A PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR EDUCATORS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF AGGRESSION IN A SECONDARY ESBD (EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR DISORDERS) SCHOOL IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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THESIS

submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR PHILOSOPHIAE

In

PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION

in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

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JULY 2012
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people:

• My supervisors, Professor Chris Myburgh and Professor Marie Poggenpoel. Thanks for your support, encouragement and guidance throughout this journey.

• My parents, Eben and Elma for their support and guidance.

• My husband, Martin for his continuous, non-wavering support.

• My friend, Alet for always believing in me and encouraging me to pursue my dreams.

• Jaclyn Gradidge for producing the tables, figures and diagrams.

• All my other friends and family for their encouragement and support.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER 1 - BACKGROUND AND BASIC THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

1.1 INTRODUCTION 1

1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE 1

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT 17

1.4 RESEARCH GOALS 21

1.5 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE 21

  1.5.1 Meta-theoretical assumptions 22
    1.5.1.1 Psycho-education 23
    1.5.1.2 Educator 24
    1.5.1.3 Aggression 25
    1.5.1.4 Dealing with aggression constructively 28
    1.5.1.5 Secondary school 29
    1.5.1.6 SEBD school 29
    1.5.1.7 Facilitation 29
CHAPTER 2 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION 51

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN 52

2.2.1 Inductive 56

2.2.2 Exploratory 57

2.2.3 Descriptive 58

2.2.4 Contextual 58

2.3 STEP 1: SITUATION ANALYSIS BY MEANS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH 59

2.3.1 Phenomenological research 59

2.3.2 Population and sampling 64

2.3.3 Data collection 65

   a) Phenomenological interviews 65

   b) Observation and field notes 71

2.3.4 Data analysis 72

2.3.5 Literature control 74

2.4 STEP 2: PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT 75

1. Goal content specified as the aim of the study 76

2. Prescriptions for the activity in order to achieve the desired outcome 77
CHAPTER 3 - EDUCATORS’ EXPERIENCE OF AGGRESSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

3.3 RESULTS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS

3.3.1 Theme 1: Aggression is Widespread Phenomenon

3.3.2 Theme 2: Educators experience aggression both overtly and covertly

iv
3.3.2.1 Category 1 Educators experience explicit aggression 96
3.3.2.2 Category 2 Educators experience hidden aggression 97

3.3.3 Theme 3: The aggression that educators experience is maintained by both external and internal environmental factors 99
3.3.3.1 Category 1 External factors maintain the aggression that educators experience 100
3.3.3.2 Category 2 Internal factors maintain the aggression that educators experience 101
3.3.3.3 Category 3 Process and dynamic factors maintain the aggression that educators experience 104

3.3.4 Theme 4: Educators’ experience of aggression is bidirectional and it results in lowered self-esteem, fewer internal resources, less job-satisfaction and emotional strain 107
3.3.4.1 Category 1 Educators experience aggression physically 107
3.3.4.2 Category 2 Aggression affects educators interpersonally 108
3.3.4.3 Category 3 Aggression affects educators emotionally 109

3.3.5 Theme 5: Educators have different strategies to deal with the aggression they experience 111
3.3.5.1 Category 1 Educators have effective strategies to deal with the aggression that they experience

3.3.5.2 Category 2 Educators experience that they have less effective strategies to deal with the aggression they experience

3.4 FIELD NOTES KEPT DURING THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS

3.4.1 Observation notes
3.4.2 Personal notes
3.4.3 Methodological notes
3.4.4 Theoretical notes

3.5 CONCLUSION

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

CHAPTER 4 - A PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME TO FACILITATE THE SELF-EMPOWERMENT OF EDUCATORS TO CONSTRUCTIVELY MANAGE THE AGGRESSION THAT THEY EXPERIENCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.2.1 Agent
4.2.2 Recipient 126
4.2.3 Procedure 126
4.2.4 Context 131
4.2.5 Dynamics 131
4.2.6 Outcome 132

4.3 PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT 132
4.3.1 Key elements of Psycho-Educational Programme Development 134
  4.3.1.1 Relationship with time and space 134
  4.3.1.2 Relationship with the self 134
  4.3.1.3 Relationship with others 135

4.4 PROCESS DESCRIPTION OF A SELF-EMPOWERMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 136
4.4.1 The colour red 136
4.4.2 The colour orange 136
4.4.3 The colour yellow 138
4.4.4 The colour green 138
4.4.5 The colour blue 138
4.4.6 The rainbow of colours 138

4.5 PHASE ONE: DISCOVER THE VALUE OF SELF 139
4.5.1 Self-awareness

Reflection groups

Learning tracking system

Journal option

4.5.2 Self-Efficacy

4.5.3 Self-Responsibility

4.6 PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

4.6.1 Interpersonal Skills

4.6.2 Interpersonal Relationships

4.6.3 Communication Skills

4.7 PHASE 3: FACILITATION OF CONTEXT-SPECIFIC EMPOWERMENT SKILLS

4.7.1 Participation and collaboration

4.7.2 Sense of control

4.7.3 Meeting personal needs

4.7.4 Understanding the environment

4.7.5 Personal action

4.7.6 Access to resources

4.8 PHASE 4: SELF-EMPOWERED EDUCATORS

4.8.1 A step-by-step guide for constructively managing the aggression in a

SEBD school
Step 1: Become part of the team 157

Step 2: Mentoring 159

Step 3: Transform the school into a learning organisation 163

Step 4: Form a coalition 166

Step 5: Approach challenges from a solution-focussed stance 168

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY 171

CHAPTER 5 - GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME TO FACILITATE THE SELF-EMPOWERMENT OF EDUCATORS IN A SECONDARY SEBD SCHOOL TO CONSTRUCTIVELY MANAGE THE AGGRESSION THAT THEY EXPERIENCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION 172

5.2 GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SELF-EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME FOR SECONDARY SEBD EDUCATORS 172

5.2.1 The facilitator 173

5.2.2 Phase 1: Discover the value of self 176
5.2.3 Phase 2: Development of interpersonal relationship skills

5.2.4 Phase 3: Development of context-specific empowerment skills

5.2.5 Phase 4: Self-empowered educators

5.3 SCHEDULE OF THE PROGRAMME

5.4 PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

5.5 GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE SELF-EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

5.5.1 Process evaluation

5.5.2 Impact assessment

5.5.3 Outcome evaluation

5.6 CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.2 CONCLUSION
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1 Future research

6.3.2 Programme implementation

6.4 ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

6.5 CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

6.6 SUMMARY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

TABLES

Table 4.1 Typical forms of mentor support in an SEBD school

FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Experiential learning cycle

Figure 1.2 Research Design

Figure 1.3 Trustworthiness: Criteria and Strategies

Figure 1.4 Summary of ethical measures

Figure 2.1 Research Design
| Figure 2.2 | Development of a conceptual framework | 76 |
| Figure 2.3 | Measures to ensure trustworthiness | 82-83 |
| Figure 3.1 | Identified Themes and Categories | 92 |
| Figure 3.2 | Types of aggression that educators experience | 95 |
| Figure 3.3 | A “snapshot” of the school community | 121 |
| Figure 4.1 | ‘Thinking Map’ to illustrate all the relevant concepts, procedures and Interactions in the conceptual framework | 124 |
| Figure 4.2 | The mediating effect of self-empowerment between external factors and work attitude | 128 |
| Figure 4.3 | The mediating effect of self-empowerment | 129 |
| Figure 4.4 | Educator self-empowerment triangle | 130 |
| Figure 4.5 | Schematic structure of the self-empowerment programme | 133 |
| Figure 4.6 | Process description of the procedure within the development of the self-empowerment programme | 137 |
| Figure 4.7 | Interpersonal Relationships skills | 146 |
| Figure 4.8 | Constructively managing the aggression in the school | 156 |
| Figure 4.9 | The MERID mentoring model | 164 |
CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND BASIC THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one proposes to explain through the rationale and basic theoretical assumptions that it is possible to develop a programme for facilitative management of educators’ experience of aggression in a school for social, emotional and behavioural disorders.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Education in the United Kingdom is divided into three stages which are: primary, secondary, further and higher education. Learners’ compulsory education lasts for 11 years. Legal schooling ages are starting from five years to 16 years. Within that period learners must obtain full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability, capacity and their special educational needs (SEN). If a learner does not attend a school, the local education authority (LEA) must be satisfied that other appropriate provision is available for them.

Transferring age from primary to secondary school is at the age of 11 years. Most secondary schools in the United Kingdom are comprehensive; which means that they do not operate a selective entrance system. However, in some parts of the United Kingdom, grammar school systems operates which usually requires learners to pass an entrance examination based on their ability.
Under the National Curriculum, as a result of the Education Reform Act 1988, four Key Stages to education were established. These are as follows:

Key Stage 1: 5 to 7 years old

Key Stage 2: 7 to 11 years old

Key Stage 3: 11-14 years old

Key Stage 4: 14-16 years old (GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education)

Special educational needs (SEN) have a legal meaning. The Education Act 1996 legally defines learners with SEN as learners who have a considerably greater difficulty in learning than others the same age. SEN includes communication, physical, sensory and emotional difficulties that require support. This includes learners who are not necessarily disabled. It also includes learners who cannot use the educational facilities which other learners of a similar age use, because of their disability. A special school is a school exclusively for learners with special educational needs.

Special education needs (SEN) are grouped into moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communications needs, physical disabilities, visual or hearing impairments and autism spectrum disorders.

Education in the United Kingdom has been through many changes in the last couple of years. In recent years in the United Kingdom, the emphasis of government policy has been on the inclusion of learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream classrooms (Department for Education and Employment, 1997) and the reduction in the numbers of learners excluded from school for disciplinary reasons.
Both of these groups will include learners with SEBD (Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties). There has been confusion as to how social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are defined. “SEBD” is an imprecise umbrella term and it is difficult to define. Cole and Visser (2005:2) point out that no recent full definition has been offered (and the Scottish Executive has been even more reticent). In fact a circular from 1994, still current at the end of 2006, offers the fullest English government definition of what this circular referred to as “emotional and behavioural difficulties” (EBD). Recent English government figures suggest that 150 000 learners in mainstream and special schools and units said to have significant SEBD. Estimates are not available for elsewhere in the UK.

Davis and Florian (2004:43) found that within literature the term “social emotional and behavioural difficulties” (SEBD) is commonly used in preference to “behavioural, emotional and social development” (BESD) which is used in the Code of Practice (DfES 2001b:87). OFSTED (2005:3) uses “emotional, behavioural and social difficulties” (EBSD). Although the phrases “emotional and behavioural difficulties” (EBD) and the more recent variations SEBD, BESD and EBSD appear in literature, policy and guidance, they are not without problems.

In the United Kingdom, the term used is mostly SEBD. The use of this term signals a recognition that disruptive and challenging behaviour may be a “positive adaptive response” to a situation or an environment that places communication demands upon young people that they are unable to meet (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009:188).

There has been pressure both on schools and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to find new ways of enabling educators to support learners with SEBD in order that they can be included in the ordinary classroom with their peers. LEAs have been required to draw up Behaviour Support Plans, which give details of the ways in which they will “provide advice and resources to relevant schools for promoting good behaviour and discipline, and dealing with pupils

In the United Kingdom, as well as providing segregated schools and units for learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), there has been a long tradition of excluding some disruptive learners from school, which is not matched by the ways in which such learners are dealt with in many other European countries (Evans, Harden & Thomas, 2004:3).

Thomas (2005:59-82) suggests there has been insufficient discussion of the provenance, status, robustness, legitimacy or meaning of the term SEBD and argues that there has been a clinicalising of unacceptable behaviour that transforms an institutional need for order into a learner’s emotional need. Furthermore, there has also been an increase in learners considered to have emotional and behavioural difficulties. This was detected by Croll and Moses (2003:745).

DfEE Circular 9/94 defines SEBD by saying that the learners' difficulties presented lie on a continuum between behaviour which challenges educators. Yet it is within normal, albeit unacceptable, bounds and that which is indicative of serious mental illness (Department of Education, 1994:4).

SEBDs range from social maladaptation to abnormal emotional stresses. Abnormal refers to stresses that are not typical, usual, or regular - deviant. SEBDs are persistent but not necessarily permanent. They constitute learning difficulties. They may be multiple and may manifest themselves in many different forms and severities. They may become apparent through withdrawn, passive, depressive, aggressive or self-injurious tendencies. They may have one or more causes and may be associated with the school, the family or physical or sensory impairments.
According to Circular 9/94 (Department of Education, 1994:4) learners with SEBD cover the range of ability found in mainstream schools, but generally behave unusually or respond in an extreme fashion to a variety of social, personal, emotional or physical circumstances.

The circular further explains that their behaviour may be evident at the:

- personal level - low self-image, anxiety, depression or withdrawal, resentment, vindictiveness or defiance;
- verbal level - learner may be silent or may threaten, or interrupt, argue or swear a great deal;
- non-verbal level - through truancy, failure to observe rules, disruptiveness, destructiveness, aggression or violence;
- work skills level - through an inability or unwillingness to work without direct supervision, to concentrate, to complete tasks or to follow instructions.

Many such learners find extreme difficulty in trusting or forming relationships with peers or adults. Whether or not a learner is judged to have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties will depend on the nature, frequency, persistence, severity or abnormality and cumulative effect of the behaviour, in context, compared to normal expectations for a learner of the age concerned.

Circular 9/94 (Department of Education, 1994) and the DFE “Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs” (1994 and revised code, 2001) stress that learners with SEBD have special educational needs. In the terms of the legislation, they have "learning
difficulties” because they are facing barriers which cause them to have significantly greater difficulty in learning than most of their peers. These impediments affect their achievement and sometimes that of others. Some learners' learning difficulties will have caused or aggravated their emotional and behavioural difficulties, often accompanied by a significant loss of self-esteem. Other learners' emotional and behavioural difficulties may have given rise to their learning difficulties, by impeding access to the curriculum through, for example, the aggression, depression or hyperactivity they have displayed. Some learners may be bright but frustrated or suffering from serious emotional challenges.

The more recent revision of the Code of Practice (DfES, 2001b:83) does not give a clear definition of SEBD, but suggests that evidence of significant emotional or behavioural difficulties is indicated by: clear, recorded examples of withdrawn or disruptive behaviour; a marked and persistent inability to concentrate; signs that the learners experience considerable frustration or distress in relation to their learning difficulties; difficulties in establishing and maintaining balanced relationships with their fellow learners or with adults; and any other evidence of a significant delay in the development of life and social skills.

The Code of Practice (DfES, 2001b:85) continues to explain that SEBD are caused by many interacting factors. There is no automatic link between SEBD and any one social factor, but research shows that the prevalence of such difficulties varies according to gender, age, health and domicile. Rates are likely to be greater in inner cities; socially deprived families for which a narrow notion of social class is not a good proxy; boys rather than girls, learners with other learning, health or developmental difficulties; adolescents as opposed to younger learners; and, amongst young learners, those with delayed language development. While many learners cope well with adverse circumstances and events, higher rates of emotional and behavioural difficulty are also likely to feature where there is or has been parental discord or divorce, mental health
problems in other family members, neglect or significant parental coldness or irritability towards the child.

The label of SEBD may have a more negative impact. It can leave the class educators, who may be very proficient at managing teaching and learning, feeling deskillled by its connotations that the response required is altogether more specialised than they can provide. Those who work with learners with SEBD, tend to structure their responses to behaviour so that damage is not compounded. This is not “understanding more and condemning less”. It is about valuing the learner but not the behaviour, building up trust so that behaviour defences are lowered and the learners feel in safe hands and can be helped to better ways to manage themselves and to learn.

The lack of clarity about which learners have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and the emphasis on the inclusion, as far as possible, of all learners within mainstream schools, have led to stresses and dilemmas for classroom educators (Evans et al., 2004:3). Based on inspections of English schools OFSTED (2004:6) made the point that overall, the issue of admissions of learners with social and behavioural difficulties was proving the hardest test of the inclusion framework and the one over which conflicts between meeting individual needs and “efficient education for other children” (DfES 2001a:25) were the most problematic to reconcile. Significantly this group of learners was also one of those cited by Baroness Warnock (2005:56) when raising concerns about the policy of inclusion.

A similar view was reported by Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000:209), with their participants seeing learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) as causing significantly greater concern and stress than learners with other difficulties.

The concerns and stress are often caused by learners’ behaviour. The Elton Report (Department of Education and Science, 1989:62) put forward the view from its findings that incidents of serious misbehaviour, and especially
extreme acts of violence, remain very rare and it is persistent, low-level disruption that troubles educators most. Whilst this statement was reassuring in terms of the national picture at the time, it is important to note that more than one in ten secondary educators and more than one in 20 primary school educators mentioned that they had “verbal abuse” directed at them by learners during the week of the Elton Report’s survey. The Teacher Support Network website reported in 2002 on research conducted in 2000 by Opinion Leader Research which indicated that an estimated 85 000 educators had experienced aggression from learners in a two year period.

Reporting on the Incidents of Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour against Local Authority School Staff in 2001/2002, the Scottish Executive (Scottish Education Executive Department, 2003:1) states that:

- The total number of incidents reported against local authority school staff (both teaching and non-teaching) was 5 412.

- Thirty-seven per cent of these incidents occurred within the primary sector, 30 per cent in the secondary sector, 32 per cent in the special sector and two per cent in pre-school centres of education.

- Two-thirds of the incidents reported involved teaching staff. There were 64 incidents against teaching staff per 1 000 educators.

Furthermore, SEBD are very common and increasing. It is estimated that in the United Kingdom between 10% and 20% of school age learners experience SEBD to a degree that significantly impairs their social and
educational development (Cooper, 2001:2). SEBD take different forms, such as acting out, phobic and withdrawn behaviour. It includes crime, substance abuse, depression, suicide and self-harm. Learners and young people with SEBD frequently disrupt classrooms and playgrounds. They are at particular risk of being excluded. Attitudes to them are often very negative. There are many causes of SEBD, but social factors almost always play a crucial role in their development. The prevalence of problems reaches its peak in the adolescent years. It is difficult to make international comparisons but the situation in the United States of America appears to be similar (Cooper, 2001:2).

In the early nineteenth century, approaches to SEBD tended to locate the source of difficulties in the individual and tried to retrain the individual following the dictum of “spare the rod and spoil the child” although there were some pioneers who established less harsh methods (Cooper, 2001:3). In the twentieth century, there was an increased use of therapeutic approaches as opposed to punitive approaches when dealing with SEBD. The early influence of psychodynamic approaches gave way to environmental approaches. Some residential schools have been very effective in meeting the needs of learners with SEBD. They have provided structured programmes involving learner self-government and therapeutic relationships, educational and residential experiences in a 24-hour curriculum. The best day provision in the United Kingdom, in the form of SEBD schools and PRU’s (Pupil Referral units), have clear goals and entry criteria, a structured therapeutic and sometimes behavioural programme, high quality social relationships between staff and learners and positive social outcomes.

Learners that are permanently excluded from mainstream schools can join a SEBD school or a PRU. In order to be eligible for a special school like a SEBD school, a learner needs a Statement of Special Education Needs. This statement is compiled after a local authority has carried out an assessment. The statement describes the learners’ SEN and the special help they should receive.
A statement of SEN is set out in six parts:

- part one gives general information about the learner and a list of the advice the authority received as part of the assessment;

- part two gives the description of the learner’s needs following the assessment;

- part three describes all the special help to be given for the learner’s needs;

- part four gives the type and name of the school the learner should go to and how any arrangements will be made out of school hours or off school premises;

- part five describes any non-educational needs the learner has;

- part six describes how the learner will get help to meet any non-educational needs.

The SEN Statement has to be reviewed annually to ensure that it still meets the learner’s needs.
Before any learner can join a SEBD school he/she will attend a pre-admission interview with their parents or carers. During this interview the school’s rules and procedures will be explained. The school’s behaviour policy will also be explained and discussed. Furthermore, the learner’s previous school records will be discussed to determine if any additional support services may be necessary. The learner will be integrated into the SEBD school over a period of time. Their timetable will gradually be increased from one lesson a day to a full timetable. This will also be regularly reviewed to ensure the learner makes progress. If necessary, the learners will be enrolled in other off-site programmes like motorbike mechanics to maximise the progress they make. The learners will also have an IEP (Individual Education Programme). The IEP could include:

- what special or additional help is being given to a learner;
- who will provide the help and how often;
- what help parents can give learners at home;
- the learner’s behavioural and curriculum targets; and
- how and when progress will be checked.

Additionally, major developments in education policy since 1980 have affected approaches to SEBD. The advent of behavioural and cognitive-behavioural approaches in psychology coincided with a shift in emphasis from a therapeutic psychology to educational psychology. In particular there is a new emphasis on considering “what works” in alternative provision for learners with SEBD within the context of educational policy as a whole. There is also growing awareness that educators are asked to help learners engage with an educational system and culture that sometimes seems indifferent or hostile to their needs.
Added to this, educators are now required to use empirically-based interventions in the education of learners with social, emotional and behavioural disorders (SEBD). Policy and legislation in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), and in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) mandate that educational programming be founded on evidence of effective practice (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). However, researchers have documented that educators do not consistently implement evidence-based interventions in classrooms serving learners with special needs (Duchnowski, Kutash, Sheffield, & Vaughn, 2006:845). The absence of evidence-based interventions appears to be particularly problematic in classrooms serving learners with SEBD (Hawkins & Heflin, 2011:97).

Furthermore, adolescent aggressive behaviour at schools continues to be a pressing social problem. Often the level of aggression is high and the consequences severe (Goldstein, Young, & Boyd, 2008:642; Hawley & Vaughn, 2003:239). Adolescents’ aggression often predicts later school dropout, alcohol abuse, child abuse, criminality and various mental illnesses (Card, Stucky, Sawalani & Little, 2008: 1185-1229; Geiger & Crick, 2001:99). Educators rank violence and lack of discipline as two of their greatest concerns (Feda, Gerberich, Ryan, Nachreiner & McGovern, 2010:461).

Freud (Fromm, 1973: 17) sees aggression as an instinct “fed by an ever-flowing fountain of energy, and not necessarily the result of reaction to outer stimuli”. Although this model of spontaneous internal build-up of aggression (also called the hydraulic model) is no longer accepted, the description of aggression as an instinctive behaviour that is released by some environmental stimulus is still currently accepted. The most popular theory has been the frustration-aggression theory: excessive frustration of one’s goal triggers aggression. Either the causal agent leads to a build-up of an aggressive urge, or it releases an aggressive instinct.
Both models assume a biological circuitry, connected to the limbic system and hypothalamus that is “switched on” by specific stimuli. The threshold for the “switch” can be adjusted by learning and overridden by cortical messages. The focus tends to be on the automatic release of an emotion which causes the behaviour and if the emotion is not controlled then aggression will ensue. This approach leaves one focused on the “control of emotion” rather than on the “communication of emotions” (Clark, 2006:1). If learners are given an opportunity to communicate their emotions, less emotions of distress will incur and less aggression will ensue.

It has been shown that less visible indirect aggression develops just before the onset of adolescence (Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski & Eron, 2003:220; Côté, Vaillancourt, Barker, Nagin & Tremblay, 2007:38) and gradually replace more conspicuous direct aggression (Vaillancourt, Brendgen, Boivin & Tremblay, 2007:323; Bjorkqvist, 1994:180). This type of aggression is harder to measure than direct aggression. It also seems to be gender normative for girls - girls tend to use indirect aggression more than boys, who in turn use physical aggression more than girls (Bonica, Arnold, Fisher, Zeljo & Yershova, 2003:553; Côté et al., 2007:40).

Education professionals consistently rank learners with aggressive behaviour as persistent and troubling, reporting various types of maladaptive behaviours ranging from talking out in class to assault (Smith, Lochman & Daunic, 2005:227). They contend that aggressive behaviours by learners in schools are widespread, necessitating an urgent, intensely calculated and collaborative response from all stakeholders, including educators, parents, community members and concerned citizens (Gladden, 2002:270).

Some learners display externalising behaviour problems that may become part of an escalating spiral of conflict within family, peer group and eventually marital relationships. Walker, Colvin and Ramsey (1995:51) and Farrington (2003:140) further point out that because aggression or other overt undesired behaviours frequently elicit negative responses, they can limit future opportunities for positive interactions and contribute to a persistent pattern of
hostility and negative social status. In sum, the continuity of aggressive and antisocial behaviour is considered to be “one of the few ‘knowns’ in aggression and criminology research” (Juon, Doherty, & Ensminger, 2006:194).

Unfortunately, learners who exhibit aggressive, antisocial behaviours tend to associate with peers with similar behaviours, thus perpetuating their aggressive behaviour and increasing their rejection by non-aggressive peers (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004:148; Hawley 2003:280; Adams, Bartlett & Bukowsdki, 2010:120). They lack appropriate social skills and as a result they turn to anti-social cliques as their only means for social support (Huesmann, Dubow & Boxer, 2009:137). The relation between childhood conduct problems and adolescent delinquency is at least partially mediated by deviant peer group affiliation (Bagwell, Coie, Terry, & Lochman, 2000:304; Rodkin, Farmer, Van Acker, Pearl, Thompson & Fedora, 2006:82).

To counter aggression, effective interventions in school settings for learners are typically based on powerful behavioural techniques, such as contingent reinforcement and behaviour reduction procedures (Alberto & Troutman, 2001:130; Polsgrove & Smith, 2004:12). Educator praise is a naturalistic and nonintrusive consequence that has been shown to be effective in classroom management (Beaman & Wheldall, 2000:444; Richardson & Shupe, 2003:11) and for increasing task engagement while reducing problem behaviour (Gorman-Smith, 2003:450). Researchers like Chalk and Bizo (2004:349) suggest that the type of praise can differentially affect behaviour. Chalk and Bizo argue that educator praise is most effective when it is descriptive. Behaviour-specific praise describes to the learner the behaviour that is being reinforced, thereby helping learners recognise which behaviours are desirable and expected and enforcing the connection between desirable behaviour and positive consequences.

Common responses to discipline problems include detention, suspension, expulsion and other forms of punishment (Maag, 2002:173). However, punitive measures have been shown to have little effect in dissuading learners
from engaging in disruptive behaviour at school (Maag, 2002:174). In addition, suspension and expulsion are not only exclusionary disciplinary practices, they have been documented to disproportionately penalise minority learners and ultimately fail to achieve the intended goal of promoting pro-social decision-making (Cameron & Sheppard, 2006:21; Fenning & Rose, 2007:557).

Studies have shown that the predominant educator response to disruptive student behaviour is reactive and punitive rather than proactive and positive. The reactive approach does little to decrease disruptive learner behaviour (Clunies-Ross, UtUe & Kienhuis, 2008:708).

The use of behavioural principles to address maladaptive behaviour is not without some limitations. Polsgrove and Smith (2004:12) note that exclusive use of behavioural strategies can foster dependence that may limit a learner’s capacity to resist negative external influences. It may also advance the values and goals of institutional programmes over those of individuals and limit the behaviour repertoire of learners, rather than foster internal standards and mechanisms of behavioural guidance. In addition, classrooms often lack the quality of guidance or reliability of reinforcement strategies necessary for learners to acquire, perform and maintain appropriate behaviour (Kerr & Nelson, 2002: 23; Knitzer, Steinberg & Fleisch, 1990:135; Wehby, Symons, Canale & Go, 1998:54). It is becoming increasingly important to recognise adolescent aggression in the classroom for intervention and prevention.

Chorry-Assad (2002:64) concluded in her research that the relationship between justice perceptions and aggression in the classroom suggests that classroom fairness may be a critical factor in the elicitation, prevention and control of school violence. Although her study only investigated and demonstrated an association between classroom fairness and indirect interpersonal aggression, it is not unreasonable to consider the possibility that classroom injustice and physical aggression may also be related.
Justice-related theories allow for such a hypothesis and anecdotal evidence indicates a link between learner interactional injustice, perceptions that one is treated with dignity and respect in interpersonal interactions, and classroom aggression leading to violence. Columbine High School’s Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold reportedly vowed revenge over prior humiliations before they killed 15 people and wounded 23 in a mass school shooting (Leary, Kowalski, Smith & Phillips, 2003:202; Cannon, 1999:24; Fortgang, 1999:52).

Experts like Harvard psychiatrist James Gilligan (Shapiro, Buttner & Barry, 1999:352) and other research studies (McDougall, Hymel, Vaillancourt & Mercer, 2001:245) seem to concur that being humiliated and shamed is the most powerful stimulator of youth violence. Recent experimental research also shows that real or imagined rejection increases the urge to aggress toward both the rejector and other people (Twenge, Baumeister, Tice & Stucke, 2001:1067).

Furthermore, in line with the equity restoration process cited by the equity theory (Adams, 1965:273; Blau, 1964:22; Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997:350; Homans, 1961:41, 1974:32; Roloff, 1981:74; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959:57; Walster, Walster & Berscheid, 1978:12), Fatum and Hoyle (1996:33) claim that learners do not view their aggression as violence, but as ways of gaining or maintaining social status - perhaps after being treated unfairly. The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence also notes that one of the functions of violence is rough justice (retaliation) or social control. They also emphasise that aggression at home is often related to aggression at school.

Fairness and justice has been widely investigated as an area of academic study, most notably in political science and organisational behaviour. Injustice can elicit acts of revenge, sabotage, obstructionism, theft, vandalism, withdrawal behaviours, cynicism and mistrust (Neuman, 2006:1). Although fairness has been extensively examined in these settings, it has not been widely studied within an instructional context (Tyler, 1987:45).
This was of particular interest to the researcher as she currently works in a school for learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties in which episodes of aggression is a daily occurrence. As an educator in this school, she has often noticed that learners are more aggressive after episodes when they feel they have been treated unfairly.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Kauffman (2001:79) and Wilde (1995:2) anger and violence obstruct the establishment of a positive environment for optimal teaching and learning. It also intensifies levels of stress and frustration for both educators and learners. Internationally, the aggression learners have towards peers, school staff and school property, is both a current and a historical issue in the daily media and of great concern to civil society (Leary et al., 2003:202; Rumberger & Larson, 1998:283). Although aggression-related behaviour is regularly linked to violence, it refers to a behavioural process. It includes the goal of inflicting harm to another living being, not to an inanimate object, who is motivated to avoid the act (Parrott & Giancola, 2007:283).

In the past psychologists were of the opinion that aggression is largely an inborn characteristic, present in all living beings (Beatty, 2005:456; Huesmann, 1994:9). Over the past fifty years, literature has increasingly reflected the learning of aggression to manage or solve interpersonal problems or conflicts. This implies that what has been learned can be unlearned and new ways of behaving can be acquired (Hester, 2002:35; Huesmann, 1994:9).

Recently, Jacobson, Prescott and Kendler (2002:400) examined the gender differences in the underlying genetic and environmental architecture of the development of antisocial behaviour like aggression from childhood to adulthood. They reported that the overlap in genetic influences between childhood and later ages was small. In contrast, they report similar
environmental factors affecting antisocial behaviour from childhood to adulthood.

The types of aggressive behaviours experienced by educators within the secondary school context have been researched in recent years (Teacher Support Network, 2002:1). Lipsett (2009:1) reported that educators are facing increasingly abusive behaviour from parents and learners. In most cases, parents became aggressive because their child was disciplined in class or received poor grades and learners often copied their behaviour. This was echoed by May, Johnson, Chen, Hutchison and Ricketts (2010:24) that the primary cause of conflict between parents and educators is discipline.

Additionally, Paul (2007:55) suggests that educators often require learners to reiterate knowledge which they both already share. Such repetition of shared knowledge may be outside some children’s experience and result in them failing to conform to educators’ expectations. Paul states that failure to share conversational rules which are implicit to the classroom setting can result in confusions or misunderstandings. Some educators may interpret such misunderstandings as aggression, disruption, arguing or an unwillingness to keep class rules.

Various researchers have investigated aggression in schools. Goolam-Babee, Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2005:575) developed guidelines for support staff experiencing aggression in schools, while Botha (2008) researched secondary school male educators’ experience of own aggression.

Orpinas and Horne (2004:28-38) developed the GREAT (Guiding Responsibility and Expectations for Adolescents for Today and Tomorrow) Teacher Program, a prevention program for middle school educators to deter learners’ aggressive behaviour. Unfortunately, the effect that these aggression experiences have on educators are not reflected and reported in literature, especially not in SEBD schools.
Despite this obvious concern about educator safety in the classroom, less research has been conducted examining the perceptions of those who are vulnerable to possible assault: educators (Meyer, Astor, & Behre, 2002:499-582; Behre, Astor, & Meyer, 2001:131-153). Similarly, the evaluations of educators’ responses to classroom incidents have been overlooked (Hansen, 1993:397-421), and when studies have been conducted, they do not attend to the social and contextual factors relating to the incident. Consequently, there is a dearth of research examining educators’ perceptions of this phenomenon.

Educators’ perceptions and experiences of classroom aggression are important for two main reasons. Firstly, the way in which an educator’s actions in such a scenario are interpreted by observers will be important in determining how the observers (like colleagues) will act in the future should they face a similar incident. If the response to an intervention is generally negative, then it is likely that colleagues will be less confident about intervening in a similar way in the future (Lawrence & Green, 2005:589). Secondly, research in other work-related areas has shown that the way in which a person’s superiors interpret their behaviour may influence how the management will respond to the individual in the incident in terms of possible support or disciplinary sanctions. Therefore, it is not only the actions of the educator that affect these outcomes, but the way that these actions are evaluated by others, for example, learners, other educators, and the school management.

The researcher viewed it as a vital area to explore as she had worked in a secondary SEBD school in the United Kingdom for more than five years. This was the first school of its kind that she had worked in since leaving teaching in a mainstream school in South Africa. She had received no special training or guidance before she started at the school and was shocked at the level of aggressive abuse and behaviour that educators were subjected to on a daily basis. There was also no additional support for staff to reflect and learn from
these incidents. The researcher found it an extremely stressful environment and other staff clearly did as well.

Furthermore, the researcher had first hand experience of the large turnover of staff in SEBD schools. From informal conversations with educators, it became evident to the researcher that the impact of aggressive incidents on educators was largely unappreciated and dealing with these incidents on a regular basis, affected educators’ mental health. It often left them feeling stressed and incompetent. Added to this, the researcher experienced that literature relating to relevant and contextualised research projects as well as the management of aggression-related behaviour at SEBD secondary schools were limited.

Aslam and Emmanuel (2010:47) and Dunn, Norton, Stewart, Tudiver and Bass (1994:154) acknowledge that research is driven by researchable questions. Scholars are expected to drive research questions from the prevailing interests related to the real world matters and to the epistemic world of research, and to develop from them new theories, formulas, methods, and designs, linking to the interests of the larger audience (Shehzad, 2011:140).

The researcher formulated the research questions in terms of the purpose of the study as well as the problem statement. The two research questions are as follows:

• How do educators in a secondary SEBD school in the United Kingdom experience aggression?

• What can be done to assist educators who experience aggression in a secondary SEBD school?
1.4 RESEARCH GOALS

Following upon the problem statement, the research goals can be formulated as follows:

- To describe educators’ experience of aggression in a secondary SEBD school in the United Kingdom;

- To develop and describe a psycho-educational programme for the self-empowerment of educators in a secondary SEBD school in the United Kingdom to constructively deal with the aggression they experience.

- To provide guidelines for the successful implementation of the psycho-educational programme for the self-empowerment of educators in a secondary SEBD school in the United Kingdom.

1.5 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

Research is shaped by the paradigm or construct of reality as perceived by a researcher. According to Welford, Murphy and Casey (2011:38) paradigms are sets of beliefs and practices. They are characterised by ontological, epistemological and methodological differences in their approaches to research and contribution to knowledge. The researcher’s construct of reality is, in turn, shaped by the recurring questions and interpretative perspective about the field of human experience to be researched (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007:xii). In this context it is deemed imperative that the researcher spells out clearly the assumptions underlying his or her particular paradigmatic perspective. Paradigms influence the identification of researchable problems, the most relevant research methods and the appropriate techniques by which
data is collected, analysed and interpreted (Welford, et al., 2011:38; Parahoo, 1997:39).

The most basic paradigmatic point of departure in that research is fundamentally grounded in the fact that the creation of a psycho-educational programme for the self-empowerment of secondary SEBD educators, who experience aggression, is focused on mental health. This implies that the researcher, in the effort to contribute to the mental health of the participants in the suggested programme, must be seen to subscribe to a meta-theoretical approach conducive to mental health. This study was motivated in the first place by an intuitive sense and a real concern regarding the high levels of aggression among my learners and the detrimental effects of aggression on the mental health of those involved. It stands to reason that this concern would translate into an attempt to do something tangible. My research focuses on the health of the whole person: body, mind and spirit. This contributes effectively to the paradigmatic points of departure of this study.

In order to clarify the researcher’s understandings of the concepts related to the research, the meta-theoretical assumptions, theoretical assumptions and methodological assumptions relevant to this research study will be discussed. The importance of the clarification of concepts is emphasised by Walker and Avant (2011:12-15).

1.5.1 Meta-theoretical assumptions

Meta-theoretical assumptions refer to the researcher’s own view of concepts (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:147; Morrow & Brown, 1994:46). On the other hand, theoretical assumptions and paradigms are orientations of looking at a specific phenomenon. In an attempt to clarify critical issues these are defined within a specific framework (Schultze & Leidner, 2002:226; Neuman, 2009:59). The purposeful exploration of a research problem involves the identification of a theoretical framework on which to base all research

In any research theoretical assumptions presume the measurable or at least verifiable, seen in context with statements made regarding the discipline(s) within which research is being done (Schultze & Leidner, 2002:226; Loock, 1999:18). For the purpose of this research, the following theoretical and meta-theoretical assumptions are clarified in relation to the following concepts:

1.5.1.1 Psycho-education

Psycho-education aims to empower people in the development of strategies, in order to cope with the emotional and behavioural challenges they experience in daily living. It is thus supportive of mental health by providing individuals with the opportunity to gain understanding of the problem they experience, as well as possible strategies that can be employed to address it effectively (Psycho-Educational Counselling Services Inc., 2002:2-7). The approach is based on the principle of a programme, promoting the learning of skills to facilitate mental health.

The concept of psycho-education refers to a certain kind of education that has a dual focus. It emphasises the learning of skills and strategies to cope with life, while at the same time facilitating psychological well-being. Consequently, it involves creating opportunities for participants to become aware of, understand and address aspects that prevent them from experiencing optimal mental health.

This is in line with the Psycho-Educational Counselling Services Inc. (2002) that states that a Psycho-Educational Intervention Programme should enable people to experience themselves as whole human beings. This thesis aims to empower educators to constructively deal with the aggression they experience, thereby experiencing themselves as whole human beings.
1.5.1.2 Educator

To work as an educator in state-maintained schools in England and Wales you need to have professional qualified teacher status (QTS). To be awarded QTS by the General Teaching Council for England (GTC) educators have to:

- complete a period of training;
- complete a period of induction, known as the newly qualified teacher (NQT) year. This is your first year of employment as an educator in a school and
- pass QTS skills tests in literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology.

Once you have achieved QTS, it is legal for you to teach any age range.

For the purpose of this research study, an educator is further seen as one who teaches, especially one hired to teach (www.answers.com). Furthermore, the Gale Encyclopedia of Education (accessible from www.answers.com) explains that the role and responsibilities of elementary and secondary school educators have undergone a significant evolution. Historically, educators have been viewed as purveyors of content knowledge and academic skills, but educators in the early twenty-first century have also become ambassadors to multicultural communities and promulgators of democracy. Where educators were conventionally viewed as dispensers of knowledge, they are increasingly perceived as facilitators or managers of knowledge. They are often thought of as co-learners with their learners. There is too much to know and too many sources of knowledge outside the classroom that can easily be brought to bear within school walls by learners themselves. Educators teach, of course, but they do not simply dispense information to their learners. Educators are also intellectual leaders who create opportunities for learners to demonstrate what they know and what

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1 In England the term “teacher” is used but in the Republic of South Africa “educator” is more widely accepted. To avoid confusion, the term “educator” will be used in this study.
they know how to do. They also serve as models to their learners for appropriate behaviour and other skills and strategies.

1.5.1.3 Aggression

Aggression is defined as that form of human behaviour which is undesirable, antisocial, influential and directed with the intention of harming or injuring other living beings and/or their property (Arunima, 1994:63; Krüger, Rech & Van Staden, 1993:9). This definition is further expended by Anderson and Bushman (1997:23) that indicates that the third key feature of aggression is the fact that the perpetrator expects that the harmful behaviour will have the desired or intended effect. These types of aggression are usually categorised in terms of verbal aggression, non-verbal aggression, physical aggression and emotional aggression (Anderson & Bushman, 1997:23).

According to the Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) (Buss & Perry, 1992), aggression can be divided into four main categories: Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Anger and Hostility.

In contrast to this, Freud (1949) sees aggression as an instinct “fed by an ever-flowing fountain of energy, and not necessarily the result of reaction to outer stimuli”: a sort of an inevitable drive that builds up and must have an outlet (Fromm, 1973:17). He sees aggression as one of the two motivational instincts. According to him, aggression consists of the death instincts of hostility and self-destruction. This hydraulic model of aggression is no longer accepted and has been replaced by the frustration-aggression theory. In contrast, psychoanalytic thinkers see a person’s primary drive from birth as relationship contact (Okun, 2002:124), as opposed to Freudian belief that it’s a discharge of tension from sexual and aggression drives.

Various other psychoanalytic thinkers, like Donald W. Winnicot and Melanie Klein, view aggression in this way as a response or a reaction to frustrating relationships, rather than an instinct (Rizzuto, Meissner & Buie, 2004:27).
Additionally, anger makes a person more aggressive or antagonistic (Johnson, 2003:308). A person can become aggressive through habit when faced with a provocation and strike out verbally or physically at the other person in the situation. However, learners who are abused or neglected, like some of the learners in the study, are at risk to develop brains that are changed at all levels (Clark, 2006:3). The cortical system fails to fully develop and these learners are less able to think abstractly and to solve problems. Furthermore, they are less able to learn and to communicate verbally. They are unable to maintain attention and are often hyperactive. Their cortex is less capable of overriding emotions or feelings and they can never develop mature, adult behaviour (Perry, 1997: 30).

Johnson (2003:314) continues to explain that aggressive behaviour is an attempt to hurt someone or destroy something. Consequently, it infringes on the rights of others and involves expressing one’s feelings indirectly through insults, sarcasm, labels, put-downs and hostile statements and actions. Through aggressive behaviour, a person expresses thoughts, feelings and opinions in a way that violates others’ rights to be treated with respect and dignity.

According to Gable, Bullock, and Harader (1995:30) the majority of aggression is less extreme - consisting of bullying, verbal or physical threats, shoving, fistfights, and other simple assaults. Learner acts of aggression may be multiplicative rather than cumulative in nature - one aggressive act begets another, usually of a more serious nature (Patterson, 1992:65). Learners can also display indirect interpersonal aggression to their educators. This involves harming someone without engaging in face-to-face interaction with that person (Beatty, Valencic, Rudd & Dobos, 1999:104). In contrast to verbal aggressiveness, Beatty et al (1999:104) explain that indirect aggressiveness can lead to long-term, substantive effects like damaged reputations, lost professional opportunities. They further claim that receivers of verbal aggression are often in control of whether and how they respond to verbal attacks, whereas receivers of indirect aggression are often not even aware that they have been attacked (Chorry-Assad & Paulsel, 2004:101).
Xie, Drabick and Chen (2011:388) consider overt aggression such as verbal aggression, norm-breaking behaviours and physical aggression as more prevalent than physical aggression during adolescence.

As Fu Fagan and Wilkinson (1998:72) point out, violence has been demonstrated to serve several functions to:

a. achieve or maintain high status and/or obtain material gain;

b. escape from a highly aversive social situation or academic demand;

c. defy authority;

d. display power and control in the form of rough justice or retribution; and

e. promote self-defense.

It follows that education personnel should be able to identify early warning signs of learner aggression and to devise interventions that blunt the growth of antisocial and aggressive behaviour in the school.

Greenberg and Alge’s model (1998:98) of aggressive reactions to workplace injustice can be helpful to further understand aggression in the classroom. The model proposes that individuals will react aggressively to perceived unjust outcomes only if they believe that the inequity resulted from unfair practices. If learners attribute malevolent motives to their educators and have thoughts that support destructive behaviour, they may be more likely to respond aggressively to injustice (Chorry-Assad, 2002: 17).
In contrast to this, aggression can also be constructive and positive. Constructive aggression is linked to assertiveness, determination and personal strength (Miedzian, 2002:44). Anger and aggression may also show strength, determination and resolve (Daffern, 2007:44). Proactive, or instrumental aggression occurs in anticipation of self-serving outcomes (Reynolds & Repetti, 2010:283). Motives that involve social control, such as a desire for inclusion in a group, and amusement motives like relieving boredom, might be considered as proactive. Furthermore, proactive aggression have also been associated with desirable normative aggression outcomes and adaptive psychosocial functioning including social prominence and resilience to stress (Bobadilla, Wampler & Taylor, 2012:459).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher views aggression as a complex construct with various causes, functions and emotions. Therefore, it is important for educators to understand this and acknowledge the impact they have when dealing with an aggressive incident. This can ensure that the aggressive incident is a learning curve for both the educator and the learner.

1.5.1.4 Dealing with aggression constructively

As learners in SEBD schools are often the most difficult to work with in any school environment, educators in these schools find it difficult to deal constructively with highly disruptive and aggressive behaviour, while also keeping the learning environment safe for both learners and staff (Smith et al., 2005:236). The way educators deal with learners’ aggressive behaviour, should serve to improve or advance, be helpful and promote development in order to be constructive. Furthermore, after dealing with an aggressive incident, educators should feel self-empowered, relaxed and calm. It should not leave them feeling stressed, exhausted and drained. Otherwise it is a destructive situation instead of being constructive.
1.5.1.5 Secondary school

The Education Act of 1996 defines a secondary school in the United Kingdom as a school providing for secondary education, whether it also provides for further education or not (Education Act, 1996 c.56, chapter 1, section 5).

According to the Act secondary education refers to full-time education suitable to the requirements of learners of compulsory school age of 16 years (Education Act, 1996 c.56, chapter 1, section 2).

1.5.1.6 SEBD school

A SEBD school is a special school for learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. According to The Education Act of 1996 a school is a special school if it is specially organised to make special educational provision for learners with special educational needs. The following categories of special schools exist: special schools maintained by local education authorities, comprising community special schools, and foundation special schools (Education Act, 1996 c.56, part 4, chapter 2, section 337).

The Education Act of 1996 defines special educational provision as education which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for learners of this age in schools maintained by the local education authority (other than special schools) (Education Act, 1996 c.56, chapter 1, section 312).

1.5.1.7 Facilitation

Mowen (2003:6) defines facilitation as making something simple and easy to use. She continues to explain that in order for anyone to facilitate and improve learning by participants, a three-step process should be followed:
a. The facilitator has to be comfortably knowledgeable about the wide range of topics covered in the programme.

b. It must be clear to participants what role they have to play in their own learning.

c. There are several things the facilitator can do to make learning subject matter easier for participants in the programme. These include to:

- simplify the principles in each session;
- demonstrate what you mean by using real-life examples;
- practice – let participants put principles to the test by role-plays;
- incorporate variety by using different methods to deliver the programme content;
- enhance the environment so that participants feel comfortable;
- bring to light common threads by highlighting how a new principle links with something covered in another session;
- include participants when setting objectives for each session; and to
- emphasise what is important (Mowen, 2003:7).
According to Sidle (2007:81) psychological facilitation occurs when participation in multiple roles helps someone keep everything in perspective. He continues to say that facilitation may increase feelings of satisfaction and enhance productivity (Sidle, 2007:82).

Furthermore, various other definitions exist for facilitation. WordNet® defines facilitation as the act of assisting or making easier the progress or improvement of something (available from http://wordnet.princeton.edu/). It is furthermore seen as a collaborative process used to help parties discuss issues, identify and achieve goals and complete tasks in a mutually satisfactory manner. This process uses an impartial third party, the facilitator, who focuses on the processes and procedures of dispute resolution and decision-making (www.peoples-law.org/core/mediation/adr_directory/definitions-terms.htm). A facilitator increases the potential for dialogue and productivity in public meetings or informal workshops by helping keep the discussion on the agenda, encouraging participation by all participants, maintaining a constructive tone, and summarising areas of agreement or disagreement (www.resolv.org/tools/consensus_building/types.htm).

Carl Rogers (1967:37–54) has written extensively on the qualities and attitudes important for the facilitation of learning. He describes the effective educator as one who demonstrates acceptance, cares and respects the learner, is emotionally congruent and genuine, and actively listens with empathic understanding. Learner-centred learning (adult learning theory) is an educational approach whereby learners identify their own learning needs and objectives, plan their learning activities for which they may seek help and assess their own results. Furthermore, the research findings of educational literature prove convincingly that properly implemented learner-centred learning fosters motivation and elicits deeper understanding towards the subject being taught (Dillinger, 2001:89; Felder & Brent, 2001:73). This educational approach is based on the work of Knowles (1980) and Brookfield (1987).
Additionally, Anderson, Rourke, Garrison and Archer (2001:5) describe a number of facilitation strategies, mostly focusing on the instructor as facilitator or moderator. They defined teaching presence as “the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing [learners’] personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile outcomes”. Furthermore, Anderson et al. (2001:7-8) identified three educator roles and responsibilities during facilitation:

a. Instructional design and organisation;

b. Discourse facilitation; and

c. Direct instruction.

1.5.2 Theoretical assumptions

1.5.2.1 Experience

Various theorists emphasise that one learns from experience. Johnson (2003:24) explains that learning from experience is a process of making generalisations and conclusions about one’s own direct experiences. It involves being part of what one is doing, making a personal commitment to learn and being responsible for organising the conclusions that one draws from one’s experiences.

To learn from one’s experiences, one needs to have an opportunity to reflect on one’s actions. This can be illustrated by figure 1.1.
Effective behaviours tend to be repeated over and over again until they occur automatically. These habitual behavioural patterns are based on action theory: a theory as to what actions are needed to achieve a desired consequence in a given situation. Action theories have an “if…then…” (Maughan & Webb, 2005:38).

1.5.3 Methodological assumptions

The methodological assumptions are based on the approach to educational research and focus on the value of the research and the application to education (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:25). Methodological assumptions identify and describe the researcher’s philosophy in terms of the purpose of the study, as well as the method and criteria that will ensure trustworthiness (Morgan, 2007:58; Bailey, 1994:34; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1996:6; Neuman, 2009:59).

Qualitative research describes the acceptance of post-modern sensibilities while capturing the individual’s point of view and examining the constraints of everyday life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007:23). The understanding of the “lived experience” marks phenomenology as a method of research (Mapp, 2008:308; Creswell, 1994:12). The method is constructivistic, interpretive and
wholistic in nature (De Vos, 2001:243). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2007:141) subjectivity is paramount because the scientific observer deals with how members of the life-world interpretively produce the recognisable forms that they treat as real, while remaining in a neutral attitude.

As a method the procedure involves studying a small number of participants, through prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Creswell, 1994:12). Qualitative researchers are subjective because they interact with the participants, trying to minimise the distance between themselves and those being researched (De Vos, 2001:234; Creswell, 1994:12).

Inter-subjectivity is an ongoing process (Unger, 2005:3; Denzin & Lincoln, 2007:141) wherein the qualitative researcher admits the value-laden nature of the study (Creswell, 1994:6).

For the purpose of this research study educators were seen as the best source of information on aggressive behaviour (Funder & Colvin, 1997:650). Even though learners know the intentions, goals and reasons for their behaviour, self ratings, particularly concerning aggressiveness, are shown to be susceptible to numerous biases, such as socially desirable responses (Paulhua, 1989:203).

The research is further also based on the following methodological assumptions:

- That a sound functional approach is used that is feasible for use in practice.

- Guba’s model is used to ensure trustworthiness (Creswell, 1994:5). To ensure the credibility and validity of the research findings, triangulation of data will take place (Thurmond, 2001:253; Janesick, 1998:119).
• Logic and justification are embedded in the research design.

It must be assumed that the researcher would be the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Watt, 2007:82). The research would be an engagement and not just an exercise in data collection according to a predetermined theoretical agenda. Fieldwork will form the basis of the research, in a one-to-one interpersonal relationship between the participant and the researcher. Finally, it is assumed that the research must be descriptive, following an inductive process during which the researcher must build abstractions, hypotheses and theories.

The initial step of the research will comprise a phenomenological study to qualitatively explore, describe and understand educators’ experiences of aggression in a secondary SEBD school in the United Kingdom. During this step, the researcher will conduct an explorative, inductive and descriptive investigation by means of individual interviews with participants. These phenomenological interviews will be conducted within the framework of qualitative research. A relevant conceptual framework and subsequent Psycho-Educational Programme will be developed in terms of the phenomenological study.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

The development of the research design and method allows for a precise, detailed and accurate plan of the research project (Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2009:6; De Vaus, 2001:2; Leedy, 1993:109). A detailed discussion of the intended research design and method will follow in Chapter Two. The broad research design and methods as well as the implied ethical measures and measures to ensure trustworthiness will be discussed in the following section.
1.6.1 Research design

The main purpose of the research design is to specify and combine the key elements and methods of the planned research in such a way that it will ensure maximum trustworthiness of the study (De Vaus, 2001:9; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:312). The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables one to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible.

The research design of this study is aligned to theory generating research. It comprises of a qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual design (Burns & Grove, 2009:218; Chinn & Cramer, 2008:270). It is a method used to understand the unique, dynamic character of the person (Hancock, 2002:6; Marshall & Rossman, 1989:46).

In step one of the research design, the situation analysis will be conducted in the framework of qualitative research. Step two will involve the development of a psycho-educational programme for the self-empowerment of educators in order to constructively manage the aggression that they experience in a secondary SEBD school in the United Kingdom. Step three will focus on the guidelines to operationalise the facilitation of the self-empowerment of educators in a secondary SEBD school.

Figure 1.2 reflects a summary of the research design with a specific focus on the purpose of the study, the data collection and data analysis.

1.6.2 Research method

A research method is the operational framework that will guide the research process (Leedy, 1993:121). The research method will be aligned to situation analysis, programme development, programme description and guidelines for the implementation of the programme.
Figure 1.2 Research Design

1. Situation Analysis:
   - Explore and describe participants' experience of aggression in a secondary SEBD school.

2. Programme Development:
   - Conceptual framework within an educational approach based on principles of experiential programme implementation.
   - The development of a Psycho-Educational Programme to facilitate the self-empowerment of educators in a secondary SEBD school.

3. Guidelines for Programme Implementation and Evaluation:
   - Guidelines based on the psycho-educational programme development will be described on how to operationalise the programme.

Data Collection:
- Transcribed individual interviews.
- Field notes.
- Literature control.

Data Analysis:
- Tesch's descriptive, systematic and qualitative approach to data reduction (Creswell, 2003: 192-195)

Trustworthiness:
- Credibility
- Transferability
- Dependability
- Confirmability
1.6.2.1 Situation analysis

The qualitative research methods that can be utilised for this research are the following: naïve sketches, drawings, interviews, field notes, the use of documents and audio materials. It is important that the research methods comply with the universal ethical measures, like informed consent (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:158). The phenomenological approach that will be used, is regarded as an inductive approach to research and is therefore a contextual, exploratory and descriptive process.

1.6.2.2 Programme development

The development of a relevant, appropriate and effective Psycho-Educational Programme for the self-empowerment of educators to constructively manage the aggression that they experience in a secondary SEBD school is reliant on the outcome of the phenomenological study, because the phenomenological study will inform the development of the conceptual framework. The researcher will develop the conceptual framework within an educational approach and according to the principles of experiential learning.

1.6.2.3 Description of the programme

This step involves describing the structure and process of the Psycho-Educational programme. The programme will be described in order to facilitate the self-empowerment of secondary educators in a SEBD school in the United Kingdom.

1.6.2.4 Guidelines for programme implementation

Guidelines to implement the programme to facilitate the self-empowerment on secondary educators in a SEBD school in the United Kingdom, will be
described. Recommendations to be applied in SEBD teaching practice, teaching education and teaching research will be made.

1.6.3 Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:290-301) there are four criteria that more accurately reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm and the establishment of trustworthiness (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:15). It gives the reader confidence in the findings because it suggests that the research has been carried out in a sound manner. Guba’s four criteria for trustworthiness will be applied in this research (Shenton, 2004:64; Krefting, 1991:215; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:61-64; Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 1995:4-9). (See Figure 1.3). Trustworthiness will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Two.

![Figure 1.3 Trustworthiness: Criteria and Strategies](image-url)
1.6.4 Population and sampling

The population of interest can be defined as the whole of the people or objects which are the subject of the research and share common characteristics. In other words, the population is that totality to which the researcher wishes to generalise or project the sample finding.

The targeted population for the purpose of this research is the educators from a secondary SEBD school in the United Kingdom. Their interviews were used for data collection in phase one to explore and describe their experiences of aggression in the school.

Sampling refers to the procedure for selecting a sample from the targeted research population (Yount, 2006:7-1; Lunsford & Lunsford, 1995: Introduction, paragraph 5). It implies that a sample or sub-group of the population is selected and used in the research study (Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services, 2003:1; Smit, 1985:200). The significance of appropriate sampling for the specific purpose of a study is that the researcher is in a better position to conclude that the study results are transferable or generalisable to the entire population and context where the study was undertaken (Houser, 2008:211; Wilson, 1993:172).

A purposive sampling method was used in the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:201) by selecting participants that would provide the most meaningful and richest data. This was done by selecting participants that had been exposed to aggression in the school environment. In this way different insights were gained into how different participants experience aggression in the school.
1.6.5 Ethical measures

Marshall and Rossman (1989:69) point out that gaining liberty to enter a research setting and the accompanying ethical issues must be carefully observed and managed in all settings. Researchers have an ethical obligation to ensure that they are competent and skilled to undertake the investigation that they have in mind (De Vos, 2001:31). Ethical issues include maintaining confidentiality of data, preserving the anonymity of informants, protecting the rights of human participants and providing an explanation of the intended purpose of the research (Creswell, 1994:148; Marshall & Rossman, 1989:69).

To ensure that the ethical measures were adhered to, the researcher firstly compiled letters of consent for the participants and the Local Education authority (LEA) (See Annexure B). The research then applied for ethical clearance from the Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg Academic Ethics Committee (see Annexure A). Before they could confirm that the research complies with the approved Ethical Research Standards of the University of Johannesburg, the researcher had to provide them with:

- a copy of the first chapter;

- a copy of the letter to the educators in which they give assent to their participation in the research (see Annexure B); and

- a copy of the letter of permission from the Local Education Authority (LEA) for the educators’ participation in the research (see Annexure B).

Furthermore, this research was conducted according to the international ethical standards outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical

As cited by Burns and Grove (2009:185-186) the Declaration of Helsinki depends on the following principles:

- The protection of participants from harm in non-therapeutic research.
- Substantial justification for exposing a volunteer to the risk of harm in the light of gaining scientific knowledge.
- Researchers should protect participants’ health, privacy and dignity.

After ethical clearance was received the researcher adhered to measures and morals in terms of professional ethics, accountability and the research participants. See Figure 1.4.

1.6.5.1 Professional ethics

The ultimate goal of this study is to attempt to explore and describe educators’ experience of aggression in a secondary SEBD school during the phenomenological study. The themes and categories identified during the phenomenology study will inform the conceptual framework of the Psycho-Educational Programme to facilitate the self-empowerment of educators who experience aggression in a secondary SEBD school. Guidelines for implementing the Psycho-Educational Programme will subsequently be discussed.
Figure 1.4 Summary of ethical measures

- Integrity in research
- Presenting the authentic data & results
- Recording of researcher's data
- Acknowledgement of all sources of information

- Informing relevant parties about the research
- Disseminate the research results appropriately
- Honour the responsibilities to bursary institutions

- Human rights
- The participant as a person
- Participants' right to privacy
- Participants' right to anonymity & confidentiality
- Participants' right to informed consent
- Participants' right not to be harmed in any manner
The measures implemented in terms of professional ethics are:

- **Integrity in research**: The researcher will attempt to bracket her personal beliefs and experiences and to maintain integrity during the conduct of the research, by adhering to the highest possible standards and professionalism (Mouton, 2011:240; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:108; Du Toit, 2000:38). She regards herself as competent and skilled to undertake the research and she will refrain from making value judgments (De Vos, 2001:31; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:69). The researcher will report on the purpose of the study, the related theories, the research design and method. The findings will also be presented fully without any intentional misrepresentation of results (Neuman, 2009:376; Smit, 1985:1);

- **Presenting the authentic data and results**: The authentic data and results will be presented as collected during the research process. Under no circumstances will the data or observations be fabricated or falsified (Mouton, 2011:24; De Vos, 2001:27; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:108);

- **Recording of researcher’s data**: The researcher will disclose the research design and methods, techniques and analysis that were used (Mouton, 2011:240). The data will also be available to other researchers,
providing that the necessary confidentiality and anonymity is adhered to; and

- **Acknowledgement of all sources of information**: All sources of information that were used will be acknowledged in writing, thereby refraining from plagiarism (Mouton, 2011:241).

1.6.5.2 Accountability

The researcher acknowledges her responsibility to be accountable to the relevant institutions and society, as they support the research process through both funding and accessibility to do the research (Mouton, 2011:242). The researcher committed herself to her responsibilities by informing the relevant parties about the research, disseminating the research results appropriately and honouring the responsibilities she has to bursary institutions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:108).

The measures implemented in this research study to adhere to accountability are:

- **Informing the relevant parties about the research**: All relevant parties will be informed about the nature and the time frames of the research process (Mouton, 2011:242; Neuman, 2009:376). For the purpose of this study, the relevant management structures was consulted, so as to ensure that they are fully aware of and consent to the agreed research process (Creswell, 1994:148). Feedback will be provided on a regular basis in a format that is mutually agreed upon between the researcher, study leaders, principal of the school and the Local Education
Authority. The participating educators was involved in the finalisation of all arrangements related to the research process, as part of demonstrating their consent to the process.

- **Disseminate the research results appropriately:** Researchers have a responsibility to report their research findings openly and timeously to the relevant parties (Mouton, 2011:242; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:12; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:108). The researcher disclosed all information relevant to the research process and the findings, by submitting a thesis and article that was developed under the guidance of the appointed supervisors. The aim of this study was not to just benefit academic questions, but also for practical results and feedback to be given back to participants at the closure of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:182).

- **Honour the responsibilities to bursary institutions:** The researcher adhered to the agreed criteria relating the bursaries received (Bailey, 1994:467). The bursary institutions were acknowledged in the final thesis (De Vos, 2001:32).

1.6.5.3 Research participants

The nature of the intended research implies educators as participants. The researcher undertakes to adhere to the participants’ rights to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent and safety (Mouton, 2011:243).
The ethical measures implemented in terms of the research participants are:

- **Human rights**: The participants’ individual rights as human beings was protected.

- **The participant as a person**: The guidelines on ethics for medical research emphasises respect for the autonomy of the participant, whether they are patients or volunteers. It further explains that the participant must be treated as an individual within the context of his or her community system. Lastly, it implies that the freedom of choice be protected. The participants’ cooperation was respectfully requested. All participants had a free choice and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:182).

- **Participants’ right to privacy**: The term “privacy” implies the element of personal privacy, while “confidentiality” indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner (De Vos, 2001:28). Participants’ right to self-determination implies the right and competence to evaluate available information, weigh alternatives against one another and the making of decisions (Creswell, 1994:165; De Vos, 2001:28; Marshall & Rossman, 1989:75).

Working with learners exposed to other learners and educators in the school on a daily basis made it necessary to preserve their privacy and to treat the information as confidential.
The rights of participants to refuse interviews, as well as their rights to not answer any questions or questionnaires were respected (Mouton, 2011:243; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:108). Educators that decide to participate in the study were involved in the finalisation of arrangements in a further attempt to reduce the inconvenience that is caused by the research process as far as possible (De Vos, 2001:29; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:100).

- **Participants’ right to anonymity and confidentiality:** Participants have a right to remain anonymous throughout the research process as well as in the reporting thereof (Neuman, 2009:376-377; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:68, 70). The conditions of anonymity apply to both the collection of data by means of tape recorders and other data gathering devices, as well as the data collected in face-to-face interviews. Audiotapes were kept under lock and key in my study. The audiotapes will be kept two years after the publication of the research and be destroyed. Furthermore, participants also had the right to refuse the use of any data-capturing device at any point (Mouton, 2011:243; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:100).

- **Participants’ right to informed consent:** Informed consent implies that all possible information, the goal of the investigation, the procedures that were followed during the investigation, the possible advantages and dangers to which participants may be exposed to and the credibility of the researcher be rendered to the participants (De Vos, 2001:25).
The researcher must emphasise the autonomy of the individual. This implies that the participant has a free choice of participation and that, if necessary, the researcher should be able to change the nature of the research rather than expose the participants to harm (De Vos, 2001:25; Marshall & Rossman, 1989:75; Creswell, 1994:165; Denzin & Lincoln, 2007:103). The importance of the research, being an investigation and understanding of the participants’ experience of aggression in the school, was explained at the inception of the research. The aims of the research were also explained namely to draw information and meaning from the findings to further research studies and to contribute to education and psychology of education.

1.7 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One: Overview and rationale;

Chapter Two: Research design and methodology;

Chapter Three: Educators’ experience of aggression;

Chapter Four: The development of the Psycho-Educational Programme to facilitate the self-empowerment of educators in a secondary SEBD school in the United Kingdom;
Chapter Five: Guidelines for programme implementation and evaluation;

Chapter Six: Conclusion, limitations and recommendations.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter One sketches a broad overview, giving the rationale and stating problems. From this discussion flowed questions that deal with the research. This in turn led to the formulation of goals, inclusive of assumptions.

Chapter One served the purpose of giving an overview to the programme as suggested by this research. Problems were stated within the broader context of previous research, assumptions and the basic theoretical points of departure of the study, leading to the formulation of goals. As outflow of the goals a paradigmatic perspective was given in which the research design and research methods used, were described. The chapter concluded by giving an outline of the way in which the rest of the research report will be compiled, mapping the logical sequence of chapters and consecutive parts of the research, and the handling of the results thereof.
CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Creswell (1994:1) the approach that is followed when researching a specific problem is termed the “research methodology”. Mouton (2001:56) emphasises that both the research design and method focus on the research process and the appropriate tools and procedures to be used. This ensures that the researcher eventually develops and provides guidance for the implementation of a Psycho-Educational Programme to facilitate the self-empowerment of educators in a secondary SEBD school who experience aggression on a daily basis.

Both the research design and the research method of this study are presented within the framework of programme development. This includes the situation analysis, programme development and guidelines for implementation.

The discussion of the research design and method will be according to a qualitative research approach. This ensures a better understanding of the research process applied in this project. Step one and two of the research process, comprise of the situation analysis and the development of the programme. Within this approach step three of the research design includes the guidance for programme implementation and programme evaluation.
2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Various authors (Gerring, 2011:626; Smit, 1985:26; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993:31; Merriam, 1988:6) see a research design as the guiding light to addressing the research problem or question. The research design clarifies the phenomenon to be studied as well as the intended approach to be followed (Babbie, 2001:28).

Yin (2009:26) describes the research design as the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and to its final conclusions. He continues to describe a research design as “a logical plan for getting from here to there”; where “here” consists of the initial questions to be answered and “there” the conclusions about these questions. To get from “here” to “there”, is a number of steps, including data collection and analysis.

Similarly, Nachmias and Nachmias (1992:77-78) and De Vaus (2001:2) define research design as a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relationships among the variables under investigation. Craig (2009:89) further explains it as a “blueprint” for one’s research. Babbie (2001:28) sees the research design as a way to clarify the phenomenon to be studied and the planned approach to be followed.

The aim of a research design is to avoid a situation where the evidence collected during a research study does not address the initial research questions. By using a phenomenological method, the researcher ensures that information is collected using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Dyck, Culp & Cacchione, 2007:39; Stake, 1995:49). The researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data.
The research design of this study is embedded in the processes of programme development, namely situation analysis, programme development and guidelines for programme implementation (see Figure 1.2).
Figure 2.1 Research design (continued)

- **Conceptual framework** within an educational approach based on the principles of experiential programme implementation. Extension of knowledge.

  *Solution of problems:*
  Secondary school educators experience of aggression in their secondary SEBD school.

- **Educational approach:**
  Experiential learning; strategies; techniques; tools.

- **Description of a Psycho-Educational Programme** for educators to self-empower them in a secondary SEBD school.

- **Description of a Psycho-Educational Programme** for educators to self-empower them in a secondary SEBD school.

- **Guidelines for Programme Implementation and Evaluation**

  *Present guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of the self-empowerment programme for secondary SEBD educators.*
Leedy and Ormrod (2001:111) see the research design as being based on four essential questions:

1. What data is needed?

2. Where is the data located?

3. How will the data be secured? And

4. How will the data be interpreted?

Furthermore, the research design is dependent on the type of research questions posed, the extent of control that the researcher has over actual behaviour events and the degree of focus on contemporary events (Yin, 2009:8).

To ensure the efficacy and trustworthiness of the research process the research design addresses the following dimensions:

- the purpose of the study;
- the context in which the research will take place; and
- the research methodology and techniques to be followed (Terre Blanche & Durheim, 1999:32).

As the research design of this study is associated with the processes of programme development it involves an exploratory, descriptive, interpretive and contextual design.
2.2.1 Inductive

Moustakas (1994:116) provides methodological considerations as he reminds us that inductive inquiry itself involves interpretive and phenomenological stance-making. Those considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Focus on the whole experience and not merely on the parts.

2. Search for meaning structures, not merely how things work, or what the rules for cause and effect are.

3. Understand that investigation of experience is essentially a subjective experience, thus permitting, even necessitating, the use of “I” in accounts. Autobiographical statements attesting to a researcher’s experience, perspective and stake in a subject of investigation are often necessary.

4. One of the best sources of data comes from inspection of relationships, whether between people and people, groups, norms, institutions, cultures, societies and worlds.

Such considerations are helpful in reminding oneself what the task is, as well as what the task is not, regarding doing phenomenology. It is an empirical examination of experience, relationships and consciousness of phenomena, in an inductive way. It is not based on preconceived theories about objects of investigation, does not seek to find cause and effect and cannot be regarded as deductive in nature.

In this study the researcher will give participants the opportunity to share their experiences, perceptions and understanding of aggression in a secondary SEBD school by means of phenomenological interviews. The interviews will
expose the researcher to the issues related to educators’ experience of aggression in a secondary school in order to understand their “lived experiences”.

2.2.2 Exploratory

High quality research addresses issues of real importance that advance the body of knowledge on a particular subject, has a defined constituency and generalised findings for use by a wider audience (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004:67). Quality research focuses upon solutions to important problems affecting individuals, organisations or larger informed audiences (Huberman & Miles, 2002:43).

Bracketing is a method to assist in the elimination of researcher bias. A bracketing interview attempts to identify the researcher’s assumptions, bias, and beliefs that may impede or interfere with understanding (DeMarrais & Lapan, 2004:58).

Patton (1990:55) identifies three steps to phenomenological study that includes epoché, phenomenological reduction and structural synthesis. “Epoché refers to the period of examination when a researcher identifies bias and removes all traces of personal involvement in the phenomena being studied to achieve clarity of perception” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:82). Epoché is the elimination of bias associated with common knowledge as the basis for truth and reality (Moustakas, 1994:34-36).

During the research process the researcher will remain aware of her personal beliefs, perceptions and assumptions in order to ensure that it does not contaminate or influence the phenomenological interviews which will be held in order to explore educators’ experience of aggression in a secondary SEBD school.
2.2.3 Descriptive

Research requires a systematic ethical approach with a defined methodology using thoughtful structured reflection and full disclosure of methods to promote transparency and replication (Anderson & Kanuka, 2003:78; O'Leary, 2004:91). Creswell (2003:18) asserts that in qualitative research, “claims of knowledge are based upon constructed perspectives from multiple social and historical meanings of individual experiences”.

This step of the research is descriptive by nature as the researcher will aim to obtain information regarding educators’ experiences of aggression in a secondary SEBD school. Therefore, the researcher’s description of the educators’ experience of aggression in a secondary SEBD school will be founded on the information found during the individual phenomenological interviews. A psycho-educational programme will be derived from the results of the educators’ experiences of aggression and guidelines will be described on how to operationalise the psycho-educational programme in practice.

2.2.4 Contextual

According to Willig (2008:52) it makes no sense to think of the world of objects and subjects as separate from people’s experience of it. The appearance of an object as a perceptual phenomenon varies depending on the perceiver’s location and context. As Christensen (2008:325) and Moustakas (1994:28) state: “self and world are inseparable components of meaning”.

This study is context-bound as it aims to explore and describe educators’ experience of aggression at a specific SEBD secondary school context. A brief description of the community in which the secondary school is situated will also be provided in order to gain greater contextual understanding of the dynamics at the school.
2.3 STEP 1: SITUATION ANALYSIS BY MEANS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH

2.3.1 Phenomenological research

Phenomenology explores the structures of experience and consciousness from an individual’s perspective (Karlsson, 1995:35). “Originally, in the 18th century, phenomenology meant the theory of appearances fundamental to empirical knowledge, especially sensory appearance” (Smith, 2003:202).

Phenomenological psychologists emphasise that they operate from a framework of the explicit study of humans as they live and relate to each other (Van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000:212). The phrase ‘being-in-the-world’ is the most fundamental concept of the phenomenological psychology (Du Toit, 1988:216). It is therefore important to understand how humans exist in the world and how humans perceive the world — projection to the world and reflection to the self (Van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000:212). Human beings live in three interrelated modes of existence in the world, namely the world around them, the world of relationships with other human beings and lastly, their own world (Du Toit, 1988:217). In the phenomenological framework, researchers will attempt to interpret and understand, rather than observe and explain (Morse, 1991:56).

The researcher agrees that the phenomenological theory attempts to understand human beings in their every-day life, acknowledging the interrelationship of living in the world around us, living in a world of relationships with other people as well as living in one’s own world (Du Toit, 1988:217).

Kvale (1996b:53) says:

“Phenomenology is interested in elucidating both what appears and the manner in which it appears. It studies
the subjects’ perspectives of their world; attempts to describe in detail the content and structure of the subjects’ consciousness, to grasp the qualitative diversity of their experiences and to explicate their essential meanings”.

The research will employ a phenomenological design which is the most appropriate approach for an exploratory study of secondary SEBD educators’ experience of aggression (Russell & Stone, 2002:156; Creswell, 2003:183). The researcher will initially conduct interviews with educators. These interviews will aim to explore, describe and understand the context at the school with relation to their experiences of aggression. The interviews will be phenomenological in nature.

Phenomenology is described as the study of the shared meaning of experience of a phenomenon for several individuals (McCaslin & Scott, 2003: 449).

“Phenomenology enables researchers to examine everyday human experience in close, detailed ways”

(DeMarrais & Lapan, 2004:56).

There are several phenomenological approaches within social science (Finlay, 2009:7; Tesch, 1990:58). The aim of phenomenological research is, according to the approach used in this study, to delimit and describe the essence of the investigated phenomenon (Wertz, 2005:175; Van Kaam, 1966:294; Fisher & Wertz, 1979:136; Giorgi, 1985:10; Moustakas, 1994:13). According to Smith (2004:41) and Karlsson (1995:32) descriptive phenomenology represents the participants’ “life-world” and the participants’ interpretations of their experiences. Qualitative research provides the framework to explore, define and assist in understanding the social and
psychological phenomena of organisations and the social settings of individuals (Berg, 2004).

Husserl (Willig, 2008:53) suggests that it is possible to transcend presuppositions and biases and to experience a state of pre-reflective consciousness. This allows one to describe phenomena as they present themselves to one. In phenomenological psychological research, the research participant’s account becomes the phenomenon with which the researcher engages. There are two major approaches to phenomenological research in psychology – the descriptive and the interpretative.

Husserl (Willig, 2008:53) identifies three steps that would take the philosopher from a fresh perception of familiar phenomena to the extraction of the essences that give the phenomena their unique character. Knowledge that is gained in this way, would be free from common-sense notions, scientific explanations and other interpretations or abstractions that characterise most other forms of understanding. It would be knowledge of the world as it appears to one in one’s engagement with it.

The phenomenological philosophy as a means of gaining understanding, involves three distinct phases of contemplation: *epoche, phenomenological reduction and imaginative variation.*

*Epoche*

Epoche requires the suspension of presuppositions and assumptions, judgements and interpretations to allow oneself to become fully aware of what is actually before one (Willig, 2008:52).
Phenomenological reduction

Moustakas (1994:34) articulates phenomenological reduction as follows: “Each experience is considered, in and for itself. The phenomenon is perceived in its totality, in a fresh and open way. A complete description is given of its essential constituents”. “Structural synthesis or imaginative variation attempts to understand and describe the essence and structure of an experience or phenomenon being investigated” (p. 36). In other words, one becomes aware of what makes the experience what it is.

Imaginative variation

Imaginative variation involves an attempt to access the structural components of the phenomenon – how is the experience made possible? (Willig, 2008:53).

The aim of imaginative variation is to identify the conditions associated with the phenomenon and without which it would not be what it is. This could involve time, space or social relationships.

Textural and structural descriptions are integrated to arrive at an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon.

Many researchers now embrace a hermeneutic version of phenomenology according to which interpretation, and the awareness (and analysis) of what the researcher brings to the text, constitutes an integral part of phenomenological analysis (Willig, 2008:54).

In this research study, descriptive phenomenology was used as “description is primary and that interpretation is a special kind of description” (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008:167). Descriptive phenomenology requires the researcher to adopt a phenomenological approach in which she brackets all past knowledge, including both general and expert knowledge and theories, about the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher attempts to be truly
present to the phenomenon as it manifests itself in a particular instance: the research participant’s account of it. The focus is therefore on the phenomenon as it is experienced by the research participant instead of the phenomenon as a material reality. Giorgi and Giorgi (2008:170) provide detailed guidelines for descriptive phenomenological research. According to them, it involves the following steps:

1. Obtain a concrete description of the phenomenon of interest.

2. Adopt a phenomenological attitude towards the phenomenon.

3. Read the entire description to gain an impression of the whole.

4. Reread the description and identify “meaning units” that capture different aspects or dimensions of the whole.

5. Identify and make explicit psychological significance of each meaning unit.

6. Articulate the general structure of the experience of the phenomenon.

For the purpose of this research study an inductive, exploratory, descriptive and contextual design is initially used to gain a wholistic understanding of secondary SEBD educators’ experience of aggression so as to develop a Psycho-Educational Programme.
2.3.2 Population and sampling

A research population can be seen as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. All individuals or objects within a certain population usually have a common, binding characteristic or trait. In this research study, the population will consist of educators from a secondary SEBD school in the United Kingdom.

According to the needs of the first step of the study – where phenomenological interviews were conducted - the researcher decided to make use of purposeful sampling, as she agrees with Morse (1991:129) that it is essential for the researcher to discover who will be the most eligible participants, those with an abundance of pertinent information. Two criteria were used for sampling. Firstly, participants had to be educators in SEBD schools and secondly they had to be secondary school educators. They also had to have been teaching in a SEBD school for more than a year.

The researcher further decided to select a school in a community which is known for the presence of aggressive behaviour but which is also indicative of the community in terms of culture, race, religion and language. Subsequently, a non-probability purposeful sampling was applied where individuals likely to be knowledgeable and informative about experiencing aggression in their schools were selected to address the purpose of the research (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005:203,491; Burns & Grove, 2009:355; Burns & Grove, 1993:246; Creswell, 1998:62; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:175-176,402,598).

Sampling was terminated when sufficient data saturation has been reached (Laverty, 2003:18; Sarantakos, 2000:156). Lincoln and Guba (1985:202) add that sampling will be terminated when: “... no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units, thus redundancy is the primary criterion”. Data was collected until data saturation occurred in line with Green and Thorgood (2009:120), Steyn and Poggenpoel (1999:46) and Valle and Halling (1989:47).
where the number of educators interviewed depends on data saturation and was determined by the repetition of themes in the data.

2.3.3 Data collection

Smith (2003:201) states that phenomenology “studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view”. Smith (2003:202) continues to explain that the types of experiences may range from “perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire and volition to bodily awareness, embodied action, and social activity, including linguistic activity”. People’s experiences are therefore not only passive by nature (hearing and vision) but can be highly active (kicking a ball or digging a hole). The focus of phenomenology however, remains the personal, first-hand experiences. A personal, first-hand experience is always regarded as reality for that specific individual.

The researcher ensured a thick description of educators’ experiences of aggression in a secondary SEBD school by using multiple methods of data collection (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:282). A chain of evidence was gathered (Yin, 1994:98) by phenomenological interviews, observation and field notes.

\textit{a) Phenomenological interviews}

In line with the nature of the phenomenological theory, a phenomenological interview is often unstructured – a conversation with purpose - where the researcher and participant explore the issue at hand (Seidman, 2006:15; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:153). This allows the researcher to focus on the participants’ perception of their experiences (Creswell, 2007:57; Smith, 1997:121). Basic principles like empathy, understanding, warmth, honesty, sincerity and confidentiality should be adhered to during interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003:75; De Vos, 2001:308; Marshall, 1989:81). This is in accordance
with the needs of both the interviewer and the interviewee and leads to the building of trusting relations in conjunction with gathering rich data.

The interviews were initiated by clarifying the purpose of the research and the interview. The participants were reassured of the confidential nature of the interviews. The researcher ensured that participants were at ease before the interviews commenced, especially in terms of the use of an audiotape. During the individual phenomenological interviews only one question were posed to the participant, namely: “How do you experience aggression in the school?”

The researcher limited her responses to strategies to elicit conversation, to clarify an issue or to refocus the conversation without guiding the conversation in any specific way. At the end of the interview, the researcher summarised key issues to allow the participant a final opportunity to verify information or concepts. Finally, the researcher thanked the interviewee for his or her willingness to participate in the process, whereafter the interview was terminated (De Vos, 2001:234). Non-directive communication techniques such as active listening skills, minimal verbal response, reflecting, paraphrasing, clarifying, summarising and silences were used during the interviews (Kreigh & Perko, 1992:262-264; Okun, 2002:69/81/850). Interviews were audiotaped and recorded. The audiotapes were transcribed verbatim.

As discussed, a variety of communication strategies were utilised appropriately. The following communication strategies were utilised during the individual phenomenological interviews are briefly cited and described:

- **Reflecting**: The researcher allows the participant to reflect on what was said by repeating the question, statement or remark of the participant (Van Manen, 2007: 12; Rooth, 1999:46; Friend & Cook, 2003:63).
• **Clarification and checking:** Clarification can be described as where the researcher requests the participant to clarify his or her statement by either providing an example or by further explanation (Fischer and Wertz, 2002:279; De Vos, 2001:311).

• **Open-ended questions:** With open-ended questions the participant is free to communicate his or her feelings without prompting from the interviewer (Baxter & Babbie, 2004:325; De Vos, 2001:310; Czaja & Blair, 1996:18; Bailey, 1994:189).

• **Paraphrasing:** With paraphrasing the interviewer repeats the participant’s statement in his or her own words in order to clarify what was said (Friend & Cook, 2003:61; Okun, 1997:123; Bailey, 1994:190).

• **Summarising:** The summarising of thoughts and expression during the interview provides the researcher with the opportunity to reflect on what has been said, in order to ensure that she does not misunderstand the interviewee (Friend & Cook, 2003:64; De Vos, 2001:311).

• **Silence and pauses:** The use of silence during interviews allows both the researcher and the participant to think, thus allowing the participant another opportunity to communicate more information or feelings (Friend & Cook, 2003:85; Okun, 1997:90; Bailey, 1994:190).
• **Minimal verbal response and minimal encouragers:** Minimal verbal responses by the interviewer affords the participant the opportunity to communicate, conveying the researcher’s interest in what the interviewee is saying (Waltz, Strickland & Lenz, 2010:290; Friend & Cook, 2003:43; Bailey, 1994:189;).

• **Nonverbal communication:** Body language confirms questions and augments what is said verbally. The most important aspects that need to be considered in nonverbal communication are congruence and individualism (Friend & Cook, 2003:44). The clarification of non-verbal communication should always take place.

In order to ensure that the researcher makes maximum use of the research opportunity, it is critical that the environment in which the interviews take place is conducive to free and unfettered communication between the researcher and the interviewee. It is therefore necessary that all logistical arrangements, for example the interview room, the appointments, the use of the audio tape, the general atmosphere as well as the reception of the participants are such that it enhances the quality of the study.

The researcher bracketed and held back her own preconceived ideas and taken-for-granted assumptions about the phenomenon. This was to ensure that the data collection process is not contaminated but to understand the phenomenon through the voices of the participants (Neuman, 2003b:80, 420; Holliday, 2002:22; Creswell, 1998:52,54).
Interviews were conducted until the data was seen as saturated and were then analysed according to Tesch’s descriptive method (Creswell, 2003:192-195).

As interviewing forms an integral part of the data collection, the researcher also made use of Kvale’s (1996:88) seven stages in a complete interviewing process:

1. **Thematising**: clarifying the purpose of the interviews, which in this study is to explore secondary SEBD school educators’ experience of aggression in their schools and the concepts to be explored.

2. **Designing**: laying out the process through which the researcher accomplished the purpose, including ethical aspects.

3. **Interviewing**: recording the phenomenological interviews, note observations and field notes.

4. **Transcribing**: writing a text of the interview with detailed transcriptions.

5. **Analysing**: determining the meaning of gathered information or data in relation to the purpose of the study.

6. **Verifying**: checking the trustworthiness of the information.
7. **Reporting**: providing themes and categories for structuring a questionnaire as a data collection instrument in step four of this research study.

Through phenomenological interviews the researcher came to a comprehensive understanding of what that experience is like for secondary SEBD school educators, to be able to explain their experiences of aggression as they experience it in their everyday existence of their life-worlds at school.

Secondary SEBD school educators were also able to describe their experiences of aggression in their secondary SEBD schools through phenomenological interviews. It allowed the participants to “give voice to their own interpretations and thoughts” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003:33). Volkmann (1992:88) adds that: “Attention to experience and intention to describe experience are the central qualities” of phenomenological activities.

The researcher chose the wording of the research question carefully so that it was clear to the participants, not directional, open-ended, indicates the purpose of this research study and ensured that it is also issue-related (experience of aggression in their secondary SEBD schools) (Creswell, 1998:99,102; Krueger, 1994:56).

In addition, Tesch (1994:147) proposes that the researcher and the participants need to work together in a partnership to “arrive at the heart of the matter”.

Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Transcription quality can affect the quality of qualitative research and was therefore addressed by the researcher (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003:270). The strategies for ensuring high-quality tape recording suggested by Holstein and Gubrium (2003:276) and De Vos, Strydom, Fouchè and Delport (2005:304), were considered in the context of this research study to enhance the transcription quality. Consequently, the researcher paid specific attention to sentence construction,
use of quotation marks, omissions and mistaking words or phrases for others. Verbatim quotes from the interviews were transcribed as the exact words voiced by participants in order to support the findings, which are discussed in Chapter Three of this research study.

b) Observation and field notes

The researcher also wrote down as much as she can remember as soon after the interviews as possible and transcribed these while they will still be fresh in her mind. Field notes include observational, theoretical, methodological and personal field notes. Field notes were compiled during and after each interview to describe underlying themes and dynamics during the focus group (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen & Namey, 2005:83; Wolfinger, 2002:92; Merriam, 1991:98; Morse & Field, 1994:91; Kreigh & Perko, 1992:262-264).

Field notes act as a written account of what has been seen, heard, experienced and the researchers’ thoughts of the interviews. This enables the researcher to get a clearer picture of what the secondary SEBD school educators experience and understand how things appear to them - thus obtaining data by observation while the researcher was in the field (De Vos, et al., 2005:304; 317; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:41,591; Wadsworth, 1997; 23).

The field notes were used not only to record non-verbal behaviour like the participants’ body language such as eye contact, posture and their behaviour (Streubert & Carpenter, 1995:99) but also to record aspects such as tone of voice. Judd, Smith, Kidder (1991:304) and Silverman (2000:140-142) suggest that the field notes include what the researcher sees and hears.

During observation as a data collection technique, the researcher explored the phenomenon of aggression experienced by secondary school educators as it is qualitative and exploratory in nature. The following field notes were

- **Observation notes:** what the researcher sees, hears, experiences and thinks about in the course of interviewing (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:293-297; De Vos, et al., 2005:304; Graziano & Raulin, 2004:421; Wadsworth, 1997:23). The researcher will speak observations into the recorder.

- **Theoretical notes:** the deliberate, controlled efforts of the researcher to extract meaning from observation notes (Leedy, 1997:103; De Vos, et al. 2005:286).

- **Methodological notes:** instructions to be followed, reminders and critical notes about the design and research methods used.

- **Personal and reflexive notes:** reflections of the researcher’s feelings and experiences during the interviews will help the researcher to establish the influence of her own biases on the research process (Creswell, 1994:152).

2.3.4 Data analysis

Kvale (1983:183) reiterates the importance of bracketing the researcher’s personal knowledge and paradigms to allow the essence of the phenomenon to come to the fore. Subsequently the researcher also had to ensure that the
data analysis process was systematic and verifiable (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:475; Kingry, Tiedje & Friedman, 1990:125). The data analysis process commences with the compilation of all relevant notes, demographic information and participants’ information. Thereafter, the individual interviews were transcribed verbatim. The data reduction process subsequently took place and was qualitative, systematic and descriptive by nature – in alignment with Tesch’s open-coding method of data analysis (Creswell, 2003:154-156).

The researcher, as well as the independent coder, followed the protocol of data reduction which is described briefly below:

- Get a sense of the whole situation by carefully reading through all the transcriptions of the interviews;

- Select one interview and read through it again, asking what it is about, bearing in mind its underlying meaning. Write thoughts in the margin;

- Make a list of all the topics from all the interviews, clustering together similar topics. Arrange these topics into major themes, unique themes and leftover topics;

- Abbreviate the topics as codes, which must then be written next to the relative segment of the text. Check if new categories or themes emerge;

- Change the topics into descriptive categories. Reduce the categories by clustering similar topics together;
• Decide on the final abbreviations for each category and place these codes in alphabetical order;

• Assemble the related data material of each category in one place;

• Recode the existing data if necessary and conduct a preliminary analysis; and

• Conclude with a consensus discussion between the researcher and an independent coder.

2.3.5 Literature control

The literature control will involve reviewing the results in terms of the literature. The results will be discussed in terms of relevant literature and information obtained from similar studies. Identification of concepts will be ensured by using the survey list of Dickoff, James and Wiedenbach (1968:434-450).

During the process of literature control the results will be compared and contextualised with other studies as well as relevant literature available (Burns & Grove, 2009:118). As indicated in Chapter One the researcher will intend to contribute to the academic knowledge, the educational field and the self-empowerment of secondary SEBD school educators (Hoffmann, 2004:66).
The literature control will be conducted after the data collection and analysis process in order for the researcher to stay objective (Burns & Grove, 2009:118,545; Creswell, 1994:23).

2.4 STEP 2: PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

The development of the Psycho-Educational Programme to facilitate the self-empowerment of educators in a secondary SEBD school has to be based on a conceptual framework.

A conceptual framework is a definition in abstract and theoretical terms and is therefore concise, clear and explicit, and closely linked to the theoretical framework (Wood & Kerr, 2011:52; Neuman, 2000:158-159; Bailey 1994:107). The conceptual framework thus provides the overview and rationale for the programme. It further describes the structure of the programme where the central concepts that inform the content of the programme are defined, as well as how the central concepts are related (Wood & Kerr, 2011:56; De Vos, 2001:110; Mouton, 1996:66). The conceptual framework further considers and describes the context related to the programme, the desired outcomes and concludes with the description of the programme itself. In an attempt to draw the conceptual framework as clear and workable as possible, Neuman (2000:160) and Wood and Kerr (2011:57) urge that existing literature, measures and theories be consulted.

Dickoff et al. (1968:433) describe a theory as a conceptual framework invented for a purpose. They add that the purpose of a situation producing theory is to achieve a certain outcome. They furthermore explained that there are three ingredients for a situation producing theory that needs to be addressed in the development of a conceptual framework. These are the:

- goal-content specified as aim for the activity;
- prescriptions for the activity to realise the goal; content and
- a survey list (see Figure 2.2).

I will now clarify each of the processes involved in developing a conceptual framework, by discussing them separately:

1. **Goal content specified as the aim of the study**

This refers to the conceptualisation of the content that would guarantee the attainment of the desired outcome (Dickoff, *et al.* 1968:434). In terms of this study, the desired outcome is the empowerment of the educators who experience aggression in a secondary SEBD school. The themes that were identified during the phenomenological interviews form the basis of the related content that would be addressed in the psycho-educational programme.

![Diagram of the development of a conceptual framework]

**Figure 2.2 Development of a conceptual framework**
2. *Prescriptions for the activity in order to achieve the desired outcome*

This is the second aspect for developing the conceptual framework. According to Dickoff *et al.* (1968:434), prescriptions are regarded as the directive for the implementation of the activities. They therefore ensure the attainment of a clear outcome. For a specific outcome to be reached, the directives that relate to a specific agent/s have to be clear. In terms of this study, the specific agent is the facilitator that would be responsible for facilitating the empowerment of educators who experience aggression in a secondary SEBD school.

3. *A survey list*

The final aspect that needs to be addressed during the development of the conceptual framework is the survey list. The survey list is an important tool as it highlights the gap between the intended activity and the prescriptions for the activity to reach the outcome. Dickoff *et al.* (1968:434) emphasise that there are six questions that correlate with the six features of the activity:

Question 1: Who *implements* the psycho-educational programme?

Question 2: Who is the *recipient* of the psycho-educational programme?

Question 3: In what *context* is the psycho-educational programme?
Question 4: What is the desired outcome of the psycho-educational programme?

Question 5: What is the guiding procedure, technique or protocol for the implementation of the psycho-educational programme?

Question 6: What is regarded as the energy source for the implementation of the psycho-educational programme?

In view of these six questions posed by Dickoff et al. (1968:434), the description of the conceptual framework relies on the development of a “thinking map”. A “thinking map” captures and clarifies all the relevant concepts and represents the interaction between the agent and the recipients that is contextualised within a specific framework and procedure.

The framework not only determines the procedure to be followed, it also acknowledges the dynamics that underpin the interaction and facilitation process that aims attaining a specific outcome or to reach a specific goal (CGNA - Canadian Gerontological Nursing Association, 1996: Dynamics, para.1).

For the purpose of this study, the conceptual framework that was developed was based on the phenomenological study as part of step two of the research design, namely programme development. In terms of the research, the aspects outlined in the conceptual framework are expressed in terms of the experiential learning educational approach (Beard & Wilson, 2006:2; Rooth, 1995:3). The experiential learning educational approach considers and accommodates the specific learning needs and requirements of adults, regarding issues such as money, ambition, preferences and values (Beard & Wilson, 2006:19; Louw & Sidzumo, 1997:6).
As development refers to the changes in the structure, thought or behaviour of the individual over time, a Psycho-Educational Programme was assumed to be effective to address secondary SEBD school educators’ experience of aggression in their schools. Both Mpofu (2011:65) and De la Rey, Duncan, Shefer and Van Niekerk (1997:124) add that the self, personality, identity and roles can positively be influenced by programmes.

Usually these changes are progressive and result from the interaction of biological and environmental factors. Programme development involves a deductive approach, which is based on the results and concepts that derives from the situation analysis in this research study. Hoffmann (2004:44) posits that: “these results and concepts are then compared, enriched and recontextualised within the available literature”.

A psycho-educational programme was developed to facilitate the self-empowerment of secondary SEBD educators who experience aggression.

The researcher used facilitation as a process to implement the programme. This was done after a conceptual framework has been established and the interrelationships of the central concepts had been identified.

The conceptual framework also provides the programme as a social intervention that exhibit core dimensions or features as suggested by authors such as Babbie and Mouton (2002:343,369) and Dickoff et al.(1968:415- 435):

- clearly defined goals and objectives;

- there is a special relationship between the programme goal, goals of the facilitator and the target group of secondary SEBD school educators;
• programme activities as the means to achieve the goals through a procedure followed;

• managing the programme of facilitation and implementation system for the motivation of participation (dynamics);

• the researcher as the administrator (facilitator (agent));

• programme stakeholders; and

• the programme context or setting as established to address the self-empowerment of educators at a secondary SEBD school in an educational setting.

2.5 STEP 3: GUIDELINES TO OPERATIONALISE THE PSYCHO-EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Guidelines will be derived from the described psycho-educational programme. Objectives and activities to achieve the objectives will be described for each guideline.

2.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

research that accurately represents the participants’ experience. Shekedi (2005:179) and Babbie and Mouton (2001:277) add that trustworthiness is an approach to clarify the notion of objectivity. Lincoln and Guba’s framework as described in Polit and Beck (2008:539) was used in this research to ensure trustworthiness of the results. This framework identifies the following criteria in assessing trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In Figure 2.3 the strategies, activities and application of trustworthiness are presented.

2.6.1 Credibility

According to Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010:230) and Brink (2001:124) credibility refers to the truth as viewed through the eyes of the participants who are being interviewed and within the context in which the research is conducted. Seale, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman (2004:407) and Miles and Huberman (1994:278) confirm that credibility refers to the truth value or the reality of the truth. Janesick (Tobin & Begley, 2004:391) states: “It poses the questions of whether the explanation fits the description.” Lincoln and Guba (Polit & Beck, 2008:539) stipulate two aspects to ensure credibility: firstly, the believability of the study must be clear and secondly, credibility must be demonstrated to readers.

For research to be deemed credible, research findings must accurately record the reality of the context and reflect what the researcher set out to explore (Pitney, 2004:26). Prolonging the time with the participants in order to obtain more information will ensure this criterion. According to Polit and Beck (2008:542) prolonged engagement refers to spending adequate time with the participants during data collection to ensure an in-depth understanding of the views, culture and language of the group being studied.
Figure 2.3 Measures to ensure trustworthiness

- Time was spent with the secondary SEBD educators when dealing with the aggressive incidents, both before and after the programme was developed.
- Creating a context of trust and building rapport with SEBD educators.
- Field notes were taken during the interviews and the researcher reflected on feelings, thoughts, experiences and observations.
- Discussions with supervisors.
- Consensus discussion with independent coder.
- Presenting research design and findings at a research forum and a doctoral seminar.
- Fieldwork, data collection methods.
- Model generation: essential criteria from dictionary and subject literature.
- Theoretical triangulation: literature control.
- Triangulation of investigators: discussions with supervisors; data analysed by independent coder with consensus discussion.
- Formal and informal discussions with SEBD teachers to verify findings.
- The researcher is a doctoral student in Psychology of Education with experience in research, interviewing and observational techniques.
- Results were reflected in the Theory for Health Promotion and Social Constructionism.
- Research design and methods were described in detail.
- Researcher placed her own experiences and knowledge about working in a secondary SEBD school aside.
- Purposive sampling
- Selection criteria
- Fieldwork, verbatim quotes of participants, model description and guidelines.
Figure 2.3  Measures to ensure trustworthiness (continued)

Figure adapted from Poggenpoel and Gmeiner (in Theron, 2008:47-49).
Prolonged engagement ensures data saturation and creates a context of trust and rapport with the participants. Thus, when the participants trust the researcher, the richness and depth of the information shared increase (Polit & Beck, 2008:542).

The researcher ensured credibility by staying in the field until data saturation occurs, and by allowing participants to verbalise their experiences. In addition, the researcher accompanied the secondary SEBD school educators over a three-month period and continued with follow-up on their experiences over another two-month period.

According to Finlay (2002:224) and Krefting (1991:218) credibility can further be enhanced by using reflexivity and by taking field notes like personal notes to minimise possible biases of the researcher. Reflexivity can be described as the researcher reflecting on him- or herself as researcher (Bradbury-Jones, 2007:291). The researcher made personal notes regarding her skills and concerns of being an effective researcher during data collection.

Member checking was employed through the continuous checking of data, the interpretation and the methods of the programme development by the researcher and her supervisors (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277). Rolfe (2006:305) notes that Guba and Lincoln regard member checking as a crucial technique in establishing credibility.

Peer examination was used through regular discussions between the researcher and the supervisors and a consensus discussion with the independent coder. According to Tuckett (2005:39) peer review (peer examination) involves the researcher making use of an objective person or persons to assist the researcher with a fresh perspective on the research.

Peer scrutiny of the research project can enhance the credibility of the research, as both feedback and suggestions offered can assist the researcher to refine her or his research method or design (Shenton, 2004:67). The
researcher applied peer scrutiny by presenting the research design and findings at a research forum and doctoral seminars.

An important aspect of credibility is authenticity. Polit and Beck (2008:540) describe authenticity as putting the feelings of participants that portray their experiences about their lives into words. The researcher ensured authenticity in this research by applying active listening skills and focusing on the experiences of aggression of secondary SEBD school educators, rather than on her own interpretation of their experiences. She also applied bracketing by placing her own experiences and knowledge about aggression in a secondary SEBD school aside (Streubert & Carpenter, 1995:457). She focused on exploring the experience of aggression by secondary SEBD school educators.

2.6.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or with other participants (Polit & Beck, 2008:539; Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277; Lincoln & Guba, 1985:118). In essence, this is the ability to transfer the guidelines for implementation of the programme to other contexts.

Therefore, the quality ensured by the internal and external evaluation of the programme will determine the extent to which the programme could be adequately applied in other contexts. Curtin and Fossey (2007:92) suggest that a researcher describes in detail the participants and findings. Hence, the sample and results will be discussed in detail in this research.
2.6.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the capacity of the findings to be consistent if the inquiry were to be repeated with similar participants and in a similar context (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278; Polit & Beck, 2008:539).

Dependability can further be enhanced through triangulation. This ensures that the weakness of the method of data collection, is replaced by the use of an alternative data collection method (Krefting, 1991:221). In this research, the researcher applied data triangulation to ensure dependability by using phenomenological interviews, observation and field notes.

Another way to increase the dependability of the research is for the researcher to use a code–recode procedure during the analysis phase of the research. After coding a segment of data the researcher might wait for some time and then recode the same data and compare it with the results.

According to Tobin and Begley (2004:392) dependability is ensured through a process of auditing. The research process should be logically and well documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004:392). An audit trail can be implemented to reflect the researcher’s methods, documentation and results. Reflexivity plays an important role during the audit process as the researcher reflects on both the internal and external level of the research process (Tobin & Begley, 2004:392). According to Johnson and Waterfield (2004:127) the “thick description” of the context, meaning and results, all form part of the audit trail.

The audit trail in this research included a dense description of the research design, methods of data collection and the collecting and documenting of field notes.
2.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the assurance that the findings, conclusions and recommendations are supported by data and that there is an internal agreement between the researcher’s interpretation and the actual evidence (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278; Brink, 2001:119; Tobin & Begley, 2004:392).

According to Polit and Beck (2008:539) confirmability consists of objectivity between two or more people in terms of the meaning, relevancy and accuracy of the data. Objectivity in this research was ensured by applying independent checking and supervision by two supervisors who are experts in qualitative research. Furthermore, an independent coder was used to analyse the data.

Peer examination and reflexivity were also applied to ensure confirmability. The researcher achieved confirmability by actively applying the principles of bracketing and intuiting to ensure a true reflection of the participants’ experiences (Brink, 2001:113; Polit & Beck, 2008:539). To achieve this, she consciously put aside what she knew about the research topic. This allowed the raw data to convey undistorted information during data collection and data analysis. Once the other three criteria of trustworthiness had been achieved, the confirmability criterion was also achieved (Brink, 2001:125; Koch, 2006:92-93).

Confirmability can be enhanced by a confirmability audit. The auditor considers the process of research as well as the product of data findings, interpretations and recommendations. Audit strategies like keeping evidence of certain documents – such as raw data, field notes and audio recordings - for a period of two years after publication of this thesis, were adhered to in this research. The researcher ensured that the audio recordings of the interviews, as well as the raw data (field notes) were kept under lock and key for the specified period after publication of this research.

Krefting (1991:221) advises that data reduction and the analysis product, data reconstruction and the synthesis product, process notes, materials related to
intentions and disposition and the instrument development information be kept as part of the documentation.

### 2.7 ETHICAL MEASURES

Ethical measures were applied throughout the research process. See the in-depth discussion on ethical measures in chapter One, section 1.6.5.

### 2.8 SUMMARY

In Chapter Two, the various aspects of the research methodology were discussed in detail. This included the research design and research methods. An in-depth discussion of the measures to ensure trustworthiness as well as ethical considerations were also presented.
CHAPTER 3

EDUCATORS’ EXPERIENCE OF AGGRESSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

“Interviews are an essential source of …evidence … helping you to identify other relevant sources of information”

(Yin, 2009:108).

An important part of this research study is the phenomenological interviews as it is an imperative step towards the development of a programme. The interviews are used as a method of inquiry to try and understand a real-life phenomenon in depth. Understanding the phenomenon includes important contextual conditions as they were very relevant to the phenomenon studied (Yin & Davis, 2007:78). In this way, this research study investigated the phenomenon “aggression”, as experienced by educators in the context of a secondary SEBD (social, emotional and behavioural difficulties) school.

Phenomenological interviews were conducted to obtain the educators’ lived experience of aggression in the school. The data collected was then used to confirm, challenge, generate or extend hypotheses and theories (Yin, 2009:47). As Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2009:446) confer, research into the phenomenon of aggression in secondary schools could significantly contribute to understanding and developing practical strategies to facilitate mental health in secondary schools.

The data will then form the basis of the conceptual framework and the development of the Psycho-Educational Programme to facilitate the development of effective strategies to deal with aggression in a secondary
SEBD school. Processes related to the interviews provide the information necessary for the development of the conceptual framework for the Psycho-Educational Programme.

In terms of the research design, the phenomenological interviews were conducted within the framework of the qualitative research approach. This allows the researcher to explore, describe and contextualise educators’ experience of aggression in a secondary SEBD school. The data was then transcribed and analysed by using Tesch’s approach to data reduction (Tesch, 1990:142-145).

3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The research was conducted at a secondary school for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in an urban area near London in the United Kingdom. There are ± 60 learners in the school. Most learners are transported to school from the neighbouring areas. As a special school, the school is well-resourced and equipped. The educator : learner ratio is 1:8 due to the complex and challenging needs of the learners. There is also one or two LSA’s (Learning Support Assistants) per class. All learners are on the SEN (Special Education Needs) Register and have varying difficulties that include: literacy and numeracy difficulties, ADHD (attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder), conduct disorder, learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and other mental health difficulties.

Educators at the school come from different teaching backgrounds. Some are trained SEN educators but most come from a mainstream school background with no or very little training in SEN. The educators at the school experience various challenges because of the learners’ different expectations and needs. One of these challenges is dealing with the aggressive behaviour from learners. I have experienced how different approaches are used to deal with
aggressive incidents and have often wondered how educators experienced these incidents. For these reasons, I made use of a purposeful sampling of participants to include educators with experiences of aggressive behaviour. Educators that were willing to be interviewed indicated it to the researcher and they were then interviewed. Interviews were conducted up to the point were additional data would be superfluous. Ten educators participated in the research. Seven educators were female and three male. They ranged in ages from early twenties to late forties. The length of time that they have been working in SEBD also varied. Some had just started while others have been in SEBD for more than ten years.

3.3 RESULTS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS

The data collected formed part of a qualitative analysis of the phenomenon: how different educators experience aggression. Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003:2) and Coffey and Atkinson (1996:80) comment that: “there are no formulae or recipes for the ‘best’ way to analyse the stories we elicit and collect. Indeed, one of the strengths of thinking about our data as narrative is that this opens up the possibilities for a variety of analytic techniques”. Subsequently, interviews were the starting point for me to try and understand the educators’ lived experience of aggression.

In addition to this, Andrade (2009:42) and Richards and Richards (1994:85) point out that data analysis is the beginning of theory building: deciding on categories involves decisions about what concepts and ideas are being developed and explored. The data obtained during the phenomenological interviews, was analysed according to Tesch’s (1990:142-145) descriptive, qualitative and systematic approach to data.

Themes and categories were identified that captured a recurring pattern that cuts across the majority of data.
Based on the identified themes and categories, relevant literature will be used to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. Quotations are used verbatim (Widmer, 2003:40). The central open question that was used to conduct the semi-structured interviews with the participants was:

‘How do you experience aggression in the school?’

The themes are shown in Figure 3.1 and are then discussed individually.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggression is experienced as a widespread phenomenon.</td>
<td>All stakeholders have been or are currently affected by aggression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators experience aggression both overtly and covertly.</td>
<td>a) Educators experience explicit aggression. b) Educators experience hidden aggression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The aggression that educators experience is maintained by both external and internal environmental factors.</td>
<td>a) External factors maintain the aggression that educators experience. b) Internal factors maintain the aggression that educators experience. c) Process and dynamic factors maintain the aggression that educators experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators’ experience of aggression is bi-directional and it results in lowered self-esteem, fewer internal resources, less job-satisfaction and emotional strain.</td>
<td>a) Educators experience aggression physically. b) Aggression affects educators interpersonally. c) Aggression affects educators emotionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators have different strategies to deal with the aggression they experience.</td>
<td>a) Educators have effective strategies to deal with the aggression they experience. b) Educators have less effective strategies to deal with the aggression they experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1  Identified Themes and Categories
3.3.1 Theme 1 Aggression is experienced as a widespread phenomenon

During the interviews, it became clear that the interviewees had experienced aggression - no one has been unaffected by the experience of aggression. They described the various situations in which they have experienced aggression ranging from when trying to help a learner to stopping a fight. The following direct quotations are from the participants’ interviews, illustrating their experiences that aggression is a widespread phenomenon:

“I experience aggression mainly when certain learners do not earn their points in my lessons because they arrived late or was verbally or physically inappropriate in my lesson”.

“I experienced aggression when I tried to re-focus learners who were exiting the class because they didn’t want to do the work and were exited to the sweeper or because they were upset about something that happened in class or something that the teacher said”.

“I experience it as bullying”.

Various research studies and newspaper articles have commented on the increasing occurrence of aggression in schools. McAdams and Lambie (2003:122) show that aggressive behaviours are widely prevalent among school-age children. This leads to increasing media and public interest in conflict and violence in school and there have been many demands for creating positive, safe school environments that facilitate learners’ learning activities (Yoon, Barton & Taiariol, 2004:303).

According to Kennedy (http://www.ctsn-r cst.ca/Aggression.html), workplace aggression includes “any act against an employee that creates a hostile work
environment and negatively affects the employee, either physically or psychologically”. A survey conducted by the Teacher Support Network (2007:8) further highlights the extent of aggressive incidents in school. The survey found that 93% of educators had been verbally abused by learners and parents in and out of school, while 49% had been physically abused. Furthermore, 53% of educators surveyed, had been assaulted by a thrown object, 26% with a “weapon” like furniture or equipment, two percent with a knife and one percent with a gun. The attacks included stabbings with scissors and nails, strangulation, hands trapped in doors, being spat at, bitten and being pushed. Added to this, 39% of educators have had their personal property damaged or defaced. This included damage to their cars, books and clothing.

Hymel and Henderson (2006:1) and Robinson, Smith, Miller and Brownell (1999:195) highlighted that educators of learners with significant behavioural problems are faced with enormous challenges. They further add that learners “who exhibit behavioural problems frequently engage in behavioural deviancy, including aggression, hyperactivity, impulsivity, lack of self-control, inattention and disrespect towards authority”.

### 3.3.2 Theme 2 Educators experience aggression both overtly and covertly

During the interviews the educators spoke of the different ways in which they experienced aggression. Some experienced overt aggression like fights, damage to property, verbal abuse or swearing and insults. Others faced more covert forms of aggression like refusal to work, insensitivity to others, threats, bullying, underlying and hurtful comments and actions. Both types of aggression affected the educators. The educators commented on the strain these daily experiences of aggression puts on their relationships with the learners and their empathy for the learners’ circumstances and behaviour.
Some of these aggressive behaviours are shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2  Types of aggression that educators experience
3.3.2.1 Category 1 Educators experience explicit aggression

Educators spoke of various situations were they have been faced with explicit aggression. These experiences include direct “acting out” behaviour, verbal comments like swearing, personal insults and threats as well as physical violence like fighting, bullying, hitting and vandalism.

“You want to stop the fight, so you try to get them away from each other”.

“I have been threatened by learners saying that they will kill or hurt me”.

“Once I watched a child hitting the wall repeatedly with a bat outside a classroom”.

“It’s the verbal aggression and insults”.

“I have witnessed lots of fights and arguments between students”.

“I quite often have to physically intervene to stop the fight and prevent students from getting hurt”.

“Students will often fight and up the anti if staff are trying to stop them”.

A survey carried out by Staffordshire County Council (2009/2010) to find out how many school workers were victims of violence and aggression in 2009/10, found that by far the most common category was verbal abuse, with 325 reported cases. Bob Stapley (acting regional secretary of the National Union of Teachers) commented that “Generally, verbal abuse is more likely to
take place outside the classroom. It's usually when staff is trying to maintain order and discipline in corridors and on playgrounds”.

Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski and Jimerson (2010:29) and Stewart and Knott (1999:108) emphasise that schools in contemporary communities face a variety of aggressive behaviours that often culminate in acts of violence. Behaviours of concern include disobedience, idleness or slowness, making unnecessary noise and aggression (Little, Hudson & Wilks, 2002:252; Stephenson, Linfoot, & Martin, 2000:225). Hastings and Bham (2003:115) report that disrespectful learner behaviour predicted emotional exhaustion, while more severe learner misbehaviour predicted burnout in educators. These findings suggest that the cumulative effects of learner misbehaviour lead to stress and burnout for educators as problem behaviours divert the educator’s attention from instructing the class and cause excess time to be spent engaged in disciplinary action (Giallo & Little, 2003:21).

3.3.2.2 Category 2 Educators experience hidden aggression

Apart from experiencing direct aggression, educators also experience hidden (“passive”) aggression on a regular basis. These are used as defense mechanisms and include passive aggressive behaviour, withdrawal and manipulation. Most educators understand that the purpose of this behaviour is to get them to “back off” – to leave the learner alone or to ignore what had just happened and not address or deal with it. This type of aggression still affects educators and puts strain on their coping mechanisms and relationships with the learners.

“…there is often transference of feelings towards the staff due to personal problems at home”.

"Some aggression is non-verbal and learners will try to intimidate and control you through their behaviour".
“…a learner refusing to do work”.

“We have both witnessed bullying everyday in every year group”.

“I told him to stop, he just told me to shut the f**k up”.

“When personal insults are made regarding my personal appearance”.

Anger, in the form of aggression, is a very volatile emotion. It is usually another person that provokes the anger and at whom the anger is directed (Weisinger, 1998:58). Steyn (2006:98) defines educators’ experience of aggression as negative, with feelings like anger, hurt, frustration and disappointment. These feelings result directly from their job as educators. Furthermore, certain demands are made on the educators. Their efforts to meet these demands, can result in more stress being experienced (Wilson, Cordry, Notar & Friery, 2004:3-4). This stress experienced, has an effect on educators’ mental and physical health.

Educators of learners with SEBD report greater stress and role problems than other special education educators. Literature indicates a definite link between stress and occupational burnout in all special education fields, but particularly among those teaching learners with SEBD. Center and Steventon’s (2001) list of stressors include:

1. Amount of time spent on paperwork.
2. Lack of administrative support for SEBD program.
3. Parents who do not get involved.
4. Responsibility for legal requirements and confidentially.

5. Unrealistic parental expectations for their child's performance at school.

6. Unrealistic parental goals set for their child.

7. Lack of motivation by the learners.

8. Learners who are disrespectful towards the educator.


10. School politics involved with the job.

Crick, Casas and Nelson (2002:98) and Crick and Grotpeter (1995:711) label various covert behaviours as relational aggression that involves interpersonally manipulative behaviours. They continue to explain that these behaviours include direct control, social alienation, rejection and social exclusion. A broad definition for this type of behaviour, would be “the infliction of psychological damage” as described by Lagerspets, Björkqvist and Peltonen (1988:404). Furthermore, Austin and Agar (2005:222) note that noncompliance inevitably leads to fewer educational opportunities for learners.

3.3.3 Theme 3 The aggression that educators experience is maintained by both external and internal environmental factors

During the interviews educators spoke about various incidents of aggression. Educators’ experience of aggression is, however, maintained by various factors. Most of the educators are aware of how some of these factors
support the aggression that they experience, but they are unable to address most of these factors due to constraints in time, resources and skills.

3.3.3.1 Category 1 External factors maintain the aggression that educators experience

One of the aspects that maintain the aggression that educators experience is the external environment. The aggression that educators experience is maintained by the school society that both they and the learners are a part of, the community that encourages and accepts aggressive behaviour, peers that promote aggressive behaviour and their families where aggressive behaviour is often a normal occurrence and learners are exposed to violence regularly.

“We may also see a child that has been the victim of sexual, physical, emotional abuse or neglect where the aggression is a way of providing relief of the built up anger and emotional pain”.

“I can see how the aggressive behaviour of the society is mirrored in the children”.

“Students with violent backgrounds tend to continue the trend, escalating their behaviour regardless of whether the police gets involved”.

“…they come from a background where nothing is done at home”.

“…there is often transference of feelings towards the staff due to personal problems at home”.

100
Lopata, Nida and Marable (2006:21) comment: “Environmental factors and events in many classrooms that include students with EBD can elevate arousal and thereby increase aggression. Anxiety, tension, and stress, are examples of factors that can contribute to elevated levels of arousal”.

Educators need the support from parents to reinforce their efforts in school (Wilson et al., 2004:167). Starr (2005:1) highlights that educators are often treated as scapegoats and held accountable for wider social problems. This might be because secondary school learners are perceived as being old enough to take responsibility for themselves.

Taylor (2004:80) is of the opinion that the family context should provide an environment where children are supported in such a manner that it allows them to explore their emotions – including developmentally appropriate strategies and discipline. This enables learners to acquire emotional socialisation skills. Parental involvement further improves learner achievement and behaviour. In contrast, lack of parental involvement and supervision contributes to adolescent aggression and violent patterns of behaviour (Morrison, Robertson & Harding, 1998:219-223). Educators should take responsibility for initiating a constructive relationship with parents through regular communication (Starr, 2005:1).

Schools have also not yet fully embraced the concept of proactive and preventative measures to address behaviour problems in the classroom (Barnhill, 2005:143). Subsequently, punitive measures are used to address behaviour difficulties and a “get tough” approach is believed to be more effective (Skiba, 2002:85).

3.3.3.2 Category 2 Internal factors maintain the aggression that educators experience

Educators also experience aggression that is maintained by internal factors – both in the educator and the learner. Educators experience being stressed
and unable to cope; they lack the necessary skills to deal with the aggression. Their own experiences, defenses and triggers (from childhood) maintain the aggression. The interpersonal relationship between them and the learners further plays a role.

“I have had to learn how to shelve emotions…”.

“…a lack of social and communication skills”.

“I find myself being on the edge the whole time”.

“There can also be some bitching about other staff; offloading with negative images of minor incidents and being over vigilant”.

“I feel my true personality has become detached from my present false ‘acting self’”.

“It’s like you are walking on burning coals the whole time while you are at school, you can almost never relax”.

“When it is a learner that I have spent a lot of time helping, e.g. mentoring, supporting in lessons etc., then it really hurts”.

From the interviews, it became further eminent that the learners also maintain the aggression that educators experience. This is due to their intellect, coping mechanisms, affect and possible triggers for aggressive behaviour.

“But it won’t work with all learners. Some learners do not have enough empathy to understand what they have done. Learners with violent backgrounds tend to
continue the trend, escalating their behaviour regardless of whether the police gets involved”.

“But certain kids will bite into it and don’t let go if they feel it’s not been sorted correctly because they come from a background where nothing is done at home”.

“There is also physical aggression towards equipment, insensitivity or apathy towards others, as well as verbal/physical bullying. Also manipulation through aggression, it’s almost as if they thinking ‘if I start bad enough I’ll get what I want’“.

“I observed that pupils’ competitive natures aroused aggression in them, whether it was winning or losing, the same emotion could be displayed. Frustrations within a game could trigger aggression very quickly in some of the pupils”.

“This normally happens when I confront learners about their behaviour or their work in class. They will then lash out at me in an attempt to get me to back off”.

“The type of aggression targeted at me usually comes from a position of frustration: small things like homework not done, equipment not at school or not the correct uniform act as the starting point and it then escalates”.

“If we don’t teach children how to deal with anger and frustrations they will continuously deal with situations using the tools they have and if aggression is the most successful tool, why stop using it?”.
There are various reasons why learners maintain their aggressive behaviour. Dyson, Farrell, Gallannaugh, Hutheson and Polat (2007:45) have pointed out that aggressive behaviour by learners can cause them to be rejected by their peers. In contrast, some forms of aggressive behaviour can lead to popularity (Farmer, 2000:197; Abrams, De Maura, Hutchison & Tenday Viki, 2005:173). This depends on norms and context. Furthermore, aggression in girls is far less acceptable by their female peers than it is with boys (Callahan & Talbot, 1997:313). Boys appear to be less tolerant of internalising behaviours like anxiety, withdrawal, and depression compared to girls (Graczyk & Waas, 1999:300).

Added to this, it is also important to note that most learners conform to the context that a school sets out for learning (Farmer, 2000:195; Abrams et al., 2005:178). Where the context of the school is an environment that requires more aggression for self-promotion, learners might act in a way to fit in. O’Mahony (2006:168) emphasises that there is a growing concern with the “uninhibited, aggressive and antisocial behaviours from the externalising end of the spectrum”. Furthermore, disruptive and challenging behaviour may be a “positive adaptive response” to a situation or an environment that places communication demands on learners that they are unable to meet (Pirrie & Macleod, 2009:188). Additionally, contemporary theories of aggressive behaviour (Lawrence & Leather, 1999b:179; Tedeschi & Nesler, 1993:201) also emphasise the importance of the social and physical environment in influencing judgments of ambiguous acts – like aggression.

3.3.3.3 Category 3 Process and dynamic factors maintain the aggression that educators experience

The aggression that educators experience, is also further maintained by process and dynamic factors. There is a frustrated outcome related to the tension between what educators expect of learners’ education and their
expectations for the behaviour of the learners. This tension then escalates the aggression.

“But with aggression towards me there is very often a two way communication blockage”.

“Often my response depends on the child, what I know about them and what kind of relationship I have with them”.

“I experienced aggression when I tried to re-focus learners who were exiting the class because they didn’t want to do the work and were exited to the sweeper or because they were upset about something that happened in class or something that the teacher said”.

“When I have been dealing with the confrontation the whole day, one student after another, I run out of energy and coping resources”.

The first tension that arises between expectations, is because educators play an important role in providing support to learners, acting as a compensatory mechanism when family support is unavailable or perceived as inaccessible (Berndt & Perry, 1986:643; Coleman, 1988:102). This support serves as a protective factor – it helps learners to cope with stress, challenging situations and social and emotional well-being (Pavri & Monda-Amaya, 2001:400). Support from educators can thus be important for psychological well-being (Bowen & Chapman, 1996:650). Also, learners gain a lot from educators that are positive role models for personal identification (Howard, Dryden & Johnson, 1999:313).
Furthermore, according to Wevers and Steyn (2002:207) most educators’ biggest motivation lies in the satisfaction they experience through the interactive relationship they have with their learners. This, coupled with the indirect motivation that they experience as a result of the learners’ successes under their guidance is their greatest motivation.

More tension is created by the expectations placed on educators and their efforts to meet those, resulting in a further experience of stress (Wilson et al., 2004:3-4). This stress then effects educators’ mental and physical health. Schools still hold educators responsible for ensuring successful learners outcomes without consideration for the realities associated with their educator assignments (Wasburn-Moses, 2006:22). Furthermore, the diverse roles and responsibilities that educators are expected to assume, coupled with excessive caseloads and teaching responsibilities, often results in situations where educators find themselves spending less time teaching and more time completing paperwork (Adera & Bullock, 2010:9).

Another concern according to Green (2001:129) is that policies and legislation in education are developed without consulting educators, therefore making it difficult for educators to implement. This damages educators’ sense of self-worth or stress as it’s a “top-down” inflexible approach (Buwalda, 1990:79).

For aggression to be resolved in a constructive manner, the relationship between educators and learners needs to be constructive. For this relationship to be constructive and maintained, Van der Merwe (1998:23-25) emphasises that a person needs to be handled in a fair, friendly, consistent and trusting manner. Furthermore, communication forms the basis for any relationship. Effective communication is essential for the negotiation and establishment of rules and boundaries of any relationship (Becvar & Becvar, 1996:67). For all parties in the relationship to feel comfortable, these boundaries need to be upheld (Weisinger, 1998:15). The relationships between educators and learners exist to fulfill a specific purpose.
3.3.4 Theme 4 Educators’ experience of aggression is bidirectional and it results in lowered self-esteem, fewer internal resources, less job-satisfaction and emotional strain

Educators described how they experience learners’ aggression on different levels (physically, emotionally and interpersonally) and as if it pulls them in different directions, almost simultaneously. Some explained in detail how learners’ swearing and insults affect them physically. Others spoke about the emotional effects of experiencing aggression through intimidation and bullying and how it makes them feel and subsequently act. Educators were aware of how the experience of aggression links with various other challenges like self-esteem and maintaining relationships with the learners.

3.3.4.1 Category 1 Educators experience aggression physically

During the interviews, educators spoke about how aggression affects them physically. They mentioned experiencing muscle tension, pins and needles, tiredness and being anxious the whole time. Some of these result in subsequent absenteeism by educators.

“My muscles tense up (especially in my face), teeth begin to tingle, like I have pins and needles”.

“…you can almost never relax”.

“I have seen other teachers take several days off after being attacked by a child and I can see how a level of disaffection among teachers can set in because of the aggression we often face from children”.

107
“You then end up with a couple of knocks and bruises before you are able to separate the two fighting”.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES), found that staff had to constantly deal with low level disruption and that this had a tiring effect on them (DfES 2005, 2006). This is because it interrupts learning and it creates a climate for more serious incidents to occur. Staff responds to situations in ways they would never have responded if they were relaxed and confident in dealing with problem behaviours. Many professionals believe that educators have received insufficient help and training in behaviour management and dealing with disruptive learners (Reid, 2009:176).

3.3.4.2 Category 2 Aggression affects educators interpersonally

Educators spoke about how aggression has changed their personalities in the interviews. They spoke about how they have had to learn how to hide their own emotions to deal with the aggression of their learners. Consequently, they have become closed, guarded and detached to deal with the aggression they experience.

“I often feel detached from things that would seem to influence my non teaching friends in a much more radical way”.

“…you just automatically carry on because that’s what’s expected of you”.

“I feel my true personality has become detached from my present false ‘acting self’”.

108
“Now after years of experience, I am more closed and guarded”.

“But its back to business and you have to carry on with your job as if nothing happened and like you not affected by it at all”.

An important point to consider is that “splitting” can take place: both by educators and learners (Frances & Potter, 2010:50). Splitting into “good” and “bad” arises from unconscious processes with the aim of avoiding the consequences, particularly guilt arising from one’s own shortcomings.

Dunning, James and Jones (2005:244) use psychodynamic concepts like splitting to understand and address blame, demonisation, scapegoating and bullying among school staff. Staff split off their “negative” qualities (difficulties, unhappiness) and project them onto other (learners) who are then unintentionally and unconsciously deprived of their positive qualities (Frances & Potter, 2010:57).

3.3.4.3 Category 3 Aggression affects educators emotionally

During the interviews, educators spoke about how emotionally draining it is to deal with aggression on a regular basis. They also spoke about the different emotions that they experience as a result of experiencing aggression. These include feeling emotionally drained, empty, rejected and like a disappointment. They also described feeling guilt, fear, hurt, shock, failure and rejection.

“…make me feel really let down and emotional”.

“I can become emotional, tearful and rebellious”.

109
“...there are times when you are completely overwhelmed by something that’s happened”.

“I have had to learn how to shelve emotions”.

“Its almost like no matter what you do or no matter what you try, it will still end up being your fault”.

“You are left feeling unsupported, guilty with very little belief in yourself”.

Weisinger (1998:5) articulated that educators that do not recognise their anger towards learners, are disempowered and can therefore not manage it constructively. Eventually, educators end up shouting at learners – undermining their relationships with them. The key to making relationships with learners work is by being able to recognise and respond to the feelings and emotions of others, guiding those emotions towards a productive resolution of a situation and using those emotions to help others to help themselves (Weisinger, 1998:105).

There is a critical shortage of special education educators nationwide in the United Kingdom (Hardman & Mulder, 2004:237). Furthermore, many educators will leave the profession within the first ten years of starting their teaching career (Council for Exceptional Children, 2002). This is twice the rate of general education educators. Educators of learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, quit their jobs in even higher proportions compared to other special education positions (Kaff, 2004:15). Furthermore, there is an increase in learners being diagnosed with emotional and behavioural problems as well as an intensifying of behavioural issues that educators face on a regular basis (Kozleski, Mainzer & Deshler, 2000:1; Simpson, 2004:50).
Billingsley (2004b:25) emphasises that stressors from both within and outside the classroom facilitate decisions by educators to leave their jobs. Educators in SEBD schools experience significantly more stress than their counterparts in mainstream schools. Their job is emotionally draining, physically exhausting and occasionally dangerous. A range of stressors will nearly always be present – stressors educators in general education do not have. Educators are furthermore frustrated by the loss of instructional time to classroom disruptions because of occasional cases when learners have emotional outbursts, flare-ups, meltdowns or conflicts with their peers (Adera & Bullock, 2010:10).

Harris (2005:6) points out that educators experience maximum job satisfaction when they believe their efforts are making a meaningful difference to their learners’ lives. Educators that do not experience being a positive influence on their learners are left feeling angry and frustrated.

3.3.5 Theme 5 Educators have different strategies to deal with the aggression they experience

Educators spoke in the interviews of ways in dealing with the aggression that they experience. Some of the ways that they mentioned, are more effective than others. Educators use different strategies. It is notable that most educators have not been trained in the use of effective strategies and that they have learned through experience with aggressive behaviour and what works for them. They are, however, able to identify and notice other educators’ behaviours that are less effective in dealing with aggression.
3.3.5.1 Category 1 Educators have effective strategies to deal with the aggression they experience

Educators described effective ways that they use to deal with the aggression they experience. These included: walking away to calm down, breathe and have a break; not to take the aggression personally; mental (emotional) awareness and distraction; talking to a trusted person in confidentiality; physical activity like sport; mediated interpersonal communication; fairness and having a support system.

“I walk away and calm myself down using breathing methods or I try to think about something or talk to someone about the situation”.

“What I have been able to do for a very long while, is bottle it up and hide my feelings and eventually release them in a contact sport or running or dynamic weights”.

“Its easier to talk to colleagues when you know that they will support you no matter what and that they are on your side regardless”.

“It will also be helpful to sometimes have a break from the aggression just to compose yourself’.

“Get all of the involved parties together, name and shame, stand-up and apologise and be counted is the only way, and to not get away with it”.

“Staff must not keep grudges – every day is a fresh start for the pupils”.

“Talking to other staff about your challenges and irritations helps, but only to people you trust and with who you can share your evil thoughts without being worried about what they think about you or what they are going to do”.

“…most of the time I just need to let some steam off by having someone to talk to or a break away from it all”.

“I am able to ignore their comments, not take it personally”.

“…deal with the guilt of either not feeling guilty for not having the time or energy to fairly deal with aggression or overcompensation”.

Many studies, such as those of Cockburn (1996:403) and Kyriacou (2001:30), have looked at the coping strategies that educators select in response to stress. These include direct action strategies that aim to eliminate the source of stress, such as seeking support from colleagues, organising time and prioritising work tasks, being well-prepared for lessons and having significant adult relationships outside of work. In the case of aggressive learner behaviour, educators also employ classroom management strategies as a coping mechanism. In addition, educators use palliative strategies which aim to meliorate the effects of stress, such as taking regular exercise, using relaxation techniques, or less healthy approaches such as excessive drinking, smoking or avoidance behaviour such as taking prolonged absences.

Added to this, Jackson (2002:142) observed that there is often a collective anxiety about classroom management in schools that leads to lost opportunities for talking through important processes and lost chances for dealing with these issues more effectively across the school. Kyriacou (2001:31) notes that discussing problems and expressing feelings to others
are some of the key coping strategies reported by educators, yet often educators feel unable to do this in their schools (Teacher Support Network, 2000; Kyriacou, 2001:31; Jarvis, 2002:14).

3.3.5.2 Category 2 Educators experience that they have less effective strategies to deal with the aggression they experience

During the interviews educators spoke about less effective strategies that they use to deal with aggression. Educators tend to use these strategies because of a lack of skills, resources and time. Less effective strategies include: retaliation; holding a grudge and blocking emotions.

“You don’t talk or discuss what’s happened or how you feel with anyone”.

“…you just bundle all the emotions and stress inside yourself. They are not resolved, dealt with or voiced – you just automatically carry on because that’s what’s expected of you”.

“Unfairness makes me feel like I want to do to them what they do to the others”.

“Staff must not keep grudges – every day is a fresh start for the pupils. You should not snidely say things under your breath or not be consistent in your lessons and letting them do what they want”.

“…usually I am able to ignore their comments, not take it personally and get them back on-task. There are, however, times when their comments does affect me”.

Lazarus (1999:101-102) is of the opinion that the appraisal of the potential harm of a stressor influences the coping strategies that are selected and the resulting stress that is experienced. Many educators appraise aggressive behaviour as being harmful and therefore may use less favourable coping strategies to deal with it. This can lead to further behaviour problems and subsequently more educator stress (Howard & Johnson 2004:411; Friedman 1995:287).

3.4 FIELD NOTES KEPT DURING THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS

The recording of field notes, observation notes and personal notes adds value to the phenomenological interviews. This is because theoretical and methodological considerations and personal experiences are noted (De Vos, 1998:285). The researcher kept field notes in the form of notes that reflected the activities that took place, as well as inferences of analyses made during the course of the research.

3.4.1 Observation notes

In these notes, the researcher tries to capture everything that was heard and said during the individual interview within the context of the actual interview. During the phenomenological interviews, the researcher audio-taped most of the interviews with the permission of the interviewees and transcribed the interviews. If participants experienced discomfort, the researcher wrote down what they said. A total of ten interviews were conducted – six interviews were audiotaped and the other four participants’ answers were written down with
any notable paralanguage. The six interviews were audiotaped, transcribed and safely locked away. The researcher will keep these for two years after publication of the research and then destroy it. The interviews were held in different classrooms – usually the educators’ classroom. Interviews were scheduled according to the availability of the educators. The atmosphere at the start of the interviews was often stressed and cautious. As the interview progressed and after explaining that the participant could stop at anytime and that their participation was confidential the atmosphere became more relaxed.

3.4.2 Personal notes

The researcher’s personal notes resembled a personal journal as these were used to facilitate debriefing and data of personal reactions were recorded for future data-analysis (Neuman, 2000:365-366).

The researcher’s feelings in the personal notes were as follows:

- **Empathy:** During the phenomenological interviews, I could identify with the interviewees as I am also a SEBD educator. However, I tried to remain impartial by keeping focused on the interview questions and the participant.

- **Frustration:** During the phenomenological interviews, I experienced that I was comfortable with my interviewing skills. I did, however, feel frustrated with some participants’ reluctance to talk about themselves on a more personal level. It further frustrated me that some participants used defense mechanisms, like intellectualising, to deviate from talking about their emotions.
• **Appreciation:** The educators tried their best to support and accommodate me as the researcher. Interviewees were willing and eager to assist in the research process. After the interviews, educators expressed how valuable and therapeutic it had been for them to talk about their experiences of aggression in the school.

• **Co-operation:** At the start of the research study, all the educators and the principal were cooperative and initial meetings went well. However, during the research study, the school appointed a new principal. I found it challenging to convince her of the purpose of the study and to be allowed the time needed to conduct the interviews. The researcher negotiated these, for example, I contacted staff via e-mail and furthermore had no other difficulties. I built a relationship of trust with the educators and other staff.

3.4.3 **Methodological notes**

I wrote notes and instructions for my personal use about the methodology used in the research process. An excerpt from my notes that reflects this is: “It is important to keep your focus on the research question, even though interviewees can provide other valuable information concerning their thoughts and feelings of what must be of importance to them”.

3.4.4 **Theoretical notes**

Theoretical notes reflect my intention to analyse the field notes by making notes of interpretations, assumptions, hypotheses, new concepts and relationships amongst concepts and/or observations.
An example of my theoretical notes during the phenomenological interviews is: “It seems that educators experience aggression on different levels – both ‘in their face’, aggressive behaviours and acts, as well as more subtle, disguised aggression. During the interviews it became clear that dealing with both of these, were challenging and stressful”. Simpson (2004:67) concurs with my perception by stating that educators are faced with increasing behaviour problems.

I attributed my difficulty in getting some educators to talk more personally about their experiences and their intellectualisation to the fact that the interviews were conducted at the school and not in a neutral environment.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Phenomenological interviews were conducted with purposefully selected participants. Participants shared their rich experiences, skills and knowledge. In addition to the data collected through the interviews, field notes were kept. The data obtained were analysed according to Tesch’s descriptive, qualitative, systematic and open approach and protocol (Tesch, 1990:142).

During the analysis of the data, themes and categories were identified. Theme One reflected the fact that aggression is a widespread phenomenon in the secondary SEBD school. In Theme Two educators described how they experience aggression both overtly and covertly. Theme Three highlighted how the aggression that educators experience, is maintained by both external and internal environmental factors. Educators’ emotions, lack of skill and coping resources maintain the aggression internally. The learners’ skills and other attributes further maintain the aggression externally in conjunction with the society and family. The expectations placed on educators by the education system is further in conflict with their daily experiences in school,
maintaining the aggression even more. In Theme Four, it becomes evident that educators experience aggression bi-directionally and it results in lowered self-esteem, internal resources, job-satisfaction and emotional strain. Finally, Theme Five highlighted that educators have different strategies to deal with the aggression they experience. More effective and less effective strategies are discussed.

The quotations are included to support the identified themes and categories which were identified during the data reduction process. Furthermore, in line with the qualitative research approach, the data from the phenomenological interviews were verified by a literature control. The trustworthiness of this was ensured by means of implementing strategies in adherence to the criteria for credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

To summarise the research context and my observations, I put together a “snapshot” (figure 3.3) of the school community. The school community is built up from different other communities: educators have different personalities, backgrounds, nationalities and opinions. Educators will grow as persons while they are part of the school as a result of the relationships they form and their individual growth. Educators will also grow in skills. These skills will be specific to the context and enable educators to gain a clearer picture of their future.

Furthermore, educators move into the community at different times and for different reasons such as a temporary contract, supply cover and career progression. Some educators will move out of the school community without really becoming a part of it. This leads to the educators experiencing tension between their individual world, their relationship world, their skills development world and their future world. This usually causes stress and
anxiety for the educator. Educators tend to leave the community for better career prospects. The “snapshot” was generated from my own personal observations while working in the school community as an educator for more than five years.

Figure 3.3 provides some guidance in trying to understand the complexity and difficulty of empowerment in this specific context. Chapter Four will focus on the development of a programme that will facilitate the empowerment of educators.
Figure 3.3  A “snapshot” of the school community
CHAPTER 4

A PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME TO FACILITATE THE SELF-EMPOWERMENT OF EDUCATORS TO CONSTRUCTIVELY MANAGE THE AGGRESSION THAT THEY EXPERIENCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the experiences of educators in a SEBD school in the United Kingdom were discussed. The data was analysed and a literature control carried out. In this chapter, the conceptual framework and the following programme will be discussed. The results from Chapter Three were interpreted by the researcher to identify the vital issues that needs to be addressed in the conceptual framework and psycho-educational programme. These are:

- all educators in the SEBD school have experienced aggression;
- educators experience aggression in different ways;
- the aggression that educators experience is being maintained by various factors;
- educators’ experience of aggression affects them as a whole person: physically, emotionally and in their relationships; and
• educators deal with the aggression that they experience in different ways.

Understanding of the above mentioned issues, can act as a guide in the process of developing a psycho-educational programme to facilitate the empowerment of the educators in the school.

Before the psycho-educational programme could be successfully developed, a conceptual framework had to be established.

4.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for the development of a psycho-educational programme to facilitate the self-empowerment of SEBD educators in order to constructively manage the aggression educators experience in a secondary SEBD school, not only reflects the researcher’s theoretical and practical assumptions of the programme, it also defines central concepts. This permits the accommodation of both the outline of the programme components and the desired educational approach in the psycho-educational programme.

This process is summarised in a “thinking map” (figure 4.1) that shows a journey with the educator towards empowerment, while also addressing the themes and categories.

The purpose of the programme for the empowerment of educators, is to answer the research question posed in Chapter One (“What can be done to assist staff who experience aggression in an SEBD secondary school?”). It is envisaged that this programme will empower educators to deal with the aggression they experience constructively, allowing them to function as whole human beings.
A secondary SEBD School in a community in Kent, UK. The educators are regarded in terms of the framework of a whole person, with a body, mind and soul.

The implementation of a Psycho-Educational Programme that follows the experiential learning approach that is suitable for adults to address the lived experiences of educators in the procedure.

Aggression is a widespread phenomenon that has affected all the educators interviewed. They experience aggression both overtly and covertly. The aggression that educators experience, is maintained by external and internal environmental factors. Educators' experience of aggression is bi-directional and it results in lowered self-esteem, fewer internal resources, less job satisfaction and emotional strain.

Empowered educators who constructively manage aggression.

Figure 4.1 ‘Thinking Map’ to illustrate all the relevant concepts, procedures and interactions in the conceptual framework
4.2.1 Agent

The agent is the person that executes the activity. In this instance, it must be somebody who has a clear understanding of the complexity of educators working within an SEBD school environment. This person would also need to be able to work “cross-culturally”. The researcher has observed that it is important to have constructive relationships with the recipients and to be familiar with their role and world. It is important that the personal knowledge and subject knowledge be integrated. The entire focus of the agent should be on the client and the positive outcomes desired (Bunston, Pavlidis & Leyden, 2010:48; Egan, 1994:21).

The educator acting as facilitator (agent) should also be able to portray certain roles. Jarrett, Horn and Zhang (2009:301) and Walters (1997:14-117) describe these roles as a supporting role of respect, acceptance and empathy, a focusing role, a clarifying role, an interaction and information role and a challenging role.

This suggests that facilitators are individuals with the appropriate roles, skills and knowledge to help individuals, teams and organisations apply evidence into practice (Harvey, Loftus-Hills, Rycroft-Malone, Titchen, Kitson, McCormack & Seers, 2002:579).

The agent (facilitator) should therefore be a current or past SEBD educator with a context specific approach as well as knowledge and skills to portray the various roles as a facilitator. SEBD educators should be guided towards a greater degree of self-awareness, self-responsibility and self-empowerment in order to promote their wholeness.
4.2.2 Recipient

The recipient is a SEBD educator experiencing aggression on a regular basis. SEBD educators were described in Chapter One. The researcher found that according to SEBD educators, they do not receive training and development and tend to blame other persons for the aggression that they experience. They acknowledge that they do not know how to deal effectively with the aggression that they experience. Three of the major reasons for this are their lack of relevant skills and self-awareness, self-responsibility and not understanding the unique and complex school community. The researcher discerned and experienced the need for support in their personal growth towards wholeness as SEBD educators experience aggression as stressful and debilitating. They need support in order to grow as educators towards wholeness.

4.2.3 Procedure

The procedure is contained within the different phases of the self-empowerment programme. Educators will move through these phases by acquiring the necessary skills towards their own self-empowerment in the management of aggression in a constructive manner. Each phase has a different focus. The phases are:

- Phase 1: Discover the value of self
- Phase 2: Development of interpersonal skills
• Phase 3: Development of context-specific empowerment skills

• Phase 4: Self-empowered educators that constructively manage aggression

The role of the facilitator is to create a context where the educators will be able to develop their self-empowerment and enable them to effectively deal with the aggression that they experience.

The facilitator will act as the agent to present the self-empowerment programme and guide the educators through the process. In order to facilitate such a process, there should be a relationship of trust between the facilitator and the educator as recipient. The ultimate goal would be to assist the educators in ways whereby they will be able to take a larger degree of self-responsibility for their self-empowerment and to promote their wholeness.

The highlighted themes, as well as the key issues that emerged during the interviews were discussed in Chapter Three. It was clear that educators, due to their environment and the aggression that they experience show a need for self-empowerment. This is because teachers’ experience of aggression is bi-directional and it results in lowered self-esteem, fewer internal resources, less job-satisfaction and emotional strain. Furthermore, educators work in an environment where aggression is maintained by both external and internal environmental factors. This has a strong influence on their sense of self-empowerment. This environment also has implications for their future as a whole person. Self-empowerment can have a mediating effect between the external factors (input) and educators’ subsequent behaviours (output) in school (Liden, Wayne & Sparrow, 2000:414). This is illustrated in Figure 4.2.
Figure 4.2  The mediating effect of self-empowerment between external factors and work attitude

Parpart, Rai and Staudt (2003:4) argue that:

“…empowerment must be understood as including both individual conscientisation (power within) as well as the ability to work collectively which can lead to politicised power with others, which provides the power to bring about change.”

“Power within” is consistent with conscientising; “power with” is compatible with inspiring; and “power to” is in accord with liberating.

The principle of self-empowerment is that an understanding of unconscious processes gives the educator a powerful, revealing tool for understanding
what goes in the most crucial part of their endeavours, the educator-learner interaction. Yet this tool is not directive, it encourages them to use their own resources and understanding to come up with a clearer view of what may be happening in the classroom. It empowers them to take responsibility for their own decisions and choices.

SEBD educators who achieve a sense of self-empowerment and control are perhaps more likely to be able to avoid the debilitating effects of educator stress. It also appears to enable educators to constructively manage the aggression that they experience, but also to establish them as “whole” human beings – with a mind, body and spirit (Paulfranz, 2008:1; Poggenpoel, 1994:52). Therefore, self-empowerment became the central concept used to develop this programme.

Strategies had to be developed and formulated for use to implement the programme of self-empowerment. This will ensure job satisfaction and can lead to constructive aggression management (Chang, Shih & Lin, 2010:427; Manojlovich and Laschinger, 2002:590). Figure 4.3 has been compiled to illustrate this.

Figure 4.3  The mediating effect of self-empowerment
Self-empowerment can be achieved through a structured psycho-educational programme approach that draws on three foundations: objectives, contents and method and assessments. This is illustrated in the Figure 4.4.

**Figure 4.4 Educator self-empowerment triangle**

Figure 4.4 shows that in order for educators to be self-empowered, it has to be clear:

- *how* they are going to be self-empowered: through gaining the necessary skills, strategies and understanding of dealing with aggressive behaviour;
• why they have to be self-empowered: to constructively deal with the aggression that they experience; and

• how to achieve the purpose of self-empowering them: enabling them to constructively deal with the aggression they experience to ensure educators function as whole humans.

The development of an appropriate and relevant conceptual framework for the psycho-educational programme will ensure that this can happen.

4.2.4 Context

The context is the environment of a secondary SEBD school in a suburb in the United Kingdom. Educators are seen in terms of a whole person: mind, body and spirit.

4.2.5 Dynamics

The dynamics of the conceptual framework arises from SEBD educators’ experience of aggression. This emphasises that aggression is a widespread phenomenon that has affected everyone. Educators experience aggression both overtly and covertly and their experience is maintained by both external and internal environmental factors. Educators’ experience of aggression is bi-directional and result in lowered self-esteem, fewer internal resources, less job satisfaction and emotional strain.
4.2.6 Outcome

The envisaged outcome of the self-empowerment programme is self-empowered educators who are able to constructively manage the aggression that they experience on a regular basis.

4.3 PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

After the themes were analysed and self-empowerment identified as the outcome of the programme, it was possible to start developing the programme. The themes pointed to different phases in developing a programme to fulfil the purpose of the programme. The phases and themes were summarised in the “schematic structure” (Figure 4.5) of the “thinking map” (Figure 4.1) to illustrate the educators’ planned self-empowerment process. The schematic structure shows the “starting point” as to where the educators are finding themselves. The facilitator will embark on a journey with them in their development and growth towards self-empowerment.

This process implicates development through phases towards their self-empowerment and functioning as whole human beings.
Figure 4.5  Schematic structure of the self-empowerment programme
4.3.1 Key elements of psycho-educational programme development

In this research the educational development model of Garbers (1972:9) will guide the development of a psycho-educational programme for educators in a SEBD school. Garbers’ model about psycho-education is still used widely and the researcher therefore chose to use his model as an assessment tool. The three key elements of relationship with time and space, relationship with self and relationship with others will now be discussed.

4.3.1.1 Relationship with time and space

According to Garbers (1972:10) everything that an individual does is grounded in a triad of a history, a period of development and a future orientation. Therefore, all individuals have a future orientation within the context that they find themselves. The psycho-educational model facilitates individuals towards their own uniqueness. This is done to provide the individuals with a better understanding of their own history, their reason for being there and a future perspective that will facilitate finding meaning and fulfilment.

The space refers to a specific context where the programme is being implemented. In this study, the context is the SEBD school community environment in the United Kingdom.

4.3.1.2 Relationship with the self

According to Garbers (1972:16) the role of the psycho-educational facilitator is to help people develop in their relationship with the “self”. People need to “discover” themselves and get a better understanding of “who” they are and “how” they are unique. A psycho-educational approach emphasises the notion of assisting people in their discovery of their unique potential and for
them to live their lives accordingly (Poggenpoel, 2008:12). Poggenpoel (2008:12) further explains that human beings are in search of meaning and facilitating them in this process of discovery will contribute to their mental health.

4.3.1.3 Relationship with others

Garber’s (1972:16) model of educational development, highlights that the psycho-educational facilitator is interacting in a relationship with the individual. This relationship is positive, loving but also dependent (Poggenpoel, 2008:13). People around an individual have had an influence on that individual’s development. Each individual is unique and the psycho-educational facilitator has to guide them towards “self-discovery”: to both find their place in society and to understand and develop skills to live in relationship with others (Poggenpoel, 2008:13).

The first phase (Figure 4.5) is about the development of skills and strategies to facilitate educators’ self-awareness. Its aim is to help educators to gain a better understanding of the “self”: self-efficacy, self-awareness and self-responsibility.

The second phase (Figure 4.5) facilitates interpersonal relationship skills. The intention is to enhance healthy interpersonal relationships between the facilitator and the educators, between the educators themselves, the educators and other school staff and also the educators and the learners.

The third phase (Figure 4.5) facilitates context specific self-empowerment skills. SEBD schools are complex communities which at the same time need empowerment skills that are “tailor-made” for the specific context. Facilitators need to be well-acquainted with the various self-empowerment challenges to effectively facilitate educators in their skills development.
Phase four (Figure 4.5) facilitates self-empowerment praxis – putting the theory into action. This is a phase of practical guidance on constructively managing the aggression in the school. The ultimate goal of this process is to promote self-empowerment and wholeness.

The process of the self-empowerment programme will now be discussed.

4.4 PROCESS DECRPIPTION OF A SELF-EMPPOWERMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

In this programme, colours are used to represent the following meanings in the process description (see Figure 4.6):

4.4.1 The colour red

The colour red symbolises the important role of the facilitator and the relationship between the facilitator and the educator.

4.4.2 The colour orange

The colour orange symbolises the “starting point” of the development programme. Orange is used in this programme to represent “growth and peace”, linking into the objectives of this programme of promoting wholeness. Self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-responsibility bring peace and harmony within oneself and also between one and others. Educators have to accept a more wholistic perspective of responsibility and act accordingly to exercise self-empowerment.
Figure 4.6 Process description of the procedure within the development of the self-empowerment programme
4.4.3 The colour yellow

Yellow represents the sun in this programme. It underlies the importance of growth and development in interpersonal relationships and skills. To grow as an educator, educators have to prioritise developing healthy interpersonal relationships and skills.

4.4.4 The colour green

The colour green symbolises the “core” skills educators need in order to be effective in their specific context. There are skills that educators need to focus on in order to be effective in the SEBD school context.

4.4.5 The colour blue

The colour blue symbolises the importance of putting everything into “praxis”. Aspirations make way for reality. The purple represents this reality.

4.4.6 The rainbow of colours

The rainbow of colours in this programme symbolises the importance of “convergence” – everything coming together. Educators need to embrace all the colours on their journey. It is an ongoing process where the educator needs to visit all the different phases regularly to develop as a person and empowered educator and grow towards wholeness.
4.5 PHASE ONE: DISCOVER THE VALUE OF SELF

The concept of the self needs to be understood by the educators. The facilitator needs to help educators in coming to terms with different aspects of the “self” that will eventually help them in exercising self-awareness. They can grow as individuals in ways that can benefit both them and the school community.

Educators need to have a deeper insight into their true “self” in order to become empowered. The self is the distinct *individuality or identity of a person* or thing (World English Dictionary, 2011). This coincides with Corsini’s (1999:874) view that people are distinct individuals that are beings with personalities. The Collaborative International Dictionary of English (2011) defines the self as the object of their own reflective consciousness; the persons viewed by their own cognition as the subject of all their mental phenomena, the agent in their own activities, the subject of their own feelings, and the possessor of capacities and character; persons as distinct individuals; beings regarded as having personality. The reflexive character of the self, emphasises that it can be an object to itself.

Huskinson (2002:437) emphasises the difficulty of a universal definition of the self. Sir W. Hamilton said:

>“The self, the I, is recognised in every act of intelligence as the subject to which that act belongs. It is I that perceive, I that imagine, I that remember, I that attend, I that compare, I that feel, I that will, I that am conscious”.

The conscious, unconscious, mental and physical aspects of the self attribute to the totality of all the characteristics of the self (Corsini, 1999:874).
The American Heritage Dictionary (2011) further explains the self as one's consciousness of one's own being or identity; the ego. In its broadest terms, the self is organised around its awareness of itself: it has a conscious and unconscious orientation towards its most important interests and values. The self therefore represents combinations of self-evaluations and various behaviours and attributes (Corsini, 1994:821).

Colman (2000:14) defines the self as a process which views the self totality and archetype: it’s both an organising principle and that which is organised. Furthermore, Johnson (2003:65) sees the self as an enduring aspect of the human personality, an “inner core” that is stable over time and slow to change. He furthermore explains that part of the self is malleable, moulded by life experiences and different from one situation to the next. It follows from this that the self is multifaceted and has many different faces. Each person has a private self – consisting of our inner-most thoughts, feelings, memories and self-views. Persons also have an outer self – portrayed by the roles they play and how they present themselves to others.

Winnicott (1965:140-152) distinguished between a true and a false self. The true self is at the core of human existence and is able to relate to itself and to others. The false self arises as a protection for an undernourished, insecure ego: it hides from the outer world and relationships.

In order for SEBD educators to become more aware of their “self”, their self-awareness, self-efficacy and self-responsibility needs to be developed.

4.5.1 Self-awareness

Self-awareness enables SEBD educators to identify the actions that they need to take in order to behave competently in different situations. Greater self-awareness enables them to control their behaviour and adapt their behaviour to changing circumstances. The development of self-awareness for SEBD educators is important as it aids effective teaching and meeting the
needs of learners (Pololi & Frankel, 2005: 155). Richardson and Shupe (2003:8) explain that SEBD educators can enhance their effectiveness and job satisfaction, minimise power struggles and build constructive relationships with difficult learners by taking proactive steps to enhance their self-awareness.

To become self-aware, SEBD educators have to maintain or enhance their self-worth (Covington, 1984:8). Self-worth refers to the judgement people make about their sense of worth and dignity and it is represented by the “performance ↔ worth” linkage. This direct, causal relationship implies that unless SEBD educators can become successful at some valued activity, they will be cut off from a major source of self-esteem, respect and a sense of value. It is therefore important for them to become aware of their emotions as it influences both their behaviour and motivation (Seifert & O’Keefe, 2001:83).

Self-awareness will ensure that SEBD educators explore their own unique, personal resources and potential. This can enable them to solve problems, face difficult situations and deal with stress successfully. It will also make them aware of how their behaviour, emotions, feelings and thoughts are all interlinked. This in turn, will increase SEBD educators’ ability to communicate effectively through both verbal and non-verbal messages and help them to act in ways that are consistent with their personal values and socially accepted ideals (Johnson, 2003:53).

Self-awareness, attitudes and feelings can be explored in the SEBD school through the use of reflection groups, journal keeping and a tracking system for capturing learning milestones.

*Reflection groups*

SEBD educators could combine to form reflection groups that create a safe, supportive environment for educators to explore feelings evoked by working with aggressive learners, parents/carers and colleagues.
Learning tracking system

SEBD educators are asked to identify and record their own learning objectives in relation to managing aggression prior to starting the programme (pre-programme learning objectives). At the end of each session they are asked to identify the learning objective(s) they had met during that session.

Journal option

SEBD educators are encouraged to keep a journal throughout the programme and beyond in order to promote reflection.

4.5.2 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is interlinked with self-confidence and refers to a person’s judgement about his or her capability to perform a task successfully (Seifert, 2004:137). From this research it became clear that SEBD educators often did not feel confident or able to deal with the aggression that they experienced.

Self-efficacy is further linked with cognitive processing, motivation, choice of activities and self-worth (Bandura, 1993:118). Educators who are efficacious are more likely to be self-regulating, strategic and meta-cognitive as it enables them to control stressors that might cause anxiety (Bandura, 1993:133). This is echoed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001: 783) who define an educator’s efficacy belief as “a judgment of his/her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of learner engagement and learning, even among those learners who may be difficult or unmotivated”.

Attributions further influence SEBD educators’ self-efficacy. They explain why events turn out like they do and they give rise to emotions that influence educators’ future behaviours (Cherry, 2011:1; Weiner, 1985:557). Elliott,
Isaacs and Chugani (2010:135) add that these self-evaluations can help to determine how much effort SEBD educators will expend on any activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles and how resilient they will be in adverse situations.

SEBD educators need to believe that the current situation in the school can be changed by them. They need to feel capable of dealing with the aggression that they face in the SEBD school setting. This can be achieved through phase one and two of the psycho-educational programme and/or other intervention programmes used in the school.

The main goals of any intervention program used by the SEBD school to improve self-efficacy should be problem-solving and emotion regulation through social cognitive instruction. This would promote social cognition, improve peer relationships, and reduce aggressive and maladaptive behaviours in the SEBD school (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2002:41).

Additionally, anger management training can be used to improve SEBD learners’ self-efficacy by helping them to recognise the level of arousal and anger that they experience in difficult interpersonal situations and the triggers that lead to these high arousal reactions. It can also help them to use several coping techniques to manage the arousal and to avoid an impulsive, rage-filled response (Smith et al., 2005:230). These can be: distraction, relaxation and self-talk. The use of self-talk disrupts learners’ reflexive aggressive response and facilitates more adaptive problem-solving. Learners can be taught these strategies through direct instruction, modelling, guided practice and independent practice. This could foster the development of skills and generalisation.
4.5.3 Self-responsibility

Being responsible implies being answerable for one’s actions. As Geyser (2004:92) explains, self-responsibility means that one accepts being the primary cause for something by developing and expressing capacities and aspirations. Subsequently, the locus of control moves away from blaming others and the environment and being external to an internal locus of control (Corsini, 1994:366). It implies SEBD educators making a conscious effort to pro-actively develop and express a new interest. Self-responsible SEBD educators do not live as victims, reacting to the situations. Instead they make choices to think and act in a more constructive way (Geyser, 2004:92).

SEBD educators need to accept self-responsibility and also encourage and facilitate other persons to accept self-responsibility within the school and the community.

The importance of an internal locus of control is summarised by Van der Merwe (2004:134):

“An internal locus of control is necessary for a person to be growing towards wholeness”.

4.6 PHASE TWO: DEVELOPMENT OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

SEBD educators are part of various relationships. Their ability to initiate, develop and maintain caring and committed relationships is the most important, and often underestimated, activity in their lives (Johnson, 2003:2-3).
4.6.1 Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills allow SEBD educators to take appropriate social initiatives, understand people’s reactions to them and respond accordingly (Johnson, 2003:7). Frymier and Houser (2000:215) also found that interpersonal skills are important not only for effective teaching, but also for ego support and conflict management.

In turn, SEBD educators’ learners will learn interpersonal skills from them in constructive relationships. These constructive relationships are build on interpersonal skills as shown in Figure 4.7.

From Figure 4.7, it is evident that interpersonal skills are not just required to build constructive relationships, but also to understand the value of constructive relationships, the difficulty in forming relationships and how to master interpersonal skills and make a commitment in doing so (Johnson, 2003:3). Interpersonal skills can develop SEBD educators’ interpersonal effectiveness and self-actualisation (Johnson, 2003:395).

- **Interpersonal effectiveness** - the degree to which the consequences of SEBD educators’ behaviour match their intentions.

- **Self-actualisation** - the SEBD educators’ drive to actualise their potential to the fullest extent. It rests on SEBD educators’ ability to build constructive relationships, live in the present and be autonomous.
Johnson (2003:395-400) explores ten interpersonal skills that SEBD educators need to master in order to become more *interpersonally effective* and to *actualise their potential* to its fullest extent. These are self-disclosure, trust, communication, expressing feelings verbally and non-verbally, helpful listening and responding, resolving interpersonal conflicts, managing one’s anger, stress and feelings, building relationships with diverse others and applying ethics of interpersonal relationships.
4.6.2 Interpersonal relationships

Research has consistently identified the substantial role that interpersonal relationships play in learners’ outcomes and experiences at school (Culp, Hubbs-Tait, Culp, & Starost, 2000:16; Field, Diego, & Sanders, 2002:128).

Additionally, Fore III, Martin, and Bender (2002:36-45) recommend more support as well as interaction from colleagues, administrators, and special education coordinators, in the same school, to help reduce stress and burnout for SEBD special education educators.

Interpersonal relationships are a necessity, especially for educators in a SEBD setting but relationships do not just happen; they need to be built and maintained (Johnson, 2003:137). Through their use of interpersonal skills, educators can initiate, maintain and terminate relationships. Furthermore, interpersonal skills will enable them to make their relationships more or less personal and intimate or change the quality of relationships.

There are various benefits for SEBD educators in having interpersonal relationships (Johnson, 2003:12). They are key to educators’ humanness, psychological health, personal identity, social, cognitive and moral development, coping with stress and adversity, meaning to and quality of life, self-actualisation, educational and career productivity and physical health.

It is through interpersonal relationships that educators can practice and learn to communicate better and that the educators in the school can form a “group identity”. The SEBD educators need to share common goals and values aimed at increasing the quality of life and defining appropriate behaviour within their school community. The school community will not be able to exist if it is dominated by competition where individual educators value striving for their personal success at the expense of other staff (Johnson, 2003:366).
The SEBD educators with diverse skills, abilities and experiences should be bound together by the values underlying cooperation and problem-solving negotiations. This could be through a commitment to the common good and well-being of others, a sense of responsibility to contribute one’s share of the work, respect for the efforts of other educators and for them as people, behaving with integrity, caring for other educators, compassion when other educators are in need and appreciation of diversity.

Another important relationship is the relationship between the learner and their educator. Martin, Marsh, McInerney, Green and Dowson (2007: 119) found that educator-learner relationships are important in the development of learners’ achievement motivation and general self-esteem.

4.6.3 Communication skills

Jowett and Lavallee (2007:34) and Frymier and Houser (2000:215) emphasise that communication between educators and learners are relational as well as content driven. They articulated that the skills most predictable of motivation and learning are ego support and referential skill (Frymier & Houser, 2000:216). Referential skill refers to explaining content effectively while ego support refers to meeting learners’ emotional needs and motivating them. These two skills represent different dimensions of communication: affective and non-affective oriented.

Communication is the foundation for all interpersonal relationships that a SEBD educator forms. Consequently, educators should continuously work on improving their communication skills and when communicating, educators should make use of the skills of attentiveness, listening and empathy.

Bicard (2000:37-45) explains that classroom rules might be considered one form of communicating expectations and that they may constitute the most cost-effective form of classroom management. Importantly, rules may help learners with language problems better understand expectations and set the
stage for positive environmental influences for effective classroom behaviours.

The facilitator also plays an important role in illustrating communication skills in his or her interaction with SEBD educators. The facilitator will have a respectful and trusting relationship with them, listen to their stories, share their experiences and perceptions with them and empathise with them (Sargeant, Hill & Breau, 2010:126; Du Toit, Grobler & Schenck, 1998:113). The educators are put first, ensuring they become empowered and are able to model these communication skills to their learners. According to Sargeant and Breau (2010:126) particular skills for facilitation include creating supportive learning environments, explicitly valuing interprofessional education, showing appreciation for the roles of diverse individuals, and promoting team formation and conflict resolution.

4.7 PHASE THREE: DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEXT-SPECIFIC EMPOWERMENT SKILLS

The context of empowerment plays a vital role in the development process as there are empowerment skills that are generic in nature that are applicable in different settings. There are also skills that are more context-specific in nature. This phase will focus on those skills that are needed for the specific context of a SEBD school. SEBD educators need the classroom management knowledge and skills necessary to establish contexts that support the academic and behavioural needs of all learners with behavioural challenges (Oliver & Reschly, 2010:195).

As discussed in Chapter One, empowerment can be broken into seven core components (Dempsey & Foreman, 1997:289). They are self-efficacy, participation and collaboration, sense of control, meeting personal needs,
understanding the environment, personal action and access to resources. These will now be discussed in the context of the SEBD school setting.

4.7.1 Participation and collaboration

The relationship between the SEBD educators and the learners has to change to one where both parties participate and collaborate to achieve agreed outcomes.

SEBD educators often use behaviour alteration techniques (BATs) to influence and manage learners’ behaviour and to ensure compliance (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004: 98). The ultimate goal should, however, be for learners to self-regulate their behaviour.

SEBD learners need to be active participants in developing and strengthening appropriate behaviours in a variety of environments. For this reason, the use of cognitive-behavioural interventions (CBI) can be useful as it incorporates both behavioural strategies and cognitive components (Smith et al., 2005:228). However, SEBD educators need to be well-trained and educated in the use of CBI’s and believe in its positive and durable outcomes. Educators should also have an understanding of the programme’s theoretical foundation, before they apply it.

Teaching cognitive strategies combined with effective behavioural contingencies, can help to decrease aggression exhibited by learners and strengthen their pro-social behaviour (Lochman & Wells, 2004:572). Cognitive-behavioural strategies can include: problem-solving, self-instructional training, attribution training, cognitive restructuring, relaxation training and verbal mediation. These strategies focus on a dimension of behaviour that is not directly addressed by the use of reinforcement or punishments linked to the appropriate or inappropriate social response. Instead these strategies combine reinforcement techniques with the
development of effective cognitive mediation through self-talk. Educators can use various strategies, like role plays, self-evaluation, modelling, feedback, reinforcement and cognitive mediation (Kendall, 1993:238; Polsgrove & Smith, 2004:415-416).

4.7.2 Sense of control

SEBD educators need to experience that any changes that occur in the school, are through their choice and that changes are not just enforced on them. This will ensure a rise in their motivation. Furthermore, for educators to have a sense of control, they need to be given feedback on how they are doing and the results that they are achieving. This is the biggest motivator for people (Blanchard, 2007:147).

4.7.3 Meeting personal needs

SEBD educators’ needs and aspirations need to be addressed in ways which make them more capable and more competent. The educators in this research have a clear need to know that what they are doing is right and if not they would like to receive training to be more competent. Clearly, SEBD educators’ communication skills need to be further developed.

Furthermore, it was clear that SEBD learners need to develop the social skills necessary for them to respond positively to the increasing environmental challenges. By developing their social skills, learners would be able to accurately interpret social clues, manage their reactions to external stimuli, navigate challenging social problems successfully and achieve personal goals (Polsgrove & Smith, 2004:400). Learners can become more self-regulated and less aggressive. This in turn leads to a safer and more productive learning environment.
Special education educators are responsible for teaching learners adequate behavioural, social, and academic skills to be successful in inclusive settings. However, research indicates that educators of learners with SEBD may not be adequately prepared, have less experience, and receive less education (Billingsley, Fall & Williams, 2006: 252–264). Koster, Dengerink, Korthagen & Lunenberg (2008: 580) found that the professional development of staff enables staff to set goals for their professional development, challenges them to use a broad variety of professional development activities, and that staff experience that they benefit professionally from participating in the process.

4.7.4 Understanding the environment

SEBD educators should be able to make a critical analysis of the services, structures and sources of (both formal and informal) support in their environment. The support in the school has a dual function: it helps educators to constructively deal with the aggression that they experience and it provides support to educators to deal with the after-effects of aggression, like stress.

Additionally, results from previous research on motivation and classroom environments (Weller, 2005; Shadlyn, 2004:1-7; Vialle, Lysaght & Verenikina, 2000:136; Ames, 1992:263; Marshall, 1985:148), suggest that the psychological environment created by the SEBD educator is a critical factor in learners’ motivation because the environment influences how learners think and feel which, in turn, influence how they behave. Educators who employ interesting, novel and meaningful tasks and emphasise the process of learning are more likely to have learners who are willing to engage cognitively with the work (Mart, 2011:8).
Consequently, the psychological environment constructed by the educator should foster confidence and autonomy which are critical for developing self-regulated, adaptive learners. Learners’ perceptions of educators as being nurturing and supportive of learning are strongly connected to learners’ sense of competence and control.

The classroom environment should also provide guidance and reliability of reinforcement strategies for learners to acquire, perform and maintain appropriate behaviour. The physical classroom environment is equally important as some environments will allow more aggressive behaviour than others.

4.7.5 Personal action

Educators need opportunities to express empowerment through actions in different ways. One way that this might be done is through debriefing sessions at the end of each day. This gives educators an opportunity to reflect on what happened during the day and how their actions de-escalated aggressive incidents. Through this, educators empower themselves as they are able to identify how what they did, was effective.

4.7.6 Access to resources

SEBD educators need to be made aware of resources that can help them cope with the aggression they experience. These might include friends and relatives, community groups and organisations, service supports and self-help groups.
Specific evidence presented to the Empowering Teacher and Scoping Group (Welsh Assembly Government 2009c) suggested that there was a lack of training for meeting the more challenging behaviour of disaffected learners in special schools and in specialist units, such as PRU (Pupil Referral Units) and SEBD schools. Educators are ill-equipped and lack the necessary skills and training to deal with the challenging behaviour they experience on a daily basis.

4.8 PHASE FOUR: SELF-EMPOWERED EDUCATORS

Educators need to identify what they see as their purpose for life. This will help them to identify where they are going to and how they are going to get there. The place the educators are now (a SEBD school) might not be where they hoped to be or want to be but it is part of their inevitable growth. This growth is both necessary and valuable. Maslow (1968:201) summarises the necessity of growth as follows:

“Growth has not only rewards and pleasures, but also many intrinsic pains and always will have … it therefore requires courage, will, choice and strength in the individual, as well as protection, permission and encouragement from the environment”.

Farren and Kaye (Hesselbein, Goldsmith & Beckhard, 1996:181) explain that in order for people to grow, they need a “panoramic view of the present” that encompasses all the aspects that they need to consider in order to anticipate change and plan for the future. Educators in this SEBD school need to have this “extended awareness” of themselves and the school community that they are a part of.
Through praxis, self-empowerment can be enacted or practised, embodied and/or realised. It has to be recognised that it is insufficient to create awareness or understanding of self-empowerment; there is a need for collective solutions which recognise difference or diversity (Webber & Bezanson, 2008:26; Hatton, 2001:272). Prior research indicates that modifiable aspects of the school context such as the policy and practice of the educators as a group strongly shapes the culture of a school and that the educators’ degree of consensus of opinion significantly affects the learners’ outcomes (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004:3-13; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005:412-444; Hattie, 2009; Welsh, 2003:346–368).

Through phases one to three of the self-empowerment programme, a self-empowering environment should be created. These are needed to create the pre-conditions for change in the school and the constructive management of aggression.

4.8.1 A step-by-step guide for constructively managing the aggression in a SEBD school


"The breakthrough discovery of most influence geniuses is that enormous influence comes from focusing on just a few vital behaviours. Even the most pervasive
problems will often yield to changes in a handful of high-leverage behaviours”.

Similarly, the constructive management of aggression can be achieved through five steps and changes in behaviour. This is illustrated in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8 Constructively managing the aggression in the school
**Step 1: Become part of the team**

Educators can be most empowered in a role where they are active individual participants of an inclusive and focused group effort with which they identify and to which they commit themselves (McMillan, Florin, Stevenson, Kerman & Mitchell, 1995:722). The school community has to be both task-focused (dealing with aggressive learners) and inclusive of all members in discussions and decisions.

To create a great team, staff need to be caught doing things right, the positive has to be accentuated (Blanchard, 2007:239). SEBD educators need an environment in which they can grow and where people believe in them.

Stables (2003:895) explains the importance of a shared school vision when he says:

> “What is important about a school is how it is imagined by those who imagine it, among whom the policy-makers are inevitably a tiny constituency with very limited terms of engagement”.

A shared vision should be agreed in the SEBD school as it unifies staff (Kose, 2011:126). The school vision and mission has to be clear and accessible to most staff; shared by most staff; perceived to be meaningful by most staff; pervasive in conversation and decision-making (Coppieters, 2005:135). In this way, the vision is specific, manageable, coherent, focus on learner learning, and transformative.

Staff will need more guidance on how to move from a vision to a reality (Hybels, 2002:55). Hybels (2002:55-72) discusses some of the steps that can be used in moving from vision to reality. These include: refining the vision
with a strategic plan, setting goals with balance in mind, finding “goal champions”, launching the strategic plan, alignment and sharing responsibility for the whole.

When SEBD educators take the time to establish a clear process of steps towards achieving their vision, it gives everyone something to refer to and to work towards. It will also energise the teaching team and focus them on working toward their strengths (Pue, 2005: 145). Furthermore, for vision to be turned into reality, educators need to be continually involved in their professional development. According to Smith (2003:203) professional development implies that an individual educator improves the quality of his or her work and tries to “become the best professional one can possibly be”.

Professional development activities that SEBD educators can participate in, can be grouped into four categories (Koster et al., 2008:577):

1. **Experimenting**: contributing to addressing the aggression in the school, writing policy advisements for managing aggression, designing an innovative workshop on aggression and using new materials or techniques to deal with aggression.

2. **Reflecting**: making a video of the participant’s own incidents of dealing with aggression and analysing it and describing realistic situations of aggressive behaviour.

3. **Learning from others without interaction**: reading literature on aggression.
4. *Learning from others through interaction*: following a course on managing aggression, having a conversation with colleagues and or executive staff about an aggressive incident, consulting a coach, supervisor or external expert on dealing with aggression, and spending more time with colleagues at lunch to discuss strategies that work.

The staff at the SEBD school has to present as a united front and belief in the success of working as a team. Their professional development can emphasise this. When the staff work as a team, it is important that approaches are consistent, conflict between staff is dealt with in private and staff communicate with each other.

**Step 2: Mentoring**

SEBD educators need to be guided in constructively dealing with aggressive incidents. This can be achieved through the use of mentoring. Mentoring can be used with both new and established SEBD educators. For new educators it can be part of their induction and for other educators as part of their continuous professional development.

Mentoring finds its original meaning in a reference to a relationship between two people, one older with greater experience (the mentor), the other, usually younger, with less experience, the mentee (Friday & Friday, 2002:154). The core of the relationship is that it is development-oriented, and also embedded in the setting of a “career” (Westlander, 2009:82).

The modern use of the word *mentor* is “a trusted friend, counsellor or teacher” (Cunningham & Eberle 1993; Kefalas, 2005:2; Equal, 2006: 22). A key
feature of mentoring is that, as an individualised work-based learning model, it ties learning directly to workplace tasks and responsibilities. The effectiveness of mentoring is closely allied to the expertise of the mentor as well as the quality and type of support provided and the presence of a school climate in which critical reflection is encouraged (Nickson & Kritsonis, 2006:4; Parker-Katz & Hughes, 2008:278). Conderman and Stephens (2000:17) note that “successful mentoring programmes encourage the development of a relationship between mentor and mentee while providing assistance tailored to the needs and challenges of the beginning teacher”.

These days mentors provide expertise to less experienced individuals to help them advance their careers, enhance their education, and build their networks, thus in many different arenas people have benefited from being part of a mentoring relationship (Papastamatis, 2010:210). As part of the larger and critical role of professional development for emergent educators, mentors can offer practical and emotional support, act as role models, and facilitate the development of essential instructional and administrative skills (McCormack, Gore & Thomas, 2006:111).

Mentoring in the SEBD school may occur in a range of ways. The key point is that SEBD educators’ needs are identified and dealt with in a constructive manner. The typical forms that the mentor support may take, is summarised in Table 4.1.

Mentor educators need to assure that the supervisory roles they take and the strategies they use to support SEBD mentees’ learning are receptive to their mentees’ concerns and suitable to their current stages of development (Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen & Bergen, 2011: 1050).
From a socio-cultural point of view, the objective, content, and process of interaction that occur in a mentoring dialogue are shaped by the discourses embedded in the particular cultural and political context within which mentor SEBD educators function (Luke, 1996:3-48). Mentor educators constantly have to make decisions about which supervisory skills must be invoked with each SEBD educator in each context at different times and for different
purposes throughout the mentoring process. Hence, roles of mentor educators’ in mentoring dialogues must also be understood as being embedded in mentor educators’ work context (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010:43) and as being shaped by contextual, curricular, population, and school culture factors (Wang, 2001:51-73). In addition, Helman (2006:69-82) mentions five other factors that should be taken into account in mentoring:

- relationship with the mentee;

- emotional state of the mentee:

Le level of knowledge base of the mentee:

- goal of the dialogues; and

- external expectations.

Through mentoring, SEBD educators are provided with learning opportunities in a non-threatening environment, develop their self-confidence in relation to their management of aggressive incidents, and obtain important experiences and expertise. Additionally, their problem-solving skills are empowered; they develop professional networking and teamwork skills and adopt a coaching method with the help of experienced SEBD teaching staff (Phillips & Fragoulis, 2010:209).
A model that can be helpful in mentoring SEBD educators is the Mentor (educator) Roles In Dialogues (MERID) model (Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen & Bergen, 2008:169-182). The vertical axis of the MERID model (Figure 4.9) represents the dimension input, indicated by the degree to which topics are introduced into the dialogue by the mentor educator. This dimension is a continuum with two poles: active and reactive. The horizontal axis represents the dimension directiveness, which indicates the degree to which the mentor educator steers the course of the dialogue. This dimension is a continuum with two poles: directive and non-directive.

The dimensions “input” and “directiveness” are assumed to be independent of each other. The combination of both dimensions results in the conception of four different mentor educator roles in mentoring dialogues: initiator, imperator, advisor and encourager. The approach has to match the SEBD educator mentee’s needs in terms of helping them to deal with aggressive incidents.

**Step 3: Transform the school into a learning organisation**

The SEBD school can be seen as a complex system with various parts. The SEBD school should aim to work towards being a learning organisation. Transforming a school into a learning organisation is a continuous learning process on its own. Learning organisations have three essential characteristics (Coppieters, 2005:134): learning occurs through shared insights, knowledge and a mental model; people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire; facilitates learning of all its members and continually transforms itself.
The essential qualities of a SEBD school as a learning organisation are:

- shared insights or vision;
- learning based on experience;
- willingness to change mental models;
- individual and group motivation;
- team learning;
- learning nurtured by new information; and
• increasing the learning capacity to reach a state of continuous change or transformation.

Senge (Coppieters, 2005:135) proposed five disciplines that organisations need to practice to become a learning organisation. For the SEBD school to transform itself into a learning organisation, they should focus on the following:

1. Educators in the school need to have a good self-knowledge of what they wish to achieve. The personal attitude to learning is the basis for organisational learning.

2. The continual reflection of the tacit mental models that educators of the SEBD school bring to all its activities.

3. Building of a shared vision for the school and its members of the future that they wish to create. The SEBD school has to be value driven.

4. Commitment to team learning.

5. System thinking - a good understanding of how things influence one another within a whole. This is because with important issues, cause and effect are not closely related in time and space.
To turn the school into a learning organisation, will involve a paradigm shift within the school community. As Blanchard (2007:195) says:

“Change is necessary when there is a discrepancy between an actual set of events – something that is happening right now – and a desired set of events – what you would like to happen”.

Step 4: Form a coalition

To initiate the move towards a learning organisation, the school community should form a coalition. This coalition should include educators and other staff, parents and carers and any outside agencies that are involved with the learners like Youth Offending Team (YOT) and Social Services. The school community coalition can be an increasingly visible force for addressing the aggression in the school as it will build confidence and competencies (McMillan et al., 1995:700). This promotes participation, increasing ownership and the expanding resources and increasing commitment to long-term change. A school community coalition can also expand health promotion and prevention activities through influencing individual decision-makers in the school community. This collaborative problem-solving and local ownership of solutions is central to empowerment praxis: translating ideas and theories about empowerment into action and results and linking perceptions of past and future efficacy and control (Wallerstein, 1992:200).

The school community coalition should be characterised by (Coppieters, 2005:135-136):

- being collaborative;
• everyone having a shared belief in the importance of continuous professional growth in the constructive management of aggression;

• an emphasis on the norms of mutual support;

• a belief in providing honest, candid feedback to one’s colleagues;

• the encouragement of informal sharing of ideas and materials, respect for colleagues’ ideas;

• support for risk taking;

• encouragement for open discussion of difficulties in dealing with aggressive incidents;

• sharing success in constructively managing aggressive incidents; and

• a commitment to helping learners deal with their aggression.
Step 5: Approach challenges from a solution-focussed stance

Within the SEBD school setting, the use of a Creative Problem-Solving Model (CPS) can be used as a means to facilitate educator reflection, classroom creativity, and curriculum construction. CPS was initially developed by Alex Osborn and Sidney Parnes in the 1960’s, the CPS model is an established and applied method for teaching critical thinking skills and metacognitive strategies (Maker, 1982).

The CPS model implementation consists of three distinct stages, each devoted to a particular objective (see Figure 4.10). The process involves a facilitator who guides the interaction, a resource person or team to help generate ideas and provide follow-up assistance for taking action, and the educator participant.

The first session, entitled “Exploring the Challenge,” acknowledges the educator’s objectives, explores relevant factual information pertaining to those objectives, and identifies a workable problem statement or question related to the objectives. In this case, the challenge will be to constructively manage the aggression educators experience.

The second session, “Idea Generation,” is entirely devoted to suggesting possible ideas that address the problem statement. These ideas are generated through brainstorming, mindmapping, and prompts and techniques aimed at exploring possible solutions. Educators will come up with their own ideas on how to constructively manage the aggression that they experience. Some ideas might include further training, consequences used and what has worked in the past.
The final session, “Preparing for Action,” evaluates the generated ideas against specific criteria, and culminates with a pragmatic action plan, complete with timeline, in order to implement the final selected idea. Educators can compile an action plan to constructively manage the aggression through identifying the aggressive behaviours that occur the most often and deciding on consequences linked to each behaviour. They have to be consistent in their approach.

Although the CPS model identifies distinct roles for those involved, the process relies on the collaborative efforts of individuals committed to work together to creatively improve a given environment (Treffinger, Selby, & Isaksen, 2008:399).
The CPS model is also supportive of the five basic assumptions of *Invitational Education*: Optimism, Trust, Respect, Care, and Intentionality. As a group, the school staff will consistently interact positively and contemplatively, and gear their thoughts towards the stated interests and obstacles (Chant, Moes & Ross, 2009:62).

Plucker (Beghetto, 2005:255) notes that creativity is:

> “...the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context”.

This definition also illustrates the aim and outcome of this effort: Inviting collaboration amongst professionals to identify and implement workable solutions and resources in response to specific educator needs. Empowering SEBD educators to benefit from their own creativity is a worthwhile pursuit as it will enable them to come up with new ways of constructively managing the aggression that they experience.

The school needs to provide SEBD educators with opportunities to be creative. Creativity, as reflected in more recent descriptions, is perceived as a mechanism for individual expression, self-realisation, and self-fulfilment (Cropley, 2006:127). Within the school, creativity can be fostered not individually and in isolation but in a social network that fosters individual and group growth collectively.

Creativity is not simply an objective property, but instead an effect of social interactions between SEBD educators and the environment in which he or she interacts. These social interactions can be structured to foster human potential in ways that allow educators to add to, rather than subtract from, the
process of being a beneficial presence to the school and the learners they serve (Novak & Purkey, 2001:28).

The empowerment of educators in a SEBD school is clearly not a simplistic process. That is why it needs to take place through different phases that each focuses on a different component of empowering educators. SEBD educators need to successfully work through and complete each phase before they can move on to the next phase. Skills and qualities gained in one phase will be further developed and utilised in the next phase. Consequently, phases cannot be “skipped” as they are seen as unnecessary or too time-consuming. The achievement of the ultimate aim, wholeness and empowerment can only be realised by following this structured, guided approach through the programme.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the psycho-educational programme to facilitate the self-empowerment of educators in a SEBD school was discussed. In the following chapter guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of the programme will be discussed.
CHAPTER 5

GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME TO FACILITATE THE SELF-EMPOWERMENT OF EDUCATORS IN A SECONDARY SEBD SCHOOL TO CONSTRUCTIVELY MANAGE THE AGGRESSION THAT THEY EXPERIENCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Four the empowerment programme was discussed. The programme envisaged a “self-empowerment journey” towards wholeness through four phases. The findings of Chapter Three were implemented in the description of the structure and process of the programme. Guidelines for the implementation of the programme are discussed in Chapter Five.

5.2 GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SELF-EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME FOR SECONDARY SEBD EDUCATORS

The educator self-empowerment programme was specifically “designed” to assist the self-empowerment processes of educators in secondary SEBD schools. These educators have a variety of responsibilities or perceived responsibilities in their school communities.
As discussed in Chapter Four, the self-empowerment programme consists of four individual phases, as shown in Figure 4.5 (paragraph 4.3). These phases are:

- **Phase 1:** Discover the value of self
- **Phase 2:** Development of interpersonal relationship skills
- **Phase 3:** Development of context-specific empowerment skills
- **Phase 4:** Self-empowered educators

Each phase has a unique and different focus and would therefore need individualised guidelines for its implementation.

### 5.2.1 The facilitator

The facilitators of the programme are important as they will play an integral role in the programme being successful.

Therefore, the facilitator of the self-empowerment programme should be someone with certain characteristics. These include, but are not limited to: listening to others, being able to communicate clearly, checking understanding, summarising and drawing together different ideas, thinking and acting creatively, managing people’s feelings, encouraging humour and respect, being well prepared whilst remaining flexible and keeping to time without being driven by it. These characteristics are shown in Figure 5.1.
Furthermore, for both the facilitator and the programme to be credible, the facilitator has to be someone that has:

- experience of working in a SEBD school or similar setting;

- the capacity and skill to sell and market the psycho-educational programme;

- a track record of taking risks and successfully dealing with change;
• the ability to anticipate and overcome resistance; and

• the ability to build and maintain good relationships;

The facilitator will take on various roles throughout the programme. The facilitator can be the instructor, who imparts information to the participants, the neutral chair, the consultant, from whom participants can ask questions, the devil’s advocate, the commentator, the wanderer, such as in a large group, and the absent friend (McCrorie, 2006:7). These roles lay on an active/passive continuum and is dependent on how involved the facilitator is. This is shown in Figure 5.2.

![Figure 5.2 The active/passive continuum](image-url)
The role the facilitator assumes will be dependent on which phase of the psycho-educational programme participants are in.

5.2.2 Phase 1: Discover the value of self

During the first phase, the facilitator will focus on enabling participants to discover their own value.

- **Objective:** The objective is for educators to become more aware of their own value and individuality.

- **Strategy:** Secondary SEBD educators to establish a relationship of trust and an open, free environment where self-exploration and self-discovery can take place.

- **Activities:** The promotion of self-awareness is essential. Through self-knowledge educators recognise their own values and the biases that might colour their perception of others; and through self-awareness they can assess the effects of their behaviour on learners (Borich, 1999: 95). When educators are more aware of their dispositions, they will be more purposeful in their teaching and, therefore, more likely to achieve their goals (Dottin, 2009: 87). Helping educators to achieve self-awareness must be purposeful and ongoing (Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2010: 361). Decision-making is key to becoming an educator who is responsive to the needs of learners and who is able to make choices that are
consistent with best practice (Bucci, 2000:75). The foundation of good decision-making lies in developing a sense of self-awareness.

The facilitator should create an environment that is safe for educators both emotionally and intellectually (Bullough & Gitlin, 2001). Facilitators should:

- show and communicate that they are committed to them as unique individuals;

- express an investment in their growth and development, not only as educators, but as human beings;

- be caring and make educators feel valued, important, challenged, and engaged, both in and out of the classroom;

- model their use of self-awareness to reaffirm or modify their own views;

- allow educators to have differing points of view and to examine the facilitator’s beliefs.

Through all of these, the educators can be guided through meaningful discussions that allow them to explore the reasons behind their beliefs and practices (Levine, 2005:55).
This involves helping educators to review their emerging strengths, weaknesses, and interests on a periodic basis and then working with them as they attempt to address any shortcomings. It is important to teach teachers how to acknowledge what they think about themselves and to engage in evaluative thinking in regards to their role as an educator (Baum & King, 2006:219).

During this phase, the facilitator can sometimes take on a more didactic role, with interactions being mainly between the facilitator and individual participants. The facilitator is helping educators in coming to terms with different aspects of the “self” that will eventually help them in exercising self-awareness. This will enable the educators to grow as individuals in ways that can benefit both them and the school community. This is shown in Figure 5.3.

![Figure 5.3 The didactic facilitator](image)
The facilitator is guiding the programme participants on what to do at this point, therefore the facilitator is inviting and active during this phase. The activities used by the facilitator in this phase, can include:

1. *Reflection groups* – participants are asked to reflect on how their experience of aggression makes them feel and to share instances of where they feel that they dealt well with an aggressive incident;

2. *Learning tracking* - educators are asked to identify and record their own learning objectives in relation to managing aggression prior to starting the programme (pre-programme learning objectives). At the end of each session they are asked to identify the learning objective(s) they had met that session.

3. *Journal option* - educators are encouraged to keep a journal throughout the programme and beyond in order to promote reflection.

5.2.3 **Phase 2: Development of interpersonal relationship skills**

During the second phase the facilitator is focusing on developing participants’ interpersonal relationship skills.
• **Objective:** The objective is to assist and facilitate secondary SEBD educators in exploring and developing their interpersonal skills and relationships. They have to learn how to effectively express themselves and how to be part of constructive relationships.

• **Strategy:** Improving secondary SEBD educators’ interpersonal and communication skills.

• **Activities:** The improvement of communication and interpersonal skills is vital for secondary SEBD educators. Çam and Tümkaya (2008:16) found a positive relationship between communication skill and constructive problem-solving and between communication skill and insistent-persevering approach. It has also been found that individuals who perceive themselves as competent in problem-solving are more extraverted, positive, and have a more positive self-perception in interpersonal relationships (D’Zurilla, Chang, & Sanna, 2003:430). Individuals who are successful in communication generally have self-confidence and are respectful and open to sharing and cooperation. Individuals who lack confidence are fearful and fail to empathise and experience problems in communication (Bilen, 2004:25).

Educators are one of the main sources for improving the problem-solving skills of learners (Arslan, 2010:257). Educators play an important role in showing learners that they (the learners) have the ability and ways and means to deal with challenges that arise in their environment (Bingham, 1998:13).
Appropriate problem-solving is achieved by effective communication, which is the common feature of all problem-solving approaches (McWhirter & Voltan-Acar, 2000:53). The situations and problems individuals encounter take place in social contexts. Therefore, the problems they have to solve emerge in interpersonal communication networks, and problem-solving requires an effective use of communication skills (Kurtyılmaz, 2005:12). Communication is the basis of personal relationships.

The facilitator should use a variety of interpersonal skills in this phase to establish rapport and develop a positive working relationship with participants. The facilitator should:

- use open questions that start with words and phrases such as what, why, how, and tell me about . . . or what if?
- get participants to open up and contribute to the discussion;
- be a good listener;
- give positive feedback to participants that is specific, immediate, earned and individualised.

During this phase, the facilitator’s focus moves to taking on a more passive role and participants become more active. There should now be regular interactions between participants as well as between the facilitator and the participants. This is shown in Figure 5.4.
Figure 5.4 The participative facilitator

The facilitator takes on this role to:

- be more passive while the participants are more active; and

- model the necessary interpersonal skills that the participants should develop.

In turn, participants have an opportunity to practice interpersonal skills in a safe environment and in a nurturing relationship. Furthermore, they are
forming constructive relationships within the school and a sense of group identity. It also improves participants’ communication skills.

In addition to setting activities that encourage discussion between participants and get them engaged with the topic, one of the main techniques that a facilitator can use to stimulate discussion is the use of appropriate questioning and different questioning techniques. Furthermore, Jacques (McKimm & Morris, 2009:655) suggests that by using different types of questioning techniques, facilitators can shift the learning and participation focus (see Figure 5.5).

![Different questioning techniques](image)

5.2.4 Phase 3: Development of context-specific empowerment skills

During the third phase, the facilitator supports participants in developing the skills they need to be empowered within the SEBD school context.
• **Objective:** The objective is to support secondary SEBD educators to explore and develop the necessary skills that they need to be self-empowered within the SEBD school environment.

• **Strategy:** Secondary SEBD educators should be encouraged to explore and develop their self-efficacy. This will improve their ability to collaborate and participate and they would gain a sense of control and feel able to meet their own personal needs.

Educators with a high sense of efficacy about their teaching capabilities may have an easier time motivating their learners and enhancing their cognitive development. These educators may also be able to rebound from setbacks and more willing to experiment with new ideas or techniques. Low efficacious educators may rely more on a controlling teaching style and may be more critical of learners.

• **Activities:** The facilitator should:

  - Establish specific, short-term goals that will challenge the participants, yet are still viewed as attainable;

  - Help participants to lay out a specific learning strategy and have them verbalise their plan. As participants proceed through the task, participants are asked to note their progress and verbalise the next steps;
- Compare participants’ performance to the goals set for that participant, rather than comparing one participant against another or comparing one participant to the rest of the group;

- Provide opportunities for role-play and modelling where participants can observe others successfully performing a skill; and

- Providing specific and positive feedback to participants.

5.2.5 Phase 4: Self-empowered educators

During the fourth phase educators should be empowered and as a result be able to constructively deal with the aggression that they experience on a regular basis.

- **Objective:** The objective is for secondary SEBD educators to constructively manage the aggression that they experience on a regular basis.

- **Strategy:** Secondary SEBD educators to explore and develop constructive ways of dealing with aggressive incidents.

- **Activities:** The facilitator should:
- explore with educators what they feel is their purpose in life. This will help them to identify where they are going to and how they are going to get there;

- provide opportunities for educators where they are active individual participants of an inclusive and focused group effort with which they identify and to which they commit themselves;

- develop a school vision and mission with educators that is clear and accessible to most staff, shared by most staff and perceived to be meaningful by most staff;

- guide educators to move from a vision to a reality;

- provide educators with an opportunity to experiment, reflect, learn from others;

- act as a mentor or provide mentoring opportunities; and

- provide opportunities for educators to solve problems using the creative problem solving method.

### 5.3 SCHEDULE OF THE PROGRAMME

The presentation of the programme requires at least 20-24 hours. Individual SEBD schools can decide whether they want to run the programme as part of four INSET (In-service training) days (five hours each) or on different
afternoons after school (two hours for ten days). After each session an evaluation will be carried out.

5.4 PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The success of the programme is closely related to “how” the “information” is communicated and integrated through facilitation. The challenge is to get the educators involved in the learning experience that the programme entails.

The programme should be offered within a group setting as interpersonal communication and interpersonal skills are fundamental to empowering educators. SEBD educators will be invited on a journey of learning, growing and developing, rather than acquiring a lot of new information. The focus is more on of the “renovation” of SEBD educators.

The goal of the programme is to assist secondary SEBD educators in:

- A wholistic understanding of the SEBD school community.

- Taking responsibility for their own personal development, growth and empowerment.

- Envisioning and creating a better future for their school.
• Finding new ways of dealing with aggressive learners in the school.

• Constructively managing the aggression they experience on a daily basis.

• Professional development and growth as a life-long process.

• Taking responsibility and ownership of the unique challenges that their school communities are facing.

• Seizing the opportunity of assisting learners to change their lives for the better.

Time should also be set aside for discussions with individuals who need guidance or personal help.

5.5 GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE SELF-EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

The evaluation of the programme can be divided into three parts.
5.5.1 Process evaluation

The evaluation will focus on assessing the extent to which the programme objectives have been met. Furthermore, process evaluation would determine whether the programme was carried out as planned. The results will help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, and where improvements may be made (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000:200).

Process evaluation consists of five components, namely, programme adherence, implementation process, intended dosage, macro-level implication, and process-outcome linkage (Scheirer, 1994:56).

Programme adherence deals with whether the programme is being delivered as intended according to the original programme design. It is an important factor affecting the quality of programme implementation (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000:205; Fagan, Hanson, Hawkins & Arthur, 2008:240). True programme fidelity is not easily achieved because programme implementers often change or adapt the programme content during actual implementation, whether intentionally or otherwise. Studies have shown that a number of programmes do not follow the prescribed programme content entirely, and adaptation is made to specific target groups (Elliot & Mihalic, 2004:51; Nation, Crusto, Wandersman, Kumpfer, Seybolt, Morrissey-Kane & Davino, 2003:455).

Process factors are those that can be observed during the implementation process and are contingent to implementation quality or success (Law & Shek, 2011:540).

Programme dosage refers to the effort by programme facilitators to follow the required time prescribed for a programme, as inadequate time affects the quality of programme implementation (Bowes, Marquis, Young, Holowaty & Isaac, 2009:394; Johnson, Lai, Rice, Rose & Webber, 2010:S16). Dosage also refers to the group size of programme receivers.
Process evaluation can provide important findings with macro-level programme implications, such as the importance of engagement of different community stakeholders (Carswell, Hanlon, O’Grady, Watts, & Pothong, 2009:446; Zani & Cicognani, 2010:67), recipient needs (Kwong et al., 2009:96), assessment of the environment (Eisenberg, 2009:291; Stewart, 2008:39), and challenges of the programmes for a particular context (Louis, Parow, Eby, Bingham, Hockanson & Greenspan, 2008:300).

Process evaluation provides insights for programme developers and implementers into the linkage between process and outcome. These insights allow both programme developers and implementers to delineate the success and improvement areas during the process and connect them with the programme outcomes.

5.5.2 Impact assessment

This will determine whether the self-empowerment programme has brought about a change. The impact, or programme effect, refers to a change in the target population (SEBD educators) that has been brought about by the programme – that is, a change that would not have occurred if the programme had not happened.

Stakeholder engagement is a key component of any impact assessment (Becker, Harris, McLaughlin & Nielsen, 2003:380; Cameron, Ghosh & Eaton, 2011:435). It is recognised as an important tool to inform, expand effective practice, and increase the feasibility and acceptability of final recommendations (Mahoney, Potter & Marsh, 2007:239). Stakeholders in this study would include the school, the governing body and the Local Education Authority.
Impact assessments have the potential to enhance the lives of impacted populations. Stakeholder engagement is an important tool for making positive impacts a reality in all types of impact assessment, benefiting not only populations but also project proponents (Tamburrini, Gilhuly & Harris-Roxas, 2011:203).

5.5.3 Outcome evaluation

An outcome evaluation is a type of evaluation that investigates whether changes occur for participants in a programme and if these changes are associated with a programme or an activity (Trochim, 2006:1). Such evaluations examine whether, to what extent, and in what direction outcomes change for those in the programme (Allen & Bronte-Tinkew, 2008:1).

Process evaluation and outcome evaluation are strongly linked. Process evaluation sheds light on which types of interventions strategies or process are related to the programme success (Painter, Sales, Pazol, Grimes, Wingood & DiClemente, 2010:426). These factors can be amplified during programme reimplementation.

Outcomes are specific attitudes, knowledge, behaviours, or skills of participants that programmes aim to influence positively.

Outcome evaluations can be experimental or quasi-experimental.

- Experimental evaluations are random assignment studies that assess the overall impacts of a programme or programme activities and allow for conclusions to be drawn about cause and effect. In experimental evaluations, a lottery system is used to assign
participants to a treatment group, which receives programme services, or to a control group, which does not receive these services (Moore, forthcoming).

- Quasi-experimental evaluations monitor outcomes over time for a single group (comparing the presence of intended changes in outcomes before and after receiving programme services) or compare outcomes among individuals receiving programme services to a similar population, a comparison group, or to national data.

According to United Way of America (Hendricks, Plantz, & Pritchard, 2008: 15) outcome evaluations can determine successful components of a programme and enable practitioners to:

- describe and understand the characteristics of the participants;

- strengthen programme services and identify training needs for staff and participants;

- help understand programme success and identify the services that have been the most effective;

- develop long-range plans for the programme;
• bring programmatic issues to the attention of a school’s governing body; and

• attract funding to the programme.

Once an evaluation is complete it is important to provide feedback to the stakeholders involved in the programme. Dissemination of the results will help garner further support for the programme if it is successful and help others gain support for the introduction of similar programmes. Publicity from dissemination activities may also increase the impact of the programme. If the programme has not been successful it is important to share this with others so that weaknesses or relevant issues are considered in other similar interventions, including whether or not to introduce such interventions.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of the self-empowerment programme were discussed. A possible way to evaluate the programme was also discussed. In Chapter Six the conclusions, limitations and recommendations will be discussed.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of the programme were discussed. This chapter will discuss whether the objectives of the study were achieved. The limitations of the study as well as some recommendations will be discussed. The researcher’s original contribution will also be described.

6.2 CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to describe and develop a psycho-educational programme to facilitate the self-empowerment of secondary SEBD educators to constructively manage the aggression they experience.

The method used to meet the broad objective, was achieved by using a qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual research design. The research design was discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

Three steps were followed in the psycho-educational programme development. In step one a situation analysis by means of a phenomenological approach was conducted through semi-structured interviews with the educators in a secondary SEBD school. The data
obtained was analysed and categorised. The themes that emerged from the data were used as the basis of the planned programme. The findings from the data were contextualised and a literature control was carried out.

In step two a programme was developed to facilitate the self-empowerment of secondary SEBD educators to ensure they constructively manage the aggression that they experience.

In step three the guidelines for the programme implementation and evaluation were discussed.

The results that were obtained were analysed in Chapter Three. The results indicated that all the educators had experienced aggression and that no one has been unaffected by the experience of aggression. During the interviews the educators spoke of the different ways in which they experienced aggression. Some experienced overt aggression like fights, damage to property, verbal abuse or swearing and insults. Others faced more covert forms of aggression like refusal to work, insensitivity to others, threats, bullying, underlying and hurtful comments and actions. Both types of aggression affected the educators. The educators commented on the strain these daily experiences of aggression puts on their relationships with the learners and their empathy for the learners’ circumstances and behaviour.

The central story line of the experiences of the secondary SEBD educators can be described as a preoccupation with their inability to address most of the factors causing the aggression due to constraints in time, resources and skills.

Educators also described how they experience learners’ aggression in different ways and that it affects them on different levels: physically, emotionally and interpersonally. They explained that it was like being pulled in different directions, almost simultaneously. They expressed a sense of feeling helpless and lacking the necessary skills and abilities to deal with the aggression. All of this makes them feel “disempowered”. If they want to deal constructively with the aggression that they experience, they need to be
confident in their abilities and skills and feel empowered. For educators to become self-empowered, they have to gain and master various skills ranging from being self-aware to interpersonal relationship skills.

In Chapter Four the conceptual framework for a self-empowerment programme is presented. The programme was developed from the themes and categories that emerged from the data analysis. The goal of this programme is to serve as a “framework” for the empowerment of secondary SEBD educators. The programme includes the following:

**Phase One: Discover the value of self**

- Self
- Self-awareness
- Self-efficacy
- Self-responsibility

**Phase Two: Development of interpersonal relationship skills**

- Interpersonal skills
• Interpersonal relationships

• Communication skills

Phase Three: Development of context-specific empowerment skills

• Self-efficacy

• Participation and collaboration

• Sense of control

• Meeting personal needs

• Understanding the environment

• Personal action

• Access to resources
Phase Four: Self empowered educators that constructively manage aggression

- Knowing one’s context
- Psychological empowerment
- Organisational (school) empowerment
- Create positive change
- Team work (collective efficacy)
- Turning vision into action

This is in line with Garbers’ (1972:9) psycho-educational model that builds on the relationship with the self, the relationship with others and a future directedness.

In Chapter Five the guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of the programme were discussed. The guidelines for the implementation of the programme focussed on:

- the facilitator’s role in the different phases of the self-empowerment programme;
the schedule of the programme; and

the presentation of the programme.

The guidelines for the evaluation of the self-empowerment programme were divided into three parts:

- process evaluation;

- impact assessment; and

- outcome evaluation.

The indications are that the programme should reach the intended objectives. The evaluation should evaluate the developed programme and guidelines and not the possible implementation.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations can be made in terms of future research and programme implementation.
6.3.1 Future research

It will be useful if the psycho-educational programme could be trialled so that the role of the facilitator is described in more detail. The programme can be marketed, facilitation of individuals can be better managed, participants can be motivated more and a “follow-up” study of how educators are doing in praxis after completing the programme can be carried out. Critically evaluating the programme after a year can lead to new insights and adjustments to the programme to make it more effective.

Subsequently, the programme’s impact will be more widespread. Learners in SEBD schools will be affected by the different approach to their aggressive behaviour and how it is dealt with. Research can be carried out into how this has affected them.

Furthermore, the changes in the school will spill-over into the school community. Further research can be carried out into how the parents of learners experience the new approach to aggression and how it has impact their children’s behaviour.

The programme will also have an impact on the school’s culture. Support staff will be affected by it. Management teams may be challenged by a new approach. Research can be conducted into how these groups experience the programme.

6.3.2 Programme implementation

The researcher envisages that the programme can be implemented in more SEBD schools so that more educators (and possibly other staff) can benefit from it.
It will remain a major challenge to identify and develop facilitators that will take responsibility as programme facilitators. This could lead to more educators being able to “teach” their colleagues and not just the learners in their lessons.

Ultimately, current in-service training policy needs to be investigated and adapted. The current statutory requirements for in-service training of educators in SEBD schools, does not focus on preparing them to deal constructively with aggression. Rather, the approach is reactive and focuses on dealing with the effects of the aggressive behaviour through restraint and positive handling. Educators complete an annual course of 3-5 days in this. In reality, educators should be trained in proactive ways of dealing with aggression to ensure the constructive management of aggression. This will decrease the need for restraints and positive handling situations. However, this can only become a reality through a change in policy – both in the school and in the teaching profession.

6.4 ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Through this research study, the researcher has made an original contribution through:

- A theoretical and practical contribution by ensuring a better understanding of how educators in a secondary SEBD school experience aggression and how these experiences affect them and lead to feelings of disempowerment.
• A practical contribution through the development of a programme to address the self-empowerment of educators in a secondary SEBD school by addressing their development as a whole person.

• A methodological contribution by developing guidelines for the implementation and evaluation of the self-empowerment programme.

• A contribution towards policy by addressing the gap that exists between the amount of provision made for learners in secondary SEBD schools compared to the training and professional development that the educators that teach in these schools receive.

6.5 CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

A challenge of this study is that the guidelines for the psycho-educational programme implementation and evaluation have not been applied in practice. The impact of the current study and the extent, to which the developed guidelines were used successfully, can be further investigated in post-doctoral research. However within the context of this thesis, the guidelines were thoroughly researched and developed and extensive guidelines were given for both the implementation and the evaluation of the programme. This ensures that any future study will be possible to carry out.
6.6 SUMMARY

The discussions in this chapter conclude the development, implementation and evaluation of a psycho-educational programme to facilitate the empowerment of secondary SEBD school educators to constructively manage the aggression they experience.
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ANNEXURE A:

LETTERS
ETHICAL CLEARANCE

20 November 2006

Dear Professor Myburgh and Ms van der Merwe

Ethical Clearance Number: 128 10/11/06

Re: Ethical Approval for Doctoral Study

Title: A psycho-educational programme for educators for the management of aggression in a secondary ESBD (emotional, social and behaviour disorders) school in the United Kingdom

The FAEC has decided to

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Sincerely

[Signature]

Professor B. Smit

Chair: FACULTY ACADEMIC ETHICS COMMITTEE
ANNEXURE B: LETTER OF CONSENT
Dear Prospective Participant,

PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I, Lize van der Merwe, am a D.Ed (Psychology of Education) student at the University of Johannesburg (South Africa). Currently I am engaged in a research project entitled “A Psycho-Educational Programme for the management of aggression in a secondary ESBD (emotional, social and behaviour disorders) school in the United Kingdom”. This research project is conducted under the supervision of Professors CPH Myburgh (Department of Educational Psychology) and M Poggenpoel (Department of Nursing Science). Prospective participants are invited to participate in this research.

The main objective of the research is the development of a programme for educators (teachers and LSA’s) to facilitate the constructive management of aggression in a secondary ESBD school. The purpose of this programme is to provide educators with the skills and understanding to manage aggression in a constructive manner, thereby promoting educators’ mental health. Phenomenological interviews with all stakeholders (learners, parents/carers and
educators) as well as field notes will be utilized to achieve the aim of this programme.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods will be used in the study, which will have an explorative, descriptive, contextual and evaluative focus. It will be conducted in four phases according to the steps involved in programme development, - implementation and evaluation.

In order to conduct the first phase of this research study, I need to conduct confidential interviews with educators, learners and parents/carers. Each interview will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes and will be audio taped and transcribed verbatim. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, a qualified independent coder will verify all findings.

In the subsequent programme-implementation phase, participating educators will be involved in four sessions lasting approximately one and a half hours. Although the content of the sessions will only be finalized once the interviews are concluded, the nature thereof will include active discussions as well as participation in written and verbal tasks. In order to evaluate whether the goals of the programme have been attained, participants will also be requested to complete a questionnaire prior to and after the sessions. It is estimated that the completion of the questionnaires will not take more than two hours.

There are no evident risks for stakeholders participating in the research study other than a possibility of initial discomfort towards the topic addressed in the research. The immediate benefit of the study to the participants is that they will be able to verbalise their experiences and participation in the programme will enable them to manage aggression in the school in a constructive manner. The implementation of such a programme in other secondary ESBD schools will benefit educators who deal with aggression on a daily basis.
The researcher will ensure the anonymity of the participants by omitting participants' names on all data collected (names will be substituted with code numbers and a master list will be kept in a separate place). Should a loss of confidentiality be threatened, all records and links to identity will be destroyed. Furthermore, confidentiality will be ensured in that only the independent coder and the researcher will peruse the transcribed material.

Participation is voluntary and respondents are under no obligation to take part in the study. The participants reserve the right to withdraw at any stage during the research process. Such withdrawal will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which the respondents are otherwise entitled.

If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is complete, please feel free to contact me on my mobile phone (07974625148) or e-mail (lizevdm@yahoo.com). A summary of the research findings will be made available to you at the completion of the study if you so wish.

Thank you for your support.

Ms L van der Merwe: Researcher
BA(Ed), B.Ed(Hons), M.Ed, D.Ed (Student)

Prof CPH Myburgh: Promoter
HED, BSc(Hon), M Comm, D.Ed

Prof M Poggenpoel :Co-promotor
RN D Phil
I, ____________________________, grant Ms. L. van der Merwe permission to proceed with the above mentioned research project. I grant her permission to make audiotapes as necessary with the understanding that every effort will be made to ensure participants' and schools' anonymity.

______________________________
Signature

______________________________
Date

UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG
PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I, Lize van der Merwe, am a D.Ed (Psychology of Education) student at the University of Johannesburg (South Africa). Currently I am engaged in a research project entitled “A Psycho-Educational Programme for the management of aggression in a secondary ESBD (emotional, social and behaviour disorders) school in the United Kingdom”. This research project is conducted under the supervision of Professors CPH Myburgh (Department of Educational Psychology) and M Poggenpoel (Department of Nursing Science).

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There are no evident risks for stakeholders participating in the research study other than a possibility of initial discomfort towards the topic addressed in the research. The immediate benefit of the study to the participants is that they will be able to verbalise their experiences and participation in the programme will enable them to manage aggression in the school in a constructive manner. The implementation of such a programme in other secondary ESBD schools will benefit educators who deal with aggression on a daily basis.
The researcher will ensure the anonymity of the participants by omitting participants' names on all data collected (names will be substituted with code numbers and a master list will be kept in a separate place). Should a loss of confidentiality be threatened, all records and links to identity will be destroyed. Furthermore, confidentiality will be ensured in that only the independent coder and the researcher will peruse the transcribed material.

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If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is complete, please feel free to contact me on my mobile phone (07974625148) or e-mail (lizevdm@yahoo.com). A summary of the research findings will be made available to you at the completion of the study if you so wish.

Thank you for your support.

Ms L van der Merwe: Researcher
BA(Ed), B.Ed(Hons), M.Ed, D.Ed (Student)

Prof CPH Myburgh: Promoter
HED, BSc(Hon), M Comm, D.Ed

Prof M Poggenpoel: Co-promotor
RN D Phil
ANNEXURE C: TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS
How do you experience aggression in school?

Uhm, I experience aggression mainly when certain students do not earn their points in my lessons because they arrived late or was verbally or physically inappropriate in my lesson. (Pause, frowning) Also, if a student is angry and not out of class they tend to be aggressive to me if I am helping the sweeper increase in speed of talking; raised tone). There is only a small minority of students that do this when they are upset. (speed slows done and tone return to normal) Most realise that I am there to help. (Pause) I have witnessed lots of fights and arguments between students. Sometimes you get involved (pause; hesitates) because you want to stop the fight. (speed of talking increasing) You want to stop the fight, so you try to get them away from each other (pitch increasing) so that they can calm down and then (speed slowing down) you can try and resolve whatever happened.

Tell me more about the type of aggression you experience?

(Pause) Swearing mainly. (Pause) On two occasions I have been threatened by students saying that they will kill or hurt me (speed increasing). These students were severely dealt with by the head and the police. (speed normal) We [referring to herself and her daughter Holly, who was a student teacher on work experience at the time] have both witnessed bullying everyday in every year group. (pause) I think bullying is just another way (speed and tone of voice increasing) of showing aggression. (Pause) It’s just less obvious (speed slowing down; pitch lower).

Explain to me how it was dealt with?

The students that threatened me, were excluded and then brought in with
parents and police officers. \textit{(Pause)} It was explained to them that their behaviour was unacceptable and will not be allowed. They were also told that if it were to happen again, police action will be taken.

\textit{Tell me about how this has made a difference to their aggressive behaviour towards you?}

Ah, \textit{(pause)} both students have been extra careful when speaking to me and also have tried to help me out when I was dealing with other aggressive students. \textit{(Pause)} But it won't work with all students. Some students do not have enough empathy to understand what they have done. Students with violent backgrounds tend to continue the trend, escalating their behaviour regardless of whether the police gets involved. \textit{(speed increasing)} Unless you have a strong relationship with an individual, \textit{(speed decreasing)} it is hard to change their behaviour towards you because uhm, you don't have an impact on them \textit{(tone low)} and they don't care about what you think or do. \textit{(Pause)} They will then just continue to be aggressive towards you. \textit{(sighs)}

\textit{Tell me more about how you feel when someone is being aggressive towards you?}

When it is a student that I have spent a lot of time helping, e.g. mentoring, supporting in lessons etc., then it really hurts. \textit{(slow speed; low tone)} When they show me so much aggression, it comes as a shock. \textit{(pause; hesitating)} I easily cope more with the students who are generally aggressive around the school because I know it is not personal. \textit{(speed increasing)} When it happens to me, some students have really been generally sorry and come and find me to put things right. I have also had many students step in to support me and advise other students and remind them what I do for them to try and bring them round.

\textit{Describe to me when other students get involved in the aggressive incident?}

It shows how these students really feel about you, \textit{(pause)} and peer pressure
is very strong if used in the appropriate way. If they respect the other students then maybe they may change their behaviour towards me. Uhm, (pause) the students will tell the others that they are being silly and remind them to think of the consequences of what they are doing. (pause) Sometimes it helps to hear it from their peers.

HS

How do you experience aggression in School?

Ah, (pause) I experienced aggression when I tried to re-focus students who were exiting the class because they didn’t want to do the work and were exited to the sweeper or (pause) because they were upset about something that happened in class or something that the teacher said. (Pause) Like if she gave them a lunchtime or after-school detention or said she was gonna phone their parents.

Tell me more about the type of aggression you experience?

Once I watched a child hitting the wall repeatedly with a bat outside a classroom. (Pause, speed slowing down) I told him to stop, he just told me to shut the f**k up. (pause) I didn’t know what to say or do when that happened (tone low; head dropping)

Describe to me how this made you feel?

It made me feel hurt and rejected (speed increasing; higher pitch). I was only trying to help. (pause) It also made me upset with the student for being so aggressive towards me because we normally get on well and I didn’t expect him to be so rude towards me (raised tone; faster speed). .

Explain to me what happened then?

Mmm, (pause) I explained to the student that I wasn’t going to keep quiet
because I was there to help him.  (*increased pitch*) I stood just watching him for a while till he calmed down, (*lower tone*) I made sure he wasn’t injuring anyone or anything valuable because then I would’ve had to get the sweeper. (*pause*) After he calmed down, I asked him if he was okay. He told me he wasn’t and that someone had upset him. I asked him who had upset him and what they have done to upset him. He told me another learner had upset him because he said something about his mom. (*pause*) We talked about what the other learner had said and I tried to make him understand that what the other learner said wasn’t true. (*slower speed*) The learner realised this after we talked about it and was able to see that the other learner was just winding him up. (*pause*) We then spoke about what to do next: going back to class, apologising to the teacher, getting on with his work etc. (*speed increasing*) We also talked about what he can do next time when someone winds him up (tell the teacher, move away, take time-out). (*tone lower*) He then went back to his lesson and was fine for the rest of the day, he wasn’t aggressive again that day. (*lower pitch*)

DK

*How do you experience aggression in School?*

Mmm… (*pause*) this actually depends on what the situation is. (*pause; sigh*) If I am confronted (face to face) with someone, I immediately begin to experience an empty feeling within. (*speed increasing*) My muscles tense up (especially in my face), teeth begin to tingle, like I have pins and needles. I then begin to see, what I can only explain as tunnel vision, (*pause; takes a deep breath*) where everything else around me blanks out, except from the person in front of me. (*pause*) I hear all sound but still have tunnel vision. (*pause; frowning*) I know when the tunnel vision is coming, so I am able to turn and walk away. (*pause; hesitates*) The aggression that I experience in school with the pupils is limited because I know that they are purposely trying to get to me and this doesn’t happen a lot. (*pause*) If I feel that a situation is beginning to develop, I walk away and calm myself down
using breathing methods or I try to think about something, (pause; frowns; talking slower) or talk to someone about the situation. (pause) The aggression is still there, not with the pupil, but the feeling, (pause) …and I try to release it during sport.

Tell me more about the kind of aggression you experience in school?

Ah... (pause) It's the verbal aggression and insults, (pause) ...especially when it's to others and I see them hurt. (tempo increasing) When personal insults are made regarding my personal appearance, this actually takes me back to my teenage years where I was subjected to gang bullying, (pause; frowning)...and people insulted my appearance as I was overweight. (tempo decreasing; tone softer) This caused me to deal with it the only way I know how...and that was to be aggressive back. I know how to deal with aggression effectively now (pause) but it still takes me back to those feelings of when I was a child ...especially when there is more students than one being aggressive to me.(pause) If I am to be brutally honest, I would revert back to my child state and deal with it that way, (pause) However, I am a professional now and would try my best to deal with it correctly.

Tell me more about the aggressive comments that have been made towards you?

Mmm...I have had a couple of comments regarding my weight, (pause) ...although I exercise regularly, this gets to me. (pause) I have a mole on my face, and certain students have targeted this area of my appearance...that immediately brings up my defensive barrier as it is a major concern for me and I get extremely angry. (pause) When I witness verbal aggression towards others, that always annoys me. I have had students tell me to “fuck off”, but that doesn’t bother me. I was called a “piece of shit” the other day and the way I dealt with it was by saying that I won’t be spoken to like that. (pause) I guess I deal with the aggression in different ways.
Tell me about things that have helped you deal with the aggression?

I deal with aggression within myself in many ways. *(pause)* I walk away while starting breathing exercises to calm down…this helps my heart rate as that increases when I am feeling aggressive or in an aggressive situation. I try to talk about it sometimes, but that doesn’t always help as I find it hard to get the words out when I am still too upset. *(pause)* Swearing helps a little, but I refrain from this when I’m in school. What I have been able to do for a very long while, is bottle it up and hide my feelings and eventually release them in a contact sport or running or dynamic weights.

Explain to me how this has helped you deal with the aggression better?

The contact sport, especially Mixed Martial Arts, makes me feel better and also does help when I am feeling down. *(pause; taking deep breath)* I have tried many different methods when dealing with aggression but exerting myself where I am able to release the aggression through a controlled sport…like boxing…is much more helpful than running or weights. Once I have released it, I am able to talk about it. *(pause; tempo slower)* I am not always able to talk to someone. It depends on what has happened and how badly it affected me on that day, *(pause; frowning)*… and if I still feel that it is annoying once I have exerted the feeling and some still remains. Then I will talk about it but *(pause; low volume, almost whispering)* I carefully choose who I speak to.

Explain to me why you say that you ‘carefully choose who you speak to’?

Well, I always speak to my partner about everything. She knows me very well but she cannot appreciate the ‘joy’ of some of the pupils that I work with daily. *(pause)* This is where I am careful about who I choose to speak to about the pupils, as I tend to find it hard to trust people and I carefully select my friends and associates. My friends I share with and trust, associates I talk to but not about how I feel. If it has affected me bad, then I will phone Vicky (partner)
and speak to her or I will find someone at school that I can trust and talk to them.

*Explain to me what makes it easier to talk to some staff than others?*

Mmm…(pause) Its easier to talk to colleagues when you know that they will support you no matter what and that they are on your side regardless. *(pause; frowning)* I sometimes feel like certain SMT members tend not to take things as serious with me, or this is how I perceive it. *(tempo increasing)* They tend to minimise what has happened and how I feel *(pause; looks down)* so I will then rather talk to another LSA or teacher about how I feel etc.

*Describe to me what would be helpful to help you deal with the aggression at school?*

Having someone to talk to that you can trust, someone that will take it further, sort it out if it needs to be sorted out. *(pause)* Someone that respects you and will not think less of you because you talk to them about your feelings, fears and insecurities. *(pause; looking down at his hands)* Someone that’s not going to tell tales about you and make you look unprofessional but will keep your conversation confidential. *(pause; tempo increasing; volume louder)* It will also be helpful to sometimes have a break from the aggression just to compose yourself again before you have to face and deal with the next lot of aggression. *(pause; tempo slower; volume softer)* Time to resolve your emotions and thoughts and get yourself under control.

**AC**

*How do you experience aggression at school?*

Well, a lot of the time, I experience it as bullying. It starts as underlying bullying. Might just be one word, or in the corridor, or on their way to class. *(pause)* But certain kids will bite into it and don’t let go if they feel it’s not been
sorted correctly because they come from a background where nothing is done at home. (pause; frowning) You have to get the bullies out so they can see that they are supported and not the bully. (tempo increasing) Some ways of dealing with the bullying (like losing points by staying/going) is not fair! (volume higher) They can be shouting at me instead of bullying someone else. (pause; tempo slower) Because I can deal with it, kids can’t always. They need to feel protected here.

*Explain to me how you think aggressive behaviour should be dealt with?*

There are different ways that depend on the situation. (pause) Get all of the involved parties together, name and shame, stand-up and apologise and be counted is the only way, and to not get away with it. You have to deal with behaviour first (pause) before teaching. (tempo increasing) The teacher has to deal with the behaviour and not ignore whatever is going on while trying to teach. (tempo slower) If not dealt with straight away it ends up in carnage. (pause; turning head away) But certain things make it hard to deal with it, there is not always time, or there is not enough staff available. You have to be constantly aware of what they’re doing; consistent; being on their case the whole time (being a ‘jar’) (pause) Talking with them individually can also help or changing the face. Allowing them to walk around the school; talking with a member staff they get on well with; listen to reason. (pause) If you ignore it, (pause) confrontation will ensue. (pause) Staff must not keep grudges – every day is a fresh start for the pupils. You should not snidely say things under your breath or not be consistent in your lessons and letting them do what they want. (pause; tempo quicker) Unfairness makes me feel like I want to do to them what they do to the others. (pause) Having a support system is important. (tempo slower; volume and tone lower)

*Tell me more about having a support system?*

Mmm…If aggression has not been dealt with appropriately in the lesson, (pause; tempo increasing) you want to rip their head off by the time you get to sweeper. (tempo slowing) Talking to other staff about your challenges and
irritations helps, (pause) but only to people you trust and with who you can share your evil thoughts without being worried about what they think about you or what they are going to do (pause) …who they might tell what you said. You are careful about what you say to who because you don’t wanna look unprofessional and incompetent. Often the SMT is not the best people to talk to because they feel they have to deal with it when you just want a sympathetic ear. You have to think about it before you go to them. (pause) Its better to talk to someone else that listens and understands but doesn’t necessarily take any action, unless you want them to. The SMT just assumes you want them to do something for you to feel better or to feel that its resolved.

Explain to me what has to be done for it to be resolved?

Well, I just wanna feel heard and understood in most instances. (volume and tempo increasing) I want to say how I feel instead of having to think about the pupils and their feelings the whole time. (tempo slowing) I want to feel appreciated for having experienced so much anger and aggression. (pause; frowning) Its almost like you want someone to give you a pat on the back and say well done. Someone to tell you that you’re not wrong or crazy for feeling that way. (pause) If I want anything else to be done (pupil excluded or consequenced in another way) I will say so, but most of the time I just need to let some steam off by having someone to talk to or a break away from it all – time to have a drink and 5 min rest!

MD

How do you experience aggression in school?

Well, (pause; frowning) In relation to the student, there is often transference of feelings towards the staff due to personal problems at home. (pause) There is also physical aggression towards equipment, insensitivity or apathy towards others, as well as verbal/physical bullying. (pause) Also manipulation through aggression, (pause) it’s almost as if they thinking “if I start bad enough I’ll get
what I want”. *(pause)* With regards to other members of staff, this is more subtle, *(pause)* but at times it can be overt when the aggression has a purpose. This can be through insensitive or difficult communication, “can I borrow a headset?” answer “No, I may need them”. *(tempo increasing)* There can also be some bitching about other staff; offloading with negative images of minor incidents and being over vigilant, “I take my job very seriously” or “you spelt that word wrong in your report”. There is also, at times, bullying. For example looking for cracks in a person’s work ethic, and when found there can be overtly expressed aggression with so-called ‘justification’. *(pause)* Also, punitive labelling, i.e. “Oh her class is it, well what do you expect!”.

Tell me more about how the aggression affects you personally?

Mmm… with regards to students it rarely affects me, *(pause)* but it can sometimes depend on my own mood and how much sleep I had, *(tempo and volume increasing)* although I do become angry if I perceive a pupil to be a manipulating bully. Personally, *(tempo and volume decreasing)* I tend to be apathetic and flippant in relation to aggression by staff. Although I’m somewhat cynical towards any staff member who has shown aggressive tendencies. I do not have much time to communicate with aggressive staff, *(volume increasing)* and I will hold a grudge as I feel their behaviour is selfish and unfair. *(pause)* I detest hypocrisy and show my own aggression by not turning up for social events organised for staff or by staff. I also become frustrated when I see professional bullying and there is little I can do about it. *(pause; tempo slower)* Somewhat disheartening really, as I have a very caring nature. This changed as I grew up due to experiences of aggression from others that I deemed unfair and no, I never got a bike for Christmas. *(smiling)*

Explain to me in more detail how the aggression has affected your personality?

Well…when I first started teaching I was more honest and open. *(pause)* Now after years of experience, I am more closed and guarded. I have a developed a dislike of teachers in general and I am somewhat cynical about their true
nature as giving carers. (pause; lower volume) In many instances, I feel my true personality has become detached from my present false ‘acting self’. (pause; looking away) As to pupils’ aggressive behaviour affecting me personally, this has been positive. (volume louder; tempo increasing) I am much better at dealing with people and have become an excellent negotiator. I don’t blame pupils generally for their aggression, but I have the opposite viewpoint with adults (pause) so much to an extent that I can come across as cold.

Tell me more about how you deal with the aggression?

As I’ve gotten older I have developed a technique of relaxing to aggression, (pause) the more aggressive the person, the more relaxed I become. I am aware of my own anxiety to aggression, but I use cognitive reasoning to deal with it. If there are times where I am agitated due to mood and I realise that the aggression is affecting me, I revert to my usual technique. (pause) I find that a couple of things helps me with dealing with the after effects of aggression. (pause) Diet (no sugars/refined); Exercise; Nurturing relationships; and Meditation. (pause) The main reason for these is that at 27 I developed agoraphobia due to an inherited low serotonin receptor count …now that’s a whole new ball game…(smiling) as my belief is nature – not nurture in relation to dealing with aggression.

Explain to me why you think nature is more influential than nurture when dealing with aggression?

Well, from my own experience, no therapeutic method works in the long term. They were all short fixes or methods of dealing with daily events. The main issue for me was thought processes. Images of negative events, no matter how minor, would linger even after they had been dealt with cognitively etc. (pause; tempo slower; tone softer) When I started taking Citalopram (SSRI’s) it all changed. Images did not linger and I was not anxious like I was for most of my life. I have decided after 40 years that dealing with stress with the right
amount of serotonin can change the outcome of your experience. (pause; takes deep breath) For me, no Citalopram means imagining being bullied as very painful and its hard to be cognitive. With Citalopram the same image is not as painful and its easy for me to be cognitive.

BE

Ah, of course with a calm, patient, non-confrontational response! (pause; smiling) Often my response depends on the child, what I know about them and what kind of relationship I have with them.

Tell me more about the different ways in which you respond to aggression?

Usually, my response to verbal aggression is ‘parental’..."excuse me...please don't say that". (pause) I try to encourage respect and appropriate language whilst reminding them of points and possible consequences. (pause) When people are verbally threatening and provoking, (tempo and volume increasing) it might mean that I am more defensive and possibly confrontational. I then try stepping in to try and take control. (pause) Physical aggression always makes me feel slightly scared (tempo and volume increasing) and I always take a deep breath, think about myself and whether I should run away. I always stay but am very reluctant or cautious about getting physically involved. (pause; tempo slower) I have seen many physical incidents and never have I seen a student suffer injuries from which they did not quickly recover. Staff, (volume increasing) however, who are injured don't bounce back as quickly. (pause) Students will often fight and up the anti if staff are trying to stop them so I prefer to make sure students and staff are safe and use words to encourage them to stop. (pause; frowning) Some aggression is non-verbal and students will try to intimidate and control you through their behaviour.
How do you experience aggression in school?

I normally experience aggression in school when I have offered pupils a variety of options to follow and they have declined all of them. (tempo and volume increasing) Once sanctions are introduced, some pupils will respond after a bit of huffing and puffing, (pause) whereas others explode and go for broke. During my 6 months in teaching PE, I observed that pupils’ competitive natures aroused aggression in them, whether it was winning or losing, the same emotion could be displayed. Frustrations within a game could trigger aggression very quickly in some of the pupils.

Can you tell me more about how the aggression affects you personally?

Certain pupils affect me differently. (pause) Pupils that I have a good relationship with such as Billy or Kieron (tempo increasing; volume more) sometimes make me feel really let down and emotional as they almost turn into a different person and are quite venomous. On the whole (tempo decreasing; volume softer) I know I have the upper hand as I can ring home or set an after school (pause) so I have learned not to react to the aggression directly.

RE

How do you experience aggression in school?

Mmm…every day, mostly every lesson in the form of verbal abuse to my face (tempo increasing; volume louder) or to another student about me whilst in the same room. (pause; tempo slower) Also students abusing each other. On a less frequent basis, but probably once a day, physical aggression - students to each other.
LM

How do you experience aggression in school?

Well, (pause; looking away) I experience it in two ways. I experience it both directly and indirectly.

Tell me more about how you experience it directly?

Ah, I mostly experience it directly with the students (tempo and volume increasing) when they swear at me (‘bitch/cunt’), insult me (‘you don’t have a fucking idea what you talking about/ you fat, ugly lesbian/ no one will ever love you’) or try to humiliate me by hurting me with their comments (‘I wish you were dead/ go fuck your dead nan’). (pause) This normally happens when I confront students about their behaviour or their work in class. (tempo decreasing; volume lower) They will then lash out at me in an attempt to get me to back off. (pause) Luckily, I know that they do this to distract from what they are doing wrong and usually I am able to ignore their comments, not take it personally and get them back on-task. (pause) There are, however, times when their comments does affect me. (low volume; looking away)

Tell me about when their comments affect you?

Their comments tend to affect me when I am tired and low. (pause; frowning) When I have been dealing with the confrontation the whole day, one student after another, I run out of energy and coping resources. I will then respond to their comments completely differently, to how I normally would. (pause) I can become emotional, tearful and rebellious, (tempo increasing; volume increasing) especially when they say things that I have an issue with – like my weight. I know myself well enough to know when I need a break from a student (or sometimes a whole class) but there isn’t always someone to take over from you or to cover you for a bit so that you could have a break. (pause) I also feel guilty if I need ‘time-out’. It makes me feel incapable and useless –
like I can’t do my job. I then worry that the SMT will think this if I ask for help. I also know under how much pressure the rest of the staff is and I feel that by asking them to relief me, I am adding to their stress.

Tell me more about how you are directly affected by the aggression in school?

Sometimes fights break out in your classroom, when you are on break/lunch duty or when you are on sweep (teachers that has to deal with students that exit lessons or cause problems in lessons). I quite often have to physically intervene to stop the fight and prevent students from getting hurt. (pause) Although we are trained in positive handling techniques, you can still get injured in the process. A lot of the times you put yourself at risk by getting in between the two that are fighting. At these times, you count on the fact that one of the two likes you or has a good relationship with you and will stop the fighting so that you don’t get hurt. But you still sometimes do and sometimes they won’t stop no matter how good a relationship they have with you. (tempo increasing) They are so caught up in their anger and their emotion and they are completely blind to anything you say or do. You then end up with a couple of knocks and bruises before you are able to separate the two fighting. (pause) But its back to business and you have to carry on with your job as if nothing happened and like you not affected by it at all. (pause; takes loud breath) I tend to be very emotionally aware – of my emotions and the students involved in the fighting. This is not really a good thing because a fight will break out and then you are just expected to carry on regardless. You have to teach your lesson, cover someone else’s lesson or be sweep. You don’t have time to think about what happened or to feel upset. You just carry on regardless.

Explain to me what you mean by ‘carry on regardless’?

Well, there are times when you are completely overwhelmed by something that’s happened – a fight, comments students made towards you or even threats. But there is almost never an opportunity for you to reflect on what’s
happened – you just bundle all the emotions and stress inside yourself. (pause; low tone) They are not resolved, dealt with or voiced – you just automatically carry on because that’s what’s expected of you. (pause; tempo and volume increasing) Then when you least expect it, a simple thing in a lesson sets you off – a comment that’s not nearly as abusive as you are used to, a student refusing to do work or the fact that you find yourself in the same argument with a student again and again. (tempo increasing; volume louder) You burst into tears and feel completely overwhelmed. (pause) It’s only then that the SMT seems to notice you, are concerned about you and want you to have some time to calm down. But, like a good soldier, you have a cup of tea, sit down for five minutes and then go back to your lesson. You don’t talk or discuss what’s happened or how you feel with anyone. (pause) Instead, you feel that the SMT thinks you are weak, vulnerable and silly for acting this way. It’s almost like they lose confidence and respect in you because you couldn’t handle it and then they seem to be upset with you.

Explain to me what you mean by ‘the SMT seem upset with you’?

It feels like they are judging you and you’ve been found too light – you can’t hack it with the kids and in the school. (pause) Its like they are comparing you to some unimaginable being that does not feel or think; it just does. Then when you do experience emotion (anger, stress, disappointment), you fail them miserably. (pause; frowning) Or it feels like they would’ve handled the situation better, differently. Sometimes (tempo increasing) when you do ask their help with a difficult student or in a difficult situation, you also end up feeling useless. (throwing hands in the air)

Tell me why you end up feeling useless?

Sometimes they (SMT) will criticise the way you dealt with a student or an incident. (pause; head tilted to one side) I can handle constructive criticism, but they do it in such a way that it makes you feel like a failure. (tempo and volume increasing) They tell you everything you’ve done wrong but offer little or no praise for what you have actually done well (pause) or the fact that you
have coped really well considering everything. (pause) It also sometimes feel like they are more concerned or worried about the students. Your actions are questioned, its your word against theirs. (volume higher; tone harsher) You are left feeling unsupported, guilty with very little belief in yourself. (pause) When they come into your lesson, its almost always your fault that the kids are not engaging or are acting up. (tempo increasing; tone louder) Your lesson has not been planned well-enough, you don’t have enough resources, the LSA (learning support assistant) does not know what you want her to do, the students do not understand the work etc. (pause) They have numerous reasons for what you are doing wrong or not doing but the students are almost never to blame. (pause; tempo slower; volume lower) Even the best planned, well-resourced lesson sometimes goes tits up because of students’ behaviour and their complete disinterest in school, but doesn’t seem to be an excuse. (tempo and volume increasing) Its almost like no matter what you do or no matter what you try, it will still end up being your fault. You still find yourself having to explain yourself to them. Your professional judgement seems useless. They often talk to you in front of the students and in such a way, that it feels like you are being told off and that you are a student. (pause; tone now calmer) It just adds to all the aggression you experience while you are at school.

*Explain to me what you mean by ‘it adds to the aggression you experience’?*

Well, not only do you have the students’ very overt, in-your-face verbal and physical aggression to deal with, (pause) you also have the SMT’s indirect aggression towards you that you have to cope with on a daily basis. (tone and volume increasing) Its like you are walking on burning coals the whole time while you are at school, you can almost never relax.

*Tell me about when you are able to relax?*

Almost never at school. Its full-on all the time you are there. Your timetable is full – one lesson after another or if you do have a free lesson, you are used for cover or sweep. You are also often on lunch or break duty, so no time
then either to relax. The only time that I feel I am able to relax at school, work through my emotions and think about what to do if something like that happens again, is if I have a break in between difficult lessons, time for myself without writing incidents or *(tempo and volume increasing)* having to explain what happened and why I acted the way I did. *(tempo slower; lower volume)* Time for me to recover and get all my emotions sorted before I have to face the next onslaught. *(pause)* Otherwise I find myself being on the edge the whole time, in every lesson and in every incident. I am unable to relax at all till the end of the day when I can go home and relax at home. *(pause)* This is not always the case though because you find yourself taking ‘school’ home with you. Because you never got a chance to reflect during the day, all the emotions overwhelm you once you are home. It leaves you feeling drained and exhausted and I often am so tired that I’m unable to do anything at home. *(pause)* I can’t make dinner, clean the house or anything else because I am totally drained. I end up going to bed, not eating or anything else, I just sleep till the next morning. *(pause)* Its only over weekends that there is enough time to work through everything that’s happened and do something fun to relax a bit. During the week your whole life is school and everything that happens there.

**JM**

*How do you experience aggression in school?*

As a head of year I see aggression every day. The aggression is either targeted at teachers or at peers. *(pause)* The type of aggression targeted at me usually comes from a position of frustration: small things like home work not done, equipment not at school or not the correct uniform act as the starting point and it then escalates. *(pause)* Usually it goes from "zero to 100" in seconds, no gradual escalation and usually it is a child that has been on my ‘radar’ for some reason or the other like neglect at home, suspected involvement with gangs or bullying. *(pause)* Not that the teachers are
completely innocent. I have seen teachers deliberately place ‘emphasis’ on kids with lower ability, who will not contribute to departments hitting their academic targets. *(tempo and volume increasing)* They then try to build evidence against the child and eventually get them out of school before the GCSE exams, not that anybody would admit to it, but it happens and is possibly endemic in all schools. *(pause; lower volume)* This is impossible to prove as the teacher always has a legitimate reason for insisting on the right uniform or what ever reason. *(pause)* But with aggression towards me there is very often a two way communication blockage. Also, when a child is aggressive to me, it often leads to me finding bigger problems. *(pause)* One little boy gets into trouble with all the male teachers and acts extremely aggressive towards them. *(tempo and volume increasing)* After investigation and spending many hours with him, his mother etc. it appears that he sees the male teachers a threat to his mother. This stemmed from a violent relationship she had many years ago with one of his primary teachers and now he reacts in deliberate way to ensure that she doesn't get involved with one of his teachers again. *(shaking his head; pause)* Another child's aggression came from a known molestation by a female tennis coach and despite CP interventions *(tempo increasing)* this has lead to the girl physically assaulting first a child that said something inappropriate and then turning on the teacher with a chair. *(pause; frowning)* In my early days in teaching in the UK I was attacked by a child who tried to throw a computer screen at me. Sometimes the teacher just gets in the way of an existing fight like *(softer tone)* when a colleague of mine was hit with fire sand in the eyes when one child tried to escape from the aggression of another. The teacher tried to protect the one that grabbed the sand and threw it in the direction of the aggressor. Little need to say the child running away from the aggressor got excluded for throwing the sand. *(pause; smiling)* Aggression aimed at peers is more difficult to understand and possibly more complex. I think it stems from positions of opposition, finding a place in the ‘unseen’ adolescent hierarchy - there is always an alpha character- often from jealousy (not having what the other has, poverty) race and religious discrimination and a lack of social and communication skills. *(pause)* The biggest reason for dealing with aggression in my office is the “your mum syndrome”. Or, "she gave me looks".
Interestingly, *(pause; smiling)* I find that there isn't a big gender difference in who is aggressive in KS 3 but in KS 4 it is more the boys than the girls that act aggressive. *(pause)* Aggression is usually brought into the school from outside. The affiliations with peers from a specific area is often part of self preservation: after school a child has to return to his or her estate and there they encounter a social force that I don't really understand *(frowning)* - we call it the gang, but it is more than that. To "be safe" or allowed in they are expected to affiliate with these groups either by becoming part of one or by showing opposition to the other gang. This often overflows into school and the slightest reason is a good enough reason to become aggressive towards a person from another area, thus showing affiliation with their own gang and thus being classified as "safe". *(pause)* There is also always an alpha figure among the boys and girls. Someone that nobody dares to mess with. Someone that becomes the object of aspiration for the younger children. *(pause)* Lately I have seen a rise in aggression based on differences: religion, ethnicity and more more prevalent immigration status (ability to speak English). *(tempo and volume increasing)* The number of times a crying "new arrival" sits in my office with a translator getting agitated at the resident bully marking his territory is on the increase. On investigation the reason was, he cussed me. The aggressor will never admit that it could not have happened because the victim can't speak English! *(smiling; pause)* The type of aggression I find most difficult to deal with in lesson is not the externalising behaviour of an angry child, *(pause)* it is the internalising behaviour of an angry child. Passive aggressive behaviour is the most taxing because it seems impossible to get them talking and unloading their anxiety, anger or fear. *(tempo and volume increasing)* I also get frustrated because I literally don't have the time to deal with passive aggressive behaviour although I know that this type of aggression also needs my attention. *(pause)* I have the responsibility to deal with children’s social, emotional and behaviour difficulties at school, a role I take very seriously. Often I feel guilty when I use quick fixes for aggression: sometimes I deliberately " loose my cool" to get the child to shout back at me because then we have a point for action. *(tempo and volume increasing)* I can then either send the child to my office to cool down, and have a decent in-depth talk with them, in which I can explore the
problems and give advice or I can make a referral to the support agencies in
and outside of school, (tempo slower; volume softer) or I can send the child
home and catch up with the problem the next day when I have more time.
(pause) I never just let aggression go as it is always the point of the iceberg.
Usually there is something more pressing going on and the aggression is a
cry for help. (pause) Often after an investigation I find that there has been a
sudden change in home life, a move, father or mother has been sent to jail or
sometimes a sibling has been involved in gang crime. There is always a
reason and I never let aggression go. I always investigate it.

Tell me more about not letting aggression go?

In the first place, I think when it comes to children and aggression we cannot
forget the biological wiring of the adolescent brain. (pause) If a child learns not
to let go of aggression, either form home, peers, school or society, then they
will not let go. (pause) If we don't teach children how to deal with anger and
frustrations they will continuously deal with situations using the tools they
have and if aggression is the most successful tool, why stop using it?
(throwing hands in the air in gesture; pause) I often find that a child wants to
let go of the aggression but then gets spurred on by their peers. Often an
aggressive act takes place because somebody in a crowd of children or a
perceived friend will say something like "are you going to let Johnny get away
with that?". (pause; tempo decreasing; lower volume) It is the way the adult
then deals with the situation that is vital in the development of the
adolescent's repertoire of reactions. (pause) If the parent or teacher of
counsellor doesn't deal with the aggression in a constructive way, the lesson
learned is that aggression is a successful tool to use. (pause; frowning) Often
we as teachers don’t have time to sit down and really deal with the
aggression. (tempo increasing) The easiest way of dealing with aggression
is punitive, either through isolation (the time out solution prescribed by nearly
every book on the matter I have read) or exclusion and some times through
aggression itself. (pause) This however doesn’t provide the young person
with a new perspective on the situation nor does it provide alternative tools for
them to utilize when they have to deal with any situation that previously lead
to aggression. (pause; head dropping down) In addition to the lack of time in dealing with aggression in education settings, we have a myriad of other stimuli to consider: (tempo increasing; volume higher) the home environment and how parents or carers deal with aggression, the way peers deal with aggression, popular media and entertainment, computer games. (pause; shaking head) If the aggression is not addressed by providing an alternative tool to deal with it, it will become part of the way a child deals with any situation that comes his way. (pause; nodding head in agreement) We also need to remember that some children do suffer from mental health difficulties and that not being able to let go of aggression are symptomatic of these difficulties. (pause; volume increasing) We may also see a child that has been the victim of sexual, physical, emotional abuse or neglect where the aggression is a way of providing relief of the built up anger and emotional pain. (pause) That does not mean that every young person that is aggressive has mental health problems, but in my experience I have encountered that it is at times the case when the young person cannot let go of aggression.

*Explain to me how the aggression influences you*

Well, I face aggression from children everyday. And most of the time I manage to understand why the children react the way they do. I have more than enough experience in dealing with it and I am an adult who chose to work with children with behaviour problems. (pause) Theoretically I know how to deal with it, but only theoretically. (emphasising words) I have found that to cope with the aggression I have to deal with daily I have become quite a "hard person." (pause; looking down) I have had to learn how to shelve emotions and concerning to delve deeper and deeper to find empathy with the problems the children face. (pause; shaking head) I often feel detached from things that would seem to influence my non teaching friends in a much more radical way. (pause; shaking head again) I wouldn't be surprised if some time soon a new syndrome (Post Teacher Stress syndrome) is discovered...(smiling; pause) One of the ways to deal with this (tone lighter; tempo faster) is through an initiative of my head teacher to provide all the staff with six weeks of life coaching per year. The life coach supports teachers to deal with emotional
strains and in my case deal with the guilt of either not feeling guilty for not having the time or energy to fairly deal with aggression or overcompensation. (pause; turning head away) The most serious situation I was in was when I instinctively put myself between two children and nearly got stabbed with a sharp piece of metal. I was really lucky and felt very grateful to the children that pulled me away. I managed to deal with it because I come from a country where violence is endemic and I have learnt how to deal with fear. I wonder how another teacher not from my country of origin would deal with the same situation. (pause) I have made some big lifestyle changes: for instance not taking public transport anymore because I feel anger at the people in the community my school serves. (volume increasing; tempo increasing) I can see how the aggressive behaviour of the society is mirrored in the children. So I had to buy a car. (pause) I have also found that my level of anger at silly things like waiting in traffic after a particularly difficult day has increased. (smiling; shaking head; pause) Disaffection of teachers is another problem. (tempo slower; low volume) I have never taken extra time off after I have been attacked by a child, but I have seen other teachers take several days off after being attacked by a child and I can see how a level of disaffection among teachers can set in because of the aggression we often face from children.
ANNEXURE D: FIELD NOTES
Theme 1:

1. Teachers experience aggression negatively as a widespread phenomena.

2. Teachers' experience of aggression affects other aspects of their lives.

3. Teachers have coping mechanisms to deal with the aggression they experience. Maintained by external factors.

Manipulation

Coping Mechanisms. Big need for SS.

Triggers in both → Triggers each other. (Inational environment) (Bi-directional)

Expectations → complicated/frustrated/escalates.

Intellectualised answers → defense mechanisms/uncomfortable.

Category

A) Teachers experience feelings such as hurt, frustration, rejection, helplessness

B) Teachers experience social, covert, direct and indirect aggression

C) Teachers experience escalating aggression spirals out of control

A) Teachers' support system gets affected/SM1

B) Relationships with learners get highly detached

C) Emotional turmoil/self worth

Confidentially-disclosed

Talking to trusted adult. Reflective.

Exercise.

Relaxation tech.

Validation of feelings & respect

D) Mediated comm.
ANNEXURE E: WORK PROTOCOL FOR INDEPENDENT CODER
DATA ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

The following steps of Tesch’s descriptive method as discussed in Creswell (1994: 153-156) will be utilised:

1. All the transcriptions of focus group interviews, naïve sketches, drawings (meaning of drawing as explained by the participants), observational- and field notes on the experiences of student nurses will be read through, whilst ideas will be jotted down in the margin of the transcriptions. This will create a sense of the central storyline of the data.

2. Select one of the texts (shortest or most interesting) and read through it carefully. Ask yourself: “What is this about?” Think about the meaning rather then the content.

3. Read paragraphs in detail while asking: “What is the main idea of this sentence or paragraph?” Start the coding process by writing down your thoughts in the margin. Reflect on key phrases and the underlying meaning.

4. Generate central themes by listing similar topics together. Identify unique and leftover themes by comparing differences and similarities.

5. Re-visit the data and group interrelated themes together. Compare or contrast themes and identify interrelationships by drawing lines between categories.

6. Categorise the themes in major themes and sub-themes. The major themes and sub-themes should support the central storyline of the data.

7. Make a final decision with regard to naming the categories. Order categories by organising them logically in relation to the central storyline.

8. Re-code themes if necessary. Verbatim quotes can be used as evidence to support categories, major themes and sub-themes.