoons and towards school holidays. On a Friday, a researcher may observe five different sets of fights, in different areas of the secondary school such as the toilets, playfields and the tuck-shop. The fights usually occur at different times of the day. Sometimes these fights are drawn out for hours. The researcher suspects that an aggression build-up starts on Mondays and grows towards Thursdays, erupting into a fight on Fridays; if not, the build-up will reach the end of a term before erupting.

The boys “do not waste words and time” so they say “we attack”. They possess an element of surprise; in the blink of an eye bodily harm and environmental damages would have occurred. There will be some casualties and blood will be oozing all over the place. It will be confusing for the researcher and other onlookers to identify the injured learners. Police intervention usually remedies such a chaotic situation. Police usually use the
water cannon to disperse the crowds. If the water cannon fails and the fighting continues, the police will use rubber bullets in order to end the fights. The incited crowds will also be scared away by the rubber bullets.

Learners always seem to be excited when such fights break out. They will be whistling, clapping hands, laughing and making laud utterances such as:

“Shaya … shaya … boy, … mbonise (hit … hit … show them), who’s the boss, he … he … he?”

Unfortunately such utterances have a tendency of hitting the opponent’s nerve; especially if their “hommies” (friends from the same neighbourhood) are losing the fight. Cheering the fighters against each other in a show of support can amount to a major disaster. Another fight emanating from the cheerers may ensue. The competition portrayed when cheering the preferred opponents instigates more fights among the grade 10 learners.

Questions and comments such as these may arise:

“Why are you cheering, can’t you see that you are supporting the wrong side?”

“Don’t you ever scream that name next to me, do you hear me, get it!”

It is unfortunate that learners do not want to agree to disagree amicably in order to coexist. If the cheering to the opponent does not stop as commanded, fights will start among the cheerers; they will be pushing, shoving, shouting and screaming. The crowds will no longer be controllable. The researcher noticed that some teachers actually take advantage of the chaotic situation by leaving the school yard during contact time without notifying the principal.
While the researcher observed that boys are more likely to use direct forms of aggression, such as physical attacks, boys were regularly observed and reported in gang fights. Their fights were more vicious; sharp self-made objects, pieces of bottles and knives were commonly used during the fights among boys. On two rare occasions guns were used during an altercation.

Fortunately, in both cases no one pulled the trigger.

These boys were subjected to a disciplinary hearing. The boys were supposed to explain themselves in front of the principal, chairperson of the school governing body, their parents and two officials who represented the Department of Education.

This is what the boys had to say for themselves:

Boy 1: “The intention was not to pull the trigger but to just threaten”.

Boy 2: “Scare off enemies”. He said repeatedly that “I was not going to shoot anyone, never”.

Most sharp objects and knives were found on the boys during the fights and during spot checks conducted by the school senior management team. It was reported that not only the sharp objects, guns and knives were brought into the classroom with the intention to harm others. A boy lost the sight in his right eye as a result of a pellet fired by another boy while they were both in the classroom. During the group interviews, some boys reported that their drinks were spiked.
They said:

“They opponents usually do that in order to gain power over them”.

It was also mentioned that:

“Spiking of drinks assist in gaining further victory more especially when they take the fight outside”.

One boy added to the conversation by stating that:

“The fights amongst us does not end up where they have started; (he pause) my fight with a group of boys started in the toilets. I thought it was over whilst, I was going to class I incurred severe blow I sustain a black out (his eyes were shining with tears). I was later told that the boy I had a fight with earlier where the one who hit me with a soft ball bat”.

Some participants in a group interview said:

“Sometimes we heard scuffle outside the tuck-shop and we heard yell ‘knife! knife!’ Sometime such a yelling will come from the boy’s toilets”.

Another boy mentioned that:

“Fights started in the playground and it lasted for days on end”.

He said:

“Other people interfered from the likes of their brothers, friends, gangs my groupies and my hommies (friends from the neighbourhood)
interfered; it was a mess they were now all fighting each other in the school premises and outside the school premises, during the week days and over the weekends. I could not move anywhere without looking over my shoulders. I think the intervention of the police help to slow down things although I don’t think it’s completely over even as I speak to you”. (He appears brave, though.)

Some patterns of fights in a grade 10 class were related to gender differences, as observed by the researcher. Although a culture of aggression, whether harmful to life or merely painful to the ego, or gender-based, it seems real in a grade 10 class. A 17-year old boy, with an established record of aggressive behaviour, picked up a girl learner in the classroom despite her pleas and struggle to escape; he dropped her on a block of concrete.

This was not the only incidence where the boy learner acted aggressively towards the girl learner.

There were some other occasions where the members of the families were infuriated by the learners’ fights. A meeting that never materialised was suggested in order to address the patterns of fighting.

The patterns of fighting in a grade 10 class sometimes borders on the issues of sexual orientation; the researcher sometimes overheard learners’ making statements such as:

“… I just want to make you aware that I’m not a faggot … say what … Hey you heard me queer don’t you dare say that to me he is not a moffie he, he, he’s a fag, no, no …” There and then a baseball bat is thrown around and everyone is fighting.

Another one will shout:
Hey you stabane (meaning queer boy). I’ll will … you up are scared of girls he he.” (When the fight ends between the “homosexual” and the “heterosexuals”.)

You will hear the learners who were involved in the fights saying:

“Did you see ye … did you see how he (heterosexual) hit that fag in the face and did you see how his face was so deformed, yehehe (laughter)’

“… I just wonder why they hate us so much”, commented one homosexual.

Another one replied:

“Ignorance … ignorance they simply do not understand the sexuality issues”.

During the interviews, one boy continued to say:

“I try too hard to stay out of trouble; is just that people do not mind their own business they are so stupid and ignorant so like 10 years ago so barbaric they need some education … in a lot of issues maybe just maybe they will stop to be so stereotypic”.

Sexual orientation refers to sexual attraction towards members of a particular sex. Whether their sexual orientation is heterosexual or homosexual, learners in a grade 10 class have a clear gender identity. They are particular about being males or females (Ford, 2006:365). Fighting in a grade 10 class is exacerbated by the stereotypic learners who still posses the traditional
paradigm that says, as far as they know, virtually all cultures in all times were predominantly heterosexual (Ford, 2006:366). Whether homosexuality is condemned and punished or viewed as an acceptable alternative, homosexuality survives and heterosexuality prevails in our societies (Ellis, 2005:243; Ames, 2000:109 & Winkelstein, 2003:366).

Just like one learner said:

“Acceptance is the key issue; they will have to accept us or tolerate us … the bottom line is we should co-exist”.

A culture of aggression in a grade 10 class goes beyond fighting; because girls were also subjected to language that they term “degrading”, they said they were often called “names” if they ignored boys.

Furthermore, they said:

“Girls who have angered boys were often made the ‘butt of humiliation’”.

This can culminate in a fight.

The girls added that:

“Often untrue stories that circulated amongst the boys, and they would say you are … this and that; they use all sort of foul language”.

Another participant said:

“Sometimes the guy beat you just to impress his friends”.
Participants contend that boys use the threat of violence to scare girls into submission; it is used as a mode of control over girls.

One girl said:

“… they will stand near the toilet … the boys will laugh at you. Tell you stink … even if you have to go to the toilet you don’t go because you don’t want to be humiliated …”

The researcher was privileged to be invited to sit in the disciplinary hearing as an observer. It was alleged in that disciplinary hearing that boy A was peeping through the girls’ toilet window, video-filming the girls who were using the toilets. It was discovered that on the following day, boy A showed the video clips to his friends in the classroom; the friends were giggling and laughing. One of the girls learned that she was among the girls who were in the video clip. The girl became angry and immediately used her cell phone to call her father who immediately came to the school armed with a cane. The girl's father did not waste any time; he stormed directly into the said classroom and whipped boy A with the cane. The toilet video-filmed by the boy forms the basis of the disciplinary hearing.

One parent said:

“A culture of aggression is not good for the image of the school; it does not attract but repels the inflow of the new learners; more especial those who can, can afford tuition elsewhere”.

Another parent said:

“As a parent I worry about my child and whether their school is safe”.


One parent mentioned that her 14-year old child would be in grade 10 the following year and that she fears for her child.

Another parent said:

“I have entertained the thought of switching to the private school system but decided otherwise because of the financial implications; if I had money I know for sure my child would never come to this school”.

Fighting in schools is also described as behaviour that seriously disrupts the safe learning environment of a classroom or school (MacDonald, Gilmer & Collings, 2006:83). More traditional gender stereotypes explain aggression scientifically by comparing the male and female hormones. Although the below-stated discussion cannot be used as an excuse to defend a culture of aggression, particularly in a grade 10 class, O’Moore (2000:445) says that testosterone seems to be partly responsible for aggression. In various animal species, one can increase aggressiveness by administrating testosterone. In humans, violent male criminals average higher than normal testosterone levels (Rubin, 2011:130). Moreover, the aggression difference appears early in life and across many species of mammals. In humans, this may be linked to males’ greater physical activity (Eaton & Enn, 2005:19). Not one of these findings would be conclusive by itself, but the convergence of evidence suggests that male aggressiveness has biological roots. Without doubt it also has social roots (Myers, 2011:143).

3.4.4 PATTERNS OF CHALLENGES TO MORAL VALUES IN EDUCATION

Moral values in education are a belief system and the principles that the school community wants to sustain. Moral values in education are the common rights that learners should strive for at the secondary school.
Common rights such as a right to experience a safe environment, a right not to be bullied and a right to a preferred sexual orientation. A lack of moral values in education is present among the learners in a grade 10 class who are disrespectful of the needs of individuals.

Learners in a grade 10 class do not understand nor tolerate the differences in personality. Learners' uniqueness is neither acceptable nor tolerated in a grade 10 class. The grade 10 learners are coerced by peers into forming what they term a “uniform identity”. For example, if the norm is to cause chaos in the classroom, all the learners must follow suit. If not, those learners who maintain order are regarded as outsiders. They are viewed as misfits. Learners who are labelled as "misfits" are also perceived to be losers; they are always subjected to ridicule.

Learners do not only display intolerance towards each other, but also towards their teachers. In some instances learners attack a teacher verbally and blame it on being provoked by the teacher. The afore-mentioned example does not only indicate intolerance, but it is also a symptom of disrespect. According to Small (2005:201), a teacher is an adult among adolescents; interactions should therefore be indicative of that fact. In a grade 10 class, the moral values in education are compromised by intolerance observed among learners, teachers, learners and teachers and teachers and learners in their daily interaction in the secondary school milieu.

Disrespect is a prominent pattern that poses a challenge to moral values in education. One example of a disrespectful episode that was observed by the researcher in a grade 10 class can be cited in this instance; when learners are divided into commissions, they all talk at once and mock the entire learning experience by teasing and laughing uncontrollably at each other, more especially when they give presentations or feedback. Learners in this study do not respect the authority of their teachers; they do not respect each others’ point of view. Learners in this study are intolerant of learners who take longer
than usual to articulate themselves; they normally “boo” them. Learners in this grade 10 class have a tendency to also “boo” the learners who ask clarity-seeking questions during lessons. Those learners will be “booed” in the presence of the teacher. The level of their irritation heightens when a learner asks the teacher to clarify even further. For example, “Mam give more examples” or “I did not understand that paragraph, (pointing at the chalk board) break it down again - please explain to me again”.

It is a common practise in this secondary school for the learners to rotate when changing lessons. During that transition, the shoving and pushing among the learners amounts to disrespect. Impatience is another phenomenon that forms the patterns of a lack of moral values in education, for example, the learners do not wait their turn to move in or out of the classroom. This similar phenomenon is observed by the researcher when the learners push and shove at the tuck-shop during break time. Learners do not want to exercise patience. When they exit the school gate after school, they push and shove again.

Learners will show their boredom by discussing and laughing among themselves; more especially if they feel that the person who addresses them at the assembly takes longer than what they anticipated. Some learners will try to maintain order by reprimanding the talkative learners in vain. Sometimes the learners who try to maintain order are rebuked. Learners do not take too kind to rebukes; as a matter of fact they respond by retaliating. The lack of moral values in education is a result of learners’ unwillingness to reach a compromise. Uniqueness and individuality are not tolerated in a grade 10 class. When there is no tolerance in a grade 10 class, chaos leading to aggression always erupts. Learners blame it on the learners who do not want to conform.
The researcher observed patterns of challenges to moral values in education when the individuals in a grade 10 class express a moral value that is in serious conflict with the group's norms, which is a culture of aggression; a group's authority may carry out various ways of encouraging conformance or stigmatisation of non-conforming behaviour of other learners.

The patterns of aggression in a grade 10 class are displayed during the registration period by challenges to moral values in education, which includes mockery. A learner will walk into a grade 10 class and the teacher will ask the reasons behind arriving late in the classroom. The response from the learner will be: “The train had a puncture!” Such responses are followed by the rest of the learners in the classroom falling over their chairs, highly amused. This makes it hard for the teacher to calm the learners down and it sets the aggressive tone for the morning, as the teacher will retaliate by tongue lashing the learners with the hope of gaining their attention. The teacher's approach towards this kind of situation aggravates aggression in a grade 10 class, because in retrospect the learners will also retaliate aggressively.

Patterns of challenges to moral values in education are observed in the learners' late-coming, truancy, school work not being done and the schools' dress code not being adhered to. These were some of the episodes of the patterns of challenges to values in education that the researcher observed, which were apparent when the teacher controlled homework in a grade 10 class. There was a handful of learners who submitted the homework - the “bookworms” as they were labelled by peers. A few of the other learners made an attempt, but the rest of the learners did not even bother to try. The researcher is of the opinion that such episodes in a grade 10 class diminish the moral values in education.

Patterns of challenges to moral values in education were further observed when the teacher attempted to punish the learners who did not do their homework; aggression took the centre stage in the grade 10 class. The
learners would get out of their seats, coming up with a lot of excuses like “we do not have electricity”; they will burst out laughing at each other’s excuses for not doing their homework. The teachers’ work plan will be altered for the days’ period, as the classroom turned chaotic; it is impossible for the teacher to continue with the planned lesson. On the contrary, the teacher will be forced to come up with means to manage the learners’ aggression in the classroom. If that is not done as a matter of urgency, the classroom environment will immediately turn violent. Learners in the grade 10 class always make an effort to successfully perpetuate a culture of aggression.

The researcher observed the learners walking down the corridors, tie loosened, shirt half tucked in, pants hanging off the waist and dusty shoes; demonstrating destructive attitude - no respect for the school’s code of conduct. The learners have a small plastic bag with only two books as its contents. Those two books have a bit of writing here and there and some offensive drawings that are not school-related. Staff members report many instances of a lack of moral values in education to the school principal, which were related to substance abuse by the grade 10 learners.

The principal reported that:

“With the school environment being a virtually police-free milieu, learners are able to smuggle alcohol and drugs into the school premises. In this case, learners were exposed to alcohol and drugs safe from the hands of the law. Substance abuse will be indulged with mostly in the unsuspecting attention of the teachers.

Whilst some teachers may be aware of the substance abuse, they are rendered ineffective because they too fear intimidation. Sometimes it becomes difficult for the teacher to advise learners not to do what they
have been doing together over the weekend in the township or community. Some teacher frequent common taverns with the learners. Whilst other teachers, engage in the mass protest marches at community level and picket together with learners as peers”.

Learners contend that:

“Some teachers have appeared on television whilst participating in mass protests for the community and also for the teachers’ unions leaving us learners to fend for ourselves. Come the next day teachers expect business as usual … hayi (meaning no).”

Another learner added:

“Some teachers lobby us into supporting their strikes; sometimes they instigate us to go against the proposed school reform. It was said that last month the school will start at 7.30; other teachers were against that idea. What did they do? They asked us to oppose it.”

Another element of a lack of tolerance was the disdained schooling environment in the grade 10 class, which usually takes place during the hot summer days. It is called “bucketing”, meaning pouring a bucket full of water over each other. Learners were not discreet during “bucketing”. They just poured a bucket of water over any learner. They did not ask permission; whether the learners liked it or not, they would be poured with a bucket full of water. Some learners do not take such actions kindly. They become extremely agitated, and as a consequence they retaliate in any aggressive manner they deem fit. What the researcher observed, was the teachers’ failure to manage this culture of aggression.
The above-mentioned culture of aggression represents the unfortunate changes in moral values in education resulting in very serious forms of interpersonal conflict, self-destructive behaviour and violations of the school’s codes of conduct occurring in the secondary school. Other unfortunate changes occurred in less visible aspects that include attitudes and beliefs that learners hold about the teachers and about each other; the rampant fragmentation in the community; and the incivility that is routinely displayed in the learners’ daily interaction with each other. The behaviour displayed by teachers and described in the above paragraph provides the learners with a very poor role model and leads to unhealthy socialisation practices that are predictably reflected in the learners’ values, attitudes and behaviour towards peers, teachers and the school environment (Grossman, 2008:45).

Some of gangs in the grade 10 class hold the belief that acts of aggression are “creative acts”. In fact, a belief exists that the more creative they are, the more fun they provide. Creativity in this case does not consider “goodness” or “badness”. The focus is only on “fun stuff equals to heroism”, as they call themselves “Skhokho”, meaning hero. Much of the so-called fun stuff does not consider the secondary school’s code of conduct. The learners’ positive personal relation is affected severely during the initiation of the newcomers in the secondary school and in a grade 10 classroom.

The senior learners, as they call themselves, arrange for initiation days where any form of “barbaric” act goes, as long as the perpetrators are laughing and enjoying themselves while subjecting the victims to humiliation. Buie (2004:139) believes that the then victims of aggression who are currently perpetrators of aggression accede that at first they thought that aggression was a bad thing, but at one time or another while reflecting on the past, it proved to be indeed a sweet revenge.

Some learners regretted being the victims then; what they regretted most was the failure to retaliate at the time. However, there were other learners who still held pains and scars of the aggressive incidents of the past. Aggression
seems to be a vicious circle in which the victims are patiently waiting in the meantime, acquiring the skills and gaining the experience to rise to the top of the game in future. The researcher believes that the victims of the past cannot wait to become aspirant perpetrators of aggression who are perceived as future heroes by other learners.

The learners in the grade 10 class reported that a culture of aggression is often seen as a rite of passage. You have credibility if you passed the “baptismal of fire” initiation. You are often looked on as “ibari”, as they are called, meaning a fool, if you were not tried and tested through the rituals of the “baptismal of fire”.

The teachers and the school management team (SMT) reported a variety of the characteristics of challenges to moral values in education that forms the patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. These included a lack of social skills, low self-concept, lack of coping skills and conflict management skills. They also reported limited vocabulary, greater need for attention, greater challenges academically, immaturity, inattentiveness, lower levels of frustration tolerance, difficulty accepting change, poor impulse control, higher levels of anger, low morale and poor job prospects when the grade 10 learners exit school.

One learner related with melancholy how another learner made a fool of him in front of the teacher and the whole class. That was after this learner failed to understand the teacher's question. The perpetrator remarked sarcastically to the wrong answer that the victimised learner gave by reminding the whole class that “some people are wise whereas others are otherwise”.

This was a phrase used to denigrate that particular learner. This was said to the laughter of the rest of the class, except for the teacher who attempted to call to order the perpetrator, to no avail. Such derogatory remarks have a lot of negative effects relating to aggression, which may not be discussed here.
However, to the perpetrator, this is a sign of victory and enlistment to the “hall of fame” that is admired by those learners who feel helpless, lack a sense of belonging and have a low self-concept. During the interviews, the learners alluded to the fact that most of the contact time is spent on trying to address the issues of aggression in a grade 10 class.

Another learner supported the latter statement by stating that:

“Teachers spend huge percentage of contact time talking about the attitudes of the learners and trying to manage aggressive behaviours” (she referred to teachers as “fire extinguishers”).

Another learner described a culture of aggression as the effects of learners’ negative behaviour in the classroom by stating that:

“Time spent dealing with aggressive learners disrupts the meaningful learning in the classroom. Therefore right or wrong all the learners suffer”.

Another learner said:

“Aggressive behaviour is something that spreads within the class. We are all on the fence and we will easily pick up on aggression for different reasons such as retaliation or revenge”.

The researcher observed that the learners’ aggressive behaviour, which is successfully used in intimidating other learners, propels the intimidated learners to use aggression as a tool for retaliation. When the teachers request
the school principal to expel the aggressive learner from the classroom, the principal becomes powerless, as such a request has policy implications.

Learners who demonstrate a lack of moral values in education are backed up by their parents and the learners’ representative council. The learners’ parents and the learners’ representative council will be on the principals’ case, stressing the rights of the learners and other related policies of the Department of Education, yet omitting the element of responsibility that comes with any right as the core in moral values in education.

At times the Department of Education does succeed in suspending the grade 10 learners for the violation of the school’s code of conduct. Unfortunately the suspension of learners is only punitive, it does not manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. On the contrary, a culture of aggression becomes a vicious circle – suspended learners resent suspension and as a result they revert to major aggressive behaviour in retaliation when the suspension is uplifted and they are back at school. Unfortunately the secondary school does not have support programmes in place to assist the grade 10 learners while they are still on suspension. Interviewed participants spoke emotionally about the impact of aggression on their classroom.

One learner said:

“It’s very stressful … Very. You feel like there is no purpose in coming to school anymore. I feel so bad because we do not feel safe and secure in the classroom. It makes me feel like quitting this school maybe other schools in other places respect the school laws”.

A teacher said:

“A lot of my attention is given to the behavioural problems which leaves less of my attention to the business of the day”.

Another teacher commented:

“That’s where all my attention is going, not to what really matters … teaching! The culture of aggression in the classroom makes it exhausting to teach”.

Another learner commented:

“Teachers spend so much time disciplining no wonder stimulating things are not in the classroom anymore learning has been reduced to putting out fires by teachers”.

During the follow-up interviews, the teachers and learners reported certain circumstances and contexts that were observed by the researcher as likely to contribute to the patterns of a lack of moral values in education. Those issues were learners reacting to not understanding or liking the rules of the school, fatigue, learners’ immaturity, issues from home weighing on them, need for attention going unmet, communities plagued by poverty and gangs.

Two teachers described a lack of moral values in education as often being a result of fighting over limited resources. Some teachers cited the demands of the new curriculum statement. Some teachers blamed a lack of moral values in education on “substance abuse and lack of parental involvement”.
Several learners mentioned classroom congestion and limited classroom furniture:

“… we do not have enough space to move around; our teacher is unable to move around, either the furniture is on the first come first serve basis. Sometimes you find someone sitting on your previous chair and table you feel that it is your space and the other guy does not want to move you say stay away from my desk. It is my … mine no it not do move he won’t do nothing I said move! So many learners are now involved knives are in the air someone is fighting someone is mix-up”.

Another learner mentioned the lack of cleanliness of the classroom as another limitation in achieving the desired moral values in education.

She said:

“The litter and bad maintenance has an effect on the learners’ attitudes and misbehaviour because the learners will engage in fights, swear words, pushing and shoving and so on … for a better spot in a classroom which is clean from litter and not next to the pot hole or broken window, more especially in winter time or any cold day no one wants to sit next to the broken window or sometimes when the door is broken no learner wants to sit there.”

According to Rappaport (2009:150), the presence of some environmental quality variables, such as vacant lots, litter and bad maintenance, has an effect on the secondary school learners’ mental health. All these might lead to the patterns of aggression in a grade 10 class.
Additional patterns of aggression that were observed by the researcher included transition times during the day, for example changing classes; unstructured spare time, for example recess, when the learners’ behaviour is less prescribed, for example when there is no teacher in the classroom or when the teacher is inexperienced; the afore-mentioned circumstances yield it impossible to manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class; as a result, the moral values in education are compromised.

The redeployment of teachers yielded a negative impact on this secondary school. The redeployed teachers in the secondary school in this study are fairly new and they lack experience.

During the interviews, the school management team (SMT) mentioned that:

“Many aggressive learners face academic challenges”.

The researcher was offered some supporting documents like mark schedules for her perusal. Several educators lamented about the fact that the academic expectations of the grade 10s increased to a degree that triggers aggressive behaviour, as learners act out their “academic frustration”.

One teacher said:

“In my 10 plus years teaching grade 10 class, I have seen a marked increase in aggressive behaviour and these teenagers are not ready for the transitional period of adolescence stage.

Erikson (1994:107) explains that “at this stage, adolescents are in search of an identity that will lead them to adulthood. Adolescents make a strong effort to answer the question, “who am I?”
On the other hand, the teachers say that they witnessed the curriculum markedly increase in difficulty. This adds to learners’ frustration and brings about aggressive behaviour. Initially, researchers thought that being unable to achieve some goal increases people’s readiness to behave aggressively. This led to the frustration-aggression theory (Myers, 2011:578). Frustration creates anger, which may generate aggression. When social scientists later realised that physical pain, personal insults and other unpleasant events also instigate aggression, they saw that frustrations are simply instances of aversive events (Myers, 2011:578).

One teacher said:

“*We are pushing too much academically and causing frustration in some children which leads to aggression because of this new curriculum statement that the learner needs to overcome*”.

According to the Department of Education (2008:11), the national curriculum statement has three curriculum design features, namely critical and developmental outcomes, learning outcomes and assessment standards. Curriculum 2005 had eight curriculum design features, namely critical and developmental outcomes, specific outcomes, range statements, assessment criteria, performance indicators, phase organisers, programme organisers and expected levels of performance.

The members of the School Governing Body (SGB) who were interviewed believed that the economic downturn led to more gang-related aggression in a grade 10 class, which undermines the school rules and the rights of the learners, in particular the rights of learners to be protected from a threatening environment.

The chairperson (of the SGB) said:
“Learners don’t have a lot of alternatives today, especially in low-income communities”.

He does not blame the parents for lack of supervision. He said:

“The problem is that society is not providing positive role models”.

When there are no positive role models, grade 10 learners learn certain values such as that being aggressive gives authority and solve problems (Jordaan & Jordaan, 2000:567). Social learning contributes to the underpinning of the theory of violence as an action; part of the development of the contemporary social learning theory was initiated from experiments demonstrating how learners can learn aggressive behaviours by observation (Weuten, 2001:369).

Traditionally, aggression was analysed in terms of the stimulus events that evoke it and the reinforcing consequences that alter it. However, researchers repeatedly demonstrated that response patterns generally attributed to underlying forces could be induced, eliminated and reinstated simply by varying external sources of influence (Bandura, 2001:103; Mischel, 2009:209).

The school principal mentioned the lack of adult supervision of learners’ behaviour. He further complained about the lack of parental involvement in the learners’ daily activities and interactions. The school principal is of the opinion that a moral value in education can be inculcated from home.

He said:
“When parents are invited to the secondary school to come and discuss their children’s aggressive behaviour parents do not bother to pitch up; learners are involved in gangs and substance abuse, they have a negative attitude towards the school environment and parents do not know anything about it and they do not do anything about it, as a school we do acknowledge the level of illiteracy in some of the parents but why they don’t come at all when we invite them or at least show concern?”

The relationship between the school and the parents is in question. A relationship in this research is defined in terms of people’s interaction with the self, with others and with the environment. It is through these relationships and interactions that cultures are formed.

The school principal mentioned that:

“A triangle analogy can be used, in order to explain that the relationship triangle should be forged between the school and the parents this triangle should represent the parents, teachers and learners and learners should be on the peak of the triangle”.

One teacher said:

“Parents today are not always at home or are trying to be only friends with their child and are not willing to set boundaries”.

The school principal commented about the absence of structure and routine in the aggressive grade 10 class.

Another teacher said:
“I have observed that most aggressive grade 10 learners in this class come from environments that are very unstable and homes in which there is very little positive adult interaction with children, the moral values in education are not taught at home”.

Another teacher added:

“Many learners from that class come from unstable environment; this makes transition into a structured environment, with rules and routine, more difficult”.

When the SGB was questioned during the interviews about the challenges encountered when working with parents or guardians of the learners who are demonstrating aggressive behaviour in a grade 10 class, it was reported that:

“Parents deny the aggressive behaviour of their children, or diminish its importance or expect the school to fix whatever”.

When engaging the participants by means of discussions about the environmental factors in the school and in the neighbourhood that contributed to the lack of moral values in education, participants reported several factors. These factors included the lack of adult supervision, high mobility, drugs, poverty, lack of acceptance or tolerance, negative interaction with peers and unsupervised media viewing.

The principal described learners as sometimes learning “street smart” rules in their neighbourhoods that do not translate to non-aggression at school. Other teachers expressed concerns including a lack of positive influence outside learners’ troubled homes, for example child-headed families. Unsavoury
elements in neighbourhoods to which learners were exposed at the early stages of their lives leads to a culture of aggression.

The culture of a shared sense of responsibility for all the children in the community diminished; one can deduce that the old cliché that states that the child is raised by the village, no longer applies to this community. The acceptance of aggression and disrespect for authority in the community translates to the lack of moral values in education. The grade 10 learners mirror what takes place in their society.

Some patterns of aggression taking place in a grade 10 class contribute to a lack of moral values in education. The participants narrated those patterns of aggression and it was summarised by the researcher into three major issues of concern, namely gambling, substance abuse and money laundering.

Aggressive behaviour has become more pervasive in a grade 10 class. As such it affects the relationships and interactions among learners, escalating in a lack of moral values in education in a grade 10 class, which is difficult to eradicate. Another key feature of educational reforms in South Africa that contributed to the patterns of aggression was retrenchment and redeployment of teachers under what was termed right sizing. Teachers were laid off because of severe budget cuts, leaving the learners to fend for themselves.

The right sizing of teachers caused teacher shortages in the secondary school. The post establishment in the school does not resemble the learner-teacher ratio as stipulated by the Department of Defence (2006:28), which is 1:40. The non-compliance with this stipulated ratio causes severe overcrowding of classrooms, and yet those teachers who remained in the system were left with uncertainty with regard to the future. An aspect of uncertainty impacted negatively on the management of a culture of aggression, as teachers were demotivated ever since the new reforms in the education system.
The researcher observed the absence of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class contributing to the patterns of the culture of aggression. Most aggressive behaviours took place when the learners were not taught. The teachers were angry about the overcrowded classroom, and they projected their anger towards the learners; as such the learners retaliated by disdaining the school environment.

The redeployment of teachers considered to be in “excess” sparked off a wave of war in the entire school. The police shot two learners from a grade 10 class with rubber bullets. I heard from the Learner Representative Council (LRC) that the dispute was over the time-tabling of the learning areas. According to the chairperson of the LRC, the redeployment of teachers led to the scheduling of many learning areas to the same teacher in one period, causing clashes of learning areas on the time-table, which affected the learners’ attendance of lessons. Most of the time learners missed lessons because one teacher cannot teach two different learning areas in the different grades at the same time. When learners are not taught in the classroom, the moral values in education wane.

One learner mentioned that such a state of affairs caused numerous frustrations. The frustration-aggression theory argues that people are driven to hurt others when they are frustrated and when they are unable to attain their goals or the reward they expect (Muro-Ruiz, 2002:111). During one of the protests that was aggravated by the learners’ accusations, the principal called in the police for intervention. This gesture resulted in greater violence, and several learners were temporarily arrested. The learners accused the principal for his role in the teacher redeployment. The classrooms were seriously vandalised during the protests.

One teacher mentioned that:
“The criminal element has cropped in; there is no respect for people and property.”

The aggressive atmosphere in the secondary school resulted in a teachers’ stay-away. The researcher observed that the grade 10 learners in this particular secondary school are at high risk for personal encounters with exposure to extreme forms of violence. These encounters are then reflected in the learners’ own conflict styles and behaviours.

Another teacher said:

“I’m fearful of being accosted; many teachers arrive late at school and leave early, an armed gang also attacked the school and caused extensive damage by setting the administration block on fire. Rampant violence against learners, the school and teachers has been pervasive, disruptive and has severely impeded the core business of the school that is teaching and learning”.

One learner mentioned that:

“Due to the lack of teachers we spend a lot of time without learning area teachers; as a result teacher X arranged for us to go to the computer laboratory; there is television there we stay and watch the television and play with computer games chatting ... hei the face book viewing and just you know ... for the whole day”.

One learner added:

“I like when that happens; at least teacher A and teacher Z are off my back”.
Another learner interrupted:

“Plus at home sonnie (small boy) we do not have these things so I get to play nicely with them and no one troubles you coz these people can make you crazy I just wish things could stay like this forever … Mem ..! Me …! Sisi ..! (drawing the researchers attention) you remember when I told you about the gossip and the rumours the spread out about the girls … iya-ya (nodding) this is the time they use come come and have a look (pulling the researchers’ hand towards one of the computers) you see … can you see, did you read this is what I was talking about … what am I suppose to do ye … ye …

Do you think I am going to keep shush (quiet) about this, this is nonsense? That I won’t stand … They watch all the horrible stuff on the site … Horrible things on tellie and they think it’s funny”.

Watching television at the secondary school, as mentioned in the paragraphs above, has a negative impact on the moral values in education. The researcher observed that the teachers do not supervise learners in the laboratory room; the learners view television programmes without the teachers’ guidance. Teachers allow television to supervise the learners on their behalf. Most of the websites on the secondary school’s Internet are not blocked. Learners are at liberty to view any site on the Internet. There is a trend in the grade 10 class of bickering through the e-mails, using foul language. Then those e-mails are circulated throughout the secondary school. There is no respect for privacy in the grade 10 class.

The researcher observed that a challenge to moral values in education was a vehicle used by the grade 10 learners to achieve respect from peers. Learners in the grade 10 class believed that respect is achieved through breaking the moral values in education. The researcher also observed that the learners in the grade 10 class do not share common goals aimed at
increasing the quality of life, which manage aggressive behaviours. The researcher further observed that grade 10 learners are diverse individuals who strive for heroism at the expense of other learners. Their individualistic efforts value only their own self-interests.

Barone (2007:447) posits that individuals who are exposed to media violence may be seen as one of many factors that will add to high and rising levels of aggression that may lead to violence. The culture of aggression in the grade 10 class can be in response to new ways of behaving aggressively towards others. One teacher mentioned that some lessons are acquired through videos, television and other media. According to Jordaan and Jordaan (2000:750), the South African society is characterised by high levels of violence as a severe form of aggression that result in traumatic consequences (Kali & Cavanaugh, 2004:423). Violent scenes might give individuals the short-time belief that aggression is common and often an appropriate form of behaviour. This belief can foster aggressive modes of conduct among learners (Berkowitz, 2003:221).

It is evident from the preceding discussions that a culture of aggression and aggressive behaviour can be more of an intrinsic matter than an extrinsic one. Shaffer (2002:190) says that all motivation emanates intrinsically, even when external factors may be the initiators (Purkey & Schimdt, 1987:57).

Various explanations were offered as to why learners are disproportionately involved in aggressive behaviour. Some of these relate to the vestiges of South Africa’s past and to the high levels of political and other forms of societal violence to which learners are still exposed (WHO, 2002:34). Some SGB members claim that what is happening on our streets and in our schools are manifestations of the decline in the social and moral fabric of our society (Tattum, 2009:77).

The waning of social fibre is impacting on the patterns of aggression in a grade 10 class. Grossman (2008:2) argues that our society inadvertently
desensitises vulnerable learners and youth to violence and socialises them to accept it as a means for coping with their social environment and life’s challenges. Grossman (2008:2) believes that this cultural shift accounts for much of the tragic youth aggression leading to violence that is depicted today. Grossman (2008:30) blames the flood of media violence as a key driving force in the casual acceptance of the patterns of aggression among the learners, especially among those who come from at-risk backgrounds.

The violence that dominates the community allows learners to come into contact with individuals who do not uphold the values in education at a tender age, while acts of aggression that lead to violence in the name of survival are condoned. Some of the learners end up leaving the secondary school prematurely. But this is not before they transferred the negative attitude of unruliness and patterns of aggression to the entire secondary school.

Buie (2004:123) purports that the perpetrators of aggression do not only have a strong belief that aggression is “good” and beneficial to them, but also expect this to have the same effects on the “victims”. That is why coercion and intimidation are the tools used in the grade 10 class.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the research findings were discussed and controlled with available literature from the participant observations. The participants’ observations were followed up by group and individual interviews of the participants, in a grade 10 class of the secondary school in the Gauteng Department of Education. The interviews were based on the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The verbatim quotations outlined the patterns that were identified, including patterns of anger, bullying, fighting and lack of moral values in education.
CHAPTER 4

THE DESCRIPTION OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO FACILITATE THE EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE MANAGEMENT OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION IN A GRADE 10 CLASS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL

“Not everything that is faced can be changed,
But nothing can be changed until it is faced.” (James Baldwin, 2011)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The results in chapter 3 portrayed a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, as the patterns below indicate.

- The patterns of anger
- The patterns of bullying
- The patterns of fighting
- The patterns of challenges to moral values in education

In chapter 3, and with specific regard to each of the above-mentioned patterns, a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class was discussed in relation to the relevant literature. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the conceptual framework to facilitate the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The literature control was integrated as a further measure to ensure trustworthiness; “control of literature confirms trustworthiness” (Molefe, 2004:81). To continue, the researcher will describe the conceptual framework relevant to this research study.
4.2. DESCRIPTION OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is defined as a schematic or verbal picture of the interrelationships that exist among concepts (Clark, 2003:190). The main function of a conceptual framework is to position the researcher in relationship to the research study (Holliday, 2004:52). The researcher will generate a conceptual framework as the basis for educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

4.2.1 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The assumptions of the conceptual framework will be based on transparency, accountability and communication.

- Transparency

The researcher, together with the facilitators of the school-based support team (SBST) as the agent, should be open to the learners, who are the recipients of the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, about the purpose of the facilitation and the activities that will be undertaken to achieve the purpose.

Transparency is essential to build a trusting relationship between the learners in a grade 10 class and the facilitators of the school-based support team (SBST). Both parties should sense that there are no hidden agendas; the trusting environment will promote the free flow of communication and participation. The agent and the recipient should both be comfortable with each other in order to create a safe space for comfortable interaction and expression.
• Accountability

Another crucial assumption is accountability. Accountability has to do with taking responsibility for one’s choices. Those choices will be based on moral values rather than external circumstances. Accountability in this research study is crucial for the agent as well as the recipient in accounting for their actions. Accountability is essential because it encourages the learners to take calculated action despite the presented circumstances. Accountability assists the learners in making informed choices that will afford them to be steadfast in assuming ownership of what they strongly believe in; it is more like taking a stand and being able to subsist with the consequences of the choice made.

• Communication skills

Communication is a cornerstone of the conceptual framework for the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. Communication skills are vital for the success of the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression. Without communication skills, it will be impossible to facilitate the description of the conceptual framework. The grade 10 learners (recipient) can only open up in an environment where communication is invitational, easy and non-judgemental.

The facilitation of communication skills in a grade 10 class should empower the recipient with communication skills, which will better enable the recipient to manage communication in aggression-provoking situations. The facilitation of communication should assist the recipient in identifying the stakeholders’ (the SMT or the SBST) concern, to improve the everyday communication and dissemination of positive information in the classroom environment. The facilitation of communication will assist the recipient in developing a comprehensive and strategic approach to communication that can be applied to non-aggressive, strategic decision-making (Sauer, 2011:6).
The researcher will use the train-the-trainer method to facilitate the strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The researcher will first train school-based support team facilitators in order to enable them to facilitate the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. Therefore the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression will be facilitated in collaboration with the SBST facilitators. This kind of collaboration will assist in sustaining the strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

Figure 4.1 shows the conceptual framework that will guide the description of the phases by means of which the researcher and the SBST will facilitate the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school. The conceptual framework showed in figure 4.1 attempts to provide a framework that can be used to describe the identified patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The conceptual framework in this context serves to provide a means of linking ideas and actions that are regarded as fundamental to the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. It links together a set of concepts that provides a particular way of thinking and taking action towards achieving the goal of facilitating the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.
Figure 4.1 - The conceptual framework that will guide the description of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

**CONTEXT**
Learners in a grade 10 class, school, family, community

**ENVIRONMENT**

**AGENT**
- RESEARCHER
- SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM
- LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

**TO MANAGE A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION IN A GRADE 10 CLASS**

**PROCEDURE**

**THE FACILITATION OF THE MANAGEMENT OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION IN A GRADE 10 CLASS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH**
- Communication skills
- Moral values in education includes respect, self-respect, tolerance of diversity, and anti-bullying
- Anger management
- School safety

**DYNAMICS**
The patterns of anger, bullying, fighting and lack of moral values in education

**TERMINUS / OUTCOMES**
The constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class as an integral part of mental health
Reference will be made to the adapted list of Dickoff, James and Wiedenbach (1968:423) as a guide for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The following questions will be asked and answered:

- who is the agent;
- who is the recipient;
- what is the procedure;
- what are the dynamics;
- what is the context; and
- what is the outcome of the activity?

4.2.2 Who performs the activity? (Agent)

An agent is “a person that provides a service; typically one that involves liaising between two other parties” (Hill & Stone, 2007:209). It refers to whom or what is facilitated; in particular the activities that will be performed during the facilitation processes planned according to the needs of the learners in a grade 10 class. An agent is a facilitator; a facilitator makes something happen more easily (Hill & Stone, 2007:209). All social relationships rely on trust. Hill and Stone (2007:46) refer to trust as a fragile attribute. There are four attributes that a facilitator should have, namely commitment, openness, knowledge and empathy, of which empathy is the most important of all (Hill & Stone, 2007:46).

In this study, the agent is the researcher and the SBST facilitators, as they will facilitate the recipient’s activities. The SBST is responsible for school guidance and counselling in this particular secondary school. They work hand in glove with the SMT, SGB and the psychological services unit of the Sedibeng district office of the Gauteng Department of Education. The researcher will follow a train-the-trainer approach. This approach is suitable
for cascading and sustaining the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The goal of the train-the-trainer approach will be achieved when the researcher successfully trains the SBST facilitators on the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The SBST facilitators will reciprocate by training the recipient and the other teachers in the secondary school to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class and to facilitate the mental health of the grade 10 learners’ in this study. The train-the-trainer approach is crucial in sustaining the strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The researcher will further train the LRC.

The LRC is the constitutional structure in the secondary school that represents the interest of the student body. The LRC has dedicated powers and is extremely influential among the learners. The researcher took advantage of those powers and used the LRC as a point of entry to receive a buy-in, as the LRC in this particular secondary school exercises enormous powers. If they are not taken seriously or awarded the recognition they desire, they can sabotage the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The role of the LRC will be to assist the researcher and the SBST facilitators during the course of their facilitation by taking care of the logistics and being the gate keepers.

The agent will apply the interventions mentioned hereafter (see figure 4.1) when facilitating the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. Policies such as anti-bullying policy, diversity and multicultural education, school safety policy, the Constitution of South Africa (1996), South African School Act (SASA, 1996) and the manifesto on values, education and democracy, as well as concepts such as mental health, values and respect, tolerance of diversity, anger management, communication skills, management and facilitation, will be described in detail in paragraph 4.3.6 when discussing the procedure.
When facilitating the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, it will be imperative for the agent to build trust and a meaningful relationship with the recipients, because without trust and a meaningful relationship it will be difficult to achieve the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. To facilitate the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, the agent should possess enabling facilitation skills.

The agent should master the skills of communication, collaboration and cooperative education. Collaboration and cooperative learning are the cornerstones of team building, support and interaction, which are required when facilitating the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class (Bird, 2004:207). Communication is all about what you say and how you say it.

### 4.2.3 Who is the recipient of this activity? (Recipient)

The recipients are the persons at whom the facilitation is aimed. The constructive management of a culture of aggression is aimed at the needs of the recipients. The learners in a grade 10 class are the recipients of the interventions that are aimed at constructively managing a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school. The learners in the grade 10 class under study are the ones, according to the findings of the research study, who were found to be participating in, perpetuating, absorbed in and affected by the patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression will include the facilitation of anger management, an anti-bullying workshop, communication skills, school safety policy and respect and values in education, all for the sake of the learners’ mental health.

In order to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, the recipients should aim for a mutual goal, which is to constructively manage
a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. Without a mutual goal the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression will be futile.

The recipients should promote the atmosphere of mutual trust and respect for individualism; the constructive management of a culture of aggression will thrive in a respectful and trusting space. Interpersonal communication skills are vital for teamwork, which will be essential during the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The agent will encourage the recipients’ optimism with regard to reaching the terminus in order to facilitate the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

4.2.4 What is the energy source of this activity? (Dynamics)

The grade 10 learners perceive the classroom environment, which is characterised by a culture of aggression and aggressive behaviour, as a negative influence on their daily interaction, forming part of their life-world and worldview. These kinds of dynamics affect the learners’ mental health.

The patterns of a culture of aggression that were identified in a grade 10 class were patterns of anger, bullying, fighting and challenges to moral values. These patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class are the energy source of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, as discussed in chapter 3.

The learners in a grade 10 class live in the shadow of fear, which does not promote their mental health. Fear is an emotional response to perceiving a threat (Peterson, 2003:23). The identified patterns of a culture of aggression constitute the dynamics of this research study, which were determined by the findings in chapter 3. The details will be discussed in paragraph 4.2.5 under the procedure.
4.2.5 What is the Procedure for this Activity? (Procedure)

The term “procedure” refers to the techniques or processes that are followed (Hill & Stone, 2007:301). To facilitate the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, the procedure will include experiential learning such as recipients’ participation, role playing, watching relevant videos, presentations, designing models, designing posters, educating, reflections, writing of poems or songs, drawing contracts, individual, subgroup and group work. Facilitation refers to “making easy or easier” (West, 2009:343). In addition, Parsons (2010:13) adds that facilitation is “a helping, problem-solving process involving a help giver and a help seeker”.

This voluntary relationship involves mutual involvement - an attempt to solve a problem. Therefore a relationship of trust is required between the help giver and the help seeker. Facilitation is about helping people engage in, manage and cope creatively with rapid changes in themselves and their communities to make a more civil society; that is, a relationship, a way of relating to the community that fosters inclusive, respectful and responsible participation. The learners will be required to participate; the SBST facilitators, together with the researcher, will be required to facilitate the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The procedure for the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class will focus on the three key areas, which are illustrated in figure 4.2, by applying phases 1 to 3.

- In phase 1 the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression will conduct a relationship phase focusing on building trust and setting objectives.

- In phase 2 the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression will form a working phase to facilitate learner’s
communication skills, learner’s moral values in education and self-respect, the culture of tolerance of diversity, anger management, anti-bullying and school safety.

Phase 3 is the termination phase

- In phase 3 the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression will focus on achieving the outcome and the experience of the procedure.

4.2.5.1 Facilitation of communication skills

This refers to an intervention to create awareness among the grade 10 learners concerning a culture of aggression in their classroom environment. It communicates the importance of discourse on aggression and aggressive behaviours. The use of the school’s newsletter and other technological innovations that will disseminate information on aggression to the grade 10 learners can increase awareness of specific aspect of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class (Eddy, 2009:210).

Communication is the process of giving, receiving and understanding messages. It involves exchanging ideas, understanding, listening, hearing, expressing oneself, talking and using body language, facial expressions and a host of other behaviours. Communication skills include self-knowledge, self-awareness and self-concept. Communication is a vital tool in a grade 10 class to enhance the positive daily interaction of learners.
Figure 4.2 - The illustration of the facilitation process for the constructive management of a culture of aggression by the agent

PROCEDURE

Relationship phase:
Building trust and setting objectives

Working phase:
- Facilitation of communication skills
- Facilitation of moral values in education
- Facilitation of anger management
- Facilitation of anti-bullying and school safety

Termination phase:
- Experience of procedure
- Achieving outcome

OUTCOME

The constructive management of a culture of aggression
The agent will discuss and share ideas with the recipient on how communication skills can be learned. Communication is a skill that can be learned by way of many aspects, such as listening, expressing one’s feelings, asking for what you want and saying no to what you do not want (Johnson, 2003:120), which the agent will explain.

To live is to communicate; perhaps the most challenging, yet essential aspect of being human is the ability to effectively communicate with other human beings. The agent cannot overemphasise the importance of communication. Communication is the foundation of all interpersonal relationships, and the recipients’ daily lives are filled with one communication experience after another. The agent will explain to the recipient communication is the medium through which understanding each other is reached. The agent will state some of the barriers to communication and ways in which communication can be improved. Communication is not a solitary activity; therefore group work will be encouraged.

The agent will explain to the recipient that people also use non-verbal communication to convey different messages. The agent and the recipient will discuss different ways in which communication can be improved by using different gestures. The recipient will do role play will in an attempt to illustrate non-verbal communication after viewing the pictures illustrating non-verbal communication.

The agent will create a learning environment in which the recipient can learn about the theory of listening, responding, incongruence and the mistakes that can be made while communicating; the recipient will be required to reflect on those mistakes in communication.

The agent will give the recipient instructions on a series of techniques that focuses on dealing with effective and ineffective communication. These activities will provide the recipient with the opportunity (1) to become more
aware of effective and ineffective communication procedures, (2) to become more aware of his or her behaviour in communicating with others, (3) to practice effective communication techniques to develop increased skills, and (4) to create self-knowledge.

The agent will empower the recipient to apply a series of methods dealing with barriers to communication, as well as effective and ineffective communication. These methods will afford the recipient with the opportunity to become aware of and to practice effective communication skills in order to master effective communication. The agent will model a few examples of a mixture of effective and ineffective communication; the recipients will then be required to classify the modelled communication accordingly. The researcher believes that effective communication can manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class constructively.

4.2.5.2 The facilitation of moral values in education

The values necessary for building and maintaining positive relationships, especially among diverse individuals, are part of the superordinate identity, cooperative efforts and constructive conflict resolution that unite diverse individuals (Johnson & Johnson, 1999:365). In the secondary school, the superordinate identity of grade 10 learners should be based on a set of common, pluralistic values specified in the Manifesto of Values in Education (Condy, 2009:102). To interact effectively with diverse individuals, grade 10 learners must value the rights of individuals; all individuals in a grade 10 class should be considered to be of equal value.

A pledge was proposed by the Minister of Education for South African schools. The general public received the proposed pledge with criticism. The proposed pledge was viewed as a crude indoctrination of learners. One thing that was clear though, was that the proposed pledge was necessary for instilling the moral values in education. The minister envisaged that the proposed pledge would seek to promote a caring school environment. As a
consequence of that, a pressing need arose to introduce the pledge. There is little understanding of what it is that forms the moral values in education, how moral values in education evolved and what role, if any, moral values in education play in managing a culture of aggression in the secondary school together (www.sahistory.org.za).

The facilitation of moral values in education can enhance the strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a secondary school, with particular reference to a grade 10 class. Moral values in education do have a major role to play in the constructive management of a culture of aggression. The Department of Education has a division called *Values in Education* that is tasked with promoting values in education and dealing with violence in South African schools. It is crucial that the agent understands the programmes of this division of the Department of Education and the impact of such programmes on secondary schools for the sake of collaboration.

The following questions may arise when trying to understand the division of values in education: Is the division sufficiently resourced? Are its efforts sufficiently integrated across the learning areas and grades in the education system? Since the Department of Education’s 2001 conference to establish its values in education policies, there has been little critical engagement with regard to the benefit of the Values in Education programme in the Department.

Moral values in education are an integral part of a secondary school culture. Along with beliefs and assumptions, they generate behaviour. Being part of a culture that shares a common core set of moral values creates expectations and predictability without which a culture would disintegrate and its members would lose their personal identity and sense of worth. Moral values in education tell the learners what is good, beneficial, important, useful, beautiful, desirable and appropriate. They answer the question of why learners do what they do. Moral values in education help learners to meet common human challenges for survival. Over time they become the roots of traditions that the learners find important in their day-to-day lives. Moral values in education can be positive and constructive. To manage a culture of
aggression in a grade 10 class, the moral values in education should be facilitated in a grade 10 class.

The secondary school has moral values that are largely shared by the grade 10 learners. The facilitation of the moral values in education identifies those objects, conditions and characteristics that the grade 10 learners consider to be important. The learners in a grade 10 class take part in a culture of aggression even if the individual learner's personal values do not entirely agree with some of the normative moral values sanctioned in the classroom. The facilitation of the moral values in education may assist in the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

Moral values in education include constructive interpersonal relationships, self-respect, respect towards others, tolerance to diversity and upholding the school's code of conduct. Attitudes influence an individual's perception of how something should be; the way things work in their ideal world (Du Toit, 1999:79). The attitudes and beliefs that the learners hold about their teachers has an impact on how they relate to them and to all their activities in their school environment. The facilitation of moral values in education has a major influence on the learners' prospects of achieving a sustainable management of a culture of aggression. Although they cannot be separated from cognitive understanding, moral values relate to the affective dimension of human behaviour (Du Toit, 1999:79).

In a few decades, learners have rearranged themselves – their own worldview, their moral values, their social and political structures, their arts and their institutions. The result is that after some years, there is an absolute new world altogether; the learners are currently living through transition that demands enormous adaptation in order to manage a culture of aggression (Drucker, 2011:1).

The facilitation of moral values in education provides an opportunity to emphasise the importance of moral values when managing a culture of
aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education (Drucker, 2011:1).

The findings in chapter 3 indicated the patterns of challenges to moral values in education in the learners in a grade 10 class. For the context of this study, the moral values in education should be discussed as principles that should be held as important and which possess intrinsic quality. Moral values in education should generally be long-term standards that will be used to judge the worth of an idea or action. Some of the role play that will be performed during the facilitation of the moral values in education will provide the criteria by which the learners can decide whether something is good or bad and right or wrong (Singleton, 2007:231).

Moral values in education are instilled by learning to engage critically with aggression in a grade 10 class. In the context of this study, the grade 10 learners practiced the patterns of declining moral values in education for quite a long time. Therefore the agent needs to create a learning environment in which the recipients can learn more about the moral values in education and apply them to their daily interaction with peers in the school environment.

This aspect is concerned with activities that support moral values in a grade 10 class. The agent will create awareness of moral values in education among the recipients. The agent will explain to the recipients that moral values in education provide the basis for critical decision-making, as stipulated in the manifesto on values, education and democracy (DoE, 2009:3).

The moral values in education will be discussed, since not everyone holds the same moral values in education. Some individuals’ moral values in education simply differ as a matter of personal preference or perspective. It is also important to recognise that moral values are not equal. This is especially true when identifying critical issues such as aggression.

In order for moral values in education to have any impact, a plethora of roles and interventions from all the inter-departmental stakeholders should be
employed for those moral values in education to be internalised by the recipients. For the moral values to create a sense of a long-term ownership, collaboration should be the key factor. Examination of the impact of moral values on individual learners themselves can promote understanding and assign merit to the moral values in education being upheld.

The Department of Education and Training has a division called Values in Education that is tasked with promoting values in education in schools. The agent will collaborate with the division called Values in Education at the District Office in the Department of Education and Training. It is important to understand the impact of the programme which is offered by the Department of Education and Training in order to facilitate moral values in education. The alignment of moral values in education can enhance the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

In facilitating tolerance of diversity, the agent needs to be knowledgeable about the developments and efforts of the Values in Education by the Department of Education and Training; whether they are sufficiently integrated across learning areas and grades in the education system. This is imperative to being in the best position to link the known to the unknown in an attempt to tailor-make the existing values in education for the purpose of facilitating the patterns of moral values that will suit the grade 10 learners in this study.

Since the Department of Education’s 2001 conference to implement its values in education as a policy, there has been very little critical engagement on the benefit of the values in the curriculum in schools (DoE, 2008:16). The recipient is the beneficiary of the facilitation of the moral values in a grade 10 class. The lack of moral values in education by which the learners in a grade 10 class live, affect the learners’ mental health, interactions, relationships and the classroom climate, as discussed in chapter 3.

Regrettably, much of the debate thus far ignored or glossed over the fact that there is so little understanding of what it is that forms the moral values in education, how moral values in education evolved and what role, if any, moral values in education play in holding together a classroom environment. But if
the grade 10 learners’ behaviour in specific situations tells us anything, it is a belief in a common vision informed by a basic set of moral values in education to make a relatively peaceful transition from an aggressive classroom environment to a non-aggressive classroom environment. Moral values in education have a vital role to play in a grade 10 class (www.sahistory.org.za).

The pledge proposed by the Minister of Education and purportedly coming from the Presidency, has two most significant features, namely that it advocates values laudable in a classroom environment and in any community. The grade 10 class in this particular secondary school should build capacity to deal with the complex issues of moral values in education by collaborating with other stakeholders from the public sector, private sector and the non governmental organisations (www.sahistory.org.za).

a. Facilitation of respect and self-respect as a moral value in education

According to Hinton (2001:212), respect is a responsive response. Dialogue about respect identifies several key elements of the response, including attention, deference, judgment, acknowledgment, valuing and behaviour (Labukt, 2009:251), as suggested by its origin from the Latin respicere, which means “to look back at” or “to look again” (Lueck, 2008:59).

Hinton (2001:200) opines that respect is a particular mode of apprehending the object; the person who respects something pays attention to it and perceives it differently from someone who does not respect it and who responds to it in light of that perception. The idea of paying heed or giving proper attention to the object is central to respect; it often means trying to see the object clearly, as it really is in its own right and not seeing it solely through the filter of one’s own desires and fears or likes and dislikes (Lueck, 2008:57). Thus, respecting something contrasts being oblivious or indifferent to it, ignoring or quickly dismissing it, neglecting or disregarding it, or carelessly or intentionally misidentifying it (Moland, 2002:45).
The principles of respect for individualism will be applied during the facilitation of respect. All human beings are created equal and endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights, among others, the right to life and the pursuit of happiness. This principle of respect will govern the interaction in the grade 10 class (Covey, 1999:109).

When raising support for the principles of respect, the agent should access the plethora of interventions ranging from school counsellors to non-governmental organisations (NGO) to ensure that a culture of respect is upheld. Respect is a participatory learning process that enables learners to make informed decisions about the principles of respect. The principle of respect may equip the grade 10 learners to make informed decisions regarding respect of self, others and the school environment. The agent will provide the skills and support necessary to instil a culture of respect in the grade 10 learners. The agent will empower the recipient by means of role modelling.

Respect is something that must be earned (Baker, 2009:29). But, if the learners in a grade 10 class live in a culture that relishes disrespect for anything and everything, the moment of addressing the patterns of disrespect, as described in chapter 3, is inevitable.

Respect has great importance in the day-to-day life of the learners in a grade 10 class. Learners in the grade 10 class should be taught to respect their parents, peers, elders, teachers, individuality, classroom rules, school rules, authority, school furniture, the school environment, leaders, other people’s feelings, the truth, differing opinions and rights. During the facilitation of respect, the learners in a grade 10 class may learn that their mental health depends on respecting the things that deserve to be respected.

While facilitating respect in a grade 10 class, self-respect should be emphasised. It is part of daily wisdom that respect and self-respect are deeply connected; respect is a two-way stream; it will be difficult for the learners to respect other people if the learners themselves do not possess self-respect. It
will be equally difficult for the learners to respect themselves if other people do not respect them as learners (people) (Rawls, 2000:156). All individuals should be treated with respect simply because they are persons. To achieve this goal of facilitating respect, individual work, group work and case studies will be embarked on.

b. Facilitation of tolerance of diversity as a moral value in education

When facilitating tolerance of diversity as a moral value in education, the focus will be on the financial, physical and psychological needs of the learners that are not met, as discussed in the chapter 3. Disparity exists between learners who are needy and middle class learners. Such diversity needs to be tolerated. The facilitation of tolerance of diversity as a moral value will also include the diverse learners who are circumcised and those who are not. Sexual education will be highlighted when facilitating tolerance of diversity as a moral value in education.

In order for the recipient to actualise the positive potential of diversity, the agent needs to create a learning space in which the recipient will recognise that diversity exists, and thereafter learn to value and respect the fundamental differences among other learners. Tolerance of diversity is the capacity of a human being to withstand unfavourable environmental conditions, the ability to endure pain and the willingness to recognise and respect the beliefs and practices of others (Dillon, 2002:223).

The Teaching Tolerance programme developed by the Southern Poverty Law (2001:2) states that “in an era of increasing diversity and divisiveness, how can the young people be helped to affirm both their own individual and group identities and to respect and appreciate the identities of others? The future of our democracy hinges on our success at getting along.” Fortunately, research indicates that “education is the best antidote for intolerance” (Godwin, 2001:543). The agent in this research study should look for ways to create greater acceptance of social, political and economical differences.
A recipient will be requested to complete a questionnaire prior to the facilitation of tolerance of diversity. The agent will ask the recipients whether they heard or used a derogatory comment in the past week. Such questions will assist the recipients in reflecting on the lack of tolerance of diversity in a grade 10 class. Once learners in a grade 10 class realise that different does not mean dangerous, the agent can work with the learners to become more tolerant and accepting of others.

Facilitating tolerance of diversity should also show that diversity is an important element of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class; all the learners in a grade 10 class should view this need for greater understanding of the constructive management of a culture of aggression as an obligation. The agent should endeavour to encourage more positive friendships. Such friendships appear to provide an excellent opportunity to increase tolerance when embarking on group work when facilitating the tolerance of diversity. Viewing the Shadow of Hate video, which examines the lack of tolerance of diversity, will be applied as an additional activity to provoke debates, discussions and reflections on the extent of the lack of tolerance of diversity in a grade 10 class.

Chapter 3 discussed that learners in a grade 10 class are caught up in the crossfire of ignorance and bigotry; the learners' lives are shattered due to a lack of tolerance of diversity. This agent will facilitate this aspect through role modelling in order to actualise the positive potential of tolerance of diversity. Through the agent's role modelling, the recipients should come to realise that diversity exists, and to then learn to value and respect the fundamental differences among themselves. Once the recipients accept themselves, they are in a position to be accepting of others.

There are, however, a number of barriers to accepting diverse peers. These barriers include prejudice, the tendency to blame the victim, stereotypes, discrimination and ideological conflicts. Diversity among learners can be either a valued resource generating energy, vitality and creativity, or a source of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination (Johnson, 2003:132). The agent
will explain the terminology, such as prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination, while facilitating the discussion on the tolerance of diversity among the recipients.

### 4.2.5.3 Facilitation of anger management

Anger is an emotion (Tynan, 2007:3). It is said to be “a short madness that carries the mind away” and it can be “many times more hurtful than the injury that caused it” (Tynan, 2007:3). Chapter 3 discussed the patterns of anger in a grade 10 class in order to address this phenomenon. The vital elements that the agent needs to facilitate to the recipients are collaboration, decision-making and ownership. The recipients need to understand that they are responsible for their actions and that they have a free will to make choices; it is therefore up to them to make good or bad choices (Cetina & Cicourel, 2009:5).

When the recipients take control of how they react to challenges such as: insults, gossip, name calling and conflict that inevitably come their way, the whole world opens up - a world marked by peace (Watkinson & Epp, 2006:219). If the recipients can believe that they can choose not to be aggressive, to accept the past and to forgive, let go and move on, they can most probably manage the culture of aggression in their classroom, at school and in the future, no matter what reality is (Cetina & Cicourel, 2009:5).

During the facilitation of anger management, the agent will expose the recipients to a variety of options, including alternatives to fighting and ways in which to cope with anger-provoking situations, to enable them to make informed choices.

The agent will give a presentation on different ways to manage anger, as different people use different styles to express their anger. The goal of this facilitation will be to educate the recipients about how to manage anger, more specifically to assist them in what to do with their anger when it fuels physical or verbal abuse.
The agent will discuss ideas of how to talk things over when they are angry with the recipients. Ways in which the recipients can react assertively rather than hurtfully will be discussed. The agent will use Goleman’s (1996:44) competence framework, comprising five dimensions of emotional intelligence and 25 emotional competencies, when facilitating the anger management workshop.

Tynan (2007: 45) posits that anger will never disappear as long as thoughts of resentment are cherished in the mind. Hidden anger can also harm learners in a grade 10 class; therefore the agent should brainstorm with the recipients about how to vent anger. An external network of support is envisaged in the facilitation of anger management due to the fact that the school does not have school-based counsellors and psychologists to refer to, as discussed in chapter 3. Some of the anger episodes will indeed need more serious, professional intervention for more specialised and intense help.

4.2.5.4 Facilitation of anti-bullying and school safety

In this study, the patterns of the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class prevent learners from enjoying a safe, stress-free living and learning environment. Bullying is caused by a variety of factors, ranging from the individual learner to social dynamics, economical difference, perceptions and the organisational aspects of the classroom, as indicated in chapter 3. The agent will create a climate that does not accept bullying by facilitating the anti-bullying and school safety workshop.

The agent will facilitate the establishment of a peer support system in a grade 10 class. The peer support system will act as catalyst in counter-acting bullying. The peer support system will work towards improving the effectiveness of relationships between the learners in a grade 10 class, while the agent provides guidance to both the “bullies” and the victims. Experiential learning will be conducted, which will assist the “bullies” in learning that the behaviour exhibited will not, under any circumstances, be tolerated. The agent
will provide guidance on how the “bullies” can moderate their aggression and behave in a more socially acceptable way.

It is not enough to focus on the perpetrator; the victim will also need experiential learning on assertion and issues of confidence in order to create a classroom environment that is mutually beneficial to all the learners in the grade 10 class - the strong and the weak, the big and the small, the advantaged and the disadvantaged. Power should be used wisely. Questions like how learners see bullying and what they would do to address bullying will be entertained. The learners will therefore be given time to verbalise and act out their ideas. The agent will facilitate discussions about bullying and harassment. The recipients will break into subgroups and devise presentations and ideas to generate awareness and action among other learners in a grade 10 class in order to manage a culture of bullying.

Ideas will range from videotapes depicting what bullying is and how to deal with it, to games. While facilitating awareness, the recipient will outline the scope of the consequences of bullying. The agent will create awareness of the involvement of all the educational stakeholders. The referral procedures to external counsellors or psychologists will be discussed for the purpose of special and specialised intervention that will promote behaviour change among the learners who are directly involved in bullying activities.

The agent will suggest to the recipients to craft a problem box by means of which the learners in a grade 10 class can report problems, concerns and offer suggestions. As Jensen (2008:19) proposed, “… emotional intelligence develops early and the school years may be a time of last resort for nurturing emotional literacy”. A plan for supervision during breaks, class rules against aggression and peer support networks will be discussed.

According to Hein (2009:54), bullies are deep-down very insecure people. They dominate because they are too insecure to allow other people to have responsibility and influence. The dominant bullying behaviour is effectively reinforced by the responses of “secure” and “non-assertive” learners to
bullying. The “bully” gets his own way, the dominant bullying behaviour is rewarded and so it persists.

Therefore the agent will conduct a session on how the recipients can boost their self-confidence and assertiveness. Assertiveness means standing up for what one wants or believes in. There is a thin line between assertiveness and aggression; the agent will explain the two concepts and give examples during the facilitation of anti-bullying and school safety.

Assertiveness involves communicating one’s feelings and needs without violating the rights of other people. One can be assertive by clearly stating the decision or action one has made or chosen, without hurting another person. Assertiveness training is important, as the recipients can avoid being exploited by “bullies”. The methods and techniques of assertiveness will be discussed with the recipient. The ten habits of emotionally intelligent people, adopted from Steve Hein (2009:23), will be discussed.

4.2.6 What is the context of this activity?

The context is the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea (Du Toit, 1999:69). The context for the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression is in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school. The following patterns of aggression in a grade 10 class were identified in chapter 3: the patterns of anger, bullying, fighting and lack of moral values in education.

It was established in chapter 3 that the learners show aggression towards each other, towards parents, towards the teachers and the physical structure of the school. The learners lack social skills and exhibit anger episodes. The culture of bullying is rife. The learners do not abide by the school rules and the ethos of the Department of Education and Training, and a culture of a lack of tolerance takes centre stage. The learners in a grade 10 class are in constant fear of what might happen next.
The interaction in a grade 10 class exhibits rebellion, defiance and mockery of school rules and disciplinary procedures. Learners in a grade 10 class openly challenge the authority and the personalities of the teachers. The learners lack locus of control, self-respect and self-discipline. The learners adopted a culture of “I don’t care”. They seem to overlook the repercussions of their decisions or actions. The researcher also observed the crucial fact that a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class was not managed constructively.

The ways in which the teachers react to the patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class create and sustain power-struggles between the teachers and the learners. Teachers illustrated various forms of power, powerlessness, anger, desperation and frustration, evidenced by shouting, name-calling, yelling, threatening, punishing, referring to the principal or inviting parents to school, as well as other personality degrading and humiliating methods.

4.2.7 What is the outcome of this activity? (Terminus)

The outcome will be the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. This will be achieved through the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in order to promote the learners’ mental health.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The conceptual framework for the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class was described. The conceptual framework reflected the identified patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, the context in which the study was conducted, the agent, who is the researcher and the SBST facilitators, and the recipients, who are the learners in a grade 10 class. The processes of facilitation were also highlighted. The assumption of the conceptual framework was outlined. The
conceptual framework gave structure and positioned the researcher in the context of the research study.
CHAPTER 5

THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE MANAGEMENT OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION IN A GRADE 10 CLASS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 4, a conceptual framework was illustrated in figure 4.1 and the interrelationships of the concepts were explained. The conceptual framework will guide the description of the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class as an integral part of the learners’ mental health. The researcher became absorbed in the daily frustrations expressed by the teachers, the SBST, the SMT and the SGB about what could be done to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The educational strategies are suggested on the premise that it is not a question of knowing what could be done to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, but rather of whether the teachers, the SBST, the SMT and the SGB are aware of what they need to do, and whether they are willing to do it. This premise is reflected eloquently in McGill-Frazen and Allington (2011:114) who, with respect to promoting positive behaviour, maintain that it is not a matter of knowing what to do, but having the will to do it.

The crux of the facilitation of the educational strategies is to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school for the sake of the learners’ mental health.
5.2 THE EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE MANAGEMENT OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION IN GRADE 10 CLASS

Aggression poses a challenge in a Sedibeng District secondary school, particularly in a grade 10 class, and one that interferes with the healthy daily interaction of the grade 10 learners with their peers, teachers and the school environment. A culture of aggression in a grade 10 class is unfavourable to the learners’ daily activities in a secondary school. A culture of aggression in a grade 10 class also interferes with learners’ mental health (McGrath, 2010:67).

In the quest to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, the development of the educational strategies to constructively manage the culture of aggression in the grade 10 class will be described under the following headings: strategies, objectives and proposed actions. The necessary educational strategies that the agent will use in an attempt to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, will be identified and explained.

The central overarching pattern derived from the findings in chapter 3 is a culture of aggression. The aim of the educational strategies is to replace the patterns of anger by means of the facilitation of patterns of anger management, to replace the patterns of bullying by means of the facilitation of patterns of anti-bullying, to replace the patterns of fighting by means of the facilitation of patterns of school safety and to replace the patterns of lack of values in education by means of the facilitation of the patterns of values in education. The successes of the facilitation of the educational strategies rely mainly on communication skills.

The description of how the process will unfold was portrayed in chapter 4 in the discussion about the conceptual framework, on which the educational strategies will be based. The following procedures were discussed:
• the facilitation of communication skills;
• the facilitation of the patterns of moral values in education;
• the facilitation of the patterns of anger management; and
• the facilitation of the patterns of anti-bullying and school safety.

What remains is to design a suitable plan of action to operationalise the objectives effectively. To operationalise the objectives, the following questions needed to be asked and answered:

• who is going to implement;
• what is the method of implementation;
• what are the time frames of implementation; and
• what are the criteria for implementation?

The plan of action to operationalise the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class will be used as illustrated in table 5.1 below.

5.2.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE MANAGEMENT OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSSION IN A GRADE 10 CLASS

Educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression are essential to facilitate the mental health of the grade 10 learners. The educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class are necessary for healthy social interaction and orientation.
TABLE 5.1 - Overview of the plan of action to operationalise the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO IS GOING TO IMPLEMENT</th>
<th>METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION</th>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION TIME FRAMES</th>
<th>CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The researcher, the SBST facilitator and the LRC | • Relationship phase  
• Working phase  
• Termination phase | • One week followed by monthly follow-ups | To constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class |

The learners’ social, psychological, emotional, intellect, will, physical and spiritual being are all interlinked, and it is therefore of utmost importance that they remain in harmony. The facilitation of the strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression will include training in anger management and communication skills, advocacy in an anti-bullying policy, tolerance of diversity, creating awareness of moral values in education and a school safety policy.

The development of educational strategies recognises that there is an opportunity to address a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class by developing educational strategies to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The attainment of this objective is labour-intensive and it is a long-term process that depends on the facilitation of the
patterns of anger management, anti-bullying, school safety, values in education and communication skills to the recipients.

Due to the dynamic nature of the identified patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, the approach will be multi-sectoral, collaborative and cooperative in nature. This kind of approach will promote the formation of a network of support that will promote the sustainability of the educational strategies. The network of support constitutes the holistic approach, which is pivotal in the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The development of educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression should strive to replace the patterns of negative behaviour, which is a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class, with positive behaviour that is non-aggressive. The non-aggressive interventions will consist of the educational strategies to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

Table 5.2 illustrates an overview of the development of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression.
Table 5.2 - The development of educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 1: building relationships</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
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<td>To facilitate trust and set objectives for the learners in a grade 10 class</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Facilitate communication skills</td>
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<td>• Facilitate the patterns of moral values in education</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Facilitate anger management</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Facilitate the patterns of anti-bullying and school safety</td>
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</tbody>
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Actions

1. Communication skills

   • Self-concept

   • Listening skills versus hearing

   • Verbal skills

   • Non-verbal skills

   • Incongruence

2. Moral values in education

   2a. The facilitation of the patterns of respect and self-respect

   2b. Tolerance of diversity

   • Acceptance of personal differences

   • Prejudice

   • Stereotyping

   • Discrimination
3. Anger management

- Controlling anger
- Collaboration with other stakeholders
- Decision-making
- Assertiveness
- Emotional intelligence
- Network of support

5. Anti-bullying and school safety

- Organisational aspect
- Peer support system
- Consequences of bullying
- Coaching
- Cooperative learning
- Emotional intelligence
- Assertiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 3: assessment of objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A narrative description of the development of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class will be described under the following headings: strategy, objective and proposed strategic actions. These actions will be dynamic in nature to enable additional interventions that will empower the recipient, as this is a dynamic and progressive process.

5.2.2 Strategy: Building relationships

1) Objective

To facilitate trust and set objectives for the learners in a grade 10 class.

   a) Actions

It will be impossible to operationalise the educational strategies without involving the agent and the recipients in an attempt to build a trusting relationship. The researcher will firstly convene a formal meeting with the SBST facilitators as an agent. The intention will be to discuss the educational strategies to constructively manage a culture of aggression in the grade 10 class. The meeting is aimed at familiarising the SBST facilitators with the context of the operationalisation of the educational strategies to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. Thereafter the researcher will organise a one-day training session to train the SBST facilitators to be the trainers of the recipients.

The researcher will convene another meeting with the learners of the grade 10 class to engage them in the proposed educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in their class. When the researcher engaged the grade 10 learners, the core will be to explain the aim of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class to attain the memorandum of understanding and to set up the ground rules that will be imperative in building trusting
relationships for the facilitation of the constructive management of a culture of aggression.

The recipients are social beings, and much of what they are is a product of trusting relationships with others (Riley, 2005:12). Trust is both an emotional and logical act. Emotionally, it is where the learners expose their vulnerabilities to other people with the belief that those other people will not take advantage of their vulnerabilities and betray their trust. Once the recipients opened up to the agent, they yield total control of their secret space and the recipients share their space with the agent, trusting that the agent will be sensitive to what the recipients hold dear (Riley, 2005:14).

It is imperative that the agent begins the facilitation by ensuring the recipients that the ground rules are set from the onset, as they serve as a key in creating trusting relationships. Confidentiality should be high on the agenda. The recipients should understand unequivocally that each and everything that is discussed during the facilitation process should and will be treated with paramount confidentiality, meaning that it should not leave the facilitation room.

It is the agent’s duty to create a climate in which the recipients experience trust. If the agent promotes safety, trust is created. A caring attitude and understanding will promote healthy relationships. The agent should promote an acceptance of individuality and a non-judgemental attitude. By doing that, the agent will assist the recipients in meeting their emotional and psychological needs (Locke & Cjechalski, 2001:64).

The time frames are crucial in forging trusting relationships; the level of information that the recipients impart to the agent will rely on the time spent in building a trusting relationship (Riley, 2005:81). When those emotional and psychological needs are being met, the recipients should be able to open up easily and to participate meaningfully in the development of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.
The agent would promote the feeling of trust by informing the SBST facilitators and the grade10 learners about the importance of the development of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression. The researcher will encourage the recipients to state their expectations of the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The recipients’ expectations of the facilitation of the educational strategies will be meaningful when the evaluation of the facilitation of the educational strategies is conducted. It will be imperative to note whether the expectation of the recipients are ever met during the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The recipients will receive their learning manuals at the beginning of the facilitation process. The learning manual will comprise the modules that will be covered, the relevant activities of the facilitation process and the outcomes of the facilitation process. The agent will skim and scan the manual together with the recipients.

The researcher will take on additional critical issues that will enhance the trusting relationship. Those critical issues are not to expose the recipients to harm, but to ensure confidentiality, affirmation, encouragement, respect of the recipients’ opinion and acceptance of the recipients as they are. The researcher should be aware that ethical provision is not just about preparing appropriately, but requires ongoing sensitivity towards the dynamic nature of power relations and lines of authority.
5.2.3 Strategy: implementing actions to manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class

2) Objective

- Facilitate communication skills.
- Facilitate the patterns of moral values in education.
- Facilitate anger management.
- Facilitate the patterns of anti-bullying and school safety.

5.2.3.1 Facilitation of communication skills

b) Actions

The agent can never underestimate the importance of communication; the researcher is of the opinion that there cannot be any facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression without communication. Communication is “positive interaction” and it can be achieved by

- a genuine concern for the person one is talking to,
- the ability to focus on the responders,
- the ability to communicate with all kinds of people, and
- eye contact (Maxwell, 2005:58).

A lack of communication skills generates misunderstandings that aggravate a culture of aggression, which is the basic problem in a grade 10 class. The absence of communication skills can become a barrier in the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. Some of the
misunderstandings in a grade 10 class observed by the researcher include problems that are communication-related (Shawchuck & Heuser, 2008:83).

Communication can be encouraged by drawing up a memorandum of understanding between the SGB, parents, learners and the school staff members, with reference to a grade 10 class. The memorandum should encourage communication on the following aspects: the classroom life, the school ethos, the learners' interactions with each other, the teachers' relationships with the learners, access to information and the parents' rights and obligations, as well as the relationships in the school community.

Furthermore, cultural issues such as school uniform, language, accessories, hair styles, punctuality, absence from classes, technological gadgets and the daily marking of class registers according to learning areas, should be included, along with instructions. The memorandum and its contents should be communicated clearly to all the learners' parents. The contents of the memorandum should be discussed on a regular basis; such discourse will open the lines of communication with the parents, which can spearhead the consultative processes such as regular parent meetings.

A consultative memorandum is crucial if the communication is to be effective and consistent for all the parents, as well as the learners in a grade 10 class. The discourse brought about by the participative communication has a potential of zooming into broader issues that are practical and helpful for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. In this manner, teachers can recognise and learn how to respond consistently and immediately to aggressive behaviour, while aiding and supporting the victim and dealing with the impact on the school community.

Communication is literally the sharing of information whether by speaking, writing or in any non-verbal form. The most important form of communication that takes place in a group is personal communication. Personal communication occurs when one person makes his or her wishes, thoughts or
ideas known to another person. Without personal communication, the agent would not be aware of the group dynamics in a grade 10 class.

The agent will create a “listening-environment” in which the recipients are allowed to speak their minds. The agent should create more openness and open-mindedness, as constructive communication skills require a high level of self-awareness. The agent should teach the recipients to understand their personal styles of communicating (Ross, 2003:04); for the recipients to become better listeners, they must practice “active listening”. Active listening is making a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person speaks, but, more importantly, to try and understand the entire message being sent. In order to master good communication skills, learners in the grade 10 class should be taught to pay careful attention to the other learners.

The agent should vigorously strengthen the self-concept of the recipients, as it is through self-knowledge that the learners in a grade 10 class can communicate constructively. A strong awareness of self is an important subject as well as object of learners’ decisions (Ross, 2003:04). Self-concept is a multi-dimensional construct that refers to an individual’s perception of “self” in relation to any number of characteristics; the self-concept is not restricted to the present. It includes past selves and future selves (Ross, 2003:10).

The recipients need to realise the importance of constructive communication in managing a culture of aggression. The agent will point out this importance to the recipients by modelling that communication can be improved by non-verbal and verbal communication. The agent will teach the recipients that communication involves hearing, listening, exchanging ideas, expressing oneself, body language and facial expressions.

The recipients will be educated about listening; listening is one of the most important skills that the learners can attain. How well they listen has a major impact on the constructive management of a culture of aggression as well as on the quality of the learners’ relationships with others. Clearly, listening is a
skill that learners in this grade 10 class can benefit from; by becoming better listeners, they could improve their mental health, as well as their ability to influence, persuade and negotiate with other learners. What is more, learners in a grade 10 class could avoid conflict and misunderstandings – all necessary for the constructive management of a culture of aggression.

The recipients will be taught about the five key elements of active listening adapted from Du Toit (2003:55), namely show that you are listening, provide feedback, defer judgment, respond appropriately and pay attention. These five elements will help to ensure the constructive management of the culture of aggression. The agent will explain the theory of listening and responding. The agent will write down any mistakes in communication and request the recipients to reflect on those mistakes.

Non-verbal communication is a rapid flowing-back-and-forth process. Successful non-verbal communication depends on emotional self-awareness and an understanding of the cues one is sending, along with the ability to accurately pick up on the cues others are sending one. This requires the individuals’ full concentration and attention (Van der Schyff, 2011:155).

The agent will discuss ways in which communication can be improved by some of the following gestures: listening attentively, making eye contact, stating feelings, trying to understand the other person’s point of view, offering possible solutions to the problem, giving possible non-verbal messages such as a smile; thereafter the recipients will engage in role play, demonstrating ways to improve communication.

Some of the following gestures can cause barriers to communication: not listening, yelling, blaming, criticizing or name calling, making the other person feel guilty, giving negative non-verbal messages, such as frowning or scowling, and interrupting.

The recipients will discuss the barriers to communication in subgroups. The recipients will be required to list gestures that constitute non-verbal communication. The recipients will also be required to role play non-verbal
cues that express warmth and coldness. At the end of the role play, the agent will give instructions on how the recipient can make a poster expressing warm and cold gestures using pictures from magazines.

The recipients will discuss the characteristics of constructive communication, such as active listening, simple language and use of matching verbal and non-verbal communication, individually. The recipients will be given an assignment to go to a crowded spot in the school yard and to observe and take notes of the constructive and destructive communication that takes place; this observation will sharpen the recipients’ skills in recognising such behaviours. Communication skills cannot be achieved in only one session; to acquire a skill is a process.

Collaboration with service providers in the area to provide training in communication skills will guarantee continuity of this intervention. The agent should advocate for a classroom library corner where books on communication skills can be kept for the individuals to read on their own during their free periods. The private sector will be approached for partnerships; perhaps with an end in mind of receiving donated books on communication skills.

The agent will encourage out-of-class curriculum activities such as debate, public speaking and drama. Learners in this grade 10 class can be trained to manage out-of-class curriculum activities on their own. The researcher believes that the out-of-class curriculum activities will yield constructive communication.

Near this particular secondary school there is a multi-purpose centre, which is currently not used. By mobilising and collaborating with the service providers and non-governmental organisations that specialise in communication skills, they can assist in cascading those skills to the grade 10 learners, as well as to the other learners in the secondary school, using the multi-purpose centre.
The researcher believes that the communication skills can be sustained if other learners in the secondary school can be involved in order for the information to be cascaded to all the learners in the secondary school. The lack of communication skills is not only confined to the class in this study, but it is contagious. Bearing in mind that the grade 10 class does not exist in a vacuum, but in the perimeters of the secondary school, it is crucial to cascade the information to all learners with the aim of constructively managing the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the secondary school.

5.2.3.2 Facilitation of the patterns of moral values in education

b) Actions

The patterns of moral values that the agent will facilitate are tolerance of diversity, adherence to the school policies, school ethos and the principles of Ubuntu, as stipulated in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (1999). In this context, the principles of Ubuntu will focus on self-respect and respect for others.

Slavin (2010:26) looked into the effects of cooperative group methods on tolerance and diversity that led to the following comment: “the very fact of organising cooperative work on mixed groups ‘cliques’ is a powerful communicator of classroom norms.” It generates a number of outcomes such as increased self-concept, low school anxiety, inter-groups relationships, a high sense of personal efficacy and ultimately a low rate of aggression (Slavin, 2010:03).

As described in chapter 3, the learners in a grade 10 class are unwilling to tolerate differences in individualism, gender, sexual orientation, social class and belief systems. For the learners in a grade 10 class to actualise the positive potential of diversity, the agent should teach the recipients about the concepts of tolerance and diversity in order for them to recognise that diversity exists.
After the recipients have acknowledged that diversity exists, they will learn tolerance and acceptance. The recipients could work in groups to analyse the intolerant scenario outlined by the agent. The recipients could also discuss the alternative ways in which the learners can deal with intolerance of diversity in their classroom. The mixed gender and social group cooperative activities will be applied throughout the facilitation of tolerance of diversity to reveal a variety of perspectives.

The agent believes that the sporting activities at secondary school level will manage the patterns of intolerance of diversity. The agent will therefore collaborate with the Department of Sports and Culture and the life orientation teachers to find a way to breathe new life into the sporting activities in the secondary school.

The life orientation curriculum's objective number 4 (DoE, 2005:20) talks about body movement; it allows the life orientation teacher and the district officials who are responsible for life orientation in the Department of Education and Training to become experts on physical education. Therefore the agent will convene a meeting with the life orientation teachers, officials from the Department of Sports and Culture and an official from the Department of Education. The meeting will focus on how sporting activities can enhance a culture of tolerance to diversity.

There are Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), for example Shaping the Learner, which specifically deal with the issues of tolerance and diversity. The agent will encourage them to partake in creating awareness among the learners in a grade 10 class of issues regarding diversity and tolerance.

The agent will identify some learners among the recipients to become peer educators to sustain the training of tolerance and diversity and to cascade the information. Forming a partnership with the National Youth Agency will be beneficiary because the National Youth Agency is assigned with the duty of empowering the youth in the local municipality (Municipality bulletin, 2009:17).
The National Youth Agency can form the network of support systems for the learners in the grade 10 class to articulate the dynamics of tolerance of diversity.

Respect has great importance in everyday life, particularly for the learners in a grade 10 class (Armitage, 2006:112). When the agent facilitates the patterns of moral values in education, the recipient will be taught about respect for themselves, respect for parents, respect for teachers, respect for elders and respect for the school rules. The facilitation of the patterns of moral values in education should emphasise teaching the learners about respect for other learners’ feelings, rights and differences of opinion.

During the facilitation of the patterns of moral values in education, the recipients should be taught that respect and self-respect are deeply connected; that it is difficult, if not impossible, to respect others if they do not respect themselves (Bowie, 2005:56). The recipients should be taught to respect even those learners they do not like or disagree with. During the facilitation of the patterns of moral values in education, recipients should learn that respect contrasts with degradation (Bagnoli, 2007:213).

The recipients should be taught about the elements of respect. The elements of respect consist of the dimensions that will now be discussed. Cognitive dimensions consist, for example out of beliefs, acknowledgments, judgments, deliberations and commitments. Affective dimensions consist, for example out of emotions, feelings and ways of experiencing things. Conative dimensions consist, for example out of motivations and dispositions to act and forbear from acting (Armitage, 2006:109).

During the facilitation of the patterns of moral values in education, the agent will refer to the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (1999), which is the policy document initiated by the Department of Education. The researcher will see to it that the recipients receive a copy of the policy document in order to use it as a frame of reference and to enhance the teaching of moral values in education. The policy document will assist the
In facilitating the patterns of moral values in education, the agent should form a partnership with the unit that deals with values in education at the district office of the Department of Education and Training. The success of the partnership with the officials responsible for the values in education at the district office of the Department of Education and Training will benefit the learners in a grade 10 class in terms of continuity and sustenance of the training in moral values and respect.

The researcher will task the SBST to organise the alumni’s day as a motivational endeavour for the recipients. The twining of secondary schools will be arranged in order for the recipients to exchange some notes and copy good practices from their peers in grade 10 classes of other secondary schools. The school-based research conducted on moral values in education confirms what are perhaps the most important findings of the C2005 Review Committee: “that while educators subscribe to the principle of outcomes-based education, there are no good models to put into practice” such as the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The C2005 Review Committee recommends the urgent retraining of teachers in this respect (DoE, 2005:17). Pre-service SBST facilitators’ training should focus especially on commitment and competence; it should emphasise that, for SBST facilitators to be competent, they should be committed to the values embodied in the Constitution of South Africa as well as the Bill of Rights South African Constitution (Chapter 2, 1996), and understand what these values mean in order to align them with the proposed facilitation of moral values in education.

The researcher will liaise with the Government Communication System Agency to source out the constitution for all the recipients. Collaboration with the Government Communications System Agency will be beneficiary when training the recipient on chapter 2 of the Constitution (South African
Constitution Chapter 2, 1996). The researcher will rope in the official from the Government Communication System Agency to lead the training processes on chapter 2 of the constitution.

Experience proved that “commitment” training is most effective when it is ongoing and school-based (DoE, 2005:28). That can be achieved if this particular secondary school can collaborate with the universities for the purpose of in-service training for the SBST facilitators.

It was mentioned in chapter 1 that the school is the microcosm of the society. Other stakeholders, such as parents, community leaders, pastors and the business community, can play a pivotal role in supporting the moral values in education by offering motivation and becoming role models for the learners in a grade 10 class. As a result the researcher will set up a stakeholders meeting for the buy-in of the facilitation of moral values in education.

5.2.3.3 Facilitation of the patterns of anger management

f) Action

The researcher believes that thematic instruction should be integrated into teaching the learners in a grade 10 class. Thematic instruction is described as “a small corner of the classroom where learners can go to relax, refocus and reflect” (Kovalik, 2002:05). Kuhn (1970:68) proposes that “… there is nothing objectionable about having a safe comfortable place where a learner can go to calm down or just be alone for a few minutes … learners should be given the option and when emotions are running high, they can gently and quietly be reminded that it exists”.

The safe place will provide the learners with the opportunity to remove themselves from the group in order to become calm, regain composure and maintain control when upset, angry or frustrated. The agent should create an atmosphere of expression in which the learners will be given space to express their concerns, frustrations and fears.
The learners in a grade 10 class are teenagers; therefore the researcher should consider the fact that the processes of cognitive development, which continue during adolescence, may affect the learners’ decision-making abilities (Clausen, 2008:119). Decision-making can be regarded as the mental process resulting in the selection of a course of action among several alternatives. Every decision-making process produces a final choice; the output can be an opinion or an action of choice.

Department of Education White Paper 6 (2002:5) on Special Needs Education – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System – provides access to all learners who experience systematic, intrinsic and socio-economic barriers to learning, which is a basic right enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), although it is still found lacking as far as the support of learners with acute anger management problems are concerned. Therefore the agent should advocate the adoption of learners in a grade 10 class by counsellors and psychologists in private practise to provide continuous therapy in order to avoid relapse episodes.

5.2.3.4 Facilitation of the patterns of anti-bullying and school safety

g) Action

The facilitation of the patterns of anti-bullying and school safety is crucial for adopting policies and procedures that clearly spell out that bullying and the consequences of such acts will not be tolerated at the secondary school. McGrath (2010:14) says that schools have three duties, namely

- the duty to remedy by adopting policies and procedures that clearly spell out that bullying and the consequences of such acts will not be tolerated,
• the duty to monitor and correct inappropriate behaviour. An environment must also be provided in which learners feel safe and free from retaliation, and

• the duty to investigate each complaint in a prompt and thorough manner.

McGrath (2010:15) further says that the legal costs of bullying are high, but that the highest costs are in the psychological, social and economic losses suffered by the individual and the community as these learners attempt to assimilate into the adult culture.

The duty for the facilitation of the patterns of anti-bullying and school safety is to monitor and correct inappropriate behaviour and to provide an environment that enhances learners’ safety and freedom from retaliation. The facilitation of the patterns of anti-bullying and school safety will assist in investigating complaints in a prompt and thorough manner with the aim of managing a culture of aggression.

The teachers, the SMT, the SMB and the Sedibeng district office have a hard time diagnosing the underlying issues behind bullying in a grade 10 class, as the perpetrators are often successful, popular and master manipulators. Victims, on the other hand, are normally passive and insecure with few friends or supporters (Walter, 2010:2).

Bullying in school flourishes especially well in environments where negative reinforcement is used to regulate antisocial behaviour. In these situations, both the perpetrator and the victim are usually punished without any investigation of the causes. Pushing someone around to show them that pushing someone around is undesirable, is a guaranteed recipe for failure. In particular bad cases the perpetrator is indulged while the victim is punished for standing up for him- or herself (Walter, 2010:2).
In order for this particular secondary school to constructively manage a culture of aggression, it should be aware of the vital role they play in creating a positive environment in which socially unacceptable behaviour is quickly, but not punitively, dealt with. The emphasis in these schools will be on guidance for both the bully and the victim. The bullies will be taught that the behaviour they exhibit will not, under any circumstances, be tolerated. They will be guided on appropriate behaviour and on how to constructively manage aggression in a socially acceptable manner.

Bullying in a grade 10 class will be best handled in a two pronged way. It is not enough to focus on the perpetrator; the victim will also need instruction on assertion and issues of confidence (Walter, 2010:2). Unfortunately, realistically speaking, this particular secondary school simply do not have the time and staff members to operate in the above suggested manner. That is the reason that the researcher cannot over-emphasise the importance of collaboration with other stakeholders. It is an important focus of an enlightened, more holistic attitude to combat aggression as a whole. This drive has a potential to inculcate social values that preserve each person’s right to be him- or herself. Bullying in a grade 10 class should be managed, and when it appears, it should be quickly attended to.

The secondary school under study is a traditional school coming from a more old-school approach where bullying in a school or classroom is still considered par for the course; in this secondary school, aggressive patterns are regarded somewhat philosophically as a part of kids being kids. This view is remarkably short-sighted given the statistics on bullies at school growing up to be bullies in the community and at home (Walter, 2010:2).

The facilitation of anti-bullying should advocate an environment that is mutually beneficial for all the learners in a grade 10 class - the strong and the weak, the big and the small, the advantaged and the disadvantaged. Anti-bullying should advocate the mental health of all the learners; the all important tenets are the wise use of power. The country’s constitution should be taken seriously and each learner should be respected for who and what he or she
is. Bullying cannot flourish if the secondary school places a high priority on honour, justice and respect.

The agent should instil the knowledge of and skills in how to resolve conflict non-violently in the recipients. The cases of possession of weapons should be decreased. One of the methods with which to combat weapons in the school premises is to educate the learners about the dangers of weapons. The learners need to be educated about the legal issues concerning weapons, for example the learners should be educated about the legislations regarding the possession of non-licensed firearms.

The agent should create awareness among the recipients of the number of legal disciplinary actions in cases of possession of weapons. The recipients should be taught that problem-solving skills can be taught to resolve conflicts amicably. There are several approaches to problem-solving that seem to be widely used and recommended. Beyer (2008:154-155) explains one version of problem-solving that comprises the following steps:

- recognising that a problem exists;
- representing the problem;
- selecting a plan to solve the problem;
- executing and monitoring the solution plan; and
- evaluating the results.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the steps of problem-solving that will be used for the purpose of this study when facilitating anti-bullying and school safety.
1. Define the problem - Becoming aware of a problem, making it meaningful and making it manageable.

2. Hypothesise a solution – Assembling the data, collecting the needed data and evaluating the needed sources.
3. **Test the hypothesis** – Processing data, translating, interpreting and evaluating.

4. **Evaluating the hypothesis** - Analysing data, identifying components, noting similarities and differences, identifying trends, sequence and regularities.

5. **Tentative conclusion** - Weighing the best option to conclude.

6. **Checking** - The solution process efficiency, effectiveness and reasonableness.

7. **Concluding** - Stating the conclusion (Basson, 2007:199).

The recipients need to be objective when they handle problems, thus not looking at it as segmented and mechanical - a broken part that needs to be fixed - but seeing it as part of a living synergistic whole (Basson, 2007:199).

Advocacy of problem solving should be planned. The agent should include the following stakeholders in the planning phase: SMT, SGB, LRC, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Education and Training, more especially the unit called Inclusion and Special Schools. The advocacy campaign should emphasise the creation of a classroom climate that does not promote bullying; such a climate can be promoted by non-violence training that will cover the following topics: conflict resolution, assertiveness, decision-making and emotional intelligence.

The South African Police Service and the Department of Education and Training formed a partnership called Signposts for Safer Schools, which provides communities with resources to manage, reduce and prevent crime and violence in schools (DoE, 2007:19).

Collaboration with the South African Police (SAPS) will play a pivotal role in enhancing the Department of Education and Training’s initiative. The school
will be encouraged to “adopt a cop”. The meeting will be convened for the “adopted cop” to meet the learners and to motivate them. The advocacy campaign on anti-bullying and a school safety plan will encourage the community ownership of the school, through the SGB. The ownership of the school by the community is vital for ensuring school safety - if a community owns a school, it will protect the school (DoE, 2006:27).

Instituting the rule of law by means of the Code of Conduct is the cornerstone of anti-bullying and school safety. The recipients will be assisted by the agent in drawing classroom rules.

The Tirisano DoE (2002:4) project of upgrading derelict school buildings is to be accelerated. This is vital; not only because the buildings themselves are dilapidated and overcrowded and might thus be unsafe, but because it was proven that a degraded environment elicits criminal activity and more degradation.

The recipients, in subgroups, will identify and list all the challenges of bullying in the classroom context. They will thereafter make presentations, discuss possible solutions and compile a plan of action. The recipients will plan and design the anti-bullying brochure; the brochure will be aimed at convincing or reminding the learners about bullying, its harmful effects and how to deal with the bullies.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In chapter 5, the researcher provided a broad outline of the development of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class as an integral part of learners’ mental health. The plan of action to operationalise the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class was articulated. Thereafter the actions for the implementation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of the culture of aggression were discussed.
CHAPTER 6

THE EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE MANAGEMENT OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION IN A GRADE 10 CLASS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL OF THE SEDIBENG DISTRICT OF THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 5 the facilitation of educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education was described according to the identified patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. In this chapter, the focus will be on the evaluation of the implementation of the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class according to the data collected through the written responses of the individual learners of the grade 10 class.

6.2 THE EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE MANAGEMENT OF A CULTURE OF AGGRESSION IN A GRADE 10 CLASS

Data was collected after the implementation of the facilitation of educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class through individual learners’ written responses. The researcher, in collaboration with the SBST facilitators and the LRC, acted as agents; the learners in the grade 10 class were the recipients. There are 52 learners in the particular grade 10 class; 48 of the 52 learners participated in the study.
Eighteen males and 30 females participated. According to the class register, the participants’ ages varied from 17 to 20 years, as tabulated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF LEARNERS</th>
<th>LEARNER’S AGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 learners</td>
<td>17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 learners</td>
<td>18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 learners</td>
<td>19 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 learners</td>
<td>20 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questions below were asked during the evaluation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

1. State what you have learned from the topics that were facilitated, with particular reference to
   - communication skills, and
   - anger management.

2. How can the moral values in education assist in the management of a culture of aggression?

3. In terms of tolerance of diversity, are you capable of accepting other learners as they are?

4. Were you once bullied or did you once bully others? In future, what can you do differently?

5. Briefly discuss your likes and dislikes with regard to the facilitation period of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in your classroom.

6. Any other comments?
The researcher will give a brief overview of the recipients’ responses.

**Session 1**

Session 1 addressed the communication and anger management skills. Most learners expressed their lack of knowledge as far as communication skills and anger management are concerned. Learners stated that they were learning the implication of these terms for the first time in their lives. Some said:

“No one has ever taught us about anything like that”.

The researcher was impressed with most learners showing enthusiasm to walk the extra mile to learn more about communication skills and anger management. It was ground breaking that all the learners were willing to practice what they were taught for future purposes. Learners said that it was reawakening to learn that listening is essential for effective communication, although some mentioned that they find it difficult to listen without interrupting or rushing to respond. They ventured to give it their best to keep quiet and listen while others are talking. They further stated that they will practice to respect other learners’ points of view, even if those views might differ from their own.

Some learners mentioned that they use non-verbal communication most of the time because they thought it was an “in thing”; but after the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression, they will review the use of their gestures. Some said:

“From now henceforth I am going to use positive gestures as much as possible.”

**Session 2**

Session 2 explored how values in education can assist in the constructive management of a culture of aggression. The learners’ responses were
clustered into three concepts, namely the definition of values, the rights discourse and making choices. These concepts are tabulated below (see Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1 - Definition of values, rights and choices by the participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of values</th>
<th>Rights discourse</th>
<th>Making choices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some learners expressed their understanding of what they thought is meant by values in education. Some attempted to give examples of what are values and what are not values, and some mentioned what they thought is right and what is wrong. Some even stated what their own values were. A few gave examples of the values that were upheld in their communities.</td>
<td>Most learners expressed their opinions about what they think their rights were; the emphasis was on their rights as learners to be upheld. No learner mentioned anything about the rights of others or the fact that rights are accompanied by responsibilities. Most learners expressed their frustrations, which the researcher summarised in one word as “overlooked”. Many learners responded that the school overlook their rights as learners. Examples such as a lack of learner involvement when major decisions, which will</td>
<td>Some learners expressed the difficulties they encounter when faced with making decisions. They expressed that it is extremely difficult to say no; (“I can’t say no.”) Most learners mentioned that they always feel “guilty” or a sense of “betrayal” when they have to take a stand on issues - more especially if that “stand” differs from the “stand” being taken by their peers. Most learners expressed that they find it extremely difficult to take an individualistic “position”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 3

Session 3 dealt with the question regarding the lack of tolerance of diversity. This issue raised a number of conflicting ideas among the learners’ written responses. Some learners just wrote yes, they do accept others; some wrote yes, they do accept other learners, on condition that those learners accept them as well. A few wrote that it was extremely difficult to accept other learners, stating their reasons as indicated below:

“Some learners are just weird; it’s difficult to just accept them”. (Other words used for weird were “funny”, “nasty”, “snob”.)

Most learners denied the phenomenon of a lack of tolerance of diversity in their classroom environment; they coiled it into preferences by saying that:

“For some reasons, they only preferred to ‘hang’ around with learners who shared things which were common to them like the neighbourhood, fashions, entertainment, future prospects, clothes, style, likes and dislikes”.

Most learners said that it was the issue of common interest that glued them together rather than a lack of tolerance of diversity.

Session 4

Session 4 dealt with bullying. The responses turned out to be 50/50. Some learners said yes to being bullied, while others said yes to have bullied other learners. Most learners expressed their distastefulness of bullying. They said it was:
“Humiliating, painful, shameful, demeaning, insensitive, inhumane, tormenting, Satanism, heartbreaking, scary, selfish and ruthless.” They continued to say: “… from now onwards I got your back, bra”.

Learners who were bullied said they wish they could have told someone or done something about the incidences of being bullied. The learners who bullied others said that they did not think of the acts they conducted as bullying; all they reminisced about were the rewards that they derived from their actions.

The learners who bullied others said that they thought bullying was fun, and that with it came honour and fame. Some mentioned that during the facilitation of anti-bullying, they were able to reconsider their actions, as they now feel sorry for putting the learners who were bullied through such an ordeal. Two learners mentioned that they plan to approach their “victims” and apologise to them. They further promised that they will never do it again. The bystanders mentioned that they felt like conspirators to the bullying because they never attempted to do anything about it at the time; they only felt relieved because they were spared the pain.

**Session 5**

Session 5 addressed the likes and dislikes of the facilitation of the strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The responses are tabulated below (see Table 6.2).
Table 6.2 – Participants’ Likes and Dislikes of the Facilitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIKES</th>
<th>DISLIKES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• They liked the safe space that was created for expression</td>
<td>• The facilitation was too congested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They liked that they were treated with dignity</td>
<td>• Some groups dominated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They liked that they were not judged</td>
<td>• The food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They liked that for once they were united as a class</td>
<td>• It was too structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They liked that there was no tension in the classroom</td>
<td>• Group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They liked that most of their problems were raised and discussed and that possible solutions were explored</td>
<td>• Too many activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They liked that it seems as if something will be done about the culture of aggression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 6

Session 6 required the learners’ comments. The learners commented about the wonderful and tranquil time they spent during the facilitation period; they hoped and wished that the positive interaction that was established among them during the facilitation may be translated into their every-day lives in the classroom environment.

The learners said that if the culture of aggression was managed during the period of the facilitation of the strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression, they were convinced that it was possible to interact in an aggressive free classroom environment on a daily basis. The grade 10 learners said that they were not happy about the time frames that were allocated to the facilitation of the educational strategies; they said that “it was little”.

6.3 CONCLUSION

In chapter 6, the evaluation of the implementation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education was discussed in the light of the written data that was derived from the participants’ responses.
CHAPTER 7

REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“...integrate results into main conclusions as they impact on the central research problem study.....”

(Mouton, 2002:178)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 6, the evaluation of the implementation of the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education was described according to the data that was collected through individual learners’ written responses. In this final chapter, the focus will be on whether the objectives of the study were met. The limitations of the study will be discussed and general recommendations for the use of the study in a grade 10 class made.

In chapter 7, the research process will be reviewed in order to ascertain whether the objectives of the study were achieved. Conclusion emerging from phases 1 and 2 of this study will be presented and the implementation of chosen research discussed. Finally, the limitations and recommendations will also be outlined.

7.2 REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The researcher will now summarise and review the research process followed in this study to ascertain whether the aims of the study were achieved.
The research sought to answer the following questions:

1 what is a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education; and

2 what could be done to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education?

The following research aims were achieved to actualise the purpose of the study:

- to explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education;

- to develop a conceptual framework as a frame of reference for the development of constructive educational strategies. The conceptual framework will be developed from the results of investigating a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class; and

- to develop, implement and evaluate the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education.

For logical coherence, the study was organised into three phases to achieve the aims of the study. In phase 1, exploration and description of the constructive management of a culture of aggression were done.
In phase 2, a conceptual framework for the educational strategies was developed from the results of the study of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

In phase 3, the development of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education was described.

7.3 CONCLUSIONS

The patterns of aggression identified in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of education were instrumental in the development of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression. The strategies to manage a culture of aggression will assist the learners in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of education. This section of the chapter will look at the extent to which the aims of the study were met.

7.3.1 Objective 1

To explore and describe a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the secondary school of the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education. This objective was achieved by conducting a study that was ethnographic, explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature. Data collection was done by means of pictures, graffiti on the school walls and furniture, extensive participant observations, field notes and in-depth face-to-face individual and group interviews with the learners in a grade 10 class. Other relevant documents, such as the school newsletters, school code of conduct and mark schedules, were also used for data collection.
The results from the group and individual interviews were subsequently analysed and the patterns of aggression identified. These patterns are patterns of anger, patterns of bullying, patterns of fighting and patterns of challenges to moral values in education. Excerpts from the participants were included. The findings were discussed in existing literature. Chapter 2 contains a detailed description of the research method used.

Findings from the analysis showed the patterns of aggression, as well as excerpts from the participants, which were described in chapter 3. All of these reflected a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class and directed the development of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

In reviewing the literature and the findings of this study, it followed that recommendations would be made to the educational fraternity, with special reference to the grade 10 class. The study findings can be highlighted as follows:

- the patterns of anger;
- the patterns of bullying;
- the patterns of fighting; and
- the patterns of challenges to moral values in education.

In conclusion, the findings pointed to a need for educational strategies that could serve as a framework to facilitate the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education.
7.3.2 Objective 2

To develop a conceptual framework for educational strategies derived from the results of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The researcher generated a conceptual framework as basis for the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

7.3.3 Objective 3

To develop the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a secondary school in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education.

The objective was accomplished by using a conceptual framework based on the patterns of aggression, goal, context, recipients, the agent and the procedure. The conceptual framework was fully described in chapter 4 of this study.

The facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression was implemented as a pilot to manage the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class. The evaluation of the facilitation of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression was conducted for the purposes of receiving feedback.

7.4 CHALLENGES

The researcher identified the challenges discussed below during the course of the research study:

The time scheduled for the facilitation of the educational strategies for a culture of aggression was limited due to the secondary school’s programme. The SGB represents the parents in the secondary school. The members of the SGB were interviewed, but it could have been more interesting if the
parents of the participants were also interviewed about the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the subsequent discussion, the researcher uses the conclusions drawn from the research findings to formulate recommendations. Certain implications emerged; these implications should be seen as an opportunity for the development of the educational strategies for the management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

These research findings imply that the challenge of a culture of aggression is too complex for an individualistic approach. Certain recommendations, based on these findings, are suggested to assist in the application of the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

To be constructive in managing a culture of aggression, as is facing the grade 10 class, the secondary school should collectively own a culture of aggression, such as in a grade 10 class, and implement the educational strategies to manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The community should also make a firm commitment to address the front end of these massive classroom aggressive behaviours through long-term management of a culture of aggression efforts rather than continuing with the reactive posture of trying to control the learners through incarceration, suspension, toleration of high rates of aggression or highly segregated alternatives, for example the schools of industry or the referrals to the Sedibeng district office of the Gauteng Department of Education for further interventions.

The referral procedures for further interventions by the Sedibeng district office of the Gauteng Department of Education demand enormous paper work from the class teacher, the learning area teachers, the SBST and the school
principal. Due to the nature of the large scope of work by the Sedibeng district office of the Gauteng Department of Education, the referred cases of aggression from the secondary schools in the district can take a very long time to be attended to, while learners' aggressive behaviours are amplified in the classroom.

It is essential that the school engage in a whole-school dialogue; the whole-school concept should include the teachers, parents, SBST, SMT, SGB, the Department of Education, the interdepartmental stakeholders, non-governmental stakeholders and the private sector.

It is imperative that the whole-school dialogue acknowledges that the patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class do exist in order to articulate the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

The recommendations are structured in the following manner:

- advocacy;
- drafting the school code of conduct;
- crafting individual-safe classroom/school plans;
- developing the written agreement with the youth organisations;
- establishing the crisis management policy;
- establishing watertight security measures in the secondary school environment;
- classroom management;
• flexible school curriculum;

• in-service teacher training;

• paying attention to the structural needs of the school;

• language policy;

• accountability of school authorities; and

• research.

7.5.1 Advocacy

Advocacy was identified as key in achieving the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education. Advocacy is instrumental in creating awareness among all the stakeholders in education.

The CAMH (2004:5) describes advocacy for the constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class as a combination of individual learner and community actions designed to gain political commitment, policy support, social acceptance and systems support for a particular strategy or programme.

The CAMH (2004:5) further states that such actions may be taken by or on behalf of individuals and groups of learners to create living conditions and interactions conducive to the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression. The advocacy for the management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class will focus on

• communication skills,
• moral values in education,

• self-respect and respect,

• tolerance of diversity,

• anger management, and

• anti-bullying.

The agent needs to employ a number of activities such as collaboration with multi-sectoral stakeholders for the purposes of creating awareness and buy-in. Under the banner of collaboration, the researcher needs to engage the curriculum developers in order for them to revisit the life-orientation curriculum and review the life skills, such as the educational strategies to constructively manage a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education, for inclusion in the life-orientation curriculum as a policy.

Clark (2003:468) asserts that on many occasions, interventions in the educational strategies to constructively manage a culture of aggression involve advocacy, which may take place with the individual learner or group of learners, as well as in interactions with multi-sectoral stakeholders for the benefit of the learners in a grade 10 class in an attempt to constructively manage a culture of aggression.

7.5.2 Drafting of the school code of conduct

Prior to the adoption of the South African School Act (1996:3), the early nineties witnessed the circulation of two documents that served as basis for the 1996 legislation. The first of these, “A Curriculum Model for South Africa”, appeared in 1991 as a Department of National Education publication. The
second was a discussion document, entitled the “Education Renewal Strategy”.

These papers emphasised the issues with regard to the school code of conduct. More importantly, these documents emphasised diversity as a permanent and desirable feature for the learners in a grade 10 class. The school’s code of conduct should accommodate diversity in that it tolerates and respect difference, while at the same time allows for non-aggressive behaviours.

The school should compile a set of written school codes and rules of conduct according to the South African School Act (1996:16) for the learners in a grade 10 class. These rules should be compiled in a collaborative manner by the teachers, SMT, parents, the SGB, law experts from the Department of Education and the learners themselves.

A code of conduct should be based on human rights principles that contain the school rules, regulations, disciplinary procedures and sanctions. The code of conduct should include rules and regulations focusing on the constructive management of a culture of aggression that encompasses school safety and the security issues in the school environment, together with the procedures that intend to deal with the matters and the consequences of breaching safety and security. For example, safety rules and procedures that deal with matters such as late-coming, criminal acts and conducting searches and seizes (Bear, 2009:14).

The code of conduct should include appropriate policies and procedures for dealing with matters such as aggression, drug peddling, sexual harassment and other forms of abuse, which include verbal and physical abuse and the possession of dangerous weapons in the classroom. Moreover, policies should be implemented and reviewed on an ongoing basis. The code of conduct should be visible and communicated to the learners and parents on admission to the school, in the school’s newsletter and during parent meetings.
In addition, however, a code of conduct needs to be firmly linked to what is called a delivery document, for example a description of the means whereby the secondary school intends to implement the policy and to monitor its effectiveness. Part of the delivery document will need to spell out the disciplinary consequences and sanctions that are available to the school should the policy be infringed, to learners and teachers, parents and the community.

In any case, this code of conduct will need to spell out the consequences at different levels of gravity and the way in which the victims’ self-concept is to be restored, as well as how the impact on the grade 10 class is to be repaired. As vigour, consistency and immediacy of response are regarded highly, all staff members and parents need to be issued with a copy of the code of conduct, delivery document and disciplinary code. Ideally, the code of conduct should include a coherent philosophical section linking it to the vision and mission statement of the secondary school - a section embarking on the school’s commitment to the educational strategies for the constructive management of the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

7.5.3 Crafting of Individual-safe Classrooms and School plans

A grade 10 class plan should include a comprehensive safety plan that addresses its own educational, psychological, emotional, social, environmental and cultural needs of the grade 10 learners under study. The classroom plan should include the roping in of the local police, health officials, religious leaders, youth organisations, other community members and the other educational stakeholders to assist the SMT, the SBST and the SGB to develop the safety plan that meets the individual needs of learners in the grade 10 class.

The expectations of the above-mentioned collaboration should be clearly communicated; it should be consistently enforced and fairly applied. School rules and the entire classroom plan should be reviewed and updated regularly
in order to accomplish the safety measures of a grade 10 class. The security management personnel should be as eloquent in the language of security as their counterparts in other environments, for example the financial institutions.

For the past few years, this particular secondary school only focused on the physical security of the school; in this new millennium, the researcher opines that the school security should not be only physically based, but it should be holistic in nature. In the present day there should be a paradigm shift; the security personnel should understand the accounting principles, verbal and non-verbal aggression, technology, substance abuse, a variety of weapons and electronics (Harvey, 2011:5). Some educational institutions began to respond to these demands with carefully crafted security programmes that address a variety of educational and security topics that incorporate the involvement of parents (Harvey, 2011:5).

This particular secondary school should take a leaf from those secondary schools who began to address the variety of educational and security topics. In this particular secondary school, the security programme that is envisaged should furnish the grade 10 learners with an understanding of the fundamental principles of the school’s code of conduct and disciplinary measures. In the security programme, the secondary school, the learners and teachers, as well as the community members, should work together to ensure that learners feel safe, respected and valued.

According to Loo (2008:120), feeling safe in the school environment extends beyond the individual. It is the perception that incorporates learners’ mental health when they are present in the classroom. One’s surroundings are regarded as the centre of safety and security, a field of care and concern, a point of orientation.

Physical safety is an issue not only in a school environment, but also in the community. Learners see their neighbourhoods as a “war zone”, seeing that gangs are everywhere. To the class of grade 10 learners in this particular
The constant violence fosters perceptual fear and caution, as well as cynicism and numbness with regard to the value of life or plans for the future. The aggression leading to violence even robs learners of the little recreational space available to them in their school environment (Heath & McLaughlin, 2009:46).

The learners in a grade 10 class are a major threat to the school environment’s stability and quality of life without aggression, violence and crime. The weakening of the foundation of a safe school and classroom plan results in learners’ perception of a lack of control and in them fearing aggression and violence.

There appears to be a strong relationship between aggression in a grade 10 class and the physical characteristics of a neighbourhood, such as informal settlements. The grade 10 learners appear to be contributing to a more negative evaluation of self-concept that is projected by their aggressive behaviours (Feimer & Geller, 2005:317).

Learners in a grade 10 class would wish to maintain a reasonable level of self-efficacy. This is regarded as important for their mental health. The aspect of aggression leading to violence threatens the manageability of learners’ daily interaction. The idea that the learners should constantly look over their shoulder is exhausting to both the learners and the school community (Feimer & Geller, 2005:317).

7.5.4 The Compilation of a Written Agreement with the Youth Organisations

The school should undertake some aspects of raising community awareness and behavioural expectations that enhances the educational strategies for the
constructive management of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class by using the SBST, the SMT, NGOs and the SGB.

Collaboration with law enforcement and social services is necessary to create an alliance with the officials; such collaboration will encourage the development of written agreements that stipulate how the grade 10 class and the youth organisations can work together in peer mentoring and in raising community awareness about the patterns of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class.

7.5.5 Establishing a Crisis Management Policy

Wagner (2011:201) says that “if you are the leader, the buck will need to stop with you. The school management team should possess clear goals which will help to solve problems”. One secret will be to recognise a problem in its early stages before it gets out of hand and, once it is recognised, it should not be postponed, but tackled immediately.

The learners in a grade 10 class are in need of positive, consistent, nurturing discipline. They need to learn positive problem-solving techniques. Parents and teachers need to place learners in environments that offer a setting and support for learning positive social behaviour rather than aggressive, hostile, antisocial conduct.

The school needs to have a user-friendly crisis management plan that involves school personnel, parents, learners, community members, registered counsellors, psychologists, social workers and law enforcement officials. This policy should include plans for communication in the school, with the parents, with the learners, with the law enforcement officials and with the community members. The envisaged policy should describe the referral procedures to the different stakeholders.

7.5.6 Security Measures in the School Environment
An unpleasant school environment invites trouble and increases the chance of aggression that leads to violence. With that in mind, the school should remove the graffiti on the school walls, repair the broken ceiling, windows and doors, cut the grass and clean the grounds, clear any maintenance hazard and establish measures that will reduce vandalism that compromises school safety.

The vendors selling around the school yard should be discouraged due to the fact that the school cannot control what they are selling. Out-of-class activities should be encouraged and monitored by teachers. The school gates should be locked at all times. The school should hire security guards to scrutinise the people visiting the school. Student cards and a clock-card system should be introduced to enable the security officials to identify the legitimacy of the teachers and learners entering and exiting the school premises.

The SMT should design a roster that the teachers will use to monitor the learners in a grade 10 class during their free periods, as well as the learners on the playgrounds, in the tuck-shop area and in the toilets. Free periods for learners should especially be discouraged at all costs. The secondary school’s future budget plans should include a close circuited television or surveillance camera in order to monitor the incidences of aggression closely.

### 7.5.7 Classroom Management

The clock-card machine system will assist the SMT in monitoring the teachers’ late-coming tendencies and absenteeism; the classroom population should be reduced to the ratio of 1:35 to create classroom space and less physical friction among learners.

The classroom aide and the school counsellor will assist in emotional-related issues that confront the learners in a grade 10 class on a daily basis. The researcher suggests that the school counsellors and a psychologist form part of the staff establishment in the near future. The class teacher, together with
the learners in a grade 10 class, should formulate the classroom rules, reach a mutual agreement and sign a contract in order to abide by those classroom rules.

7.5.8 School Curriculum and Training Sessions

The secondary school should provide training for parents on parenting skills. The school should further organise the ongoing training of teachers in order to empower them with skills such as early identifying aggression, diverting at-risk learners from destructive life paths early in their lives, replacing forms of behaviour, skills and strategies leading to positive interpersonal relationships, fostering attachment to and bonding with the schooling process and how to manage aggression and anger management.

A common theme running through this research is that more training on the recognition of bullying, skills in confronting bullies, skills in de-escalating highly charged situations and on teaching learners how to address the issue of bullying in the school, is of extreme importance (McGrath, 2010:24).

Learners should be empowered with social and emotional skills. The educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression, as suggested by the researcher, should be incorporated in the life-orientation curriculum. The educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression should be cascaded progressively by training the relevant personnel in the school.

7.5.9 The Structural Needs of the School

Reading has a calming effect that can reduce the episodes of aggression; therefore it will be advantageous if the school could invest in a school library. The classroom library corner could be a start. In the meantime, it will be advantageous if the secondary school can collaborate with the nearby library staff to learn good practice. Physical exercise is essential for relieving stress-related issues that can add to a culture of aggression in a grade 10
classroom. The playground should therefore be refurbished to introduce sporting activities.

7.5.10 Language Policy

The language policy should be flexible; it should include issues of standard English. English should be regarded as a second language, and the home language should be regarded as a first language. In order to promote the culture of respect and tolerance, the understanding of a dialect and the use thereof should be across the spectrum of the classroom environment.

7.5.11 Accountability of School Authorities

The teacher-learner relationship should encompass a “duty of care” to protect the learners from reasonably foreseeable harm. The teacher should be charged for breaching their duty of care only if the aggression leading to violence was reasonably foreseeable and they failed to carry out their duties in a sufficiently careful manner.

The teacher should provide adequate supervision of learners in places such as the classroom, tuck-shop, toilets, sport field and where the learners move around on the school premises. The learners should also be protected from dangerous situations and activities like substance abuse. The safety of the premises and equipment should be maintained and the learners should be protected from staff members who may bully and harass the learners.

7.5.12 Research

The ultimate aims of research are to generate measurable and testable data, gradually adding to the accumulation of human knowledge. Research is a combination of theory and practice, linked by the investigation of the real world. It is informed by values about the issue under investigation, follows agreed on practices, is sensitive to ethical implications, asks meaningful questions and is rigorous (Heath & McLaughlin, 2009:46).
In order to keep up with the patterns of aggression in a grade 10 class in the secondary school that may mushroom over time, research is imperative to keep up with the new trends of aggression. Research can further assist with the vast knowledge of developing the educational strategies for the constructive management of a culture of aggression at a certain point in time.

7.6 CONCLUSION

The researcher reviewed the research process of a culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in a particular secondary school in the Sedibeng district in the Gauteng Department of Education that was aimed at the development of educational strategies to constructively manage the culture of aggression in a grade 10 class in the Sedibeng district of the Gauteng Department of Education.

The core of the chapter was to provide an overview of the overall research process, including the main conclusions drawn from the actualisation of the purpose of the research study as guided by the aims and the research questions. The challenges of the study were highlighted and recommendations made.
ACRONYMS USED

1. DOE- Department Of Education.
2. LRC- Learners Representative Council.
3. NGO- Non Governmental Organisation.
5. SBST - School Based Support Team: Consists of Principal, Head of Department, different stakeholders, Heads of Grade and Life Orientation teachers.
6. SGB- School Governing Body: Consists of Parents, Principal, Teachers.
7. SMT- School Management Team: Consists of Principal, two Deputy Principals and Head of Departments.
References


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