

**BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN THE
CLASSROOM: A MODEL FOR TEACHERS
TO ASSIST LEARNERS WITH UNMET
EMOTIONAL NEEDS**

by

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SUMMARY

This study has as primary objective the development of an appropriate model to assist teachers, in South Africa, to be able to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems. The need for the study has its genesis within the current difficulties teachers experience in dealing with behaviour problems in the classroom and the fact that increasing numbers of children are involved. A key facet of the research is its accent on the unmet emotional needs of learners that function as a behavioural determinant. The study is analytical descriptive in nature and as such is based on two fundamental dimensions: – to acquire a sound theoretical understanding of the concepts, causative factors and underlying behaviour problems and the most appropriate means to deal therewith and substantiating the insights acquired by means of interviews with teachers, school principals, and other significant role players. An earnest attempt was made to analyse behaviour problems in terms of the various theoretical frameworks presented within contemporary literature. The ecological systems model was found to be the most appropriate for the development of the referenced model. This stands in sharp contrast to the traditional medical model which in many instances still forms the basis of current theory and practice.

Learners with emotional problems experience behaviour problems which serve as barriers to effective learning. Little attention however, has been attributed to putting appropriate systems in place to assist these learners. A key consideration embodied within the new Education Policy (NCS DOCUMENT 1997:10) is the issue of meeting the needs of all learners so that they are able to actualise their potential – this includes their emotional needs. The findings of this study need to be seen within the light of meeting this objective.

In order to address the unmet emotional needs of learner, teachers must attend to the cognitive mind maps which embody internalized feelings and cognition. A model for understanding the cognitive maps has been developed as part of this study and serves as introduction to the model developed to assist learners with behaviour problems.

The study provides a new perspective directed at understanding instead of managing behaviour problems.

Key terms

behaviour problems; behaviour disorders; conduct disorders; maladjusted behaviour; emotional needs; needs of children; unmet emotional needs of children; affective education; psychological needs; the need for new experiences; the need for responsibility; the need for praise and recognition; the need for love and security; self-concept; self-image; self-confidence; feelings about the self; cognitive map; cognitive development; internalisations; internalisation model; internalised messages; emotional milestones; emotional developmental milestones.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Systemic change is needed to enhance regional and community capacity to the point where those involved can meet all of the needs of troubling youth. True collaboration and, with it, a reorientation of our commitment to all children, represent our best hope for an improved future for these too-long neglected children and youth.

Illback (1996:24,30)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Meeting the needs of *all* learners and the actualising of the full potential of *all* learners with and without disabilities, are key components of the vision of the proposed new Education Policy (NCSNET Document 1997:10). If these objectives could be realised, barriers of learning would essentially be removed.

It is a universal fact that internationally the predominant objective of any education system, in a democratic society, is one of providing quality education for all learners, in order to enable them to realise their full potential and thereby meaningfully contribute to and participate in society. The recognition that education is a fundamental right and consequently needs to be freely available to all learners, underpins the notion that the education system must provide for and sustain such learning for all learners (Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, sec. 29:1). This will, inter alia, include factors such as: the development of educators so that they can meet the needs of all learners; that physical, psychological, social and learning problems are prevented at all cost and that a supportive learning environment for all learners is created (NCSNET 1997 August & November:7,11). It is frequently contended that learners who experience behaviour problems suffer from unmet emotional needs.

In terms of the proposed new Education Policy, teachers are supposed to be responsible for a learner on a first phase level. More than was the case in the past, the teacher has to take the initiative and be creative and knowledgeable as regards how to understand and assist the learner in the process of removing barriers of learning, so that the learner's needs are fulfilled and he or she can actualise his or her full potential. Apart from practical problems like larger classes, more responsibilities and curriculum reform, for example the Outcomes-

based Education Programme, which the teacher needs to master and implement, teachers now have to cope in the mainstream classroom with the reality of inclusive education.

In the past learners with mild to serious behaviour problems were accommodated in schools of industry, reform schools and places of safety, which were part of the Specialised Education provided for learners. According to the new Education Policy (NCSNET Document 1998:25), the separation of education into ordinary and specialised contexts, led to the social isolation of learners from their peers, families and other members of the community. The family's cohesion, the learner's sense of belonging in his or her community and a diminished parent involvement in the education of their children (because of the long distances that parents had to travel when they wanted to visit their children at these specialised schools, e.g. schools of industry), impacted negatively on the learning context of learners. Further criticisms of segregated specialised learning contexts relate to (NCSNET Document 1998:25):

- ▶ the negative effects of large institutions in contrast to smaller, localised units of learning;
- ▶ restricted career choices as a result of the scaling down of the general curriculum;
- ▶ an overemphasis on a medical-deficit approach in the support provided;
- ▶ overspending on specialist intervention;
- ▶ a lack of facilities in disadvantaged and rural areas; and
- ▶ only a small percentage of learners with *special needs* were provided for by these centres or schools to the detriment of thousands of other learners that were totally excluded from these services, although also being in need of these services.

It is argued that all learners have a right to be accommodated within one education system. Equal *opportunities*¹ and *education for all* are important principles embodied within this right. Learners in schools of industry, reform schools and places of safety must thus be, in terms of the new Education Policy, provided with a supportive and effective learning and teaching environment.

¹The use of "bold" and/or "italics" in the thesis is utilised by the researcher to highlight very important issues.

In the classroom many teachers appear to be experiencing substantial difficulty in coping with learners with special needs. In many instances they do not know how to simultaneously understand and assist the learners' diversity of needs. They often experience themselves as being disempowered, and lacking the necessary skills, expertise and knowledge to understand and assist learners exhibiting behaviour problems (see Chapter 3, sec. 3.6 in this regard).

Illback and Nelson (1996:24,30) refers to concepts like **collaboration, involvement, reorientation, commitment, regional and community capacity**, in order to provide a solution for the problem of fulfilling the needs of learners and actualising their full potential. These concepts can be categorised as falling within the frame of reference of the ecological systems model. In this study the possibility of developing a model that will enable teachers to more effectively assist and understand learners with unmet emotional needs resulting in behaviour problems, is researched. This study focusses on **understanding and assisting learners with unmet emotional needs, resulting in behaviour problems**, in contrast to *managing behaviour problems* (e.g. "Managing behaviour in the Primary School" by J. Docking or "Managing difficult children" by L. Stone) as most researchers choose to research to the effect that more and more learners are reported to exhibit behaviour problems. It is, however, not the learner or the classroom that needs to be managed, but the environment in the sense that the teacher manages the involvement of all the significant other role players in order to satisfy the unmet emotional needs of the learner so that the occurrence of behaviour problems can be prevented or that existing behaviour problems can be attended to. Concepts such as unmet emotional needs, emotional milestones or crises, temperament types, collaboration, a community based model, "taking ownership", community involvement, a whole school approach, and open systems, are researched for purposes of incorporation within the model.

If an "improved future", as envisioned by Illback and Nelson (1996:24,30) in the introductory quotation, is hoped for, teachers will need guidelines for assisting and understanding learners with behaviour problems more effectively. This study proposes to provide teachers with *Behaviour problems in the classroom: a model for teachers to assist learners with unmet emotional needs*.

1.2 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The following concepts, frequently referred to in this study, are clarified and defined:

1.2.1 Behaviour problems

Ashman and Elkins (1994:294) and Wicks-Nelson and Israel (1984:6) regard the identification of psychological or behaviour disorders as being complex in nature, as an array of various different considerations can influence the identification thereof. Ashman and Elkins (1994:294), in particular, maintain that learners with behaviour problems are the most difficult group of learners, within the field of Special Educational Needs, to describe. Haring (1978:125) and Gearheart, Weishahn and Gearheart (1988:306) argue that there is no generally accepted definition of the concepts *behaviourally disordered* or *emotionally disturbed*. People who have worked with disturbed learners have tended to create their own working definitions of the concepts. Notably, Zionts (1985:9) contends that the teacher dealing with learners with behaviour problems, has little difficulty in identifying these learners – what teachers need is not a clear-cut definition, but guidelines on how to understand and assist these learners. Teachers can observe in the classroom various degrees of normal behaviour. This enables them to note when a learner's behaviour exceeds the limits of normal behaviour.

According to Kerr and Nelson (1989:5), the concept *behaviour disorders* is preferred by the Council for Children with Behaviour Disorders (CCBD), on the grounds of its greater relevance within the context of education. Moreover, that it is less stigmatizing and more representative of learners in society exhibiting behaviour problems, or as they phrase it, "are handicapped by their behaviour". Concepts frequently used to label learners with behaviour problems and that are regarded by the CCBD, as being very similar to that of "behaviour disorders" are: behaviourally handicapped, behaviourally impaired, emotionally disturbed and emotionally handicapped.

Apter and Conoley (1984:14), Ashman and Elkins (1994:294,295), Haring (1978:125,126) and Zionts (1985:11,12) present the following reasons for the lack of conceptual clarity with regard to behaviour problems:

- No psychological tests are available that can measure personality, anxiety or adjustment precisely enough to be used in determining behaviour disorders. Tests that have been used in the past, namely projective tests, personality inventories, behaviour rating scales, and screening tests, were not deemed valid and they consequently could only be used to identify learners who *might* be experiencing

behaviour problems. Identifying learners with behaviour problems is therefore left to the “experts” and their “clinical” judgements.

- The conditions under which these tests are administered are not controlled and this can consequently impact on the test performance.
- The behaviour of a learner may well differ quite substantially during tests and towards the psychologist, from how he or she would normally behave towards significant others in his or her life-world.
- Unlike other aspects of special educational needs, for example the blind, no generally accepted definition exists.
- Different terminology is used in referring to the same concepts within different countries (eg. in Australia, the concept behaviour of serious concern, disruptive, disturbed), thereby further adding to the confusion that presently exists. It is therefore difficult to reach a consensus, as regards the definitions attributed to the concepts concerned.
- Many overseas and especially Australian definitions tend to concentrate on the identification of negative behaviour, as exhibited by the learner, but they do not provide any *guidelines* on how to remediate the behaviour problems concerned. Consequently definitions like these frequently lead to classifications and identification, which provide a reason for regarding the learner as a deviant, rather than the behaviours being seen as disordered.
- There is a lack of distinction between learners with mild behaviour problems and those who experience serious behaviour problems.
- From the 1970s to the 1980s definitions of disruptive behaviour have changed. Initially during the 1970s learners were regarded as being disruptive and during the 1980s disruptive incidents were regarded as the joint responsibility of schools and learners.
- Different opinions could be held by different persons, as to whether the learner exhibits behaviour problems or not, for example a specific learner can be diagnosed by a psychiatrist as being mentally ill, by a psychologist as emotionally disturbed and by a special educator as behaviourally disordered.

Haring (1978:126) constructs a profile of the mentally healthy child:

he or she has a positive self-concept, has good interpersonal or social skills, is capable of perceiving reality realistically, sets realistic goals for him/herself, actions and thoughts are organised appropriately, achieves

scholastically what is realistic in terms of his/her potential, acts according to chronological age related norms and is capable of functioning independently.

The profile of the learner with behaviour problems is thus construed to be the opposite of the above profile of a so called "mentally healthy learner".

Disordered behaviour or problem behaviour can be viewed as "abnormal". According to Webster's new collegiate dictionary (1973) (Wicks-Nelson & Israel 1984:2), *ab* means "away", while *normal* indicates the "average", "the standard" and "regular". The concept *abnormal* thus indicates away from the normal or average and according to common usage it assumes that the direction of deviation is usually negative or pathological. Judgment is the factor according to which behaviour is going to be determined as being disordered, abnormal or problematic. Reinert (Apter & Conoley 1984:22) regards deviant behaviour, namely acting out, stealing, and lying, as behaviour that can be attributed to so called "normal" learners and consequently should therefore not be associated purely with behaviour problems or, as he phrases it, "troubled learners". Laslett (1977:29) talks about *maladjusted learners*. He describes them as learners who "show evidence of emotional instability or psychological disturbance and who require special educational treatment in order to affect their personal, social and educational readjustment".

From experience teachers know that some of these so called "maladjusted learners" are actually quite "normal" if their home backgrounds are taken into consideration. Their behaviour is an expression of stress reactions to unsuitable, abnormal and harmful environments. Serious difficulties can, however, arise when their behaviour changes into a pattern that occurs regularly. In this regard Rutter (Laslett 1977:33) distinguishes between the following psychiatric disorders that are commonly encountered amongst maladjusted learners, namely neurotic, antisocial or conduct disorders, a mixed group that do not accommodate either antisocial nor neurotic disorders, developmental disorders, the hyperkinetic syndrome, child psychosis, psychoses that develop at or after puberty, mental retardation and children at-risk because of socio-economic circumstances.

Wicks-Nelson and Israel (1984:2) recommend that a definite standard be defined, so as to be able to decide whether the behaviour is qualitatively or quantitatively different from the standard. Prinsloo (1995:7) in a similar vein argues that behaviour should always be judged from within a specific frame of reference of norms, for example the laws of a country which

allow certain behaviour and forbid other behaviour. Religious norms also give rise to different viewpoints, regarding to what is accepted as being correct and decent behaviour and what is considered as indecent and incorrect behaviour. Different cultural groups also have certain unique norms, values, traditions, customs, and beliefs. People from these cultures are expected to live in accordance with these cultural determinants.

Behaviour that differs dramatically from “normal” behaviour, is easy to recognise, but behaviour that appears to be less dramatic, is far more difficult to categorise. Grossman (1990:80) holds the view that educators have a definite obligation to modify behaviour that everybody identifies as problem behaviour. Grossman (1990:80) goes on to further suggest that teachers need to keep in mind that factors such as their likes and dislikes, own value system, and personal priorities, can in effect influence their views on whether a learner’s behaviour can be regarded as problematic or not.

Definite criteria are therefore needed to define these behaviour patterns, for example socio-cultural norms; developmental norms; frequency of occurrence of behaviour problems; the intensity of the problem behaviour; period of time over which the problem behaviour took place; any changed and strange behaviour; the inappropriateness of behaviour in terms of the time and place where it is taking place; the fact that the behaviours of these learners are of greater or lesser magnitude than that of normal learners; and the fact that disturbed learners usually experience numerous problem behaviours in more than only one area of their daily functioning (Haring 1978:25,126).

Behaviour problems can be categorised in terms of:

- ▶ **more serious behaviour**, for example juvenile delinquency. These behaviour problems affect only a smaller percentage of learners and are usually related to psychiatric problems, such as anorexia or child schizophrenia,
- ▶ **less serious behaviour**, for example being disruptive in class. These behaviour patterns seem to occur for a longer period of time. The causes of these problems are more often than not deep-seated and will thus require the professional assistance of a psychologist to unravel the underlying factors giving rise to the behaviour problem, and
- ▶ **of a minor nature**, such as not being punctual. These problems seem to be present for some time and can be ascribed to certain disruptive circumstances in the learner’s life. They are however, only of a temporary nature and with the

necessary love, interest and support of significant other people within the life world of the learner, these problems can be readily overcome.

Although at times difficult to distinguish between, behaviour problems can in certain respects be categorised in terms of *primary* and *secondary* behaviour problems. A primary behaviour problem is defined in terms of the root cause giving rise to the problem in the first instance and then causing other additional problems to develop as a consequence thereof. In essence, a secondary problem has developed as a consequence of the primary problem.

Labelling of a behaviour pattern as “problematic” usually occurs when the learner is disturbing other learners. Adults are usually the persons inclined to label childhood disorders. Factors that are important to keep in mind when this labelling process is engaged in by adults, is the fact that their attitudes, sensitivity, tolerance and ability to cope, will have a direct impact on the way they perceive the learners and therefore on how they will assist them.

According to Morgan and Reinart (1991:4), Bower’s definition of behaviour problems is widely accepted as relevant within various contexts. Notably, it is currently being used by the United States Federal Government with slight modifications. In the literature that has been explored for the purposes of this study, Morgan and Reinart’s (1991:4) contention appears to be confirmed, as Bower’s definition of *behaviour problems* is frequently used and accepted by many of the researchers and authors concerned. Bower (1969,1981) with material received from Michigan (Ashman & Elkins 1994:298; Haring 1978:128,129) has compiled the following definition of learners with behaviour problems/disorders:

a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance in the following ways:

- ▶ an inability to learn, which cannot be related to intellectual, sensory or health factors;
- ▶ an inability to keep up good, solid social relationships with peers and teachers;
- ▶ inappropriate feelings or types of behaviour that are exhibited during normal conditions;
- ▶ a general, ever present mood of unhappiness or depression;
- ▶ a tendency to develop psychosomatic symptoms, eg. fears or pains, that are related to problems experienced within the school; and

- ▶ exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics: disruptive behaviour in the classroom, over a longer period of time, as well as extreme withdrawal from involvement with other learners over a longer period of time; the manifestation of symptoms that can be categorised as psychosis, schizophrenia or autism; the overall presentation of disruptive and aggressive behaviour which can eventually result in placement in a place of safety, awaiting Children's Court procedure and placement in an industrial school.

England's Code of Practice (Farrell 1995:8) provides the following guidelines for identifying learners with behaviour problems:

The learner -

- ▶ does not attend school regularly;
- ▶ exhibits obsessional and unhealthy eating habits;
- ▶ is dependent on a drug or drug related substance;
- ▶ behaves in an uncontrolled, unanticipated, bizarre and disruptive way;
- ▶ is inclined to bullying of other learners; and
- ▶ is mentally not healthy.

Grosenick and Huntze (Apter & Conoley 1984:16) regard the concept *behaviour disorders* as being far more useful than the concept *emotional disturbance*, in that behaviour disorders constitute a larger and more useful "umbrella" under which a more complete set of behaviour problems could be categorised. Behaviour disorders are also regarded as denoting a more pragmatic and less stigmatizing label. Hewett and Taylor (Apter & Conoley 1984:16) distinguished between the two concepts by stating that behaviour disorders are indicative of mild behaviour disorders, whilst emotional disturbance indicates more serious difficulties.

Barker (1983:58) defines *conduct disorder* as "involving aggressive and destructive behaviour and involving delinquency. The behaviour should not be part of some other psychiatric disorder such as a neurotic disorder or a psychosis but minor emotional disturbance may be present". Conduct disorder emerges through socially disapproved behaviour of the learner, "acting-out" behaviour towards people or property and behaviour that is persistent and fails to conform to normal sanctions. Laslett (1977:33) defines *conduct disorder* as those learners that do not fit in with socially accepted norms of behaviour and who "fail to correct their deviation in response to social sanctions". Their behaviour is

socially not acceptable. Their behaviour becomes a way to free them from their anxieties, hostilities and jealousies towards other significant other role players in their environment.

Wardle (Laslett 1977:34), in a similar vein, maintains that severe anxiety states within the learner causes the learner's behaviour to be disordered and he rather strikingly refers to it as the "the cornered animal syndrome". The underlying feature of this syndrome may be deemed to be a learner's unrecognised fears, the drawing of attention to a serious wrong that the learner has suffered or is aware of, disillusionment with a significant other role player in the environment of the learner, a reaction to intolerable stresses within the home, stresses on the learner or one of the family members, the discontinuation of affectionate relationships of the learner within the family, cerebral dysfunctions, depression and suicidal thoughts, adolescent psychosis, or a sudden and identifiable deterioration in the learner's performance. Wardle (Laslett 1977:35) proposes that such learners should be subjected to "a prolonged period of intensive, extensive nurture of a much more basic kind" than usually undertaken during psychotherapy sessions. This needs to be linked to progressive behaviour expectations and training. Behaviour modification programmes appear to bring about dramatic changes in the behaviour of these learners in the classroom, however, it is not yet clear how long these changes last in practice (Laslett 1977:35)

Rutter (Laslett 1977:35) describes learners with *neurotic disorders* as learners who are experiencing personality problems. Neurotic symptoms would for example include, disproportionate and persistent anxiety, depression, obsessional behaviour, compulsive behaviour as well as phobias. These learners need individual attention and sympathetic support from the teacher. Childhood psychosis, according to Stroh (Laslett 1977:36), is identified by childhood autism, organic psychosis with autistic features, schizophrenia, traumatic psychosis, psychotic depression, and obsessive-compulsive psychosis. Underwood (Laslett 1977:36) provides a more vivid description of psychotic behaviour by describing it as "conduct which is so profoundly disturbed that disruption of the normal pattern of development takes place at all levels, intellectual, social and emotional. It is behaviour which has led to descriptions of these children as having broken with reality, or at the best, retaining a very slender hold on it". Undoubtedly, a feature of the behaviour of these learners is such as to generate extensive tension in their relationships with other people sharing their life world. This will clearly have significant implications if they are to be accommodated within mainstream schools.

School principals frequently make use of the *Provincial Gazette Extraordinary* (1982:2) as a guideline for dealing with disciplinary and behaviour problems in South African schools. Learners who exhibit *misconduct* include “any conduct, committed in or out of school uniform and within or outside the school premises, which tends to bring the school into contempt or disrepute, or interferes with the governance and proper administration of the school, or interferes with the conditions necessary for any school activity or is committed with the intention of preventing any person from exercising his or her rights, powers or duties as a member of the school community, or is committed in retaliation against such exercise of which a punishment of suspension or expulsion may be imposed” (*Provincial Gazette Extraordinary* 1982:2).

Apter and Conoley (1984:15), Bos and Vaughn (1994:3-5) and Zarakowska and Clements (1988:2) present the following characteristics that may act as criteria for identifying learners with behaviour problems:

- They continuously draw attention to themselves in the classroom because they experience difficulty in learning and interacting appropriately.
- They have a poor academic record – problems experienced in spelling, reading, or mathematics can cause them to underachieve.
- They experience attention span problems – they cannot concentrate for long periods of time on a single task, they may also experience problems in following the teacher’s instructions, and their attention is easily distracted.
- They are inclined to be hyperactive – they experience difficulty in staying in their seats up to the end to complete a task. While they are concentrating on a task, the least noise will distract their attention.
- They have a difficult time trying to remember what they have learnt – they may remember something on one day and forget it the next day.
- They have poor motor abilities – poor coordination, spatial problems and fine-motor problems, for example an inability to cut with scissors handicaps them.
- They are inclined to be socially maladjusted and to act antisocially – learners who could, but who do not want to conform to the expectations of society and who do not experience any feelings of guilt or anxiety.
- They experience conflict and stress due to their problems.
- They are inclined to experience poor perceptual abilities, which causes auditory and/or visual perception problems, for example visual discrimination difficulties.

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- They exhibit poor language ability that causes them to have difficulties with vocabulary, to understand concepts, use language adequately, express themselves appropriately, or pronounce words correctly.
 - They act aggressively, either verbally or physically, for example by hitting or kicking other learners or by insulting others. They become easily upset, are inclined to overreact and make use of “acting out” behaviour to get rid of their frustrations.
 - They are inclined to be withdrawn and seldom interact with other learners. They frequently do not even have any friends – they are real loners and choose to avoid any contact with other learners.
 - They display bizarre behaviour, for example staring at objects for long periods of time or they may sit and rock themselves continuously.
 - Their behaviour itself or the severity of their behaviour is inappropriate in terms of their age and level of development.
 - Their behaviour results in danger to themselves, as well as others.
 - Their behaviour acts as a barrier to learning, as it inhibits the learning of new skills or excludes the learner from important learning opportunities.
 - Their behaviour causes significant stress to themselves and to others in their life-world, and impairs the quality of these persons’ lives, as well as their own quality of life.
 - Their behaviour is contrary to socially accepted norms.

Apter and Conoley (1984:22,23), Bos and Vaughn (1994:4), Rich (1982:94,95) and Zarakowska and Clements (1988:2) have listed the following questions that need to be considered when determining the seriousness of a behaviour problem:

- ▶ How long has the problem persisted?
- ▶ How long does the behaviour episode last?
- ▶ How often does the behaviour occur?
- ▶ In how many types of situations does the behaviour occur?
- ▶ How disruptive of the learner’s other activities is the problem behaviour?
- ▶ How easily can the circumstances that produced the behaviour be identified?
- ▶ Does the learner have difficulty being accepted by peers?
- ▶ How quickly is the situation leading to the episode forgotten?
- ▶ Does the behaviour of the learner disrupt the activities of others?
- ▶ Do others copy the problem behaviour?
- ▶ Does the behaviour represent a loss of contact with reality?
- ▶ How severe is the problem?

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- ▶ What are the comments of his or her previous teachers regarding his or her behaviour?
 - ▶ What is the relationship between the teacher and the learner like?
 - ▶ What mechanisms did the teacher employ to assist the learner with learning or behaviour problems?
 - ▶ What *range of tolerance* has the teacher for dealing with learners with behaviour problems?
 - ▶ Has the teacher explored the possibility of other factors that could have an impact on the learner's learning/behaviour problems?
 - ▶ Do the behaviour problems of the learner cause stress in the lives of the rest of the members of the family?
 - ▶ Can the behaviour problem of the learner be judged as being socially unacceptable in terms of accepted social norms or in terms of socially, accepted behaviour?
 - ▶ Is the behaviour a reasonable response to the situation?

In terms of the preceding discussion, common characteristics shaping the profile of *the learner with behaviour problems*, can be identified. They are *summarised* as follows:

A learner with behaviour problems is inclined to: set unrealistic goals for himself; show an inability to learn; be unable to maintain good social relationships with peers and teachers; experience inappropriate feelings or types of behaviour; not act according to what is regarded as being age related; be unhappy most of the time, feeling depressed and aggressive; experiences minor emotional disturbances; express behaviour that is uncontrolled, unanticipated bizarre and disruptive; bully other learners, act destructively and exhibit delinquent behaviour; suffer from a bad self-image; and be unable to function independently.

For the purposes of this study, the concepts *misconduct*, *behaviour problems* and *emotional problems* will be regarded as being interactive and interwoven with each other, as the one condition can be regarded as a causative factor to the other. For example, a learner who has a poor self-image and experiences a need to be accepted (unmet emotional needs), can be influenced by peers to exhibit misconduct, for example smoking on the school grounds although they know that it is prohibited (misconduct) and at a later stage he or she could even become involved with the peer group in depicting criminal behaviour (behaviour problem).

1.2.2 Emotional problems

According to Grossman (1990:237) emotional problems can be identified as follows:

- Learners whose emotional responses do not guide their behaviour appropriately.
- Learners whose emotional responses are too intense (eg. *you have to be careful about what you say because they are devastated by the slightest criticism; a little blood from a scrape on the knee or a small cut on the finger petrifies them; they become very anxious when they have to answer questions – especially if it is in the presence of other learners, or when they must complete a test/exam; they are angry about little things and react like somebody who has a chip on the shoulder; minor delays, small obstacles or other irritants, frustrate them immensely; they get depressed easily over little disappointments that do usually not bother other learners*).
- Learners whose emotional responses are too weak (eg. *when their peers mistreat or abuse them, they will only experience resentment but not enough to enable them to do something about it – usually a learner will eventually rise up and protest such treatment; their failures and mistakes are not corrected by them, because they are not concerned enough to try and correct them or to improve; pleasant things don't particularly please them and make them happy*).
- Learners who experience incorrect emotions and have a mistaken view of reality (eg. *they worry about things that they know are extremely unlikely to happen; when inflicting pain on other children, pets or animals, they laugh; they get involved with dangerous activities and appear exhilarated by any possibility of getting hurt; when others learners treat them with respect or show that they like them, they seem uncomfortable and anxious*).
- Learners who experience contrasting/conflicting emotions and for whom it becomes a problem to sort out their emotions to act one way or the other. These conflicting emotions can have an immobilizing effect on learners when they have to make a decision (eg. *when they have to learn how to play an instrument, to build a project or to form part of a team, they pretend that it does not bother them, while in the meantime, they are scared of being a failure deep down; they will rather persist, even though they know what they are doing is incorrect, than to ask for help*).
- Learners who experience emotional responses that are either too intense, or too weak, or the incorrect ones, or in conflict, usually act appropriately for their emotional response, but inappropriately for the situation. They experience a mismatch between emotion and situation. Learners react in three different ways

instead of implementing appropriate solutions to the problems of everyday living, namely they **avoid** facing up to challenging situations (eg. they will rather break up relationships than to try and work something out when they are encountering difficulties with other people), or they go on the **defensive** (eg. they are inclined to blame their teachers and peers for their own failures instead of admitting that it is their own fault that they were unsuccessful) or they **suffer** through the experience without feeling capable of dealing therewith (eg. they are inclined to fall apart during exams and are unable to function as they would have in a less stressful situation). Learners' emotional problems are caused by emotional reactions, which causes them to consistently avoid, defend or suffer with these problems, instead of thinking creatively of solutions to solve the problems.

Behaviour problems differ from **emotional problems** in the following respects:

- Learners with *behaviour problems* are able to behave differently, but they either do not want to do so or think it is not necessary to do so. Learners with *emotional problems* are not capable of behaving differently although they would like to. They need to have opportunities to experience more appropriate emotional responses and be capable of avoiding, defending and suffering in a lesser way and to resolve their problems more effectively.
- Learners who experience *behaviour problems* do so at the expense of others and to the benefit of themselves in trying to have their emotional needs met by significant other persons within their environment. They therefore have to learn that they cannot always regard their own needs as being the most important. They need to learn to consider other people. Learners with *emotional problems* are not necessary acting in self interest – they must be assisted to discontinue behaviour that they derive no benefit from. (Please see Chapter 4 in regard to “emotional problems”.)

1.2.3 Needs of learners

Charlton and David (1993:3) make the following statement:

The increasing challenge to schools, when they want to make a difference and they want to be fit for the future, is to examine what they are offering their learners, how it is offered and whether it meets the needs of the learners and the public. †

As may be ascertained from the above statement, “meeting the needs of learners” remains an important aspect of consideration in analysing the occurrence of behaviour problems. Grossman (1990:14) maintains that if learners’ basic needs are fulfilled, they are more likely to behave appropriately. Human needs may be conceptualised in terms of a hierarchy of needs, which implies that if basic needs (eg. food, clothing, accommodation) are being met, a person can take responsibility for realising higher needs (eg. the actualizing of potential). According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory (Grossman 1990:14; Santrock 1992:65), five fundamental levels of needs exist and these are arranged in order of importance, namely:

- ▶ at a basic level physiological satisfaction needs predominate (eg. *hunger, thirst, rest*);
- ▶ security and safety (*avoiding injury, physical attack, pain, extreme temperatures, diseases, physiological abuse*) feature at the second level of the hierarchy, as being of predominant concern;
- ▶ social needs such as love and acceptance, as well as a feeling of belonging gain importance at the third level;
- ▶ at the fourth level self-esteem, self-confidence, empowerment and a sense of meaningfulness, is representative of a higher order of needs and
- ▶ self-actualization is situated at the apex of the hierarchy of needs. Self-actualisation represents the full development of learners’ potential.

When learners are preoccupied with their unmet basic needs, for example being hungry, they cannot perform well academically. It might also affect their behaviour, as they can act out in anger, resentment and frustration for having to suffer whilst their peers appear to enjoy a state of relative well-being. This could lead to feelings of jealousy or result in theft. Grossman (1990:15) urges teachers to attend to the learner’s psychological needs, while referring learners to a social worker to attend to their basic needs. He suggests that teachers must on a personal level become involved with the learner, providing them with love, acceptance and a feeling of belonging, while simultaneously encouraging other students to react in this spirit towards one another. A sense of power can be enhanced by the teacher, by allowing learners to participate in decision-making processes within the classroom. Their self-esteem and self-confidence can be enhanced by providing them with opportunities to solve their own problems, to resolve conflict situations with others themselves, as well as being able to experience success in one form or another. The teacher must take care to protect learners from each other, by discouraging teasing, rejection, ridicule, harassment, or any other form of abuse. The teacher must refrain from any form of sarcasm or ridicule that can impact on the learner’s self-image.

In summary, learners' needs are conceptualised in terms of a hierarchy of needs that impact on their behaviour and therefore need to be taken into consideration in analysing any form of behaviour problems. (Please see "Satisfying of emotional needs" as discussed in Chapter 4.)

1.2.4 Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN)

The term *learners with special educational needs* refer to "those learners whose education requires additional planning and modifications in order to assist them to learn" and who are, according to the new Education Policy (NCSNET 1997:6,7), described as learners who are experiencing *barriers to learning*. LSEN includes learners who were previously identified and referred to special schools (Du Toit 1996:2).

There are various forms of special educational needs. In other words, certain types of Special Educational Needs (SEN) show similar symptoms or signs (also called manifestations). These manifestations are important because they enable teachers to identify learners who need special forms of assistance. The manifestations can be divided into the following groups:

■ **Disabilities**

This concept refers to permanent shortcomings in a person's make-up. Learners may be born with such disabilities or they may be caused by some harmful factor such as an illness or an accident. The following types of disabilities can be distinguished:

- Sensory disabilities: these occur when one (or more) of the senses has been affected. A person may be blind or deaf, when his sense for seeing or hearing is affected.
- Physical disabilities: a physical disability affects a person's outward appearance or movements. For instance an arm may be missing, or a hand or limbs cannot be used, with the result that the learner requires the use of a wheelchair or crutches.
- Intellectual disability: a learner is intellectually disabled when he or she is less capable to understand or to learn than the average person.
- Multiple disability: learners who suffer from more than one disability, are multiply disabled.

The following facts regarding disabilities need to be kept in mind (Du Toit 1996:3):

- Several forms of disabilities, such as epilepsy, autism and others exist.

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- Disabilities are usually of a permanent nature.
 - Disabilities can be identified at an early age.
 - Disabilities can be caused by internal factors (intrinsic factors).
 - External (extrinsic) factors can intensify disabilities – especially if not identified at a young age and if parents did not have the necessary support.
 - Learners with disabilities have the same rights as other learners.

 - ***Developmental problems***

A learner is experiencing developmental problems, when his or her development does not correspond to that of peers. In other words, the learner may be late in acquiring the so-called “developmental milestones”, namely sitting, walking, talking, and reading, to but name a few.

Developmental problems could manifest as:

- ▶ a total delay in all or most of the developmental areas,
- ▶ a delay in one or more aspects of development such as motor, perceptual, language or intellectual development, for example a learner who cannot speak fluently by the age of six, and
- ▶ not being school ready at the accepted age for new entrants.

- ***Learning problems***

Learners experience learning problems when they find it difficult to master those learning tasks which most other children in the class can manage. Learning problems are manifested in all school subjects, only certain school subjects, or in certain aspects of a school subject.

The following concepts are associated with learning problems:

- ▶ ***Underachievement:*** This implies that a learner does not do as well as one would expect of someone with his or her intellectual ability. There is therefore a gap between the learner’s achievement and what he or she is actually capable of doing.
- ▶ ***Learners who do not do well at school:*** They may be trying their very best but because they lack good mental abilities, they cannot be expected to show better results.

- ▶ **Disadvantaged learners:** *This concept refers to those learners whose education has fallen behind as a result of social, economic or political circumstances. In many cases they start their school career with a disadvantage and this disadvantage tends to increase with time.*

According to the proposed Education Policy (NCSNET 1997:6,7), *special needs* are regarded as resulting from barriers, in the way that the curriculum has been presented. It has thus been suggested that the concept *learners with special educational needs* be replaced by *learners who experience barriers to learning*. Barriers implies learners who experience some form of difficulty in engaging in the learning process.

Learners who experience *barriers to learning* are deemed to be the following (NCSNET Document 1998:12-19):

learners who experience socio-economic barriers, e.g. inadequate numbers of centres of learning; learners who experience a lack of access to basic services, e.g. inadequate transport, inadequate access to clinics; learners who experience poverty and underdevelopment, e.g. unemployment, the inability of families to meet the basic needs of their children; factors that place learners at risk, e.g. the emotional and social well-being of learners due to violence, crime, HIV/AIDS; discriminatory attitudes towards learners who are labelled, e.g. slow learners, drop outs; inflexible and inaccessible curriculum and inadequate training of teachers as well as teaching styles that do not meet the needs of all the learners; language and communication where the medium of instruction is not the home language of the learner; inaccessible and unsafe built environment, e.g. wheelchairs or blind learners; inadequate and inappropriate provision of support services; lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy; lack of parental recognition and involvement; disability, e.g. the learning environment and the broader society do not provide in the needs of these learners and a lack of human resource development strategies, e.g. the absence of ongoing in-service training programmes leads to insecurities, uncertainties, low self-esteem, lack of innovative practices which in turn impacts on the attitudes of teachers.

Jones and Southgate (1989:59) argue that special educational needs do not only arise from various types of disabilities, but also from the violations of human rights. Jones and

Southgate (1989:56) maintain that a human rights perspective can be of use to the school principal and teaching staff in order to help them to analyse needs and to develop more relevant strategies for meeting these needs.

1.2.5 Learners-at-risk

Wood (1991:24) maintains that learners-at-risk constitutes the fastest growing component of the learner population. This factor in itself makes them the focus of growing concern. In the past, different labels were used to identify these learners, for example the culturally deprived learner, the marginalised learner, the underprivileged learner, the low-achieving learner. Nowadays there is no clear consensus on how to identify the at-risk learner. These learners are not necessarily disabled. Helge (Wood 1991:25) constructed a profile of the at-risk learner. In terms of the profile these learners are:

- ▶ making misuse of drugs and other related dependancy substances,
- ▶ involved with crime,
- ▶ suicidal/depressed/exhibit low self-esteem,
- ▶ being abused (physical, emotional, verbal and/or sexual),
- ▶ poor,
- ▶ the children of alcoholic or substance users,
- ▶ members of dysfunctional families,
- ▶ illiterate or use English as their second language,
- ▶ migrants,
- ▶ in a disabling condition,
- ▶ dropping out of school,
- ▶ sexually active or pregnant,
- ▶ members of the minority group,
- ▶ experiencing health problems,
- ▶ performing significantly below their potential, and
- ▶ resident in a rural or remote area.

The Iowa Department of Education (1989) has defined the at-risk-learner as follows (Wood 1991:25):

Any identified student who is at risk of not meeting the goals of the educational program established by the district, not completing a high school education, or not becoming a productive worker. These students may include, but are not limited to, dropouts, potential dropouts, teenage

parents, substance users and abusers, low academic achievers, abused and homeless children, youth offenders, economically deprived, minority students, culturally isolated, those with sudden negative changes in performance due to environmental or physical traumas, and those with language barriers, gender barriers, and disabilities.

The impact that these risk-factors and combinations thereof can have on a learner will differ from one learner to another. Wood (1991:27), however, warns that the earlier the learner is exposed to these at-risk factors, the longer it is going to take to remediate the effects of these at-risk factors – especially during the adolescent period, the situation can become quite complicated.

The growing statistics and the vast impact of these at-risk factors on learners, families, parents, and communities, act as a warning sign to educators to no longer work in isolation, but to form partnerships with community leaders in order to assess community resources, parents as well as the development of “in-house” resources, to provide for the needs of these learners.

According to Du Toit (1996:6), this concept refers to those learners whose circumstances are such that they do not have a good chance of making a success of their school career. Slavin, Karweit and Madden (1989:4,5) in contrast maintain that the meaning of this concept is never exact and that it can vary considerably in practice. A possible definition would indicate that these learners are unlikely to graduate from high school. Risk factors would for instance be low achievement, retention in grade, behaviour problems, poor attendance, and low socioeconomic status. They are quite likely to drop out of school. Causative factors to these problem situations are often socioeconomic status. The learners concerned are unlikely to leave school with an adequate level of the basic skills. Their intelligence is within normal limits, but they fail to acquire the basic skills that are necessary for success in school and in life. They can thus be regarded as eligible for special or compensatory education.

1.2.6 Inclusive learning environment

According to the proposed Education Policy (NCSNET 1997:149), an inclusive environment is an environment that stimulates the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners, irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religious denomination, learning styles and language. An inclusive learning environment is an environment that is free from discrimination, segregation and harassment. An atmosphere of mutual acceptance and

respect is facilitated. Learners are respected and valued as partners in teaching and learning. The rights of all learners are respected and they are enabled to participate fully in a democratic society. Clearly, this interpretation of the concept is quite wide in scope.

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) describes inclusion as “a human right, it’s good education and it makes good social sense”. *Human rights* include the following:

- ▶ the fact that all learners have the right to be educated together;
- ▶ no learner should be sent away, or be devalued or be discriminated against by being excluded from education or by being sent away because of being disabled or because of the fact that he or she is experiencing a learning disability; and
- ▶ no legitimate reasons exist at present to separate learners for their education. Learners must be grouped together as they belong together – with the necessary advantages and benefits for everybody. It should thus not be necessary to protect them from one another.

According to the CSIE, *good education* is possible because inclusion, ensures:

- ▶ better academic performances by the learners, as indicated by research findings,
- ▶ that no teaching or care that takes place in a segregated educational situation, cannot take place in an inclusive environment.

These facts make inclusive education more acceptable and educational resources can be more effectively utilised within an inclusive educational setting, where commitment and support are important.

Good social sense is stimulated in a situation where learners develop relationships that will prepare them for life in mainstream educational settings; fear is reduced and friendships are built, in addition to a nurturing of respect and understanding.

According to the Discussion Document on Inclusion (1996:1), inclusion implies “in its pure form a warm, embracing attitude, accepting and accommodating another human being unconditionally, thus expressing the human element within every individual”. Inclusion implies the acceptance of differences. All people, including those learners with special needs, form part of society. A need for a paradigm shift is implied, in order to accept the principles and underlying philosophies of inclusion, as based on a socio-critical perspective. Learners with special educational needs have abilities that need to be brought under the attention of the whole society, ensuring that this makes them worthwhile members of

society. A changed *attitude* is thus needed towards the norms and criteria society makes use of to evaluate the “worth of a human being”. Inclusion is a basic value that is applicable to every learner – “everyone belongs” (Discussion Document on Inclusion 1996:1). Each learner is entitled to a wide variety of opportunities to grow. According to the Discussion Document on Inclusion (1996:10), all learners can benefit from a heterogeneous learning environment and learners with special educational needs, perform better when they are challenged by their peers in a mainstream classroom.

An inclusive education system would imply that learners who were in the past taught in special schools, such as the blind, are now permitted to go to any mainstream school of their choice, provided that the parents, administrators, teaching staff and the learners themselves believe in the right of every learner to be an integral part of the school community. Schools in turn have the responsibility to create conducive learning environments that will stimulate and actualise the potential of all learners.

Inclusive education implies in practice that all learners, including learners with special educational needs, are educated together—even although the curricular outcomes and needs for these LSEN (learners with special educational needs or learners experiencing barriers to learning) differ from those of their classmates. Inclusive education is aiming at “the preparation of all students for productive lives as full, participating members of their communities” (Discussion Document 1996:2). The following factors need to be taken into consideration, if inclusive education is to become a reality, namely collaboration, teamwork, flexibility, a willingness to take risks, and support from individuals or organisations within the community.

South African schools will need to be restructured, in terms of the review of the curriculum, with the collaboration of various stakeholders. Community-based involvement in this regard is deemed essential, with members of the community becoming involved in actualising the full potential of learners, as opposed to a process of labelling or stigmatising these learners as being different and of lesser value to the community. Special schools, with their very skilled and experienced staff, could offer assistance and support to the teaching faculty at mainstream schools. Teachers need to focus on the strengths of learners, rather than to emphasise their weaknesses. Learners enter school with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and such diversity should not be regarded as being problematic, but rather as having the potential to stimulate a richer learning environment.

In the past, learners were evaluated, according to the traditional medical model, by means of IQ and various similar tests. Learners were then regarded as being either educable or trainable and were placed in different schools according to their assigned label. Those deemed to be trainable were placed in special schools for the mentally disabled. In these schools the emphasis was on the attainment of basic life skills and not on inclusion in mainstream education, where they would have been granted the opportunity to become a full participator in the life of the community and society in general (Discussion Document on Inclusion 1996:3).

A global momentum towards a unitary, inclusion philosophy, incorporating all learners, including learners with special educational needs/learners experiencing barriers to learning (LSEN), was advocated in June 1994, in terms of the Salamanca Document on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education (1994:viii-xii). This statement specifically emphasises that inclusive education needs to be implemented by schools, because inclusive education is regarded as the most effective way of “combatting discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost effectiveness of the entire education system” (Discussion Document on Inclusion 1996:7).

Four types of proposed models of inclusion, within the South African context, can be distinguished (Discussion Document on Inclusion 1996:9):

- *Total inclusion: all learners being educated together under one roof, together with the necessary support, age appropriate education programmes, and differentiated curricular goals for LSEN.*
- *Inclusion where LSEN are included in the social milieu of the school, but are educated in a self-contained class. They will be involved with the ordinary class programme, according to which their competencies allow them to take part.*
- *Inclusion where LSEN would be sharing some of the tuition with a neighbouring mainstream school.*
- *Inclusion where learners from mainstream schools go to special schools to receive instruction in vocational skills.*

1.2.7 Emotional neglect or deprivation or emotional ill-treatment

According to Boston and Szur (1983:1) emotional deprivation is difficult to define, as it can take place in different contexts and does not necessarily have to occur within the family home. Deprivation implies “an actual lack, disruption or distortion of parental care” (Boston & Szur 1983:1) or “the crux of the child’s deprivation may be perceived as the absence of an adult who, parent-like, shows constancy of care by being sufficiently present and emotionally available to be receptive to the child’s feelings and to ‘think’ about them”.

O’Hagan (1993:19,20) maintains that emotional neglect occurs when either “meaningful adults are unable to provide necessary nurturance, stimulation, encouragement and protection to the child at various stages of development” or that it “is a result of subtle or blatant acts of omission or commission experienced by the child, which causes handicapping stress on the child and is manifested in patterns of inappropriate behaviour”. Whereas the first definition focuses on the unintentional outcomes of the neglect of the child by the caregivers being too poor or too oppressed to eliminate it, the second definition points to the high level of awareness and intentionality of the caregivers.

O’Hagan (1992:20) contends that it is difficult to determine the exact difference between emotional abuse and emotional ill-treatment. It can however be argued that “emotional abuse is caused by emotional ill-treatment” (O’Hagan 1992:20). Emotional abuse can thus be regarded as the outcome of emotional neglect or emotional deprivation or emotional ill-treatment (For the purposes of this study these concepts are used in a similar vein.)

1.2.8 Emotional abuse

Wolfe (1991:5,6) maintains that the growing consensus amongst professional persons is the fact that emotional abuse becomes more prevalent than any other kind of maltreatment – it is also destructive in its impact on development.

The following psychological characteristics of abusive parents can be distinguished (Wolfe 1991:21):

- ***Behaviour dimension***
 - ▶ Chronically aggressive
 - ▶ Isolated from family and friends
 - ▶ Rigid and domineering

- ▶ Impulsive
- ▶ Experiencing marital difficulties

- ***Cognitive-emotional dimension***
 - ▶ Emotional immaturity
 - ▶ Low frustration tolerance
 - ▶ Difficulty expressing anger
 - ▶ Role reversal; looks to child to gratify own needs
 - ▶ Deficits in self-esteem
 - ▶ Inability to empathize with children
 - ▶ High expectations of child; disregard for child's needs and abilities
 - ▶ Defends "right" to use physical punishment
 - ▶ Deep resentment toward own parents for failing to satisfy dependency needs

Research findings (Wolfe 1991:31) indicate that physical and emotional abuse of a child impacts on the parent/child relationship as well as causing developmental disabilities for the child as the psychological dimensions (e.g. socioemotional, behaviour and social-cognitive) in the child's development are impaired or disturbed. Children that are emotionally abused, are more abused than their counterparts who have only been physically abused, as they are developmentally delayed, exhibit behaviour disorders and are recognizably different from their peers (Wolfe, 1991:32). Abused children experience problems with the formation of attachment with caregivers and this problem effects the other relationship of the child with the peers, future partners as well as future offspring. These children experience problems to act independently, act with aggression towards others, are inclined to become depressed, lack social skills, experience feelings of hopelessness, low self-worth and have no proper problem-solving abilities as they cannot adapt appropriately to their environment.

Research findings (Boston & Szur 1983:1) indicate that the discontinuation of emotional care in the early years of childhood does seriously impact on "a child's capacity to establish trusting and secure relationships as well as on the ability to think and to learn". A "primary emotional experience" is thus needed to fulfill in the emotional needs of the child and to substitute the emotional inabilities that are situated within the parent/child relationship. According to Hoxter (Boston & Szur 1983:125), "the crux of the child's deprivation may be perceived as the absence of an adult who, parent-like, shows constancy of care by being sufficiently present and emotionally available to be receptive to the child's feelings and to 'think' about them. Long-term work with the children revealed many of them to have a pervading preoccupation with the complex of experiences relating to their sense of

deprivation, which left little space in their lives for anything else, thus diminishing their capacity to benefit from ordinary maturational experiences". According to Hoxter (Boston & Szur 1983:125), the lives of these children were characterised by a continuing need "to keep at bay the intolerable emotions of their past experiences of deprivation". These children often expel the pain inside themselves by reacting in ways that are likely to hurt those who care for them. When assisting a child who has been emotionally abused, the therapist must always bear in mind that together with the child, they must face the fact that the past cannot be "put right" and that the scars of the past will always be present. The therapist must also realise that his or her contribution can only be of a limited nature and that he or she cannot substitute the parent and rectify all the developmental gaps resulting from a faulty parent/child relationship. According to Hoxter (Boston & Szur 1983:131), "we can never observe emotional injury; we can only observe the adaptations and maladaptations which each individual utilises in attempts to cope with pain. The pain remains unseen, our only perceptual organ for it is that most sensitive of instruments, our own capacity for emotional response. By maintaining our sensitivity without being overwhelmed or resorting to withdrawal in relationship with someone who can be relied upon to attend to suffering with both receptivity and strength".

1.2.9 Psychological abuse

Wolfe (1991:6,7) describes psychological abuse as something that immediately harms the behaviour, cognitive, affective or physical functioning of the child e.g. maltreatment which includes psychological maltreatment like rejecting, terrorizing, isolation, exploiting and missocializing. Psychological abuse impacts the nonphysical aspects of the individual, for example self-esteem, self-concept, and social competence". It is however difficult to tell which type of abuse is the worst, physical or psychological abuse.

1.2.10 Whole school development approach

According to the Discussion Document on Education for All (NCSNET 1997:43) a whole school approach "implies a change in the whole environment that surrounds and contains the school/centre of learning, including the physical and psycho-social environment and ethos, and the development of the learners, staff, governing bodies, parents and others. The ultimate achievement of organisation development in this context is the transformation of the culture of the school/centre: the substantial and sustainable alteration of patterns and practices of the school/centre as a learning and teaching organisation". When a whole

school/ institutional development approach is adopted, it will ensure that the learning environment will be inclusive and supportive.

Jones and Southgate (1989:51) define the concept *whole school policy (whole school development approach)* as:

a policy clearly understood by the whole school community, whose purpose is to guide and determine the ethos of the school and to support attitudes and behaviour consistent with that ethos. It is a way of raising issues and feeding in information. It's a way of making teachers know and feel what the concerns are that these issues are supposed to be responding to. It's very important for teachers to be part of the process.

A whole school policy/approach provides a platform that can be used to reiterate a principle, which encourages teachers to think more deeply about the nature of the unfulfilled needs of learners, in such a way that they will aspire to meet these needs. It can also act as a catalyst for changing the ethos, the organisation and management of the school, in the best interests of the learners, while simultaneously engendering a change of mind and heart. Westwood (1993:196) points out that in terms of the *whole school policy*, all the members of the teaching staff must be involved in catering for the needs of the learners. It is "to a large extent, a survival response to the change of emphasis from segregated to integrated placement for disabled learners in times of shrinking resources" (Westwood 1993:197). Dean (1989:25) gives the following reasons for regarding the implementation of a *whole school policy*:

- Problems that a learner experiences and which form a barrier to learning, are quite often not as a result of a lack of remedial teaching, but as a result of a lack of motivation, a low self-esteem and a feeling that the curriculum is irrelevant.
- Different demands placed on learners by different teachers in secondary school can confuse a learner. Therefore, the more members of the teaching staff can work together, the more common elements in their approach will materialise and the easier it will be for a learner to settle into secondary school and meet the demands of their teachers.
- All members of staff must be in agreement, as regards the allocation of resources and the design of an appropriate programme for learners with special needs.

Jones and Southgate (1989:55,56) contend that if a school adopts a *whole school approach*, the principal and staff will be implementing the Warnock Report's (1985) "new view of special education", namely one whereby learners are helped to overcome their educational difficulties that serve as barriers to learning, however they are caused. The emphasis and focus will no longer be on the individual learners, who after all, cannot be held responsible for the environment in which they grew up, or the attitudes and behaviour of people within that environment. Whole school policy can thus contribute to the removal of the burden of guilt and stigma which is bestowed on the learners, who are deemed to have special educational needs. This policy can also assist teachers in distinguishing between the needs of learners that they can satisfy and those that are the responsibility of the community.

Charlton and David (1993:12,13) maintain that the central tenet of a whole school approach is one of focussing on the encouragement of good behaviour, instead of the punishment of bad behaviour. It is contended that a preoccupation with the behaviour of individual learners and how teachers react thereto, needs to be overcome. A whole-school approach can positively contribute to the realisation of this objective. Charlton and David (1993:13) identify aspects of the school system that require specific attention, in implementing a whole-school policy, namely:

- ▶ the quality and effectiveness of school leadership;
- ▶ management systems;
- ▶ teacher assessment/appraisal;
- ▶ staff development;
- ▶ the meaning and impact of professionalism;
- ▶ the purpose and effectiveness of the way in which the curriculum is organized and presented;
- ▶ ways and methods of assessing and changing of the school climate;
- ▶ school philosophy and its rules;
- ▶ classroom incentives and punishment;
- ▶ internal and external communication systems; and
- ▶ staff liaison and pastoral responsibilities.

Charlton and David (1993:14) stress that a factor to be born in mind, when considering implementation of a whole-school policy, is the need for obtaining consensus among staff members since that they individually and collectively exercise considerable influence on the way learners respond within the school context. Members of the teaching staff must therefore be committed and willing to explore ways in which they can improve the content quality and the presentation of their work (Charlton & David 1993:14). If everybody, from

the learners to the teaching staff and governing body supports a whole-school policy, the learners, their parents and the school community can collectively benefit from this.

Charlton and David (1993:14) argue that the only way that schools can become “fit for the future” is when:

- ▶ they have a well formulated school policy, which clearly defines its aims and objectives;
- ▶ a code of expected behaviour for everybody involved is clearly set out;
- ▶ everybody (learners, teachers, administrative staff members, parents and members of the governing body) understands what their responsibilities are; and
- ▶ a collective understanding exists, as regards what is being planned for the school.

According to Charlton and David (1993:14), if attention is paid to the above aspects of a whole-school policy, apart from being fit for the future, it will promote a sense of “community” that will be of assistance in establishing a healthy learning environment and the building of a positive school ethos.

1.2.11 Community-based model

According to the Discussion Document on the proposed Education Policy (NCSNET 1997:57), the education system in South Africa has been criticised because of its weakness in preparing the learners for life and for the adult work life in particular. This criticism is especially relevant to learners with special educational needs.

It is deemed imperative that members of the business community are involved with various aspects of the curriculum development, so as to ensure its relevance in terms of the future work environment that will be confronting the learners of today. A further aspect that requires attention, is the career guidance or counselling, that will mirror the relationship between the community and its needs, and the school within the community. According to the proposed new Education Policy (NCSNET 1997:63), “a strong centre-of-learning/community relationship” must be stimulated. This type of relationship will automatically include parent involvement, as well as the inclusion of community resources, whilst a relevant curriculum and a supportive learning environment is being developed. The support of the broader community is a precondition for ensuring that the community takes ownership of the centres of learning and responsibility for the learners who are the

“products” of these centres of learning. According to NCSNET (1997:64), the concept *community* includes family members (eg. grandparents) volunteers, NGO’s, members of the business sector, members of religious organisations, traditional healers and similar support infrastructures that may exist within the community.

It is necessary for schools/centres of learning to establish a strong link with the broader community, as it provides an opportunity to link education to the future work environment of the learner. This linkage can ensure that learners are prepared, in the most appropriate way, for functioning within a future work or business environment and being accepted within this very challenging community context. The work sector can make a major contribution, by providing learners with work placements while they are still at school or studying at centres of learning. “Developing a strong centre of learning/parent and community relationship is therefore a goal that should be striven for. This is a fundamental principle of the Education and SA Schools Act (1996) and of the vision reflected in this Public Discussion Document” (NCSNET 1997:64).

Services should be provided to assist learners with the transition from school to active working life. Vocational training, adult education, carrier guidance, and community participation are all means that may be used to facilitate the transition process. Between different education and training institutions, good inter-institutional coordination should exist, in terms of curriculum development and the implementation of training programmes.

A *community based model* accentuates the fact that the community has to take “ownership” of the school and assume certain responsibilities towards the school. In the past the community has not always been involved with the school and its activities. Consequently quite often learners with special educational needs, for example blind learners, have been stigmatised and pushed aside by the community. Nowadays, in terms of the new proposed education policy, the community is urged to neither stigmatise, nor push this learner aside. Instead the community is urged to take part in a programme, drawn up in conjunction with the team members of the educational support team, to satisfy a certain learner’s needs. In other words, the school “responds to the community and the community responds to the school” (Jones & Southgate 1989:198).

In a slightly different vein, Freire (Jones & Southgate 1989:197) utilises the metaphor of “banking education” to draw a correlation between financial investment and an investment in the education of learners. Learners are thus regard as a kind of bank account into which money is inserted. Knowledge is essentially viewed as a gift bestowed, by those who regard

themselves as being knowledgeable, upon those (learners) whom they regarded as knowing nothing (Jones & Southgate 1989:197). Clearly implied is a need for the business community to invest in the development of one of the most important future assets it will have, namely a potential human resource asset base, from which its future employees will be recruited. Within a highly competitive global business environment, it is these future knowledgeable workers that will spell the difference between success or failure for the institutions concerned. To therefore use Freire's metaphor (Southgate & Jones 1989:197), these institutions will in effect be investing in their own future destiny by banking in the education of a future work force.

1.2.12 Collaboration

The concept *collaboration* is derived from the Latin word *laborare* which means "to work together" (Dettmar, Dyck & Thurston 1996:18; Idol, Nevin & Whitcomb 1994:6). Friend and Cook (1992:5) ascribe a similar connotation to the term by defining it as "a style for direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal". In an associate sense Dettmar *et al.* (1996:17) define collaborative school consultation as "interaction in which school personnel and families confer and collaborate as a team within the school context to identify learning and behaviour needs, and to plan, implement and evaluate educational programs for serving those needs". Cramer (1998:3) also views collaboration as "the designing and using of a sequence of goal orientated activities that result in improved working relationships between professional colleagues". The golden thread running through the preceding definitions is one of interaction and teamwork to realise a common objective, which in the context of this study is meeting the needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs.

Bos and Vaughn (1994:423) make use of the concept *collaboration* within the classroom context, when they refer to collaborative learning. This type of learning implies that learners work together in the classroom and that they also rely on each other as a source of learning. For this to happen, the following four basic elements need to be in place for small-group learning to be effective, namely interdependence; individual accountability; collaborative skills; as well as group processing. An interdependency between group members is accentuated and fostered, by formulating a common goal or objective that they all agree on. Rewards are based on group and not individual performance and the materials that group members will need to complete the task, in order to achieve their goal, will be distributed between the members of the group concerned. Learners are also given

complementary roles and tasks when labour has to be divided. Group processing takes place when learners in the group discuss the good progress they are making in achieving their goals.

Learners can benefit from the opportunities provided to take part in cooperative learning experiences. It in particular can assist the learner with behaviour problems in developing social skills, as well as in achieving defined academic skills. Cooperative learning also provides learners with opportunities to interact positively with peers, as well as to co-create or establish the necessary strategies to support one another. In effect a context is generated where learners cannot only learn from each other, but also learn to interact in a group or team context to achieve a mutually defined objective.

1.2.13 The ecological model

Teachers are expected to take control of the motley assortment of different behaviours to be found in their classrooms. Less desirable behaviour needs to be redirected and more desirable behaviours encouraged and strengthened. Some of the behaviour tends to be less serious and other more serious in nature. Dealing with behaviour problems consumes a great deal of a teacher's time and leaves him or her with little or no time to encourage desirable behaviours, such as effective social skills (making and keeping friends, dealing successfully with peer pressure), self-regulatory behaviours (working independently, finishing a task on time), and behaviour that is indicative of a good self-image, for example taking pride in what one has done and feeling good about one's successes.

The ecological model offers teachers an opportunity to target and understand and assist problem behaviour directly, by paying special attention to the environmental and situational factors that can either make a contribution towards the aggravation of the problem, or enhance the successes in dealing with it, if dealt with in an appropriate manner. In effect it is contended that desirable behaviour can be inhibited by situational and environmental factors, which must therefore be taken into consideration in addressing the behaviour concerned.

The concept *ecology* refers to a study of the relationships between an organism and its environment. Rhodes (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:21) distinguishes between different models, namely the behaviour, psychodynamic, biophysical, sociological and ecological models. With the exception of the ecological model, each of the other models tends to focus on the learner, as the guilty party, in analysing problem behaviour. Only the ecological model

focuses on the *interaction* between the *learner* and the different *systems/ecologies* that are part of his or her environment. Clearly, the ecological model therefore is of substantial significance, in researching a future methodology for dealing with problem behaviour within the school context.

Paul and Epanchin (1982:216) describe the ecosystem as something that is not separate from individuals. They maintain that learners are not *within* an ecosystem – they are *part of* the ecosystem. Learners have their own unique niches, psychological places that are comfortable to the learners and the rest of the ecosystem.

The ecological model is based on two fundamental principles, namely:

- Ecosystems are continually in a process of seeking to establish a state of equilibrium. Because of the complex composition of the different elements of the ecosystem, permanent equilibrium is never possible. However, the system is always seeking equilibrium, although it can only be achieved on a temporary basis. Disturbance occurs when the various elements of the ecosystem are so out of harmony that the stability of the environment is in jeopardy. Four processes are needed to harmonize the disturbance, namely:
 - ▶ **adaptation** (a component changes to fit in better with the rest of the components),
 - ▶ **assimilation** (if adaptation does not occur, and the disturbance perseveres, the ecosystem can assimilate it by creating a new niche for it or expel it from the system completely or if any of the two mentioned processes are unsuccessful, ecological succession takes place),
 - ▶ **expulsion**, and
 - ▶ **succession** (the whole ecosystem is being altered in a basic way, together with associated changes in relationships and expectations).
- The *interrelatedness of the components* of the ecological model. Every component/element of the model affects another component, which in turn is affected by yet another component. If one component changes, it affects another component within the same environment. The ecosystem must thus be seen as an entity and not as isolated components. This reality highlights the complexity of obtaining any form of equilibrium in a context where change has become the norm rather than the exception to the rule.

Davie (Charlton & David 1993:11) explains what is meant by the ecological model, when he argues that “each individual child is embedded in a number of systems, notably family and school, and that the individual’s behaviour can only meaningfully be viewed in that sort of context”. No behaviour takes place in a complete vacuum – it is always embedded in the environment. Rhodes and Paul (Hammill & Bartel 1995:294) explain that ecological theories are “holistic phenomena that explained how the various social, physical and psychic processes of an ecosystem become a disability and are transformed into deviance”. This theory points out in a definite way that deviance can be regarded as a result of disturbed relationships between an organism (the learner) and its environment (eg. the home, the peer group, at school). Therefore, the teacher needs to take into consideration, this interaction that takes place, when formulating strategies, as to how to best understand and assist problem behaviour. Factors that teachers should pay attention to are classroom structure, school rules and regulations, the curriculum, friendships and cliques among peer group members and their impact on learners who may be experiencing difficulty in socialising with members of the peer group. Several environments may therefore be looked at when assessing the behaviour problem.

The **advantages** of the *ecological model* are as follows (Apter & Conoley 1984:21; Hammill & Bartel 1995:293, 294):

- It allows the teacher to assess a learner’s status within the various ecologies/systems or environments within which he or she functions.
- It provides the teacher with a much broader and more natural picture of the learner, than has been the case with conventional evaluations in the past, which removed the learner from the classroom to be evaluated in the principal or psychologist’s office.
- It focuses on various factors that could have aggravated the behaviour problem, instead placing the blame on the learner, as was the case in the past “troubled children are really representatives of troubled systems” (Apter & Conoley 1984:21).
- It prevents labelling, as learners are no longer to blame, but the different ecologies/systems take responsibility for the learner’s behaviour problem.
- It clearly highlights the fact that a piecemeal approach, in contrast to a holistic or “wholeness” (all parts being part of the “whole”) approach, is not acceptable, as the former approach merely focuses on the problem behaviour, thereby failing to view the problem behaviour within the broader framework of organisational complexity.
- It prevents a study of only the learner or only the environment, as it focuses on the ***interaction*** between the ***learner*** and the ***environment***.

- It focuses on *relations* instead of *entities*, as well as on process and change variables.
- It provides more insight than any other model has done in the past, and far greater opportunities for formulating strategies to understand and assist with
- problem behaviour in a realistic way. Specific behaviour outcomes can be planned, in accordance with a well-designed systems analysis and systems change process.
- It is such a complex model that any specific intervention can in effect cascade into a wide range of unanticipated consequences, which accentuates the unique encapsulation of each learner within his or her environment.

The school is regarded as an open system, namely a system that is in constant interaction with other systems in the environment that it serves, for example the church, the community, and the parents. It serves different systems and receives input from these systems, for example society at large. The success of a school can be measured in terms of how well it can maintain an internal state of equilibrium, while serving and adapting to the constantly changing needs of society. Its success will also depend on its ability to adapt its products, in terms of satisfying the needs and demands of society, while simultaneously attending to the needs and problems of staff, learners and parents as well (see Chapter 2 and 4 regarding the ecosystems model). This reality accentuates the importance of the model, as South Africa is a society in transition and the needs referred to are therefore in a perpetual state of change.

1.3 FACTORS GIVING RISE TO THE STUDY

The following factors have given rise to this study:

- In South Africa, the incidence of behaviour problems in schools is exceptionally high. This fact is highlighted by the large numbers of youth involved in crime, who are in detention and in places of safety and the feedback received from teachers, namely that from 10-60% of the learners in primary schools exhibit behaviour problems (see chapter 3, sec. 3.6 in this regard). ***The future of the country is at stake and urgent attention should be given to the high incidence of behaviour problems experienced.***
- The headlines of newspapers are an outcry for help as they spell out the need to attend to the unmet emotional needs of children as well as accentuating the ignorance of and being abused by the significant other role players in the environment of the learner, who are supposed to care for the children (see Chapter 5, sec. 5.1 in this regard). ***Children and their emotional needs, which is their right***

to be satisfied, are left to themselves to find ways to satisfy their unmet emotional needs – be it in an accepted or unaccepted way.

- The concern of the present Minister of Education, regarding the high failure rate of grade 12 learners during the previous matriculation examinations can be attended to if the unmet emotional needs of learners are addressed. Learners cannot perform academically according to their potential, if their emotional needs are not met ***Academic performance in schools can only improve if the unmet emotional needs, besides other relevant factors, are also attended to by professional persons.***
- Learners exhibiting behaviour problems because of unmet emotional needs, become the parents of tomorrow. They will because of the fact that their emotional needs were not met, also not know how to meet the emotional needs of their children which will then in turn, create the possibility of more learners exhibiting behaviour problems. ***The vicious circle will be continued by not attending to the matters of concern which will end the continuation of circumstances that provide for the occurrence of behaviour problems.***
- The manifestations of behaviour problems in South African schools are not those typically recorded in the literature, as being manifested by primary and secondary school learners. The manifestations are far more severe, and even in primary schools include incidents of stabbing, rape, sexual harassment, and vandalism. ***South African conditions are not a carbon copy of the international situation, and alternative ways of managing behaviour problems within South African schools are needed.***
- In the previous educational dispensation, behaviour problems of school going children were managed according to the clinical or medical approach. Schools in the privileged areas could refer such learners to the educational support services for evaluation and assistance. Learners could be placed in so-called clinic schools for therapeutic teaching and after a trial period they could, if necessary, be placed in child care schools (Reform schools or Schools of Industry). However, this form of support was not generally available in all departments of education and is being phased out because of the stigmatising effect it has on learners. Many educationists in schools, parents, members of the community and even professional people, are still inclined to cling to the old medical model and did not make the paradigm shift so that they can implement new ways of thinking about learners exhibiting behaviour problems. ***As the clinical or medical approach is not envisaged within the new proposed Education Policy, some of these alternative measures will no longer be available, for example reform schools, as a way for dealing with serious behaviour problems. Teachers, parents, members of the community, employees of***

relevant Government Departments as well as professional stakeholders, must make the paradigm shift in terms of their thinking about learners with behaviour problems if any effective assistance can be rendered.

- The plea of professional persons in the community (e.g. social workers) for collaboration between different government departments, professional people in the community, institutions and significant other role players to offer a joint attempt to attend to the needs of the learner exhibiting behaviour problems, needs serious attention (see Chapter 5, sec. 5.1 in this regard). ***If communities, government departments, schools, institutions, professional people in the community and significant other role players, do not collaborate, behaviour problems in schools, homes and communities will become more and more.***
- Internationally and nationally there is presently a definite move away from a clinical approach in the education of learners with special educational needs. Instead, a policy of inclusion (integration) is favoured. This implies that learners with learning and behaviour difficulties are no longer referred to others for assistance and are excluded from mainstream education. The assistance and understanding of learners with such problems remains the task of teachers and schools. ***A lot more is expected of teachers and school principals, as they have to render first level assistance to the learner with behaviour problems – even though more learners are now to be found in the classroom than in the past.***
- Teachers are finding it extremely difficult to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems in class (see chapter 3, sec. 3.6 in this regard). This fact was, for example, stressed in the Elton Report in England, which reported that teachers found the “management” of learners with behaviour problems much more problematic and stressful than the “management” of learners with learning difficulties. In this country, the same is experienced. It is clear that procedures used in privileged countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, where specially trained people are available at schools to understand and assist learners and support teachers, will not necessarily be appropriate within the context of the South African situation. South Africa needs a model which will take into account the lack of support, the nature of the problems, the cultural diversity, and the prevailing situation in rural and urban areas. ***If teachers have to cope with more learners in the classroom and the fact that a bigger percentage of these learners exhibit behaviour problems, it will be even more difficult for teachers to effectively assist and understand an individual learner with behaviour problems. The teaching situation will become even more stressful and frustrating for teachers and many more will tend to leave the teaching profession. Policy makers, educational***

planners, teachers and school principals, need a model which could be used for the effective understanding and assistance of the unmet emotional needs of learners resulting in behaviour problems. This model should be suitable for the South African contextual situation and its associated problems.

- A survey has been conducted by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) during 1997, information was obtained from provincial workshops, written submissions, and site visits, as well as formal research conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE). The research findings indicated that “high levels of social, emotional and behaviour difficulties were reported in all contexts of the CASE sample survey, urban advantaged, urban disadvantaged and rural disadvantaged” (NCSNET 1997:38). Research findings also indicated that services provided to assist learners with special educational needs, are either nonexistent or insufficient. For example the Northern Cape and Northern Province are the only two provinces with industrial schools. Similarly the Western Cape and Mpumalanga are the only provinces with reformatories. According to the CASE survey’s research findings, 88% of household members reported to experience “special educational needs” and did get assistance from “support services”, while only 32% of the people in the disadvantaged areas of Gauteng, who had reported to be experiencing “special educational needs”, had access to any kind of “support services”. In the Mpumalanga Province only small teams of “support staff” are rendering a service in ten of the provinces’ districts. Although a district-based system exists in the North-West Province, it is not sufficient to provide for all the needs of the people of the province. ***Teachers in mainstream schools will have to understand and assist the special educational needs of all learners, which includes having to understand and assist social, emotional and behaviour problems as the roles and job descriptions of the staff members of the Support Services have changed as well as the fact that individual attention paid to a learner is not regarded as cost effective as many other learners will them be left to themselves without any assistance.***
- Researchers involved with the CASE survey, consulted with teachers from special schools, as they envisaged “an advisory and in-service training role for ordinary school teachers as part of their role change”. These teachers, however, found it rather difficult to envisage a further extension of their roles to incorporate support services for mainstream school teachers and learners (NCSNET 1997:39). “South Africa lags far behind in teacher education programmes insofar as raising awareness and responding to a diversity of learner needs in ordinary classrooms is concerned” (NCSNET 1998:35). In the past, schools and teachers blamed learners and parents

for behaviour problems exhibited. Learners and parents were thus viewed as being the guilty party, for not behaving according to expectations. Learners were often labelled as being “disruptive” “when it might have been more honest to label the teachers as lacking in professional competence. They were often unhelpful where they only suppressed the misbehaviour without exploring the root causes it” (Charlton & David 1993:10). Labelling of a learner is counterproductive because it actively de-skills the teachers that are concerned. In the new proposed Education Policy, the learner is not to be blamed for the fact that he is experiencing barriers in learning and that other systems, for example the community or the parents should become involved in fulfilling the needs of learners. “The history of limited involvement in schools by the community concerned is a characteristic of most schools and other centres of learning in this country. This includes the historical disempowerment of parents in the involvement of the education of their children. This has made the development of community-based support and action a major difficulty” (NCSNET 1997:47).

At In-Service Training Workshops that were presented during 1996 and 1997 by the University of South Africa (UNISA), the primary school teachers mentioned that between 10% and 60% of primary school learners were experiencing behaviour problems (see chapter 3 also in this regard). They also complained about the fact that they experience themselves as disempowered because of their limited knowledge, of dealing with learners with behaviour problems in the most effective way. ***It appears that teachers are not suitably trained to understand and assist learners in mainstream schools who experience barriers to learning and specifically in understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems. Teachers need to be trained to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems. The effective training of teachers can enable them to make the paradigm shift in order to enable them to think in terms of the ecological systems model as how to utilise significant other role players so that unmet emotional needs are met.*** The need for this is accentuated by Cooper, Smith and Upton (1994:96) when they maintain that “deprived of a barrier against which to kick, and presented with a new and undesired rationale for the negative behaviour, the behaviour loses its original effect and is therefore made redundant”.

- Teachers and the school, as a system, have a major impact on behaviour problems. According to Hargreaves *et al.* (Charlton & David 1993:3; Cooper, Smith & Upton 1994:6), there is extensive evidence available that clearly indicates that schools do affect their learners’ behaviour within school. Charlton and David (1993:3) make the

following statement: "What schools offer, and how they offer it, helps determine whether pupils respond in desirable or undesirable ways, and the reasons for pupils' misbehaviour may have as much (if not more) to do with their experiences at school as those they encounter in the home, or with aspects of their personality". ***As teachers and the school, as a system, have such an impact on the behaviour of the learners, it is essential that teachers and the whole school system must take care to ensure that their impact on the learners' behaviour is of a positive nature.***

- The stress that teachers are experiencing in the classroom may in many instances be directly related to learners' problem behaviour (Charlton & David 1993:5). Disruptive behaviour in the classroom causes teachers to become frustrated, irritated and stressed, and in certain extreme cases the behaviour patterns of learners can cause a complete breakdown of order in the classroom, thereby even affecting the teacher's health. HMI (Charlton & David 1993:5) mentions that "good behaviour is a necessary condition for effective teaching, and learning to take place, and an important outcome of education which society rightly expects. Society is expecting good order and good results from teachers, and will be increasingly impatient and lacking in understanding if we do not provide them". The impact of teachers on learners' behaviour has become obligatory rather than just advisable, as behaviour problems need to be eradicated or prevented by various forms of intervention and by various significant other role players in the learner's life-world. ***Teachers cannot attend to the unmet emotional needs of learners if their own emotional needs within the school system are not met and if they do not get the support from the significant other role players.***
- According to the Discussion Document (NCSNET1997:40), "there are no services or activities available for children with 'special needs' whether one looks within the school or the broader community". ***Services available to learners with special educational needs or learners experiencing barriers to learning, including learners with behaviour problems, are limited, nonexistent or insufficient.***

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In terms of the preceding discussion, the following factors emerged, as giving rise to the problem to be researched in this study, namely:

- ***Increasing numbers of learners are being identified by teachers as exhibiting behaviour problems in the classroom.***

- *Teachers experience themselves as being disempowered, and they feel that they need additional training, as regards how to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.*
- *Attention should be given, during the training, to effective understanding and assistance of the learner with behaviour problems, the need for making a paradigm shift – from blaming the learner for his or her problematic behaviour (clinical or medical model) to getting the different significant other role players involved in the fulfilment of the unmet emotional needs of the learner (ecological systems model), and sensitising teachers in regard to the impact that they have on the occurrence of behaviour problems in the classroom.*
- *A model is required, which will take into account the problems, the cultural diversity, and the situation that exists within rural and urban areas within South Africa, as opposed to conditions that exist within more privileged countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States.*
- *Teachers, educational planners, policy makers, significant other role players in the life-world of the learner, as well as researchers must make a mind shift from being used to connect behaviour problems to causative factors such as the home, the school, the peer group etcetera ... to rather focussing on the impact of unmet emotional needs on the behaviour of learners.*
- *Teachers, educational planners, policy makers, significant other role players in the life-world of the learner, as well as researchers must realise that the relationships in the life-world of the learner (e.g. teacher/learner relationship, peer/learner relationships) in which he or she is involved are opportunities to meet the unmet emotional needs of learners leading to behaviour problems.*

If learners with behaviour problems are to be assisted and understood in the most effective way, in order to enable them to actualise their full potential, an answer to the following research question should be found:

WHICH MODEL CAN BE USED BY TEACHERS TO EFFECTIVELY ASSIST AND UNDERSTAND LEARNERS WITH UNMET EMOTIONAL NEEDS RESULTING IN BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM?

1.5 GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 General outcomes of the study

The following general outcomes are identified for this study:

- To ensure the *emotional well-being of learners* by attending to the unmet emotional needs of learners
- To prevent the ever growing numbers of learners exhibiting behaviour problems in the classroom to enlarge, by attending to the unmet emotional needs of learners
- To render valuable guidelines to policy makers and educational planners, as regards a model which could be used for the effective understanding and assistance of the unmet emotional needs of learners, resulting in behaviour problems in the classroom.
- To establish collaboration amongst the significant other role players as well as amongst different government departments, service organisations, institutions, persons in the community, professional people, schools and teaching staff and parents in order to assist and understand the learner in the best possible way.
- To change the mind set of significant other role players, professional people, members of the community, teaching staff and principals, parents, institutions and everybody assisting and understanding children with behaviour problems from looking at behaviour problems within the frame of reference of the medical model to viewing children with behaviour problems within the ecological systems framework, by utilising the environment to satisfy the unmet emotional needs of learners.

In order to achieve the general outcomes of the study, it is necessary that the specific outcomes be first reached.

1.5.2 Specific outcomes of the study

Specific outcomes identified for the study are:

- Policy makers, educational planners, teachers and significant other role players in the life-world of the learner, as well as researchers, will be able to understand that unmet emotional needs serve as a causative factor of behaviour problems of learners, as they will:
 - ▶ view behaviour problems within the different theoretical frameworks provided,
 - ▶ appreciate the advantages of the ecological systems model,
 - ▶ be able to look at behaviour from “normal” behaviour, as a point of departure before looking at identified behaviour problems, and

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- ▶ become sensitive to the impact of unmet emotional needs as a causative factor of behaviour problems,
 - ▶ understand that unmet emotional needs are, in terms of the ecological systems model, to be met within the learner's relationships
 - ▶ realise that the teacher/learner relationship has a very definite impact on meeting the emotional needs of the learner in the classroom
 - ▶ realise that the emotional needs of the teacher within the work situation also need to be satisfied if the teacher is expected to satisfy the emotional needs of the learner
 - ▶ realise that teachers will have to start implementing therapeutic techniques in order to address unmet emotional needs of learners
 - ▶ be prepared to highlight the impact of unmet emotional needs and the occurrence of behaviour problems, as a serious emerging problem in schools, as one of the more important barriers to learning that needs to be addressed urgently in the new Education Policy, as it is outlined in the NCSNET Document
 - ▶ be sensitive to the fact that the teacher/learner relationship can either meet the emotional needs of the learner or serve as a causative factor of behaviour problems by not meeting the unmet emotional needs of the learner.
- Policy makers, educational planners, teachers and significant other role players in the life-world of the learner, as well as other researchers, will become familiar with existing behaviour problems in schools, by means of information from questionnaires, discussions with members of focus groups, teachers attending in-service training workshops and visits to schools which will be utilised for this purpose. **This information will enable them to realise that attending to the unmet emotional needs of learners is the best and most effective strategy to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems.**
 - Policy makers, educational planners, teachers and significant other role players in the life-world of the learner, as well as researchers, will familiarise themselves with different models, on an international basis, that are being used in schools to understand and assist behaviour problems. The following models will be researched in order to create a model that will be suitable for South African schools, the:
 - ▶ psychoanalytical model,
 - ▶ behaviour modification model,
 - ▶ cognitive behaviour modification model,
 - ▶ ecological systems model,
 - ▶ clinical/medical model,

- ▶ multi-disciplinary teamwork model, and
- ▶ whole school model.
- Policy makers, educational planners, teachers and significant other role players in the life-world of the learner, as well as other researchers will be able to, by making a paradigm or mind shift regarding the causative factors of behaviour problems, benefit from a model that will be developed in the course of this study, to enable them to assist and understand the unmet emotional needs of learners that result in behaviour problems in the classroom, more effectively and to implement new ways of thinking about, understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems.
- Policy makers, educational planners, teachers and significant other role players in the life-world of the learner, as well as researchers, will be able to utilize the proposed model to for the first time, attend to the real causes of behaviour problems with the promise of providing learners with a sense of emotional well-being.
- Policymakers, educational planners, principals, governing bodies, will have to realise that if the emotional needs of the teachers in the work situation are, for various reasons, not met, teachers will not be able to meet the emotional needs of learners.
- In-service training workshops where teachers are trained to become familiar with the new proposed model to address behaviour problems in the classroom more effectively, will be taking place, workshops presented in communities to educate members of the community on how to assist and understand learners more effectively, parent groups, where parents will be guided on how to assist and understand their children more effectively. Publications in acknowledged scientific journals can be utilised to provide a changed mindset to professional persons.
- Policy-makers, educational planners, teachers, significant other role players in the life-world of the learner, government departments and members of service organisations in the communities must collaborate and offer a holistic, joint service to assist and understand the behaviour problems of children – a network of support to children in-need-of-assistance and understanding, must be established.

1.6 THE FIELD OF STUDY

The field of study comprises that of Special Needs Education. Learners with behaviour problems are deemed to form part of the Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) or according to the new Education Policy, *learners who are experiencing barriers to learning*. Behaviour problems are, however, (although it can interconnect in a secondary nature with other categories of LSEN, e.g. the physically impaired learner exhibiting behaviour problems)

one of the categories of Special Needs Education that is not, as regularly mentioned in documents or discussions as for example learners with learning problems, physical, sensory, intellectual or multiple impairments (NCSNET Document 1998:vii).

The unmet emotional needs resulting in behaviour problems will be studied within the frame of reference of the Ecological Systems Model. The *normal* emotional developmental milestones as discussed by Erikson, will be utilised to view behaviour problems and together with the needs theory of especially Pringle and Raths, the role and impact of unmet emotional needs on the behaviour of learners will be explored.

The study will focus on the unmet emotional needs resulting in behaviour problems of learners whereas the concept *learners* apply to all learners, "ranging from early childhood education through to adult education" (NCSNET Document 1997:vii).

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

By means of an extensive literature study, this study essentially focuses on gaining an insight into:

- ▶ existing theoretical models on behaviour,
- ▶ the development of "normal" emotional behaviour,
- ▶ the causative factors to behaviour problems,
- ▶ behaviour problems being manifested in the classroom,
- ▶ the unmet emotional needs of learners in relation to the occurrence of behaviour problems in the classroom,
- ▶ how the unfulfilled emotional needs of learners can be satisfied within the environment in order to prevent behaviour problems or to understand and assist behaviour problems that are already being exhibited by learners,
- ▶ how teachers, educational planners, principals and significant other role players are at present understanding and assisting learners exhibiting behaviour problems and
- ▶ a possible conceptual framework for a new model that will enable teachers, principals, educational planners and significant other role players, to understand and assist the learner with unmet emotional needs resulting in behaviour problems, in a more effective way.
- ▶ spin-offs of unmet emotional needs
- ▶ therapies that could be implemented by teachers in the classroom in order to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems more effectively

The study being an insight study is analytic-descriptive and not statistical-interpretive in nature. The study is based on two fundamental dimensions. The first is acquiring a sound theoretical understanding of the concepts, models, causative factors underlying behaviour problems and the mechanisms for dealing therewith. The second dimension focuses on substantiating the insights gained from the theoretical analysis, by means of interviews with teachers, principals, guidance teachers and other relevant significant role players, for example professional members of focus groups, teachers attending in-service training workshops, involved.

This study will form the basis of the development of a model for teachers for the effective understanding and assistance of learners with unmet emotional needs in order to prevent or to understand and assist existing behaviour problems in South African schools. To attain the general and specific outcomes as previously defined in this study, the following research methodology will be implemented:

- An extensive, national and international, literature survey of behaviour problems, and the most effective methods and models for assisting and understanding learners with behaviour problems will be explored, with a view to theory formation.
- Theory formation is followed by a critical analysis of contemporary practice, utilizing questionnaires, visits to schools, interviews with school principals, teachers, guidance teachers and significant other role players, for example parents, professional members of focus groups. The personal experiences and insights of these people concerned, in assisting and understanding the behaviour problems of learners and their unmet emotional needs, provide valuable information for a comparative analysis of the information obtained from the literature study. The practical analysis will, just like the theory, contain exploratory, descriptive and explanatory components, as information obtained will be analysed, the phenomenon as it appears at a certain time, will be described and certain phenomena concerning the research problem will be explained (see chapter 3 in this regard).
- A qualitative approach that aims at the uniqueness of the situation, namely: teachers not knowing how to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems in the most effective way and which investigates the distinctiveness of learners with behaviour problems, is followed. Although proponents of phenomenology are inclined to believe that although a qualitative phenomenological interpretation of human behaviour is not completely reliable, nevertheless it provides the most reliable and most valuable insights into the way that learners on the one hand,

experience behaviour problems and the way that teachers deal with this situation and on the other hand, the way that teachers experience learners with behaviour problems and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the teachers' ways of understanding and assisting behaviour problems (see chapter 3 in this regard).

- The rationale for this study is based on the fact that many teachers do not know how to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems in the most effective way and that a model on understanding and assisting the unmet emotional needs of learners, resulting in behaviour problems in the classroom, is not available at present.
- It is maintained that unmet emotional needs is the main causative factor of behaviour problems exhibited by learners and that if these needs are attended, fewer behaviour problems will occur in the classroom.

1.8 PROGRAMME OF STUDY

The research problem will be explored, described and explained in the following chapters:

- In *Chapter 2* theoretical models (e.g. the psychodynamic and ecological systems model) are used to discuss ***Theoretical perspectives on behaviour and development: overview of views, models and normal developmental patterns*** of the learner in the primary school as well as the learner in the secondary school
- In *Chapter 3* ***Behaviour problems in international and local context***, as well as the manifestations of behaviour problems in the classroom on an international level are discussed.
- *Chapter 4* deals with ***Understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems in the classroom: an emotional needs perspective***. This chapter paves the way for the new South African model on dealing with problem behaviour in the classroom, to be presented in Chapter 5.
- In *Chapter 5* a new, tailor-made model to suit the South African education situation in order to understand and assist behaviour problems in the classroom will be formulated and described, namely ***Guidelines for teachers to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems in South African classrooms***
- In *Chapter 6*, the concluding chapter, the ***Summary, conclusions and recommendations*** emanating from this study will be reflected.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This study on *Behaviour problems in the classroom: a model for teachers to assist learners with unmet emotional needs* can be of practical assistance to teachers, in the classroom, who do not know how to understand and assist the ever growing numbers of learners exhibiting behaviour problems. Teachers, learners, significant other role players, educational planners, researchers and communities will be able to benefit from the study, as the effective understanding and assistance of behaviour problems manifested by learners, will have a substantial impact on various different systems, in terms of the ecological systems model. The proposed model explored in this study, provides a new perspective on looking at behaviour problems with the outcome of emotional well-being of learners and less behaviour problems occurring in the classroom.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON BEHAVIOUR AND DEVELOPMENT: OVERVIEW OF VIEWS, MODELS AND NORMAL DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS

... a person's behaviour (whether normal or problematic) is maintained and structured by interaction with other people. This means that members of a learner's family, people that he interacts with at school, or persons in his neighbourhood may each have a hand in shaping the learner's behaviour. The learner, in turn shapes the behaviour of these other individuals; as these people continue to interact over time, certain repetitive patterns develop around both normal and problematic behaviours

Amatea (1989:22)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The interaction process that Amatea (1989:22) has described, in the introductory quotation, is also applicable to learners with behaviour problems. Most of the time parents and other significant role players in the environment or life-world of the learner, do not understand this process of interaction. No preventive or therapeutic intervention will be meaningful, if the reciprocal impact that the learner and significant other role players have on one another, is not kept in mind (Amatea 1989:22; Apter & Conoley 1984:98; Haring 1978:137; Wicks-Nelson & Israel 1984:68).

The following authors provide illustrations in support of the above statement, when they suggest that: "teachers and the schools in which they work can dramatically affect the behaviour of their young people" (Gray, Miller & Noakes 1994:242); "to meet the needs of children with learning and behaviour problems are likely to be successful **only to the extent to which the needs of their teachers are also understood and met**" (Hanko 1995:139).

Theoretical assumptions can act as a frame of reference when analysing behaviour patterns (Hanko 1985:59). In each theory, behaviour is analysed within the premises of the specific theory concerned, thereby contributing towards the development of an eclectic theory. It is of interest to note that the interaction patterns referred to by Amatea (1989:22), in the introductory quotation, are in effect embedded within the behaviourism, countertheoretical, sociological, psychodynamic and ecological systems models, to name but a few. In drawing from other models and their underlying theories, the ecological model is deemed to constitute an eclectic model, as it clarifies the cause of disturbance or problem behaviour

as a *misfit* between the individual learner and his or her environment or ecosystem. The individual learner has unique characteristics that are in frequent interaction with the environment in such a way, that deviant behaviour is triggered. The causative factors giving rise to the occurrence of behaviour problems are therefore a function of both the learner and the learner's environment or ecosystem.

In contrast with the medical model, no blame for behaviour problems is attributed in terms of the ecological model – instead all the significant other role players including the learner need to contribute towards the cure or prevention of the behaviour problems of the learner. It is thus not a matter of pure “cause effect problem behaviour” but rather a matter of “problem behaviour-interaction within the environment to cure or to prevent the problem behaviour” that is of significance (see sec. 2.2 of this chapter in this regard).

In this chapter the following aspects will be addressed:

- ▶ theoretical perspectives on the development of behaviour, and
- ▶ the normal development of learners.

2.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BEHAVIOUR

In the period prior to the 1940s no proper educational strategies were identified that could be used to satisfy the needs of troubled learners. Over the years, various prominent scientists have studied the phenomenon of behaviour. They arrived at specific conclusions, as to how human behaviour arises, why people's behaviour differs, and why some people experience behaviour problems. On the basis of their convictions, they made certain *theoretical deductions, based on views which they accepted as being true*. They described these views and thereby *generated theories* regarding how behaviour came into being. These theories are generally termed *theoretical models for explaining behaviour or theoretical perspectives on behaviour* (Santrock 1995:3). Not only did these behaviour theories attempt to anticipate what will occur, but they also attempted to make sense of the prevailing situation, while simultaneously attempting to gain an understanding of the impact of the past. Consequently, these theories have been deliberately used to explain human conditions that could be described as unusual, or socially unacceptable behaviours (Rich 1982:23). They also offered suggestions as to how behaviour could be modified.

Before the findings of the scientific analysis emerged, explanations for behaviour were founded in superstition and religion (Rich 1982:23). With the emergence of science

dominated thinking, the scientific analysis of physical conditions and their impact on human behaviour assumed substantial significance in analysing behaviour. Notably, therefore, early scientific researchers tended to use abnormal behaviour and the physical impact upon behaviour, as their point of departure when analysing so-called normal behaviour. The emphasis on physical symptoms, as causes of certain behaviour patterns (e.g. fever, pain), originated from the medical model. All behaviour problems or mental disturbances were deemed to originate from within the context of a medical model. All behaviour problems or mental disturbances were deemed to stem from a physical condition.

Towards the end of scientific findings dominating diagnoses, the medical profession moved rapidly towards accepting the behaviour-psychological origin of human behaviour. The impact of these behaviour psychological analyses of behaviour can, as from the twentieth century, be traced within the fields of psychiatry, psychology, sociology and ecology, each having developed its own distinct perspectives, theories and frame of reference (Rich 1982:24). In other words, based on their unique assumptions, each theory suggested ways and means of assisting persons with behaviour problems. This is confirmed by Rhodes and Paul (Rich 1982:23) who argue that "each perspective has its own knowledge base and represents a sound view of the problem". Apter and Conoley (1984:55), Gallagher (1988:10) and Haring (1978:132) describe these theoretical models as "models of human behaviour are representations of reality or ways of understanding and predicting the behaviour of ourselves and others". In this regard it should be noted that Wicks-Nelson and Israel (1984:44) maintain that the concepts *perspective*, *paradigm* and *model* and *theory* are frequently used interchangeably.

Emotionally disturbed learners have since the turn of the century been observed and their behaviour studied, resulting in the development of various theories, as to the causative factors giving rise to the behaviours concerned. These pertinent models and theories were analysed in the *Study of Child Variance* (Apter & Conoley 1984:55; Hammill & Bartel 1995:295; Haring 1978:132) and six major perspectives or models emerged, namely the:

- ▶ *biophysical model,*
- ▶ *behaviour model,*
- ▶ *psychodynamic model,*
- ▶ *sociological model,*
- ▶ *ecological model, and*
- ▶ *countertheories model.*

Each of these models focuses on different aspects of the “truth” regarding learners with behaviour problems, and thereby attempt to understand, predict and relieve the behaviour problems encountered in practice. Notably, each of the models is essentially correct, but not complete in generating a holistic understanding of behaviour problems. However, collectively they enrich our understanding of the behaviour problems experienced by learners. Each of the respective models offers truths that, within their specific context, generate an understanding of learners with behaviour problems and their conflicts.

Human behaviour is complex in nature and several different scientific and quasi-scientific approaches have been used to gain an understanding thereof. These various behaviour theories are not mutually exclusive, but offer a specific perspective and understanding as to the causative factors that give rise to behaviour problems. The six theories or models, referred to above, can be regarded as constituting basic or umbrella theories which contain a variety of different perspectives and debates on behaviour and the causes thereof. So for instance the biophysical model integrates a variety of different explanations of behaviour, for example, genetic and neurological factors underpinning behaviour patterns. A number of biophysical elucidations constitute a theoretical model because of their basic methodology, universal orienting points of departure, a managing principle of a behaviour causative factor, a universal philosophical background and a basic effective method to evaluate behaviour (Rich 1982:25; Santrock 1995:34). Although the different theories were integrated into a main theory, for example, the biophysical theory, all have a biophysical base that they agree on. For example, all behaviour theories will explain behaviour in terms of principles of learning.

Rich (1982:25) provides the following example of the different interpretations of different theories of a given behaviour pattern:

Biophysical model	Allergic reactions to food additives develop due to neural inflammation
Behaviour model	Copying of a role model (e.g. parent) or being reinforced by the role model (e.g. the parent)
Psychodynamic model	The personality is being dominated by the id because of the inadequate development of the ego
Sociological model	Social rules and expectations are more important than the behaviour of one individual as such

Ecological model	The individual organism is in dysfunctional interaction with the ecosystem (e.g. classroom conditions)
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Each theory provides teachers with a more comprehensive understanding of learners with behaviour problems and assists them in planning an assistance program to suit the needs of each individual learner. If teachers merely focussed on a single theory, their ability to assist the learner with behaviour problems would be equally constrained. It is therefore contended that a holistic approach should be adopted in dealing with learners, with behaviour problems. The ensuing statement by Santrock (1995:34) tends to affirm this contention, namely "Together they let us see the total landscape of life-span development in all its richness." Gallagher (1988:10,11,18) in a similar vein contends that "there is no single best strategy for teaching troubled youth; a strategy integrating several viewpoints appears to be the most effective".

Morse (Swanson & Reinert 1984:14), in support of the adoption of a holistic approach, contends that an important development that has taken place is the fact that theorists have basically moved from linking to a restrictive psychodynamic point of view, to one of incorporating alternative approaches advocated by other theorists as well. These typically include the behaviouristic and ecological approach, to but name two such approaches. In a related sense, Kauffman (Swanson & Reinert 1984:15) argues that it might be worthwhile for teachers to extend their influence beyond the classroom by involving the parents of learners or making use of community resources to the benefit of the learner, but "talk of influence beyond the classroom, including such high-sounding phrases as ecological management, is patent nonsense until the teacher has demonstrated that she can make the classroom environment productive".

Gallagher (1988:15) regards the matching of the most appropriate intervention with the type of problem the learner exhibits, as constituting the best and most effective approach in dealing with learners with behaviour problems. Redl (Gallagher 1988:18) further maintains that apart from which theoretical model is implemented, when dealing with learners with behaviour problems, a certain "life support variable" is crucial for teachers if they want to understand learners with behaviour problems, namely "an imaginative awareness from within" or as Redl (Gallagher 1988:18) phrases it "there is no substitute for getting a "feel" of what it is like to be an emotionally disturbed child or to be in a "state of conflict".

From the above discussion it may be concluded that an integrative, as opposed to an exclusive approach, needs to be adopted in assisting learners with behaviour problems. By implication this of necessity requires an understanding of the respective models concerned. Consequently in the ensuing discussion, the *biophysical, behaviour, psychodynamic, sociological, ecological and countertheories models* will be analysed, in order to acquire such an understanding.

2.2.1 The biophysical model

In terms of the biophysical model it is argued that problem behaviour primarily stems from biological and physical factors and consequently problem behaviour can be traced back to a physical illness, especially a dysfunction of the central nervous system. A direct correlation between physical malfunctions (e.g. internal variables that affect the central nervous system) and problem behaviour is observable. Proponents of this model believe that behaviour is an outward expression of an inner, physical problem. Causes of behaviour problems are therefore regarded as being intrinsic in nature, in that the origin of the behaviour problem is rooted within the body of the learner and does not emanate from extrinsic factors within the environment of the learner. Rich (1982:26) argues that while teachers are frequently sceptical of the biophysical model, they in practice need to consider the symptoms and characteristics of physical disturbances, as they have direct implications in terms of identifying causes of behaviour problems and in regard to educational practices.

Various terms have been attributed to this perspective within the literature. They range from the biogenic model, to the biogenetic, organic, biological, and psychoneurological models respectively. These models are essentially all based on the same premise, namely: "emotional disturbance is a form of mental disease, a pathological condition that exists because of deficiencies in the individual" (Apter & Conoley 1984:65). More moderate followers of this perspective are less keen to ascribe behaviour problems directly to physical malfunctions. Instead, it is proposed that if triggered by a particular environmental condition, the necessary biogenic predispositions can result in an emotional disturbance or problem behaviour. Paul and Epanchin (Apter & Conoley 1984:65) hold the view that two basic types of organic factor theories can be distinguished that are related to emotional disturbance or problem behaviour, namely underlying *organic defects* and *developmental backlogs*. As may be determined from the preceding discussion, the biophysical model interprets behaviour in terms of genetic, biochemical and neurological factors, as well as developmental factors (Rich 1982:27).

2.2.1.1 *Biological defect model*

The following theories are incorporated within the biological defect model:

- **Genetic theory.** Genetic factors have a direct impact on the learner's behaviour. Two types of genetic disorders are distinguished namely: *process disorders*, which are based on some sort of genetic disposition, that begin early, show more serious symptoms and tend to have a rather poor prognosis; and *reactive disorders* which are manifest more suddenly and exhibit milder symptoms, with a better prognosis, as well as no initial genetic predispositions. **The role of genetic factors, as causative factors are quite controversial, as empirical evidence therefore is essentially lacking.**
- **Temperament theory.** Thomas and Chess (Apter & Conoley 1984:6; Paul & Epanchin 1982:158; Santrock 1992:96) identified three temperament types, namely: the *easy child/learner* who has a high tolerance for frustration and is characterised as adaptable to change; the *difficult child/learner* who is frequently inclined to be negative, with intense mood expressions; and the *slow-to-warm-up* child, who represents a combination of the previous two temperament types, but is more inclined to adapt satisfactorily. This topology is useful in the prediction of the type of behaviour that the learner will exhibit, instead of predicting whether a learner will behave in a specific manner. Research seems to indicate that these three basic temperament types are reasonably stable in the early life years, but are shaped and modified by a learner's later experiences (Santrock 1992:96,97). The following elements have been identified, as forming the foundation on which the three basic types of temperament are based, namely: activity level, rhythmicity, approach/withdrawal, adaptability, thresholds of responsiveness, intensity of reaction, quality of mood, distractibility and attention span (Santrock 1992:97). The impact of these elements can be traced back to genetic factors in interaction with environmental conditions (see chapter 4 in this regard).
- **Neuropsychopharmacological theory.** In neuropsychopharmacological theory the focus is on the impact of drugs on the elements of problem behaviour, especially in relation to the hyperactive or psychotic learner. Although medication could suppress hyperactivity and get the learner to remain on his or her seat, it does not lead to positive long term effects and improved adjustments. Gado (Apter & Conoley 1984:67) argues that "treated children are not significantly better off in the long run than hyperactive children who do not receive drugs".

- **Nutritional disorders.** This theory maintains that the food that a child consumes or fails to consume, has a direct impact on his or her behaviour. For example, a hyperactive learner could behave quite differently if certain chemical additives in his or her food are eliminated. Biochemical changes in hormonal levels, especially during times of stress, have an impact on the sensitivity of the neural systems that control behaviour, for example aggression. Feingold (Apter & Conoley 1984:68; Rich:1982:28) maintains that “there is sufficient evidence to indicate some relationship between food additives and hyperactivity in some children”.
- **Neurological dysfunction theory.** A neurological dysfunction – neurological impairments, for example brain dysfunction – can influence a learner’s behaviour. A variety of symptoms are observable when a child is brain damaged, for example disorientation, hallucinations, intellectual impairment, and loss of impulse control. In the case of brain dysfunction, however, it is not so easy to observe the neural damage. Although a child/learner may act impulsively, appear emotionally unstable, and may even exhibit symptoms, such as hyperactivity, distractibility, and labiality, it is not easy to ascertain whether the learner is suffering from brain dysfunction or not, as the symptoms seem to interchange for different conditions. For instance the symptoms that children, who were diagnosed to be suffering from brain dysfunction, exhibit are in effect very similar in nature to the symptoms depicted in adults suffering from brain damage. Extreme behaviours, even death can be triggered by neurological damage that occurred after a physical trauma (e.g. accidents, fights and poisoning) or as a result of disease (e.g. meningitis, encephalitis and sclerosis). Allergies have been identified as constituting a major causative factor of disturbed behaviours (Rich 1982:29). Fever, as well as minor head injuries may also cause neurological damage, consequently resulting in behaviour problems being exhibited. In some instances the symptoms of neurological damage are so slight that teachers do not consider the possibility of neurological damage. Teachers, without becoming medical diagnosticians, need to be sensitive to the possibilities of neurological damage, as it can act as an intrinsic causative factor to behaviour problems.

2.2.1.2 Developmental theory

Developmental theory is based on the contention that in some learners, who exhibit behaviour problems, the central nervous system is not adequately developed in accordance with the age group of learners concerned. By implication a correlation is therefore drawn between behaviour and variables that have an effect on the central nervous system.

Developmental theorists maintain that delays in a learner's development can be regarded as constituting an at-risk factor for triggering behaviour problems. Different areas of development can exhibit delays, for example neurological organization, perceptual-motor learning, and sensory integration. Stage theorists believe that a learner must successfully complete earlier stages of development, before meeting the challenges presented by subsequent phases of development. Kephart (Apter & Conoley 1984:70) concurs with this contention by stressing that learners who are exhibiting poor social skills or learning problems, need to improve their lower developmental skills, such as balance, before their poor social skills or learning problems can be remediated. Newcomer (Apter & Conoley 1984:70), however, warns that "the notion of developmental deficits as the cause of mental disorders has not been substantiated".

Rhodes and Paul (Apter & Conoley 1984:70) have identified five important areas of psychopathology that can be traced back to biophysical dysfunctions, namely *inadequate impulse control, disturbances in perception and movement, disturbances in conceptual and abstract thinking, body image, and self-concept*. Each of these areas can trigger behaviour problems. A learner with a poor self-concept can for instance act negatively by attempting to control peers, and experience difficulty in trying to cope with minimal frustration. The energy that is needed for normal growth to take place is utilized in an attempt to compensate for and to remediate biological weaknesses. Developmental theorists therefore suggest that a biophysical dysfunction is a cause of behaviour problems.

2.2.1.3 A critical appraisal of the biological defect theory

Not all researchers concur with the assumptions that underlie the developmental model. Newcomer (Apter & Conoley 1984:71) for instance criticises the biophysical model, in that it correlates behaviour problems directly to a physical condition, which teachers are unable to understand and assist. The learner by implication therefore becomes the responsibility of a medical doctor and the teacher, as one of the important role players in the learner's life-world, is totally excluded from dealing with the problem. According to the medical model, learners with behaviour problems need to be removed from mainstream classrooms and be placed in separate schools. A further criticism of the medical model is its focus on the learner per se. It is argued that changes must be made "within" the learner and the impact of the environment, for example the classroom environment in which the learner functions, is totally ignored. Rhodes and Paul (Apter & Conoley 1984:72) are of the opinion that educational planning should consider the strengths and weaknesses of each individual

learner, so that a learner may be assisted to build upon his or her own particular strengths in order to achieve success, which in turn will nurture a better self-concept and consequently compensate for biological deficits.

It may be argued that in practice a team approach needs to be followed, whereby members of the medical fraternity and educationists could collectively, with other relevant role players in the learner's life-world, deal with the issues concerned on a synergistic, as opposed to an individualistic, basis.

2.2.2 The behaviourist model or learning theory

Two distinct learning theories evolved, as a result of the disagreement between theorists as to the functional relationship that exists between the behaviour of a person and environmental events. The first group of theorists argued that the most important element in learning is the relationship between the Stimulus (S) and the Response (R) to the stimulus, within the environment. This argument is based on the law of association. Thus: stimuli and responses or behaviours to the stimuli are associated with one another. This theory is termed *classical conditioning* and is generally accredited to Ivan Pavlov (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:66-68; Rich 1982:32). The second group maintained that the response following a stimulus must be reinforced immediately. They argue that a person will choose or discover a response that will provide him or her with the best reinforcement. This theory is termed *operant conditioning* (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:68,69).

While Freud was formulating his influential psychodynamic model, Pavlov was conducting experimental work with animals in Russia. Pavlov discovered that animals learned by means of stimulus/response associations. For example, a dog knows that if he obeys his master and sits on command he will be rewarded. Various perspectives regard *conditioning* as a synonym for *learning*. This association of the correct behaviour being rewarded, produced the correct behaviour, even if the initial eliciting stimulus was absent (Apter & Conoley 1984:61). Generalization of behaviour patterns, which has now taken place, is a higher order mental process and is related to the probability that when a stimulus, similar to the original stimulus occurs, the person will behave in a very similar way. A case in point being when the word "bad" is first mentioned to a young child, it does not appear to be meaningful to the child, but when the child is slapped the word is associated with a bad experience and the child generally reacts by crying. The word "bad" becomes a conditioned stimulus that can be generalized to include other words such as "not nice" or even "school"

or “teacher”. When a learner has established a set of conditioned responses to certain stimuli within the environment, they can trigger a certain behaviour pattern. Statements made by teachers can for instance initiate a variety of responses, such as withdrawal, hyperactivity, aggression or uncontrollable behaviour (Rich 1982:33). As previously stated above, Pavlov’s theory has been termed *classical or respondent conditioning*. Classical conditioning (including modelling of behaviour) stresses the impact of the interrelatedness of significant stimuli and associated behaviour that are transferred from the classroom situation to other situations outside the classroom. Learners are often labelled *disturbed* when their behaviour is not in line with behaviour considered as appropriate within a particular situation or context.

John Watson followed in Pavlov’s footsteps when he extended Pavlov’s studies to human beings under controlled laboratory conditions. The theory has been termed *behaviourism*, in view of the fact that Watson maintained that the only legitimate way of studying human behaviour, was by means of systematic observable observations of their behaviour. This assumption was directly in contrast to Freud’s beliefs, as Freud essentially focussed on inner feelings and conflicts.

Skinner, being part of the *operant conditioning* group, conducted experiments in order to gain a better understanding of the complexity of the relationships that exist between behaviours and their consequences. Wicks-Nelson and Israel (1984:60) claim that the insight generated by Skinner “is probably the behaviour perspective most extensively applied to children’s disorders”. Meyer and Van Ede (1995:69) in a similar vein contend that “a large proportion of a child’s behaviour is also learnt through operant conditioning”. This method of learning seems to be complementary to respondent conditioning, as each of the theories attempt to provide explanations as to why people act in a particular manner. Classical conditioning emphasizes the effect of the environment in eliciting responses, for example the cock that crows, creating an awareness that it is time to have an early morning cup of coffee (Apter & Conoley 1984:62). Although the cock crows at noon, one still associates it with the crowing at the crack of dawn. Association is thus the key factor in linking the two perceptions with each other. Skinner maintains that most learning is based on associations that link two perceptions with each other. Human beings receive a response from the environment and then tend to react in an appropriate manner. This response can be either a reward or punishment. Reinforcing responses from the environment can either, depending on the type of response, reinforce the same reaction from a human being or eliminate a certain reaction (Apter & Conoley 1984:62).

A typical example is the case of a teacher praising a learner for being on time. The learner in return feels good and would like to please the teacher, thus he or she keeps up the punctuality (positive reinforcement). However, if the learner is punished for being on time, the learner will arrive late in future (negative reinforcement). Thus: operant conditioning differs from classical conditioning in that it emphasises the reinforcement, in terms of either a reward or punishment that follows a behaviour pattern which is being established. Pleasant associations, as a result of rewards, will strengthen the behaviour and punishment which is associated with unpleasantness, weakens or changes the behaviour to conform to more acceptable behaviour patterns.

Teachers and all other significant role players in the environment of the learner act as reinforcers who can either punish or reward certain behaviour patterns. This reality complicates the control of behaviour, as behaviour patterns that are unacceptable to the teacher within the classroom situation can be regarded by peers or parents as acceptable. When a learner is desperately seeking attention, he or she can even regard the teacher's punishment as a reward, although it was not meant to be a reward and punishment can thus be counterproductive if emotional needs remain unmet. Therefore, according to the operant conditioning theory, the way in which significant other persons within the environment respond to the behaviour of the learner, can give rise to behaviour problems. For example, the behaviour of learners who are looking for attention, can be reinforced by the laughter of the peer group rather than by the punishment threatened by the teacher (Rich 1982:35).

There are critics who argue that while operant conditioning offers an explanation for the occurrence of some new behaviours, it does not explain the wide variety of behaviour (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:69). The implications of operant conditioning are that a child can only learn behaviour when he or she exhibits the behaviour himself or herself and receives reinforcement therefore. Meyer and Van Ede (1995:69) draw attention to the fact that some modern learning theorists regard the social environment as another important source for the nurturing of new behaviour patterns.

Bandura (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:69) refers to several experiments which demonstrate that children can learn behaviour through observational learning. Bandura's theory (Apter & Conoley 1984:62; Haring 1978:138; Santrock 1995:44) on observational learning, is deemed to complement that of Skinner and Watson. This theory in concept implies that people learn from the behaviour of others, by observation, even if they are not personally rewarded or punished (Apter & Conoley 1984:62; Santrock 1995:44). This by implication

means that children can acquire a variety of behaviours, such as aggression or cooperation, by observation. Notably, Bandura (Wicks-Nelson & Israel 1984:63) also demonstrated the usefulness of imitative learning in the treatment of behaviour problems. Earlier behaviourists ignored the “inside” or *inner world* of a person and focussed on what goes *into* the person. In effect people were regarded as “black boxes” and consequently what happened inside the person was deemed of little importance, nor of scientific value, as the process could not be directly observed or quantified.

Suddenly, the dynamic behaviourist model was placed in the classroom by means of the behaviour modification model, which was used by many educators and psychologists in dealing with the so-called “troubled” child. It has in fact replaced the psychodynamic model. Juul (Apter & Conoley 1984:63), in noting the sudden rise in interest in the behaviour modification model, commented that the model emphasizes the reinforcement of the child’s strengths and is inclined to sensitise parents and teachers alike, as regards what children really are able to do. The literature shows the increase in popularity of the behaviour modification model, judging by its immense following, was due to behaviour modification model could be applied in various different situations. At the core of the behaviourist model is the contention that behaviour is learned. To be able to understand behaviour patterns fully, it is therefore necessary to research the interactions that take place between learners and their environment, as well as the stimulus-response patterns embedded in the interactions that take place.

After Freud, *learning theorists* such as Watson and Skinner emerged. They attempted to replace Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis with a theory that was far easier to test, thereby making it far more verifiable from a practical perspective. Watson is commonly considered to be the father of the behaviourist model – or behaviourism (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:64). The assumptions that form the foundations on which the model is based are summarised as follows (Apter & Conoley 1984:63; Gearheart, Weishahn & Gearheart 1988:313; Paul & Epanchin 1982:186; Rich 1982:35):

- Inherited potential is not important. What *is* important is the *environment* in which a person is raised. Behaviours are learned through the environment in which the learner finds him or herself. Learners act or behave in a specific manner that they have found to be most effective and appropriate within a particular set of circumstances.

- All human behaviour is acquired or learnt, thus the coining of the term “learning theory”. Behaviour consists of a series of responses that a person has learnt in reacting to environmental stimuli impacting on him or her. From early childhood, learners receive cues and reinforcement through an interaction process with their environment, from parents, teachers and peers, as well as strangers. Learners learn from associates and society in general, as to what objects of physiological drives to find inviting and attractive, for example what type of food they should choose to eat, or who to find attractive.
- Children’s individual development, and the rate or tempo at which they reach certain developmental phases, have nothing to do with their inner biological composition. It depends entirely on the number and type of stimuli that have an impact on them. Such stimuli are deemed to be the most important factors in a learner’s environment or life-world.
- Most behaviour is learnt and by implication is unlearned, by means of the application of principles of learning.
- Appropriate or normal behaviour patterns, as well as disturbed (abnormal) or inappropriate behaviour patterns, are learnt and consequently behaviours that are regarded as inappropriate, can be changed or swapped for alternative, more acceptable behaviours through the use of appropriate reinforcement procedures. Where learners exhibit inappropriate behaviours the assumption may also be made that, apart from other causative factors giving rise to the behaviour, these learners did not learn what the appropriate behaviour should be within a specific situation, for example learners need to be taught to raise their hands when they want to answer a question in class instead of speaking out of turn. As a situation or environment changes, so behaviour will tend to change accordingly. A change in the environment can therefore act as an antecedent or a consequent event. In both cases, however, the behaviour changes as the environment changes.
- If all the environmental characteristics are known, it is in theory possible to predict and control behaviour.

Skinner elaborated on Watson’s hypotheses, by pointing out that human (and other) beings learn certain patterns of behaviour far more easily if they are rewarded for exhibiting the appropriate behaviour concerned. In contrast they tend to avoid forms of behaviour, if they are punished for them. Skinner arrived at this conviction on the basis of his experiments conducted with animals, such as a caged dove that had to tread on a lever in order to release food; a cat in a cubicle, which had to perform certain actions before it could receive food;

and rats which, having discovered certain responses by coincidence, had to repeat these responses if they wished to obtain the same results. The emergent theory was therefore based on the pleasure-pain principle. What you enjoy, you tend to repeat; while you prefer to avoid the things you find unpleasant. Skinner referred to this theory as *operational conditioning*.

In view of the fact that the theories propounded by Watson and Skinner were criticised for completely ignoring “inner” processes, such as attention and memory, Bandura devised his *social learning* or *social cognitive theory* (Haring 1978:141; Sigelman & Shaffer 1994:39). His theory focussed on an additional component of the process whereby human behaviour is acquired, namely people are able to think through the relationship between their behaviour and its consequences. For example, they can anticipate what will happen if they behave in a particular manner or continue with their current behaviour. Bandura (Santrock 1995:44; Sigelman & Shaffer 1994:39) attached considerable value to the impact of *observation* and *imitation*, as a behaviour determinant. For instance, the conduct and actions of parents, teachers or peers can influence children’s behaviour, in the sense that they will imitate it and integrate it into their personal life style. A case in point being the way teenagers may spend hours in front of a mirror, imitating the behaviourism of some popular hero(ine) or idol, or trying to copy the hair style of a prominent role model within their life world.

There are additional theoretical differences between Bandura and Skinner and Watson, in that Bandura maintains that not only does the environment impact on the learner, but the learner also has an impact on the environment – hence the reference to *mutual influencing*.

In view of the preceding discussion, the premise on which behaviourism theory is based, is summarised as follows:

- Behaviour does not arise from within a person. Instead, it is learned on the strength of stimuli impacting on the person from the outside. Sigelman and Shaffer (1994:41) illustrate this by citing teenage sexuality. According to the behaviorist model, teenage sexual behaviour is not, as intimated by Freud, determined principally by inner sexual drives, but by environmental factors (e.g. James will not use a condom if he thinks this will spoil his enjoyment, and Sheila will not ask him to do so again if, on a previous occasion, he reacted vehemently to her request).

- The consequences of learners' behaviour will determine whether or not that behaviour is reinforced. Conduct that is rewarded with pleasant experiences will occur far more frequently, and behaviour that is punished (by unpleasant results) will decrease. Positive behaviour is reinforced by rewarding it with positive incentives relating to the learner's primary or biological needs (food, security) or to his or her secondary or psychic needs (attention, recognition, praise, privileges). Tokens may also be used as reinforcing incentives, in which case they must be an incentive for a particular learner, which in turn means that the teacher must know the learners well enough to choose the right incentives to use as reinforcement in each specific case. The following techniques can be used to eliminate undesirable behaviour: erasure (unacceptable behaviour is ignored, while positive behaviour is praised); punishment (disincentives like restriction of freedom, suspension of privileges is used to discourage the learner from resorting to the unacceptable behaviour); response costs (tokens are used as incentives); distance education (time out – the learner is removed from the classroom for a period in order to prevent disruption of the class or to give the learner the opportunity to settle down); and satiation (the learner is allowed to transgress rules of conduct with monotonous regularity so that the novelty of the unacceptable behaviour will wear off and the learner will lose interest in persisting with the behaviour concerned).
- The physiological development of children (such as Freud's phases), as behaviour determinants, is not accepted.
- New behaviours may arise through imitation or mimicking. A teacher can make use of this principle, by encouraging children with behaviour problems to emulate (as their role model) a peer-group member whose behaviour is socially more acceptable.
- The situation in which the behaviour occurs is important. The cat in the cubicle has to tread on a lever to obtain food. This means that the cat will not repeat this behaviour outside the cubicle. Similarly, children do not exhibit the same behaviour in all situations. For instance, a child may steal things in one situation, but not in another. Santrock (1992:290) asserts that a child who *never steals in any situation* is just as rare as one who steals in every situation.

2.2.2.1 A critical appraisal of the contributions of the behaviourism model

Behaviourism has made the following contributions (Santrock 1992:384; Sigelman & Shaffer 1995:40-42; Meyer & Van Ede 1995:71):

- The claims/pronouncements of behaviourism may be tested and precisely defined, and are formulated on the basis of controlled experimental situations. Thus far they have provided evidence that their proven formulations are feasible, valid and reliable.
- Learning principles such as operational conditioning and observed learning (role modelling) are applicable to all age groups, that is, from babies to the aged.

The model is criticised on the basis of the following:

- The behaviourism school of thought does not succeed in explaining how human behaviour passes from one phase of life to the next. All it does is indicate that the observed changes in behaviour can be acquired.
- Advocates of behaviourism fail to account for the inner biological development of children or for the fact that children have to reach a specific level of development before they will be ready to learn specific skills.
- The impact of the genetic-hereditary component is forfeited. People are essentially different, not only because of their learning experiences, but also because of genetic-hereditary factors.
- The behaviour model focuses on simple behaviours and therefore is not applicable in the case of more complex behaviour patterns.
- Behaviourists reject important inner cognitive, affective and conative processes.
- It does not take into consideration the importance of values, as behaviour determinants, in modifying behaviour.
- The behaviour of children cannot be changed to suit adults – children can appear quiet and docile from the outside, yet experience inner turmoil and emotional instability.
- Problems have been experienced by behaviorists in transferring the skills to another similar situation, with the result that the positive results are not manifest over time.
- There are supporters of the behaviour modification model, who have become so attached to the model, that they have become blind to its deficiencies. In practice no model is deemed to be perfect. Each model offers a partial explanation of behaviour and no one model is capable of explaining all the behaviours that occur, in relation to every child.
- A serious criticism of the behaviour model, emanates from the fact that it is open to ethical abuse. Persons making use of the behaviour modification model, to control children's behaviour, quite often abused the use of negative reinforcement,

especially if it takes a while to modify old habits. Skinner and his colleagues were more in favour of making use of positive reinforcement to modify behaviour. Sometimes the expectations were so unrealistic, that the child could not show any improvement in behaviour.

In light of the above criticism, it is interesting to note that Pica and Margolis (1993:29-33) argue that teachers underestimate, over simplify and inappropriately apply the principles of behaviour modification. It is contended that behaviour modification programmes need to be precision crafted and developed in accordance with the principles of operant conditioning. Behaviour modification programmes need to be modified, as well as maintained, in order to have an impact on the learner's behaviour. Teachers very easily blame the behaviour modification theory, when they were not following the principles.

Pica and Margolis (1993:29-33) have posed certain questions that teachers can ask of themselves, when they find that they are unsuccessful in implementing behaviour modification techniques, namely:

- Is the classroom environment suitable to increase the probability of appropriate behaviour?
- Has the program been given enough time to prove itself?
- Do the teacher's demeanor and actions emphasize the positive or is the program used to catch students "*being bad*"?
- Are suitable and appealing reinforcers employed?
- Does it take long to reward the learner with reinforcers?
- Are the qualifying criteria for reinforcers too high?
- Do learners easily become satiated on the reinforcers?
- Are appropriate schedules of reinforcement being used?
- Is shaping used to reduce frequently occurring inappropriate behaviour, or is complete elimination of these behaviours required for reinforcement?
- Does the behaviour modification programme have "*dark spots*"? (Dark spots are those times when learners because of their failure to meet the requirements to qualify for receiving reinforcers, are precluded from any further receiving of reinforcers)
- Is contingent praise given far more than negative comments?
- Does the environment make it easy for students to perform well?
- Is generalization systematically taught?

In conclusion Pica and Margolis (1993:29) stress that “an impressive body of research” exists, which provides positive comments on the substantial impact that behaviour modification programmes have on behaviour.

2.2.3 The psychodynamic model

The psychodynamic or psychoanalytical model, as it is called, was Freud’s brainchild. It was mostly used in medically orientated treatment facilities. Freud’s theory was based on the following fundamental assumptions (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:50-57; Mc Dowell, Adamson & Wood 1982:47-70; Rich 1982:35-39; Santrock 1995:34-36; Swanson & Reinart 1984:14):

- A person’s behaviour is determined by an interaction between three components of their personality: the id (unconscious), the ego (conscious) and the superego (ideals). These deep inner feelings in the unconscious mind can influence people’s behaviour throughout their lives. In a mature, mentally healthy person, the ego (reality orientation) must take control, transform or sublimate the id (instinctual desires) and the superego (conscience). One of Freud’s main goals was to relieve the unconscious conflicts of his patients by making them aware of their feelings and working out strategies to understand and assist the conflicts that may arise.
- The experiences we have during our early childhood years have a decisive and lasting effect on our behaviour. Psychological difficulties experienced by learners, as well as in adults, are the result of problems that the learner or adult has experienced during the first few years of his or her life.
- The typically human instincts or drives, such as the instinct to live or to die and the sex drive, are at the origin of human behaviour. They give rise to human emotions, such as anxiety, fear and love.
- Everyone is unique and different. This implies that each of us is able to attribute personal meanings to specific circumstances and events in our lives, and meanings that affect our lives in ways that are different from the ways they may have affected others.
- A child’s personality is essentially established during the first five to six years of the his or her life.
- Each individual is provided with psychic energy which is distributed amongst the various aspects of the personality, for example the id, the ego and the superego, with their frequently conflicting goals.
- Psychodynamic theory is developmental and maintains that each learner passes through three stages of psychosexual development (early childhood, the latency

period and puberty) that takes place in a fixed sequence. The specific stage of development must be taken into consideration, when a child's behaviour is evaluated. The bodily zone that is the primary source of gratification, during a particular developmental stage, provides the name of the stage concerned, for example the oral phase. Each of the developmental stages poses a developmental crisis, which the child has to resolve. If the child does not reach a resolution, he or she becomes fixated at that stage. Fixation can be caused by the fact either that the child cannot meet the demands from within the environment or because the child is enjoying the fulfilment of his or her needs to such an extent, that the child does not want to progress to the next stage. Feelings during fixation can thus vary from frustration to overindulgence, thereby adversely impacting on all subsequent stages.

- Anxiety is deemed to be the result of an unacceptable impulse that wants to gain consciousness. When the conscious gets to know about this danger signal, which is causing anxiety, the ego creates defences to deal with it, for example repression and denial, projection, displacement and aggressive reaction formation.

With the above background in mind, it is important to note that the psychodynamic model emphasizes the inner life, as a causative factor of emotional disturbance (behaviour problems). Bad experiences from the past and unsolved conflicts in the unconscious mind act as determining factors, with regard to the behaviour of the patient (Santrock 1995:34). The patient must therefore be assisted to gain an insight into the past experiences, for example a child who has been sexually molested must develop insight, in relation to the terrible experience concerned. In the case of children the development of insight into the causative situation, becomes the aim of education. Consequently the teacher needs to develop a positive interpersonal relationship with the child, in order to be able to explore together with the child his or her past experience and thereby assist the child to develop insight into these past experiences. This will enable the child to take part in reality testing, to get rid of fixations or unsuitable defences against drives or feelings of anxiety and to relive the emotional experience, in order to deal therewith. These outcomes of the teacher/child relationship, as a way of providing understanding to the child, provide an opportunity to "correct" behaviour, by developing an insight into the unpleasant experiences of the past. It can be accomplished by the child's verbalization and clarification of thoughts that have thus far been repressed (e.g. being sexually molested and pretending that it is alright or that it was only a bad dream and it did not really happen), reliving bad experiences from the past together with the teacher, and by working out new strategies for dealing with the past.

Up until the 1960s the psychodynamic model was the model that was most widely used by health and educational personnel. The psychodynamic theory incorporates psychoanalytic

and intrapsychic theories, as well as humanistic psychology in that they all have as a point of departure the supposition that behaviour problems are caused by "internal forces". Although different perspectives shape the psychodynamic approach, the commonalities among these various perspectives, provide the necessary premises on which the model is based.

The psychodynamic theory is deterministic, as Freud regarded models that did not analyse causes of behaviour or that did not attempt to gain an insight into the learner's behaviour, as superficial and consequently less valuable. All behaviours have a cause, even the most trivial behaviour. Intrapsychic factors rather than environmental or social influences are regarded as causative factors to occurring behaviour. Instinctual -irrational forces determine problem solving, rather than rational problem solving.

Education aims at guiding the learner to obtain insight into his or her experience. The teacher is expected to establish a positive interpersonal relationship with the learner. This relationship will strengthen the emotional experience, strengthen the possibility of reality testing and undo fixations or unsuitable defences against drives or anxiety. In the classroom the teacher will be able to assist learners to verbalize and clarify unrepressed thoughts and to provide a corrective emotional experience based on the learner's relationship with the teacher, as an understanding adult. The teacher can also assist the learner to cultivate alternative, and more acceptable behaviour patterns.

Freud focussed on learners' inner emotional lives, namely their feelings, attitudes, memories, impulses and drives. All of these, are understood within two levels, the *conscious* and the *unconscious*. Conscious impressions are related to direct impressions, for example thoughts, perceptions or memories that a learner experiences at a particular moment in time. The material embedded in the unconscious mind, can only be made known to the conscious mind, symbolically. Examples of this symbolic material would be dreams, pictures, interpretations and slips of the tongue. To Freud, the unconscious elements are more important than those embedded within the conscious mind. Freud and his colleagues, Karen Horney, Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, Erik Erikson and Bruno Bettelheim, described the conscious mind as the "tip of the iceberg of mental life" (Apter & Conoley 1984:56; Wicks-Nelson & Israel 1984:54). Apart from the fact that Freud categorised human experience in terms of two levels of awareness, the *subconscious* and *conscious*, he also proposed a *structure of personality*. The building blocks of the personality, according to Freud, are: *the id, the ego and the superego*.

The *id* supplies enough undifferentiated, psychic energy for the whole personality called libido which in turn is controlled by the pleasure principle. Behaviour that is motivated by the *id* is impulsive, irrational and selfish in nature. The *id* remains in existence throughout one's life – at some points in time, it comes to the fore, far more prominently, depending on the extent to which it is controlled by the *ego* or *superego*.

The *ego* is active on the conscious level in trying to make decisions on the behalf of the person. The reality principle dominates at this level and thus the *ego* being on the more rational side of the personality controls the *id*, but is also subordinate to it, in the sense that it merely postpones gratification of needs until a more realistic moment. The *ego* also plans instances of behaviour, so that the needs of the *id* may be satisfied in the best possible way. The *ego* is shaped directly after birth, as the child interacts with role players within his or her environment. He or she slowly, but surely, learns to differentiate between himself/herself and the significant other people in his or her life-world. Thus the *ego* is essentially less basic and primitive than the *id*, but has to be moulded or developed.

The *superego* provides personality appropriate specific moral standards to live by and watches over the personality, whilst it stimulates the *ego* to be more perfect in the controlling of the *id* impulses. It develops out of the *ego*, is able to control the *ego* and the *id*. It arises at the age of two or three, when young children begin to imitate the behaviour and values of their parents. Later in life, the *superego* functions as the little voice in children's heads, whilst controlling their behaviour. This voice is defined as the conscience. The *superego* sees to it that socially acceptable or ethically correct safety valves are found for the possibly undesirable impulses of the *id*.

The three components of the personality (*id*, *ego*, and *superego*) do not always work together in harmony. The *ego* is located between the *id* and the *superego*, and tries to create a balance between the two. The way in which this is accomplished determines the person's personality. In practice, the *id* does not always succeed in maintaining this balance, and the disturbance of the balance may give rise to conflict, with an ensuing manifestation of various psychological problems (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:51,52; Santrock 1995:34,35).

Although Freud referred to the drive for survival and security (safety), he considered the sexual or sex drive to be the most important instinct of human life (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:51). He called the energy or drive that arises from the sexual drive, the libido. He maintained that a wide range of problem behaviour is manifest, if the basic sexual drive in

people is not satisfied. Freud considered the influence of the sexual drive on the lives of people to be so important that he identified and drew a distinction between five phases of psychosexual development, namely (Apter & Conoley 1984:58; Meyer & Van Ede 1995:53-55; Santrock 1995:35; Rizzo & Zabel 1988:31):

- **The oral phase (birth to the age of one).** Most activities are focussed on the mouth for gratification purposes. Conflicts during this stage can, according to Freud, cause over dependence and irrational use of verbal aggression. Freud believed that young children, who are weaned too early, could be deprived of their oral gratification and might therefore continue to need mother love indefinitely.
- **The anal phase (between one and three years of age).** Gratification is focussed on the anal area, as the child takes a lot of interest in bowel functions. Conflict during this stage centres around toilet training and being either too orderly or too messy and /or by being too defiant or obstinate to be properly toilet trained, thus exhibiting unacceptable behaviour. According to Freud, the handling of this phase or stage, can have long lasting negative or positive effects on a child's personality. This is a time when children experience conflict between their physical drives and the social norms which their parents expect them to display. If their parents treat them harshly or unsympathetically, by for instance making them spend hours sitting on a potty, they may develop all kinds of problems.
- **The phallic phase (three to six years of age).** According to Freud, during this phase children focus on the genital area and indulge in masturbation, sex play with other children, and finding out where babies come from. These activities need to take place, as part of a process directed at discovering sexual identity and attitudes towards sex. During this phase the libido energy is channelled from the anus to the genital organs. Freud contended that this is the reason why during the phallic phase, small children like to play with their genital organs and to stimulate themselves. Freud advanced the *Electra complex concept* for girls, whereby unconscious conflict between the child and the same sex parent exists, in order to obtain affection and the attention of the parent of the opposite sex. In a similar vein he developed what is termed the *Oedipus complex* for boys, in terms of which it is contended that boys compete with the father to gain the attention and love of the mother and fear that their fathers will deprive them of their penises in punishment for their competition. When the child works through this developmental crisis, he or she eventually gives up the craving for the parent of the opposite sex, because of feared reprisals. As stated by Freud "biology is destiny" (Apter & Conoley 1984:59).

- **The latency phase (six to twelve years of age).** The child is no longer so interested in sex, as during the previous phase and a greater identification with the parent of the same sex takes place. The child is more focussed on peers and gets involved in peer activities. This is the period in the lives of children when they have to deal with the suppressed emotions emanating from the phallic phase. The sexual energy (libido) now has to be neutralised and find expression in socially acceptable activities, such as schoolwork and socialising with friends of the same sex. As children in this phase internalise the social values of their society and make them their own, the ego and the superego feature far more prominently and the drives of the id are increasingly inhibited.
- **The genital phase (twelve years and above).** The conflict from the phallic stage resumes during this phase. This phase is characterised by the maturation of the reproductive organs, the secretion of sexual hormones and the reactivation of the sexual areas, as sources of pleasure and self-gratification. The main drive is now to reproduce by means of sexual intercourse. However, adolescents encounter difficulties coping with their newly found sexual urges and in establishing love relationships. This means that the libido is used to establish friendships, to prepare the child for a career, dating, and eventually marriage. The sexual interest is directed towards persons who are not members of the family. The young adult is now capable of acting out feelings towards others.

Each stage/phase represents cognitive, emotional and social experiences. As the child grows older and progresses from one stage to the next, these experiences vary. Each stage embodies a specific focus, in terms of the child's physical development. Although each stage embodies a certain focus, unfinished business from the previous stage is carried forward into the following stage. These "leftovers" from a more primitive stage are termed *fixations*, because they are essentially unchanged and unexamined by the more mature mind (Apter & Conoley 1984:58). The fixations could be immature, troubling and upsetting attitudes, that are maintained, although the source thereof, are long forgotten or forcibly repressed to the unconscious level (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:53-55; Santrock 1995:35).

According to Freud, conflicts could arise within each of the above-mentioned phases, conflicts between the basic human drives, as represented by the id, and the social norms which determine *what is* – and *is not* acceptable. This conflict could be accompanied by inner tension, fear and anxiety. The way in which parents (and other persons) treat the child during each of these phases, can defuse or augment the inner conflict. For example, conflict can be aggravated when parents deprive children of oral satisfaction, act harshly or

insensitively while a toilet routine is being established, or punish young children for being fascinated by their naked bodies and those of members of the peer group. Freud assumes that unsatisfied needs and the accompanying conflict from the past are carried over into the present. Experiences from early childhood therefore influence later life (Santrock 1995:34).

A further basic premise of the psychodynamic model is Freud's contention that disturbed behaviour or problem behaviour is determined by psychological processes. Psychopathology is determined by the way that each individual child responds to his or her environment in terms of feelings, thoughts, perceptions and needs – thus being shaped by his or her own, unique psychological makeup.

Freud's psychodynamic model, for many years remained the only model available for guiding educators in the education of "disturbed children" (Apter & Conoley 1984:59; Paul & Epanchin 1982:123). Of particular note in this regard is Reinert's (1980:41,42) comment that "Freud is to psychology what Darwin is to genetics. He not only influenced those who have studied the human personality in a direct way, but his ideas are evident in novels, poetry, and even the jokes that enliven various social gatherings. His theoretical constructs were truly the foundation for future psychological thought."

2.2.3.1 A critical appraisal of the psychodynamic model

According to Haring (1978:133), Juul and Newcomer (Apter & Conoley 1984:59,60), Meyer and Van Ede (1995:56) and Sigelman and Shaffer (1994:35) the psychodynamic model has made the following contributions:

- A new sensitivity towards the feelings and needs of children, has been created within parents and teachers alike, by the reevaluation of the rich and complex inner life of children.
- Freud highlighted the importance played by human emotions, such as anxiety, love or fear and their impact on people's lives.
- Major reforms in child care institutions and agencies followed the discovery of the negative effects of emotional deprivation during the early childhood years on the child's personality development.
- Teachers have come to realise that they serve as important role models for learners and that they could assist learners in dealing with their emotional problems, by creating feelings of security and confidence.

- Educational programmes for “disturbed” children, were developed on the premises of Freud’s psychodynamic model, for example, that personality characteristics are determined by events that take place during the early childhood years. This implied that emotional distress results from early family relationships. Problems that the learner experiences at school are simply repetitions of these early disturbances that took place within the family. Psychodynamic thinking focusses on early child/family relationships and far less on strategies to be implemented at school. Melanie Klein (1932) and Anna Freud (1966) in particular were the first to use analytic theory in the treatment of children. This treatment is called therapy or edotherapy (child therapy). Different kinds of therapy are distinguished in terms of the communication medium used, for example **play therapy** (especially suitable for children who are not able to express their feelings), **image therapy** (particularly suitable for children who like to draw and cannot verbalise their feelings) and **conversation therapy** (very suitable for older children). Of note in this regard is Baruch’s (Apter & Conoley 1984:60) following statement: “If a child misbehaves, we must recognize that he must have unmet emotional needs or that he is still expressing hurt, fear, or anger for lacks in the past”.
- A further premise of Freud’s psychodynamic model, regarded as relevant, is his contention that problem behaviour is symptomatic of unconscious conflict. Educators need to realise that learners are frequently unconscious of the reason for their inappropriate behaviour nor are they to be held responsible for controlling the behaviour concerned. Symptomatic treatment of symptoms (overt behaviour) may result in the substitution of another more problematic symptom(symptom substitution).

Freud’s ideas influenced the research conducted by many other researchers. For example Aichorn’s dealings with antisocial adolescents, Bruno Bettelheim’s Orthogenic School for dealing with the emotionally disturbed child, Victor Frankl’s logotherapy, Eric Berne’s theories on transactional analysis, and Fritz Redl’s efforts directed at dealing with delinquent youngsters during the 1940s and 1950s, when he made use of life-space interviews, based on the psycho-educational perspective. Life-space interviews enable learners to come to grips with their unconscious thoughts and feelings, that impact on others within their life-world, by applying psychodynamic thinking to real-life situations, as encountered by educators.

The impact of Freud's psychodynamic model gained in prominence, but after a while it was criticised for the following reasons:

- its intensely pessimistic view of humanity, as well as Freud's extensive reliance on the hypothetical constructs and operations;
- the amount of circularity in Freud's model, as he used a certain hypothetical construct to explain another. For example, his use of the Oedipal complex to explain the id, drew extensive criticism;
- the use made of subconscious material for interpretation, was regarded as being far too time-consuming;
- the use made of an unproven method for dealing with these so-called "disturbed" children (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:56). Juul (Apter & Conoley 1984:59) points out that the school could be seen as constituting a hostile force by certain practitioners of the psychodynamic model, resulting in their recommending unreasonable strategies for teachers understand and assist these "disturbed" learners in the classroom – strategies that could only be implemented during a one-to-one therapeutic session and not in the classroom, for example the catharsis of inner feelings;
- not having any potential for assisting learners to understand and assist learning problems, because of their so-called "limited intellectual capacity" and their limited expressive language skills (Zarakowska & Clements 1988:6);
- concentrating mainly on inner conflicts and pathology. Freud overlooked the impact of the strengths of the child and the impact of the child's environment on the behaviour problem (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:56);
- the difficulties encountered in testing psychoanalytical theory, consequently resulting in doubt being cast on its validity;
- the fact that the actual impact of the early childhood years cannot be measured;
- the overwhelming influence attributed to the sexual drive on the lives of people being questionable;
- the fact that it is regarded as sexist, as women are being valued less than men; and
- the fact that it tended to focus on the causes of behaviour problems (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:56,57; Reinert 1980:45; Wicks-Nelson & Israel 1984:57,58; Zarakowska and Clements 1988:6).

2.2.4 The sociological model

To trace the origins of the sociological model to a single specific researcher appears to be impossible. In contrast it appears to have evolved from the published research findings of a number of sociologists, which broadened and enriched more narrowly conceived theories of the time. Sociologists tend to focus on the functioning of people within groups and are attentive to the impact of forces from within the environment on the learner with behaviour problems. They tend to not be as interested in the individual psychological and learning differences that exist among different people, as is the focus within some of the other theories that have been developed. Sociologists are inclined to interpret behaviour problems in terms of concepts such as social control, rule violations, labelling, deviance, and the relationship between learners who break rules and learners who keep to the rules or as termed the “enforcers”. Behaviour problems therefore originate from a failure to conform to rules or standards of behaviour and consequently constitute a breaking of established social norms.

“Sociological theory” is an umbrella term, which encompasses several theories. Although they represent substantial differences, when explaining disturbed or problem behaviour, they have as their common denominator the belief that deviant behaviour has as its origin a breakdown of social norms and the rules governing behaviour within society. Although the common denominator is relatively easily to identify, the fact remains that learners from different cultures, in one classroom, are not readily socialised to conform to a single set of norms. Rich (1982:39) warns that attempts to socialize learners from such a diverse group, using a single set of norms, stimulates conditions for deviance to occur.

Sociologists have constructed a few models relating to the study of emotional disturbance. These models include the following (Apter & Conoley 1984:73,74; Rich 1982:39-42):

- **Anomie.** According to Durkheim (Apter & Conoley 1984:72), a sociologist, “when individual needs expand and cannot be accommodated by social norms, frustration and discontent – anomie – results”. In effect it is contended that a state of normlessness exists in some parts of modern society, as a result of social change taking place at such a rate that old norms cannot be replaced with new norms, within the time periods concerned. In addition, individual needs that need to be fulfilled within society, are expanding at a similar rate and frustration arises when these needs cannot be realised. This state of frustration results in social deviant

behaviour, as manifested in criminal behaviour and mental illnesses. Schools are hampered by the conditions leading to anomie, as they are struggling to educate learners under normal circumstances, according to society's norms. When a state of normlessness exists within a society, it may happen that the rules governing social interaction within the society concerned, no longer conform to that being taught within schools. Clearly, the occurrence of problem behaviour can have as its genesis the phenomenon just described. The school's ability to socialize learners, is in effect hampered by the conditions leading to anomie. Rapid social change may cause cultural norms to become obsolete by the time they are implemented in institutions, such as the schools of the community in question.

- **Social disorganization.** Social disorganization occurs when social interaction patterns have broken down to such an extent that the psychological needs of the members of the community remain unfulfilled. The community becomes disorganised and traditional institutions like the family and the church experience stress, the crime rate is high, delinquency frequently occurs, mental illnesses are common, and many members of the community are unemployed. This type of breakdown gives rise to increased rates of deviant behaviour. Schools can intensify social disorganization, as the school represents and immortalises mainstream cultural values. This implies that social conditions which have been causative to the breakdown of the family system, the increase of crime, and other types of deviance, result in learners being confronted with conflicting norms. No partnership between the school and the community can exist under such conditions, as learners have to choose between the home and school, in terms of values, norms and beliefs. Insecurity emanating from these conditions, results in the "dropout" rate increasing and/or the involvement of schools in a struggle with significant groups, which have a great amount of influence, within the community.
- **Cultural transmission theory.** In terms of this theory, the accent is placed on the context in which people/learners are supposed to meet their needs. Persons, including learners, are inclined to satisfy their needs in terms of their observations, as to how others in their life-world are satisfying similar needs. For example members from a peer group taking drugs, may also take drugs in order to be accepted by the rest of the group. Learners can thus actually learn to exhibit problem behaviour by identifying with other learners who exhibit the same type of problem behaviour. Learners learn to behave in ways, prescribed and modelled by leading figures or role models within the community. In a society, models of "normal" and "deviant" behaviour exist. These models are typical of certain groups within that

society. The norms that a learner adopts and identifies with, will be determined in accordance with which group he or she is affiliated to. The school is deemed to be a microcosmic reflection of the community in which it exists and as such also experiences cases of “normal” and “deviant” behaviour. Learners behaving in a deviant way, identify with other learners and persons in the community who exhibit the same type of behaviour. Because of their identification with the norms associated with these “deviant” groups, the learners concerned are in constant conflict with their teachers, as these norms will tend to differ quite significantly from those being taught in school.

- **Functionalism.** A dynamic equilibrium between the disruptive elements and the forces that maintain the community, is idealised within the community. Forces that could be regarded as functional satisfy human needs, whilst dysfunctional forces disrupt the social system. Social strain results from these conflicting social systems.

Rich (1982:41) identifies certain roles fulfilled by different learners, namely the **innovator** (performs criminal acts, for example stealing from lockers, he or she is excluded from *school activities* usually by being suspended or expelled); the **retreatist** (rejects both the goals approved by society and the means provided by social institutions. They are treated for being “sick” or are simply rejected and isolated from the usual mainstream activities within the school, are placed in special education classes, or the parents may even be forced to take them out of the school and place them in a special facility), the **rebel** (rejects existing means and goals and actively attempts to change them. The rebel confronts any representative of the prevailing social order and this brings them into conflict with those who want them to conform to prevailing norms and values. These learners are usually regarded as constituting a danger to the existing social order and are quite often expelled because of their activities), and the **ritualist** (accepts and exaggerates the means of the society, while simultaneously rejecting its goals. These learners are not regarded as deviant, as they are behaving in accordance with established rules and social norms. They are, however, described as unmotivated and not performing according to potential.).

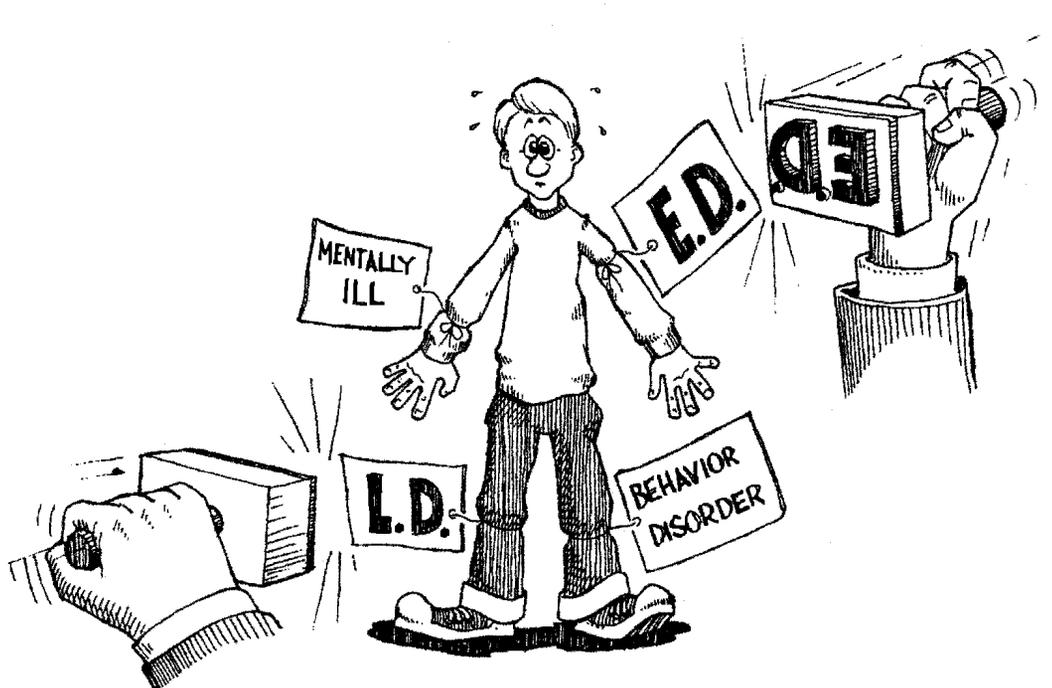
- **Labelling theory.** Learners who exhibit deviant or problem behaviour and non-deviants are psychologically alike, as they both behave in accordance with expectations. Their actual behaviour is very similar in that both these groups (deviant and non-deviant learners) break certain social rules and conform to certain of the social norms. The only difference occurs in the way that society regards these learners. Deviant behaviour is regarded, as a consequence of a certain behaviour

pattern, rather than a cause of being labelled as a deviant learner. Identified causes of deviant behaviour are for instance the enforcers of social rules. Once a learner has been labelled *deviant*, it is almost impossible to redefine the learner as somebody exhibiting "normal" behaviour. Even although the learner does not conform to the label and does not act deviant, the "normal" behaviour will be ignored by society, as people seem to remember the behaviour that confirms their expectations. Labelling is believed by sociologists, to be the first step towards the onset of a learner's problem, instead of it representing the beginning of a process of better adjustment (see figure 2.1).

Schools have in the past, labelled and categorised learners. Labels are coupled to the *learner's* actual or expected academic performance or the way that the learner behaves, for example exhibiting delinquent behaviour, playing truant. Other labels are correlated to differences in learning styles, for example the learning disabled and dyslectic learner, and the mentally retarded learner. Labels are also associated with teachers' expectations of their learners, for example if the learner grew up in a culturally different environment, or if the learner is from a family with a history of emotional and behaviour problems. Learners who are walking around with labels, usually subconsciously perform according to the expectations of the labellers.

Many educationists have voiced their concern with regard to the negative impact of the labelling of a learner, as it has the potential to stigmatize a learner in school and within their social context. They further agree that labels serve no practical purpose when a teacher has to plan an assistance program for the learner. Labels can even stimulate wrong expectations of a specific learner, which can act as barriers to learning and growth. Ysseldyke and Foster (Apter & Conoley 1984:74) illustrate the impact of labelling with the following example. They requested teachers to view a video tape of a so-called "normal" learner. They told one group of teachers, that the child was exhibiting deviant behaviour and the other, that the learner was acting normally. The result was that the first group of teachers rated the learner's behaviour as more deviant than the other group of teachers. The main concern is that once a learner has been labelled, his or her behaviour becomes a reflection of the label, even although he or she might not have exhibited genuine behaviour problems before being attributed the label concerned. Clearly, living out the negative expectations of role players within his or her life-world, is the result of the labelling process.

Figure 2.1: Labelling learners



A number of labels has been applied to troubled children, and the labeling process itself often adds to the youngster's difficulties.

Source: Apter & Conoley (1984:14)

Labelling learners as mentally ill, criminal or delinquent will without doubt have substantial consequences for them. Any rule breaking behaviour exhibited by the learner will be evaluated in accordance with the label that has been assigned to him or her. A typical case illustrating this point is that of a learner who does not hand in an assignment on time. Having been labelled a rebel, the learner concerned is regarded by the teacher, as once again being rebellious. In contrast, another learner who has not been labelled would probably be given a second chance to hand in the assignment. Deviant behaviour is actually expected from the labelled learner, whereas, for the unlabeled learner forgiveness is available. Clearly, the consequence of erroneous labelling can be quite devastating for the learner concerned.

Intervention strategies utilized by sociologists are essentially directed at enabling social change within the society, rather than the modification of a particular learner's behaviour. Society's involvement in deviant behaviour, is therefore not within the ambit of the teacher's

control. Newcomer (Apter & Conoley 1984:74) argues that the sociological model has enabled teachers to lessen the negative effects of labelling and has broadened the acceptance of individual differences. Sociological theory places the accent on the social context impacting on the troubled learner, in devising appropriate strategies. Paul and Epanchin (Apter & Conoley 1984:74) use the metaphor of a sociological theory lens, through which teachers are able to obtain a clearer understanding of the situations surrounding troubled children.

2.2.4.1 A critical appraisal of the sociological model

The sociological model or perspective, just like the existential and the phenomenological models, focuses on the social milieu and the impact on the individual. The impact of group behaviour and interpersonal relationships, on the behaviour of the individual, is specifically emphasized.

Although the sociological model had a major impact on education during the 1970's, the most important criticism levelled against this model, according to Newcomer (1980:55-57) is that it does not discriminate between emotional disorders. Socially deviant disorders are classified as psycho sociopathic acts, whereas according to critics, these types of disorders may have resulted as a result of different causes, for example genetic factors and consequently not as a result of social factors.

The sociological model does not, as in comparison with other models, provide a comprehensive picture of a learner in terms of individual attitudes, traits, drives, needs and emotions, all of which are deemed to be behaviour determinants.

Proponents of the sociological model contend that a discrepancy exists between the pluralistic nature of students' life styles and behaviour standards in schools, which often result in a labelling of students as being disturbed (Rich 1982:42). Within the new South African Education Policy the labelling, marginalisation and stigmatisation of learners, whether regarded as a consequence or a cause of deviant behaviour, are no longer condoned. In contrast the policy is directed at fostering inclusion, whereby all learners are treated with dignity and are afforded equal opportunities, so as to actualise their full potential and enjoy a quality education. Learners therefore no longer need to act in accordance with the expectations of people within their life world who have labelled them, for example teachers. In fact the contrast is now true. Teachers in terms of the new

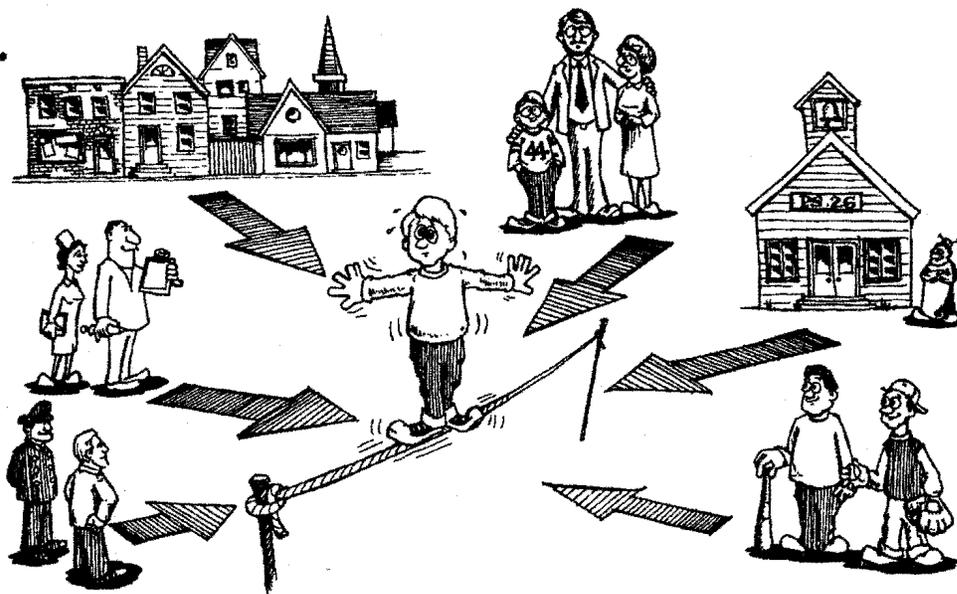
Education Policy need to think and act creatively, so as to find ways to assist the learner in the actualisation of his or her potential.

2.2.5 The ecological model

Within various disciplines, an ecological research perspective has been established. It is therefore not surprising to discover that the basic concepts incorporated within the ecology model, stem from diverse fields of study, such as biology, sociology, and anthropology, to but name a few. The situation that exists is depicted graphically in figure 2.2. Scientists from the different disciplines concerned, are essentially united by the use of a similar research methodology, and their common concern in terms of the relationship that exists between the individual (the learner with behaviour problems) and his or her environmental context. The ecological model essentially evolved, as a result of the criticism levelled against previous models, namely for not taking environmental factors into account as behaviour determinants.

The ecological model and its various variations are associated with a number of prominent researchers and it is contended that the theoretical conceptualisations embodied within the ecological model are acknowledged within most fields of research. Most ecologists, dealing with the human dimension, agree that behaviour stems from an interaction between the "internal forces" within the person or learner and their particular environmental circumstances. Each ecologist will, however, have a unique interpretation of the interaction that takes place, in accordance with his or her own frame of reference, as embedded in their research perspective. Ecological psychologists would therefore analyse situations according to both psychological and non-psychological forces. Barker and his colleagues (Apter & Conoley 1984:85) stress the importance of "synomorphy" (the fit of an individual's behaviour within a particular situation) and in terms of their research findings conclude that the term *mental illness* is used to describe behaviour that is not deemed appropriate within a particular context. They further argue that since behaviour is flexible and can vary from situation to situation, it will be unfair to judge a learner's behaviour as deviant on the basis of only one situation, for example at the school.

Figure 2.2: The ecological view



The ecological perspective is focused on the "balance" in each child's unique ecosystem.

Source: Apter & Conoley (1984:93)

There are researchers who regard emotional disturbances, as a malfunction in interaction (Ackerman 1970; Vogel & Bell 1960). They maintain that when learners exhibit behaviour problems, it must be seen as part of a much larger pattern of family relationships. In this way, psychoanalytic explanations of learners' individual personalities, are made applicable to the patterns of interaction within a family system. The ecological systems model emphasizes the fact that all behaviour is determined by a learner's interaction with other role players within his or her environment. All interventions in the relationship between a learner and his or her environment take place in order to assist the learner to maintain the harmonious balance or equilibrium between him/her and the significant other role players within the environment. Any disturbance in the equilibrium is therefore essentially, as a result of a *misfit* between the individual learner and the environment (ecosystem).

Bronfenbrenner and Crouter (Sigelman & Shaffer 1995:86; Santrock 1995:44) view the environment, as any events or circumstances located *outside* the individual person. In other words, *the extrinsic* factors which can influence a learner's development. The concept *environment* encompasses a variety of environments, namely the physical, educational,

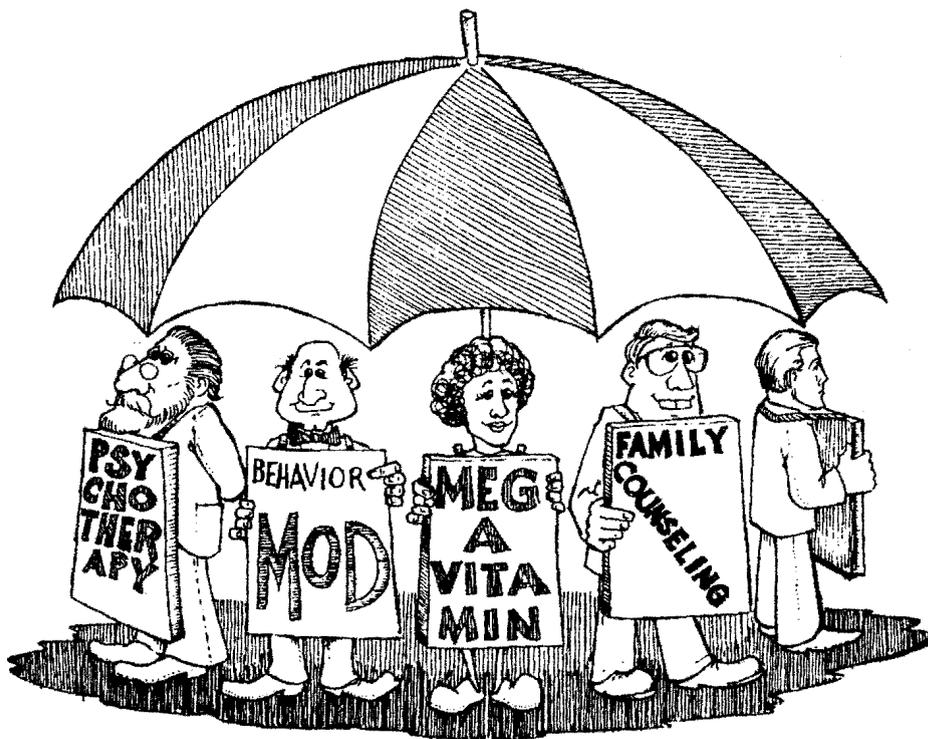
social, cultural and geographical environments. Each of these in turn can be expanded for the purpose of analysis. For example, the physical environment includes even the molecules in the bloodstream of the foetus, which reaches it via the umbilical cord and can influence its development even before birth. The social environment includes all meaningful role players which may have an impact on the learner's life and experiences. It also encompasses various subsystems, such as the close family system, the extended family system, the peer group at school, the neighbourhood peer group, the church group, and the soccer or a netball team. All these systems interact and influence the development and behaviour of the learner concerned.

Bronfenbrenner (Sigelman & Shaffer 1995:87; Santrock 1995:48,49,44) categorised these systems as follows:

- **Microsystem.** The term *microsystem* refers to the immediate vicinity or environment of the learner. It typically constitutes the setting in which the learner lives and includes the family, peers, neighbourhood, and church. The learner is not regarded as a passive recipient of the experiences to be found in these settings. He or she is in fact regarded as somebody who helps to construct a specific setting. Most of the research conducted in terms of sociocultural influences, relates to microsystems.
- **Mesosystem.** Mesosystem is an allusion to the interaction or link between the various microsystems. Examples cited are the relation of family experiences to school experiences; school to church experiences and family to peer experiences. Unpleasant experiences in one system will have a ripple effect on the other systems. Thus individual learners who have had a bad experience in the home, will exhibit negative or "different" behaviour at school and towards their peer group and this could have a negative effect on the interactions among all the related systems. Developmentalists emphasise the importance of observing behaviour in multiple settings in order to gain a holistic picture of the learner's development.
- **Ecosystem.** Ecosystems refer to social systems which individuals do not personally experience, but which could nonetheless have an impact on their lives. Children might be influenced by the stress the parents are experiencing at work or the problems they are encountering in their social relationships. It relates to experiences that the learner has acquired in another social setting where he or she is not a prominent role player, yet the experience exerts an influence on what the learner experiences in an immediate context.

- **Macrosystem.** The macrosystem is the most comprehensive context. It forms part of the larger sub-cultural and cultural context within which the microsystem, mesosystem and ecosystem function. It essentially constitutes the cultural milieu (e.g. beliefs, customs, norms, traditions and related cultural elements passed from one generation to the next) in which the learner lives. Culture and religion provide a frame of reference for assessing behaviour, in terms of that which is deemed to be acceptable or unacceptable in specific life phases.
- **Chronosystem.** The system indicates that certain patterns of environmental events are formed and they are then relayed over the learner's life course and socio-historical circumstances. For example, studies in regard to the impact of divorce on children indicate that negative after effects only become visible one year after the divorce has taken place and that boys are more negatively affected by divorce than girls. Two years after the divorce took place, things seem to settle down.

Figure 2.3: Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development



Source: Santrock (1995:48)

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development is diagrammatically depicted in terms of the model presented in figure 2.3. The five environmental systems, previously discussed, are clearly illustrated in the model presented. At the centre of the model is the individual with the various systems encompassing the individual in successive layers and with the chronosystem. Battering events over the life course are reflected by means of a vertical dimension of time. The model as an entity provides a holistic picture of the interaction between the systems concerned in influencing the development and behaviour of learners.

Swap (Rich 1982:43) suggests that an "ecological network" should be organised, in order to "explicate and integrate the ecological model of emotional disturbance in children". Three fundamental systems or levels are incorporated within this network, namely the *behaviour setting*, *patterns of behaviour setting*, and the *community and cultural influence*. The relevant systems are briefly defined as follows:

- **Behaviour setting, for example a classroom or the home.** This will include the physical milieu of the classroom, the program of activities taking place in the classroom, the learners, a roster, which is followed every day, seating arrangements, work space, crowdedness, teaching styles, the principal and his or her influence. These are factors that could be triggering a misfit between the learner and his or her environment and that can be the cause of disturbed or problem behaviour.
- **Patterns of behaviour setting.** When the behaviour pattern is changed, the learner's behaviour can change accordingly, as behaviour is a function of the learner's interaction with the environment. Variations in behaviour between the home and the school, tend to support this contention. The fact that problem behaviour only exists in certain situations, supports the notion that disturbance is not global, but related to specific ecosystems within the environment.
- **The community and cultural influence.** All communities and cultural groups have a set of expected norms, values, beliefs, customs and traditions that act as behaviour determinants. Society has tended to assign to schools the task of identifying, controlling and treating learners whose behaviour may be categorised as *deviant*. Teachers, as representatives of the community, are greatly influenced by the norms, values and expectations of learners, and more specifically their behaviour. The influence of the community on the teachers, is discernible in the willingness of teachers to label certain types of behaviour as disturbed or problem behaviour. Kenniston (Rich 1982:45) argues that "Until policy makers and planners shift their focus to the broad ecological pressures on children and their parents, our public

policies will be unable to do much more than help individuals repair damage that the environment is constantly reinflicting.”

Most other models, relating to human behaviour, focus on the internal and external forces influencing the learner's behaviour. Some focus more on external forces (behaviour and sociological models), while others tend to focus on internal forces (e.g. the psychodynamic and the biophysical model). Psychodynamic theorists emphasize the importance of “needs” and “drives”, as well as behaviour patterns that could be expected to occur during certain stages/phases. Biophysical theorists mainly focus on physiological conditions that can influence behaviour, for example hyperactivity. Behaviour and sociological models emphasize external factors, such as the impact of societies, communities and culture, on the learner with behaviour problems. They also tend to focus on the impact of stimulus-response patterns, together with reinforcing or punishing conditions within the environment, and how these forces (e.g. significant other role players), from within the environment influence the behaviour pattern of the learner. Although each of these models uncovers a part of the truth, as regards behaviour and specifically learners with behaviour problems, they were not broad enough to include the far-ranging aspects of behaviour problems. It is only the ecological systems model that is comprehensive enough to accommodate a conceptual framework provides solutions for behaviour problems. Apter and Conoley (1984:82) summarise the situation well in terms of their following statement:

Only the ecological model provides the basis for simultaneous analysis of the individual's adaptation to his or her environment and the impact of environmental forces on the individual.

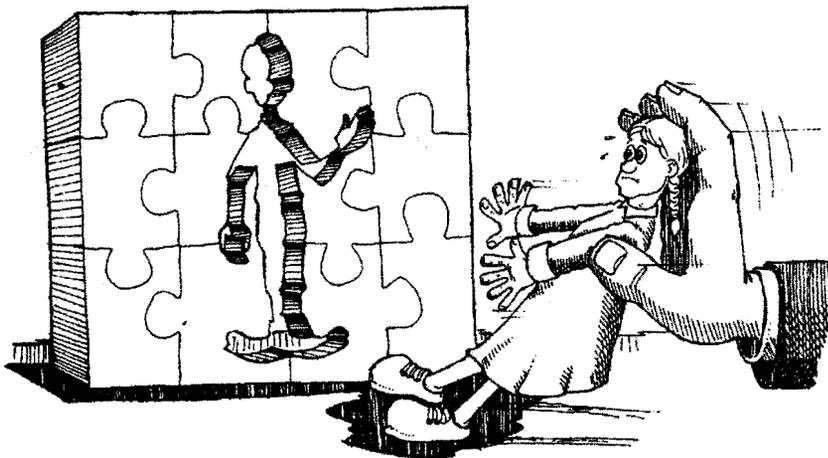
The ecological systems model attributes attention to the multiple forces within the environment impinging on the learner and assists learners to grow and to gain control of these forces, after having identified them. In contrast to many other models, the ecological systems model focusses on both the external and internal factors and the interaction between them, that causes certain behaviour patterns to occur. Ecologists view behaviour problems as being the result of an ecosystem that is disturbed. A disturbance can be viewed as a “failure to match” the environment. Figure 2.4 presents a graphical presentation of the misfit that exists.

The ecological systems model views the learner, as constituting a complete person surrounded by a unique ecosystem. When the different components of the ecosystem are

working harmoniously together, the ecosystem is regarded as balanced or in congruence and the learner therefore appears to act "normal". Deviant behaviour occurs when the components of the system are not in congruence and a failure to match the learner with his or her ecosystem occurs. Potential solutions therefore need to focus on these failures to match the learner with the ecosystem. When the failure in aligning the learner with his or her ecosystem is addressed and the ecosystem regains its balance or congruence, a state of harmony exists. The stage is thus set for positive behaviour and competent functioning, development and psychological growth, that improve so long as the state of harmony exists. According to Apter and Conoley (1984:83), an increase in the learner's skills or a decrease in environmental forces can act preventatively in the occurrence of school situations that stimulate behaviour problems.

Figure 2.4: A graphical presentation of the misfit

Sometimes there is a failure to match between child and system.



Source: Apter & Conoley (1984:82)

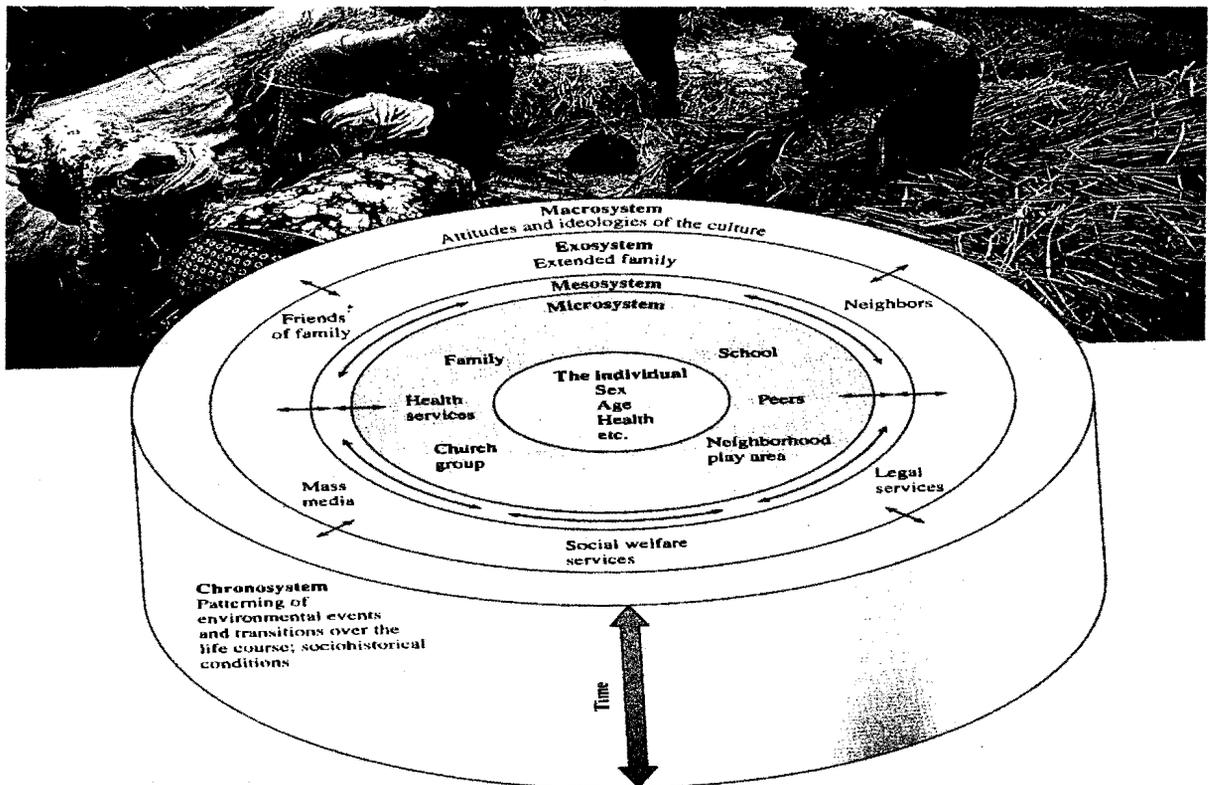
As may be ascertained from the preceding discussion, the ecological systems model is based on the following fundamental assumptions (Gearheart *et al.* 1988:323-324; Gilham 1981:29; Rich 1982:42-46):

- Each learner forms an inseparable part of an ecosystem.
- Behaviour problems are not viewed as constituting a state of incongruence, because of a misfit with the system.

- Problem behaviour of learners can be viewed, as a disparity between the learner, his or her abilities and the expectations of the environment. It is thus a case of “failure to match” between the system and the learner.
- Interventions aim at making the system work on a long-term basis without any further assistance or intervention.

In terms of the above assumptions, the ecological systems model is not generally directed at attaining a particular state of mental health or a particular set of behaviour patterns, it focuses on reaching a state of harmony between the learner and the forces within the environment. A graphical presentation of the ecological model is presented in figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: A graphical presentation of the ecological perspective



Source: Apter & Conoley (1984:81)

2.2.5.1 A critical appraisal of the ecological systems model

The ecological systems model has no intervention techniques of its own. It tends to make use of methods developed within related fields, utilizing ecological principles. In this way,

individual deficits are de-emphasized by a belief in the possibility of eliciting systems change, in order to attain and maintain a state of harmony. The ecological perspective may serve as a holistic and inclusive umbrella, under which many different perspectives are accommodated.

The ecological systems model has made the following positive contributions towards dealing with learners with behaviour problems more effectively (Apter & Conoley 1984:80-99; Dowling & Osborne 1994:3,33; Swanson & Reinart 1984:13):

- Increasing numbers of learners are exhibiting behaviour problems in classrooms and traditional programs that have been implemented, have not been as successful as envisaged, as the number of learners with behaviour problems is escalating at a substantial rate. The ecological systems model maintains that these unsuccessful attempts may be attributed to the narrowness of previous efforts.
- The ecological systems model provides a new way at looking at the “whole” learner. In the past all the attention was focussed on the learner, as the guilty party, who had to change or revert back to acting in a so-called “normal” manner.
- The assessment-planning-assistance cycle, in order to assist the learner with behaviour problems, as suggested by the ecological systems model, is far more comprehensive than suggested by other models. Apter and Conoley (1984:97) maintain that focussing on the learner only and ignoring other significant systems like the school, the family and the community that surround the learner, makes the identification and remediation of behaviour problems completely impossible. To the benefit of the learner, as much information as possible must be gained from as many sources as possible. Inclusion of all information is deemed to be far better than an exclusion of necessary information. Ecological mapping, profile systems and comprehensive case reports, are but a few of the new strategies that are proposed in terms of the ecological systems model.
- The impact of the entire system surrounding the learner, is stressed by the ecological systems model. Because of the fact, that the ecological systems model casts a broad net, numerous resources that have an impact on the learner’s behaviour and that were previously ignored by other models, are now included. Ecosystems like parents, siblings, neighbourhood peer groups, church, school and playground, all have an impact on the learner’s behaviour and must therefore be taken into consideration in the planning of an assistance programme for the learner.

- The model enhances coordination amongst the different ecosystems. If the different impacts of the different ecosystems, are not linked to each other, no proper assistance programme can be planned, as such a programme would be unorganised and incomplete. The result, one ecosystem will tend to dominate another and no state of harmony or equilibrium will be attained.
- The significant other role players from the different ecosystems, can also benefit from the ecological interventions, as well as the “targeted” learner and the further occurrence of more serious behaviour problems could be prevented.

The failure to coordinate efforts in providing services to learners with behaviour problems and the failure to understand the complex surroundings or environments of learners with behaviour problems, have a major bearing upon the occurrence of behaviour problems. The ecological systems model, however, emphasizes these failures as important points of departure.

2.2.6 The countertheory model (the phenomenological model)

Countertheorists regard the other major theories as failures, in terms of assisting learners with behaviour problems. Some of their concerns include the following: a school curriculum that is irrelevant to the learners, the negative impact of labelling learners, and the fact that learners do not have a democratic say in decisions being taken. Countertheory is a concept that is representative of a range of approaches that have developed during the past twenty years, for example humanism, humanistic psychology and radical therapy.

Countertheorists (Apter & Conoley 1984:75-78; Swanson & Reinert 1984:14):

- contend that behaviour is meant to be diverse and each person or learner has the choice of behaving as he or she chooses to behave. Countertheorists may therefore regard behaviour, previously regarded as being problem behaviour, as healthy individual responses to an unhealthy environment;
- propose major and even radical changes to the traditional concept of school and go so far as to even advocate the abolishment of school entirely. They are unhappy with the present state of educational programs implemented in schools and with school life in general. They regard a school curriculum as being irrelevant, the atmosphere in the classroom and at school is deemed to be dehumanizing, and school policies are viewed to be destructive in nature;

- want to make allowance for deviant behaviour at the school, rather than to develop a safe niche that will promote the controlling of behaviour;
- are in favour of a holistic approach in dealing with problem behaviour and reject fragmentation of the problem;
- argue that learners who are deemed to be acting in a deviant way, should also be included in the planning process, when an assistance program is developed for them,
- reject the concepts of *deviance* and *normality*;
- reject the drawing up of a contract with a learner, as it reinforces the notion that the teacher is superior to the learner;
- reject the tendency of society to label and categorize learners, as deviant learners, thereby stigmatizing them;
- argue very strongly in favour of the uniqueness of each learner and reject the tendency of schools to shape a diverse school population into a standardized model. Too much comparing and categorizing takes place in schools, instead of emphasizing individual differences. Special education is an example of how learners were grouped together, after not being able to keep up with their peers. They have been compared with the mean or average learner and found to be less suitable, and are therefore being dumped into special schools where they, in all probability, will remain for the rest of their school careers;
- reject the notion that education consists of a known set of information and skills that can be passed on from one teacher to another, generation after generation;
- emphasise the “goodness” of the learner, in contrast to labelling the learner as *deviant* or *abnormal*;
- maintain that the aim of education is to help the learner to find happiness;
- propose that education is both intellectual and emotional;
- maintain that education should be “spot on” regarding the capacities of the individual learner;
- contend that learners should not be disciplined extensively;
- believe that freedom must be mutually arranged by the teacher, parent and the learner/child;
- stress that learners must hear the truth from their teachers;
- argue that no religious training should be allowed;
- maintain that guilt feelings should not be allowed to impede the progress towards independence and

- de-emphasize the more traditional intervention strategies devised to understand and assist behaviour problems, for example the behaviour modification model and psychodynamic model.

The countertheory model is certainly not without its critics, but it needs to be seen within the same light, as the other models previously presented, and evaluated accordingly. Each of the models concerned provide a particular perspective of the concept "problem behaviour", its causes and the means for dealing therewith.

Having discussed and obtained an understanding of the various perspectives presented, with regard to the development of behaviour, the normal development of learners and especially their emotional development, will be discussed in the ensuing section. Of particular relevance in this regard is the discussion relating to the different life phases through which a learner passes. In the discussion special attention is also attributed to the *social development* and the *cognitive development* of learners, as these specific milestones are relevant in gaining an understanding of behaviour problems. With regard thereto it is interesting to note that Ausubel and Sullivan (1970:418) specifically argue that "emotional and cognitive development are interrelated in many intricate ways. In terms of priority of development, it is difficult to dispute the fact that young children exhibit intense and well-differentiated feelings long before a capacity for logical thought is prominent. Emotions similarly precede reasoning in the phyletic scale".

2.3 THE NORMAL DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNERS

The development of children/learners, is a subject which has been extensively debated within various academic fields. Questions frequently posed by researchers include the following:

- Are children/learners inherently good or bad?
- What plays the most important role in the development of children/learners – their inborn, inherited possibilities or education? (the "nature – nurture" controversy)
- To what extent can children/learners contribute to their development, or are they merely passive bystanders and at the mercy of external factors outside of their direct control?
- Can the behaviour of children/learners suddenly change or is it an evolutionary process?
- Is the development of children universal in nature? In other words do all children of all cultures develop in the same way or does this development differ from person to person?

These, in essence philosophical questions, will not necessarily all be addressed in this section, where the focus will mainly be on the development of children's/ learners' behaviour and more specifically the development of "emotional milestones", as an aspect thereof . The latter will be undertaken with specific reference to Erikson's (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:216-219) theory of human development. However, because children's/learners' behaviour is affected by various other aspects impacting on their development, behaviour cannot be discussed in isolation thereof and reference will be made, where relevant, to these other aspects of development. According to Pringle (1985:33) "learning (in the widest sense of the word) and emotion, the cognitive and affective aspects of development, intellect and feelings, are so closely interwoven and from so early an age as to be almost indivisible". The different developmental phases will be discussed, with reference to the emotional, physical, motor, cognitive and social factors which contribute to the behaviour of children/learners.

It is important to understand how children/learners develop for the following reasons:

- It enables teachers, parents and significant other role players, to understand the level of children's / learner's development, in order to adjust the teaching methodology and assistance rendered to learners, in terms of their respective levels of development.
- Teachers, parents and significant other role players, in communicating with learners, need to gain an insight, as to learners' abilities to understand the information presented, as well as the level of their language ability, so as to avoid either boring the learners or becoming incomprehensible. Clearly this will relate to the learners' level of development in understanding and language proficiency.
- Teachers, parents and significant other role players, who wish to establish or access a child's/learner's progress in the different areas of development, should know how normal development evolves over the space of time. In particular they need to be aware of the ensuing step in the child's / learner's progress, in order to be able to establish educational objectives or objectives for an assistance programme.
- In essence, it is pointless teaching learners skills or curriculum related material if a learner has not reached a level of maturity to cope therewith. The creation of expectations that the learner is unable to realise, in terms of his or her level of maturity, would merely result in increasing the stress to which the learner is subjected. Teachers, parents and significant other role players therefore need to become conversant with and be able to recognise the signs that indicate when learners are ready to learn a particular skill or need to become part of an assistance programme. A knowledge of the learner's normal development process enables them to recognise the signs concerned.

- Teachers, parents and significant other role players should be able to determine what behaviour is normal for a particular age group and what is not. This is only possible if they know what behaviour can normally be expected from a child/learner in that particular age group

Hobbs (1982:319) argues that when learners are being assisted to behave appropriately, the adult or for the purposes of this study, the teacher must understand the learner and be sensitive to a learner's normal patterns of development. In addition Hobbs (1982:319) asserts that the adult concerned needs to understand and be sensitive towards individual variations from the usual developmental patterns. The general age and level of development will provide the teacher with the necessary guidelines, as to drawing up a programme of assistance when intervening in the learner's life.

2.3.1 General characteristics of the development of learners

The following are typical characteristics of children's development (Ausubel & Sullivan 1970:414-498; Graham 1986:98; Botha, Van Ede & Piek, 1995:269-304, 336-370, 383-428; Pringle 1985:34-58; Raths 1972:8-17; Santrock 1995:165,181,187; Santrock 1992:48):

- **Different features of development.** There are different features associated with a child's cognitive, language, emotional, social and moral development. Although researchers tend to refer to these features separately for the purpose of analysis, they cannot really be separated, since they are all integrated in a holistic sense.
- **Specific phases.** The development of children takes place in specific phases, namely during babyhood, as a toddler or preschooler, in the middle childhood years and in the later or secondary school years. During each of these respective phases certain characteristics feature far more prominently than at any other time. Although we differentiate between these phases, it needs to be understood that a child's development cannot really be divided into clear-cut phases. Children gradually move from one phase to another. There are no clearly defined "boundaries" between the phases. In addition, children do not develop in all aspects, at the same rate. They may, therefore, have entered the next phase in respect of one aspect of development, yet still be in a previous phase in terms of another. This means that they can be in more than one phase, at a specific point in time. In this study the typical development characteristics of children, within specific phases, are discussed. It, however, needs to be stressed, that this relates to the average child. One may always find children who do not share these typical

characteristics. However, this does not imply that they are abnormal or can be deemed to be deviant.

- **Clear patterns of development.** The development of children tends to follow a clear pattern. This pattern is evident in all children, from all cultural groups. They for instance first learn to sit, then to crawl, stand and finally walk. These obvious signs of a child's development are known as developmental milestones. In other words, they are recognised stepping stones which are moved across in a specific order. These milestones enable teachers to identify the level of a child's development, as well as the next goal or milestone to be reached.
- **Horizontal and vertical development.** Development takes place both on a horizontal and a vertical dimension. Horizontal development means that children are able to master more and more skills (they can climb, kick and clamber), while vertical development means that these activities also improve in quality and that they can do them better than before.
- **Development is nevertheless unique.** Although we have just indicated that there is a clear pattern of development, each child's/learner's development remains unique and no two children develop in exactly the same way in all respects.
- **Quicker tempo.** Children develop faster in the first few years than in later years.
- **Internal and external factors.** The development of children/learners is influenced by internal and external factors, such as for instance education and environment. A continuous interaction takes place between these two factors. It needs to be noted, that the previous discussion relating to the ecological systems model is of relevance in this regard.
- **Progress.** Not all children/learners progress at the same pace through the different phases. Different factors have a role to play in terms of the child's rate of development. Some children are born with particular skills and abilities which may assist them to progress at a faster pace than others. However, extrinsic factors also play a role, such as exposure to appropriate stimuli. The intentional development of specific skills can therefore enable the child to reach the next phase far more quickly. The previous discussion relating, to the behaviourist model, is of relevance in this instance.
- **Deficits.** There may be deficits in the development of children which create a gap between their present level of development and the level of development that they should have reached. These deficits may be caused by a lack of support or because they were not subjected to the appropriate stimuli, as would be the case in neglect or poor environmental circumstances. Apart from deficits, development can also be adversely affected if children develop inappropriate and maladapted behaviour.

- **Emotional needs in each phase.** In each phase children/learners have specific emotional needs which have to be met. A failure to meet these emotional needs, may give rise to conflict or even create a crisis. (See Chapter 4 for further information relating to the unmet emotional needs of learners.)

Erikson is especially well-known for his theory on human development (Meyer *et al.* 1997:213). He essentially distinguishes between eight stages of human development, namely that of the baby, early childhood, the play stage, school years, adolescence, early adult maturity, adult maturity and finally old age (Meyer *et al.* 1997:221). In this study the focus is on the development of the primary and secondary school learner and by implication only the first five stages identified by Erikson will therefore be of relevance. Erikson's stages of human development together with the discussion on emotional needs as set out by Pringle in Chapter 4 are, for the purposes of this study, regarded as the emotional milestones of normal emotional development (see figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6: A tabular representation of the integration of the emotional milestones as described by Pringle (1986:33-58) and the emotional milestones or crises as described by Erikson (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:216-221).

<i>Emotional milestones (Erikson)</i>	<i>Emotional needs (Pringle) to be satisfied during this stage</i>
<p>STAGE 1: 0-1 year (and the eventual outcomes during his or her later life if this crisis has been solved):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child develops a healthy trust in the world in general as well as in himself or herself • The child depends on consistency and sameness of experiences provided by the caregiver • The child maintains hopeful attitudes, if the basic trust is strong and eventually develops self-confidence • The child believes and trusts that the environment will satisfy his or her needs for food, love and attention • The child/person believes that people in general are good • The child/person has no problem in sharing with other persons in his or her environment • The child/person is not particularly fearful to disclose him or herself to significant other role players within his or her environment • The child/person believes that people in general do not want to harm him or her • The child is inclined to rather keep the positive aspects of the personalities and behaviour patterns of significant other role players in mind than to focus on the negative aspects of people or their behaviour • The child/person trusts the significant other role players to assist him or her to become what they trust him or her to become 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for love and security • The need for praise and recognition
<p><i>Integration of Erikson and Pringle's theories:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust implies security and in an indirect way, being loved • If the child is praised and recognised by the significant other role players, he or she will develop a sense of trust in him or herself as well as in the significant other role players <p><i>"This forms the basis in the child for a sense of identity which will later combine a sense of being oneself and of becoming what other people will trust one will become. However, healthy trust is not naive or blind, but is tempered with a degree of distrust which leads to caution. Erikson calls this characteristic of the ego hope"</i> (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:216).</p>	

<i>Emotional milestones (Erikson)</i>	<i>Emotional needs (Pringle) to be this satisfied during this stage</i>
<p>STAGE 2: AUTONOMY VERSUS SHAME AND DOUBT: 1-3 Years (and the eventual outcomes during his or her later life if this crisis has been solved)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child needs outer control, firmness of the caregiver before the development of autonomy occurs • The child cannot trust him/herself and his/her abilities, if he/she doubts himself/herself, as the significant other role players overly shame the child • The child/person experiences a certain amount of order in his/her life, so that he or she can experience a feeling of being in control of his/her life, as well as experience self-approval • The child/person is able to make his or her own decisions • The child/person can experience the impact of his/her personal feelings • The child/person can complete a task on his/her own if needed, or in a group • The child/person knows when to refuse a request being made of him/her, without needing to feel guilty • The child/person can enjoy his or her individuality and refuses to be dominated by others wanting to take charge of him/her • The child/person can verbally indicate what he/she wants to or will do • The child/person is task-persistent and wants to complete an assignment • The child/person does not feel self-conscious and communicates freely when in a group • The child/person wants to act independently within reasonable limits • The child/person does not want to feel inadequate and in doubt of his/her abilities • The child/person wants to experience the feeling that the significant other role players are not expecting too much of him/her, as failures can cause him/her to doubt his/ her abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for love and security • The need for praise and recognition • The need for responsibility • The need for new experiences
<p><i>Integration of Erikson and Pringle's theories:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child will not become autonomous and venture into the unknown if he/she does not feel secure and loved. • Praise and recognition must be implemented in order to allow the child to become more and more independent, building on small successes and tackling bigger challenges to eventually become independently. • Opportunities to act more independent must be created by significant other role players so that the child will experience responsibility • If the child experiences no guilt, shame or lack of self-confidence and feels good about him/herself, is praised, recognised, loved and feels secure, the child would embark on new experiences and satisfy a need for exploration and stimulation of his/her intellectual potential. <p><i>"This stage becomes decisive for the ratio of love and hate, co-operation and wilfulness, freedom of self-expression and its suppression. From a sense of self-control without loss of self-esteem comes a lasting sense of goodwill and pride; from a sense of loss of self-control and of foreign overcontrol comes a lasting propensity for doubt and shame. A healthy solution to this crisis is the development of the ego quality of willpower – that is, the ability to make independent choices and exercise self-control"</i> (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:217).</p>	

<i>Emotional milestones (Erikson)</i>	<i>Emotional needs (Pringle) to be this satisfied during this stage</i>
<p>STAGE 3: INITIATIVE VERSUS GUILT: 3-5 Years (and the eventual outcomes during his or her later life if this crisis has been solved)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child/person uses his or her own initiative when tasks have to be completed – both motor and intellectual • The child/person feels no guilt if goals are contemplated (especially aggressive goals) • The child/person experiences conflict between his/her potential to intrude into the lives of significant other role players and his/her newly found realisation of moral values and rules (which stabilises whilst imitating the adult role model of the same sex) • The child's conscience is shaped during this period of life and he/she must find a balance between experiencing childlike enthusiasm for doing and making things and the inclination to be too strict with him/herself • The child/person likes to take up initiative when accepting a challenge • The child/person is starting to experience a feeling of being adequate – especially if he/she enjoys praise and recognition or by completing an assignment in a responsible way • The child is involved in continuous sibling rivalry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for love and security • The need for praise and recognition • The need for responsibility • The need for new experiences
<p><i>Integration of Erikson and Pringle's theories:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the child feels loved and secure, he/she will feel free to take the initiative to tackle new challenges, will be looking for new experiences and will be able to deal with responsibility in a successful way • If the child's need for praise and recognition has been met, as well as the need for love and security, he/she will not feel guilty when he/she has used his or her initiative to complete a task or to behave in a certain way <p><i>"The instinct fragments which before had enhanced the growth of his infantile body and mind now become divided into an infantile set which perpetuates the exuberance of growth potentials, and a parental set which supports and increases self-observation, self-guidance, and self-punishment. The ideal resolution of the crisis lies in finding a balance between the childlike enthusiasm for doing and making things and the tendency to be too strict in self-judgement. Erikson calls this trait purpose"</i> (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:218).</p>	

<i>Emotional milestones (Erikson)</i>	<i>Emotional needs (Pringle) to be this satisfied during this stage</i>
<p>STAGE 4: INDUSTRY VERSUS INFERIORITY: 6-11 years (and the eventual outcomes during his or her later life if this crisis has been solved)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child/person is busy creating, building and accomplishing tasks • The child/person can experience a feeling of inferiority and inadequacy if he/she despairs of tools, skills and status among peers • The child/person has to make decisions regarding his/her relationship • The child has to learn about the skills and habits of his/her culture and has to learn to collaborate with others • The child enjoys to produce things which are accepted and approved by the significant other role players which in turn reinforces his/ her feelings of adequacy and industry • The child/person is learning to deal with criticism and how to implement it to improve his/her outcomes • The child/person is enjoys learning about new things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for love and security • The need for praise and recognition • The need for responsibility • The need for new experiences
<p><i>Integration of Erikson and Pringle's theories:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the child/person feels loved and secure, experiences praise and recognition, he/she will want to excel and work harder to achieve and to feel good about him/herself • If the child/person feels competent he/she will want to take on more challenging and bigger responsibilities • If the child feels competent, he/she will want to experience new challenges and experiences which will provide him/her with more opportunities to excel and to become more competent <p><i>"A healthy balance is reached through the ego quality of competence , in other words, the development of a sense of proficiency or competence, which is one of the conditions for participating successfully in the cultural processes of productivity and, later, maintaining a family" (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:218).</i></p>	

<i>Emotional milestones (Erikson)</i>	<i>Emotional needs (Pringle) to be satisfied during this stage</i>
<p>STAGE 5: IDENTITY VERSUS ROLE DIFFUSION : 11 years up to the end of adolescence (and the eventual outcomes during his or her later life if this crisis has been solved):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child/person struggles to develop the ego-identity (sense of inner sameness and continuity) • The child is preoccupied with his/her appearance, hero worships adult role models and the ideologies of significant other role players • The child's group identity (with peers) develops • The child/person can experience role confusion, doubts about sexual and vocational identity • The child/person has to find answers to the questions of <i>who am I in the eyes of others</i> and <i>how does my self-image correlate with the significant other role players' images of myself</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for love and security • The need for praise and recognition • The need for responsibility • The need for new experiences
<p>Integration of Erikson and Pringle's theories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the learner experiences love and security, praise and recognition, he/she will feel good about him/herself; He/she will also know via his/her involvement with different relationships, what the answer to the questions on <i>who am I</i> and <i>does my self-image correlate with the significant other role players' images of myself</i> • The response of the significant other role players who granted the child opportunities to act responsibly, will shape his/her self-image which will in turn impact on his/her identity. • New experiences granted to the child by the significant other role players will offer the child an opportunity to stimulate his/her intelligence, which will in turn impact on the self-image and the identity <p><i>"The ego gain which results from a satisfactory resolution of the identity crisis Erikson calls reliability or fidelity. This ego strength is characterised by certainty about one's own identity, an accepting awareness of other possible identity choices which the individual could have made, and a capacity for loyalty towards one's social role or roles"</i> (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:219).</p>	

In each of the different life stages, the *cognitive* development, the *emotional* development, the *personality* development, the *moral* development and the *social* development will be discussed. These milestones have an interactive impact on one another and a direct bearing on the behaviour of the learner. For example, if the learner's thinking processes are functioning on a lower cognitive level which could be expected from a younger child, the teacher must be able to identify the learner's cognitive level and keep this aspect of his or her behaviour in mind when an assistance programme is worked out. In order to understand social relationship problems, the teacher must be able to identify what social skills a learner should have acquired at a certain age which can be related to the learner's present day relationship problems. In drawing up an assistance programme, the teacher can thus include opportunities, for example in the classroom, for the learner exhibiting behaviour problems to actualise these skills under the supervision of the teacher.

The specific milestones regarding the development on these different levels are relevant in gaining an understanding of behaviour problems. With regard hereto it is interesting to note that Ausubel and Sullivan (1970:418) specifically argue that "emotional and cognitive development are interrelated in many intricate ways. In terms of priority of development, it is difficult to dispute the fact that young children exhibit intense and well-differentiated feelings long before a capacity for logical thought is prominent. Emotions similarly precede reasoning in the phyletic scale." The self-concept and the establishment of a personal identity, as facets of the developing personality are being shaped within the child's relationships with significant other role players (social development) and have a direct bearing on the learner's behaviour (Louw *et al.* 1995:370, 276). Moral development as part of the social development of a child is determined by factors like the emotions and cognitive development of a child (Louw *et al.* 1995:342,345).

In the following subsection the early childhood years will be discussed. This essentially correlates with the first three stages of human development identified by Erikson (Meyer *et al.* 1997:227-228).

2.3.2 The early childhood years (0-6 years)

According to Botha *et al.* (1995:231), Santrock (1995: 204-266) and, Prinsloo , Vorster and Sibaya (1996:79-96) children during the early childhood years, must be able to achieve the following developmental tasks:

- *motor control* (the child must master fine and gross motor control in order to have control over his or her body, for example running, climbing, cycling);
- *the development and improvement of skills* (the child learns to dress, to feed himself/herself, learns to deal with different objects and understands how they must be handled);
- *the development of the cognitive skills* (children need to learn how to form concepts from social and physical realities, as well as how to do quantitative assessments. The child is exploring his or her surroundings, the memory skills are practised and the child finds that formation in context is remembered more easily. The child is escaping the world of reality by means of fantasy. The thinking is egocentric, irreversible, transductive, self-centred, egocentric and they do not understand conversation);
- *the development of language* (the child's language and communication skills expand significantly and he or she learns how to communicate by using words and especially

- how to express his or her needs. The child's vocabulary improves rapidly as his or her pattern of thinking and representational abilities develop);
- *socialisation* (the child learns how to behave, in accordance with the expectations of members within the family system, but also to behave according to the expectations of significant other role players outside of the family system);
 - *inclusion of the child in the community* (the child learns to know the values and norms of the community, in order to become part of the community and "fit in" within a larger system that extends beyond that of the family);
 - *development of a self-concept* (the self-concept of the child in the early childhood phase, changes continually, as the child's cognitive development progresses and they become more experienced in life. The child's positive or negative view of him or herself is mainly determined by the parents. When children are accepted by parents, family, teachers and playmates, children come to accept themselves, which has an impact on their self-esteem. This feeling of self-esteem can have either a positive or a negative influence on the child's interpersonal life and if it assumes a negative connotation will prevent them from actualising their potential);
 - *the development of a sex-role identity* (various changes and developments that take place during this phase which enables the child to eventually realise that his or her sex will not change and he or she therefore needs to adapt accordingly);
 - *the development of emotions* (the child learns to interpret the reactions and emotions of the significant other role players in his or her environment. The child learns to understand and control emotions, such as love, joy, fear, anger, jealousy, aggression, sorrow and fear of things like dogs, noise, pain, sudden sounds and strange objects);
 - *self-control* (as the child grows up and gets older, they are more capable of controlling themselves than when they were younger) and
 - *the acquiring of moral values* (the child gets to know more about norms, rules and cultural meanings, and eventually they also get to know about what is deemed "right" and "wrong").

The ability of the child to master developmental tasks, which he or she will have to accomplish during later life stages, is determined by the way that he or she has dealt with developmental tasks during the early childhood years.

The *language ability* of these children now progresses from short, simple sentences to more complex sentences. Between the age of two and three they begin to talk out loud to themselves and accompany their actions with words. Piaget calls this the phase of *egocentric speech*.

Vygotski (Botha *et al.* 1995:268; Santrock 1995:221) in turn, believes this is actually the beginning of the development of thinking in words – in other words, the language in which we think. This language of thinking has an important influence on one's thoughts and actions, since it helps one to direct, control and check one's actions. Learners in primary school, who experience learning problems are often returned to this phase and taught to verbalise each step of a task out loud. Next, they are taught to say it softly in their thoughts. This helps them to think carefully about what they are doing.

In terms of the *cognitive development*, Piaget (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:77; Santrock 1995:155) classifies children in this phase, as being in the *sensori-motor phase (0-2 years)*. This implies that these children acquire knowledge of themselves and the world around them through their senses and their actions. Piaget (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:77; Santrock 1995:155) further divides this phase into six sub-phases. The main issue is that these children still "think with the body". They find pleasure in activities which they can experience through their senses or in a physical way, for instance swinging, or playing in water.

According to Piaget (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:77; Santrock 1992:226), children between two and seven years of age are in *the pre-operational phase of cognitive development*. (The most important milestone in this phase, is the development of a set of internal symbols in which they can think. Once they have done this, they can also think of something which is not necessarily in their presence. Their thinking is nevertheless still very limited and characterised as follows (Prinsloo 1996:87):

- **Egocentrism.** This means that the self still plays a dominant role. Children cannot put themselves into another's shoes. They cannot imagine that someone else might see things quite differently, than they may do. For instance, they believe that if they close their eyes and cannot see anyone, neither can anyone see them. This egocentrism is also expressed when young children play together. They all pursue their own trains of thought. In actual fact, they all conducting their own individual dialogues and are not really talking to each other.
- **Centring.** Children tend to concentrate on a single obvious aspect of a situation and discount all its other aspects. In this way they imagine that the tallest glass has the most cool drink, irrespective of whether it is narrower than a shorter, but wider glass. They therefore cannot see an object in its totality. Children judge an object by its external appearance, without thinking about it logically.

- **Irreversibility.** The thinking of children in this phase is irreversible. This means that they cannot turn something around in their thoughts to look at it from a different perspective. This applies to sums where adding and subtracting actually require two reverse actions and also to other everyday activities.
- **Bound to the concrete.** Although children in this phase can think in symbols and have internalised their thinking, it remains concrete in nature. The symbols they use are only of concrete things and not of abstract concepts, hence the term "pre-operational".
- **Transductive reasoning.** Children in this phase still reason transductively and not inductively. Transductive reasoning is still not logical. Simple deductions are made without taking any rules or preconditions into account. The following serves as an example of transductive reasoning: Superman wears special clothes. "If I wear these clothes then I'll be Superman."
- **Animism.** Young children have an unrealistic and superficial understanding of reality. They believe that lifeless things can feel and that animals can think like people. This is known as animism.
- **Realism.** According to Erikson (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:60; Santrock 1992:50), children between the ages of one and three experience a crisis of **independence (autonomy) versus doubt and shame**. The trust that the toddler has in his or her caregiver allows the toddler to realise that his or her behaviour is his or her own. Their strong need to be independent is obvious from the fact that they want to do everything for themselves. This is also related to the so-called stubbornness of children in this phase. They learn that they can impose their wills on others and that they are able to make their own decisions. When children are not allowed to experiment with new things, they will begin to doubt their own abilities. Other unfavourable circumstances, such as those which go together with violence, abuse, insecurity and anxiety, may impede their development. This gives rise to insecurity and doubt rather than confidence and independence. Children/learners who are unsure and anxious do not have the courage and willpower to tackle the world and often withdraw or develop defence mechanisms, such as aggression or regression. In other words, they act more childishly than one would expect from children of that age.

As regards their *moral development*, Kohlberg and Piaget (Santrock 1995:334) categorise learners younger than five years, as being in the *pre-moral or pre-conventional* phase, as they do not yet understand what is right and what is wrong and thus are not able to judge when they have done something wrong. When they play games, they do not bother about winning or losing or about conforming to the behaviour of friends. This is the most basic level of moral development and the child only obeys rules in order to avoid punishment. They do not think about or question

conventions (customs). Therefore, it is called the pre-conventional phase. Their obedience is determined by external factors such as reward and punishment, and thus they do not yet have any internal conviction (internalisation) of what is right or wrong. Children are in this phase "punishment and obedience orientated" and thus need a role model to identify with (Prinsloo 1996:90).

Kohlberg (Louw *et al.* 1995:344; Santrock 1992:375) divides this phase into a further two stages. Initially, children have a "crime and punishment" orientation when they are obedient to avoid being punished. Later, they enter a phase of *individualism* and *purpose*. They are clever enough to know that there are benefits in being obedient. Hence their own interests begin to play a role now. The reward may even be that they are considered better behaved than a child who does not listen. These children judge the behaviour of others in simple categories: something is pretty or ugly; a child is good or bad. Because their thinking is still not reversible, they cannot evaluate their own behaviour critically and therefore they like to believe that they are always in the right.

Sullivan (Meyer *et al.* 1997:193-195) describes seven stages regarding the shaping of the *personality*, namely the infancy stage (birth – when the first signs of articulated speech can be heard), the childhood stage (stage when articulated speech can be heard – the need for playmates of the same age occurs), the youthful stage (the need for playmates of the same age – the need for an intimate friend of the same sex), early adolescence (physiological changes of puberty – the desire for an intimate relationship with someone of the opposite sex) and late adolescence (the establishment of a long lasting love relationship). In this early childhood phase, the child should be able to articulate speech, communication should have been characterised by autistic language, a transition from prototaxic to parataxic experiencing should have taken place which enables infants to distinguish between their bodies and the environment. The mother/child relationship is important during this phase, especially the degree of empathy and caring that the mother exhibits towards the infant. Tension and anxiety will, according to Sullivan (Meyer *et al.* 1997:193), stimulate the development of the dynamism of apathy as well as sleep withdrawal which links up with the shaping of the self-system. During the childhood stage, the child makes use of the articulated speech until he finds a playmate of the same age. The personifications of the *good me* and the *bad me* is integrated into the self-system by means of the fact that the child now uses syntactic experiencing. Using parents and their value systems as role models, children now categorise their own behaviour as "good" or "bad". The acquirement of cultural customs makes them aware of restrictions within their environment, for example toilet customs and personal hygiene. They now get to know about friends and enemies in life.

During the early childhood phase, children become conscious of their own gender and come to realise that this is a reality of life that cannot be changed. They also become aware of sexual differences and the expected behaviour to suit the specific sex of the child. The psycho-socially determined factors regarding the sex-role identity of the child, are established already during the first year of life. The following factors impact on the sex-role identity of the child during the early childhood phase (Botha *et al.* 1995:280-283):

- Biological factors – the biological development of the sex organs and characteristics, the functioning of the hormones.
- Cognitive factors – the way that the child perceives sex characteristics and understands sex roles and expected behaviour of boys and girls.
- Emotional and reinforcing factors – the internalising and acceptance of the sex role that society has granted him or her according to his or her sex.
- Environmental and cultural factors – sex-role behaviour that is learnt originates from stimuli from within the immediate and wider cultural environment.

Two factors that have a definite impact on the sex-role identity shaping of the preschooler are the *absence of the father and the mother* as well as the *sex roles of the parents*. If the parent is present in the life-world of the child, the child can identify with the parent of the same sex. If the parent is, however, not always present and available, the child can experience sex-identity confusion. The sex-role expectations that parents have for the different sexes will shape the child's sex role expectations, for example girls only play with certain toys and girls must always wear pink. If the parent is overprotective, boys can be prevented from getting engaged in adventurous games because they will get hurt and eventually this impacts on their sex-role identity.

The preschool child gets to know himself or herself through the eyes of others, for example whether he or she is tall, big, ugly or attractive – thus the self-concept gets shaped. The child develops an idea of whom he or she would like to be (the ideal self) and the real self as he or she evaluates himself or herself according to the values of his or her parents or according to his or her own values and ideals. The self-concept includes the self-image, self-esteem and self-acceptance (Botha *et al.* 1995:282). According to Botha *et al.* (1995:283), the early childhood years offer an exceptional opportunity for the self-concept of the young child to develop as the child becomes familiar with facts like his or her age, his or her sex, being able to evaluate himself or herself and his or her traits, being able to experience feelings like shame and pride

and being able to develop “a sense of ownership” regarding his/her own personal property and thus being able to expand himself or herself. (See Chapter 4 in this regard.)

The needs of children in their early childhood years, *are of a particular physical and emotional nature* and consist mainly of the need to be fed, feel secure and be cared for lovingly. Exhibiting feelings of love towards the child, comforting the child, or praising the child, needs to be done in such a manner that these children, in their early childhood years, can physically experience it through their senses. Even small babies are capable of experiencing moods or emotions. Their bodies tell us whether they are happy or unhappy. Soon there is a further differentiation of feelings. The toddler shows pleasure, affection, anger, fears and even jealousy. These feelings are mainly shown in a sensori-motor manner. They need the kind of attention that they can see, hear and feel, such feelings as perceived by touching, cuddling, and parents talking or singing to them (see Pringle, Chapter 4 *emotional needs*). A two-year-old child can express the emotions that he or she is experiencing spontaneously, for example happiness, excitement and love. Anxiety and fear are, however, experienced when the child is angry and jealous, as he or she has learnt in Western cultures that he or she must suppress these negative emotions. Fear is dealt with by denying the situation or by withdrawing from it. Van der Zanden (Botha *et al.* 1995:269) maintains that by the age of six many children are less spontaneous in expressing their emotions, as they have been socialised to conform to social norms and to withhold their emotions.

As previously alluded to, Erikson (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:58; Meyer *et al.* 1997:216; Santrock 1995:37) describes eight stages of *emotional development*. Progressing from one stage to the next, is governed by the “epigenetic principle”, which maintains that each developmental stage poses a crisis at specific ages, according to a fixed sequence. These crises must be dealt with during each stage in terms of the child’s total development, in order to allow the child to progress to the next stage and crisis. If a crisis is not properly dealt with during a specific life stage, the child can either expect to experience complications when dealing with the next crisis or deal with crises at a later stage, which provides for a spontaneous recovery of experienced developmental problems.

The first three stages of Erikson’s emotional development theory takes place during the early childhood years, that is, 0-6 years, namely from birth to one year: ***basic trust versus mistrust (hope)***. This crisis must be dealt with during the first year of life. The quality of the mother/child relationship determines the extent to which the child trusts significant other role players within his or her environment. If children have enjoyed a healthy mother/child relationship, they will have acquired a healthy trust in the world and in themselves, in the sense that they trust that the

environment will provide them with food, love and attention, and satisfy their needs within their specific cultural environment. Trust implies that the child will experience a feeling of physical comfort and less fear or apprehension about the future, than a child who did not experience attachment. Trust provides the infant with a guarantee that the world will be a good and enjoyable place to live in. The degree of distrust that is embedded within trust, causes the child to be cautious about trusting everything and everybody. The synthesis of trust versus mistrust is called *hope*.

The next crisis that the child has to deal with during the second year is called the *autonomy versus shame and doubt (will-power)*. The child develops physically and thus becomes more independent. According to Erikson (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:58-60; Meyer *et al.* 1997:217; Santrock 1995:37) parents should encourage their children to be independent, whilst being protected by the parents from unnecessary failure and feelings of inadequacy or insecurity in relation to their abilities. Children must enjoy the opportunity to act independently, without too much being expecting of them, as this may cause shame and doubt about their abilities to occur. *Willpower* is the synthesis of autonomy, shame and doubt. Willpower enables the child to make independent choices and to be able to exercise effective self-control. Erikson (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:60; Meyer *et al.* 1997:217; Santrock 1995:37) highlights the importance of this stage by accentuating the fact that this stage is decisive for the ratio of being loved or hated, to cooperate or to experience wilfulness, freedom and self-expression, as well as the suppression of expression. A lasting propensity for doubt and shame originates from a sense of self-control, eliminating the possibility of a loss of self-esteem and a lasting sense of general goodwill and self-pride. If the child does lose self-control, a lasting propensity for doubt and shame are a possibility.

The third early childhood crisis (3-6 years) that Erikson (Meyer & Van Ede 1995:60; Meyer *et al.* 1997:217; Santrock 1995:37) introduces is the *initiative versus guilt (purpose) crisis*. The child has increasingly become independent in terms of his or her movements and the eroticisation of his or her genitals. Children act in their own special way triggered by their own initiative and feel guilty about their behaviour. The conflict that children experience during this phase is situated within the conflict between their abilities to force themselves abruptly on others by means of their movements, speech and making a noise and via their sexual fantasies and their newly-established set of moral rules, which are reinforced by the parent of the same sex. Children are inclined to act like rudimentary parents, as they are eager to adopt and apply rules and to look after younger children. The development of the conscience is of utmost importance during this stage. According to Erikson (Meyer *et al.* 1997:218), the personality splits into two aspects

namely: "The instinct fragments which before had enhanced the growth of his infantile body and mind now become divided into an infantile set which perpetuates the exuberance of growth potentials, and a parental set which supports and increases self-observation, self-guidance, and self-punishment." The conscience can however develop too strictly or in a moralistic way. The *purpose* synthesis of initiative and guilt is a result of the balance between the typical childlike enthusiasm and initiative and the more mature, adult-like tendency to be judging himself or herself too much which then ends in feelings of guilt. Children during the early childhood phase becomes part of a big, wide world out there, one where bigger challenges come their way. They need to be active and purposeful in order to cope with new demands or challenges being made whilst enjoying the guidance of the parent and teacher.

Ainsworth (Louw & Louw 1995:217; Santrock 1995:181) maintains that *secure attachment* sets the stage for normal psychological development later in life, especially if the mother tends to be sensitive, accepting and expresses affection towards the child. Research findings recorded by Sroufe (Louw & Louw 1995:218; Santrock 1995:182) during 1985-1993, indicated that infants who have experienced secure attachment to their mothers, were more socially competent and performed better at school. Not all developmentalists, however, believe that this is the only path to competence throughout life and that too much emphasis is being placed on secure attachment. They prefer to highlight factors like genetic and temperament characteristics and maintain that these factors influence a child's social competence more than secure attachment would. They also argue that children easily adapt to new situations and they develop attachments easily to people other than only the mother, for example a grandmother or the father or a group attachment that develops like in Israeli kibbutzim (Santrock 1995:182; Louw & Louw 1995:216). According to Louw and Louw (1995:218), the long-term effects of attachment are difficult to determine (see Chapter 4 regarding *attachment*).

The subsequent adjustment and functioning of the preschool child can be negatively influenced by the fact that the child is separated from his or her parents and cannot deal with it. Factors that have a definite impact on the child's way of dealing with *separation anxiety* are: the reason for the separation from the parents, the type of separation, the kind of substitute care that has been organised for the child and the quality of the parent/child relationship that existed before the separation. Bowlby (Botha *et al.* 1995:272) describes children's reactions to separation as follows:

For three days they are protesting against the separation and cry a lot and are searching for their parents. Hereafter, they experience an increasing despair about

the possibility whether or not the parents will ever return – this phase is called the despair phase which precedes the detachment phase. During the despair phase, the child becomes inactive, he cries less, is not interested in whatever is happening in his environment, he becomes socially withdrawn and although substitute caregivers think that he has actually adjusted to his new circumstances, he has actually given up hope as he is convinced that his parents have left him. During the detachment phase, the child becomes more interested in his environment again. He will however not be interested in his parent(s) if they would appear again and will in fact ignore them. After the parent has been back for a few days/hours, the child experiences ambivalence as he wants to be with the parent wherever the parent goes, but on the other hand, he experiences feelings of hostility and rejection towards the parent.

Typical factors that could trigger separation anxiety to occur, as manifested in problem behaviour, are:

- **divorce**, where the one parent leaves the caregiving situation (the child becomes worried that the mother has got to start working and he or she has nobody to look after him or her, as well as that the other parent might also desert him or her),
- **the death of a parent** (the children initially play games focussed on the death of the parent, but when the emotions become overwhelming, he or she starts to deny the death of the parent – especially children between the ages of six months and five years are affected mostly),
- **temporary absence** (e.g. when the father/mother is away from home because of work commitments), and
- **hospitalisation** (the child has got no understanding of time and distance and thus does not know how long he or she will be in hospital and how far he or she will be away from the parents or the family home as well as the fact that he or she is not used to the strange smells of the hospital, sounds, medical instruments etcetera. The child eventually feels lonely, confused and lost.

Fear during the early childhood phase, is dealt with by each child in his or her own unique way. Jersild and Holmes (Botha *et al.* 1995:271) for instance found that children between the ages of two and five did not fear dogs, noise, pain, sudden movements and unfamiliar objects as much as younger children would. Children during this age group however, feared the dark, imaginative characters and threatening occurrences like fire or deep water. Bauer (Botha *et al.*

1995:271) similarly found that fear of physical injury increases in comparison with fear of fantasies, which decreases. Parents and teachers of preschool children should understand and assist with the fears of children during this life stage by not avoiding these fears, but by regarding them as a normal part of growing up and assist the child to deal with and to overcome them.

To be able to engage in play activities is part of every child's life and does not demand obligations or much discipline from the child. Play impacts on the social, emotional, physical, cognitive and personality development of the child (Botha *et al.* 1995:299). Play can thus serve as an opportunity that could be used as a therapeutic intervention to free the child from emotional problems which in turn causes behaviour problems to occur (see Chapter 4 in this regard).

The **main conclusions** reflected in this subsection on *social development, cognitive development and emotional development* can be summarised as follows:

- *Cognitive development:* According to Piaget (Santrock 1995:155), children from birth to two years are in the sensori-motor phase which implies that they acquire knowledge of themselves and the life-world via their senses and actions. They "think with their bodies". Between two and seven years of age children are in the pre-operational phase of cognitive development. They now develop a set of internal symbols in which they can think. Their thinking is characterised by egocentrism, centring, irreversibility, being bound to the concrete, transductive reasoning, animism and realism.
- *Moral development:* According to Kohlberg (Santrock 1995:334), they are in the pre-moral or pre-conventional phase as they do not yet have an idea of "right" or "wrong" and are thus not able to judge when they have done something wrong. The child only obeys rules in order to avoid punishment.
- *Personality development:* According to Sullivan (Meyer *et al.* 1997:193-195), children in the early childhood phase have progressed from the infancy stage when the first signs of articulated speech could be heard to the childhood stage where the child starts to be on the look out for playmates of the same age. The mother/child relationship is important during this phase, especially the degree of empathy and care that the mother exhibits towards the infant. The personifications of the *good me* and the *bad me* is integrated into the self-system and the child categorises his or her own behaviour as *good* or *bad*. The self-concept is gradually shaped by the experiences of himself or herself within his or her environment.

The child becomes conscious of his or her own gender and that it is a fixed matter that cannot be changed. He or she also gets to know about the specific behaviour that suits his sex as he or her role models his behaviour on the behaviour of the parent of the same sex and thus his sex-role identity is established.

- *Emotional development:* The needs of children in this life phase are of a particular physical and emotional nature and consist of the need to be fed, to feel secure and to be cared for lovingly. Exhibiting feelings of love towards the child, comforting the child, or praising the child, needs to be done in such a manner that these children, in their early childhood years, can physically experience it through their senses. *Fear, separation, and anxiety* are common feelings experienced by children during this life-phase.

According to Erikson (Meyer *et al.* 1997:216), the child in the early childhood phase between birth and six years is experiencing a crisis of *basic trust versus mistrust* with the synthesis of hope (birth to one year); The next emotional crisis that the child is experiencing is *autonomy versus shame and doubt* (1-2 years) with the synthesis of willpower. The third crisis that children during the early childhood phase experience is the *initiative versus guilt* (3-6 years) with the synthesis of purpose. Secure attachment sets the stage for the normal psychological or emotional development later in life, especially if the mother tends to be sensitive, accepting and expresses affection towards the child. Research findings indicate that infants who have experienced secure attachment to their mothers were more socially competent and performed better at school. (See Chapter 5 in this regard.)

- *Social development:* the child has been socialised in the sense that the child now knows what members of the family system, as well as significant other persons outside the family system, expect of him or her in terms of behaviour.

2.3.3 The primary school years (6-12 years)

According to Louw *et al.* (1995:311), Santrock (1995: 274-301) and Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:99-101), learners need to master the following developmental tasks during the primary school years:

- developing motor skills necessary for games;
- accepting a sex-role identity;
- stimulating concrete operational thinking;

- acquiring more knowledge and the development of academic skills (reading, writing, numeracy);
- exploring his or her surroundings and escaping reality by fantasising. Their thinking is egocentric, irreversible, self-centred and transductive. The child is in the sensori-motor phase, as described by Piaget. The child is thinking with the body;
- developing social skills and involvement with peers;
- developing greater self-knowledge;
- acquiring pre-conventional morality (conscience, sound morals and a system of values);
- developing positive attitudes towards diverse social and cultural groups, in terms of different religious, cultural and race groups, different gender groups, the own school group and groups from other schools;
- stabilising personal independence (physical independence, psychological independence and intellectual independence, for example the acceptance of responsibility for decisions made);
- acquiring wholesome attitudes towards the self (acceptance of physical and personal strengths and abilities, as well as to care for his or her physical appearance); and
- acquiring concepts needed for everyday living on a concrete, semi-concrete and abstract level, in order to enhance the child's later intellectual development.

In this phase the maturation process of the brain is almost complete. The brain now has many more neural connections which enable the child to reason on a more complex level and to perform more complex skills.

On the *cognitive level*, according to Piaget (Louw *et al* 1995:316-317; Prinsloo 1996:105; Ausubel & Sullivan 1970:576-580), these learners are in the *concrete operational phase* (7-11 years). In the beginning of this phase the thinking processes are still concrete and not on an abstract level. The ability to form concepts improves at a relatively substantial pace. They gradually become less egocentric, so that by the end of this phase they can see another's point of view. They begin to decentre and can think of more than one thing at a time (e.g. form, colour and function). Their understanding becomes truer to reality and they become less animistic. However, they still have a powerful imagination and derive a lot of pleasure from fantasy related stories. Their ability to reason improves and their thinking become more inductive. They enjoy games which have logical rules. They are not always bound by concrete realities, however, the act of thinking still has a concrete point of departure – hence the term *concrete-operational* (Louw *et al.* 1995:316). They are not yet able to think about ideas or to reason with somebody by making use of arguments. However, during the latter part of this life-

phase, towards 12 years, they are more able to think on an abstract level and not so much on a concrete level. Logic becomes more important especially in problem solving. Children are now able to solve a variety of problems as they have gained a concept of numbers, are able to classify, can manage serialisation, can understand conservation and understand transition.

Regarding the meaningfulness of knowledge in the cognitive development of the child, Louw *et al.* (1995:326) maintains that the teacher can make use of the knowledge in the following ways:

- The teacher realises that their thought and language ability differs from the language and thought ability of an adult. Attention must thus be paid to this, when the teacher teaches learning content.
- Learners must be active when learning as the child's actions determine the knowledge that he or she will acquire.
- Learners learn mostly by being provided with new experiences. Teaching large groups are thus not very successful. Educational programmes during this phase should be individualised.
- Learners should be given many opportunities to debate and argue about their own viewpoints. Thus they will become conscious of their own shortcomings and in which way their ideas differ from those around them.

When the learner starts a school career, life changes considerably as, although the home is still important, the school has now become a very important system that impacts on life in different ways. Louw *et al.* (1995:337) contend that the personality of the child has become more important, as it now provides the child with either a secure or insecure base, from where he or she approaches and gets involved with significant other role players in his or her life-world/environment. Previous social experience is important as the child will benefit from it when he/she is settling down in the new school environment.

According to Louw *et al.* (1995:338), teachers "not only play a central role in the learning experience of every schoolchild, but also exert a powerful influence on virtually every aspect of the child's development" (see Chapter 5 in this regard).

During the beginning of this phase, children/learners have to go to school, and their emotional resilience is tested to the limit. They must be able to leave their loved ones, control their feelings to a greater extent and be able to work with others. Because they begin to outgrow the cognitive limits of the previous phase, they gradually begin to look more critically at themselves

and realise that they may not always be the most beautiful or the best, which can make them feel insecure and inferior.

The primary school years are the period in a learner's life when he or she has become *emotionally* more mature. The learner has changed gradually from a child who has been helpless, to a more independent learner – somebody who is self-sufficient, more flexible, emotionally stable, and able to differentiate on an emotional level. The expression of emotions, during this period of a learner's emotional development, is more specific, more diverse, as well as more sophisticated in nature. Because of the greater emotional differentiation, the learner is able to express a wider variety of emotions. As the learner's sense of rationality improves and the learner acquires an ever-widening frame of reference, via new learning experiences, the learner can understand and control his or her emotions far better and can restrain from impulsive expression of feelings (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:113). Learners come to realise that a person can experience different emotions simultaneously. Sex-role stereotyping influences learners during this life phase, in terms of the nature and quality of emotional expression, for example boys do not cry (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:114; Ausubel & Sullivan 1970:404).

Learners in this phase no longer think egocentrically as they are able to now place themselves in other people's shoes and see things from their perspective (Louw *et al.* 1995:317; Meyer *et al.* 1997:194). Their concerns for classmates and friends are genuine. In the early childhood phase, the child was focussed predominantly on him or herself. They live in their own world and everything that they do or say is aimed at themselves. They are not sensitive towards another person's viewpoints or feelings that could shape that person's behaviour (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:87). From six to eight years, the learner begins to realise that other people's needs, wishes, and feelings are important as well. They now begin to realise that there could be a difference between what a person says and does, and his or her thoughts. The learner's perception of other significant role-players' needs and feelings begins to assume relevance and they actually would like to get involved with these significant other role players in their environment. According to Louw *et al.* (1995:360), a definite link between the moral development and the development of sensitivity towards others exists. The older the learner becomes, the more altruistic the learner gets. The learner is now more capable of showing sympathy and empathy towards significant other role players in his or her life-world. He/she actually enjoys pleasing his or her teachers and parents. Adults, especially the teacher, become the hero of many young learners.

The learner who is eight years old, begins to realise that his or her behaviour can have an impact on the behaviour of the significant other role players in his or her world. Because of the fact that

the learner, in this phase, considers the feelings of others, ridicule, criticism and failure stimulates a negative response from the learner. Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:114) advises teachers to deliberately avoid situations where either they themselves or a learner will hurt another learner's feelings. The marring of feelings should rather be substituted with sympathetic support, praise and an opportunity to experience success.

Learners are more capable to control and hide their own feelings. They experience the following feelings during the primary school years (Louw *et al.* 1995:346-347; Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:113,114):

- **Fear.** Learners in primary school are less fearful about physical well-being, for example injury or diseases. They are also less afraid of dogs, storms and noises, as was the case when they were younger. They, however, still fear supernatural phenomena, such as ghosts or monsters. New fears begin to emerge in relation to his or her academic performance, teachers and friends. Concrete fears in effect appear to be fewer, but abstract fears can still cause learners to experience pain and distress. A significant number of learners begin to fear that their parents may die, with a consequential increase in a need for security.

Learners in the primary school phase are inclined to fear their fathers more than any other adult – disciplinary action and possible sexual abuse could be the causative factor. Today's primary school learners tend to fear phenomena that characterise the time in which they live, for example fear of violence, war, hunger, unemployment, Aids, crime, and rape. Quite often learners' fears are not completely irrational in nature. Teachers, parents and significant other role players need to keep this fact in mind. Quite often the existence of a fear can be traced back to an unpleasant experience or event in the learner's past, for example a learner's fears of a male teacher can be related back to being sexually molested by the stepfather. Something they had read in a book or a movie/video that they had watched or a even a television programme could have a similar consequence. Learners react in an individual, unique way to fear. When learners are shouted at, either at home or at school, or humiliated in front of other learners or siblings at home, it can trigger feelings of fear, apprehension and mistrust.

- **Love.** Although children are capable of showing love from the day they are born, they do not understand the abstract meaning of love until they are cognitively fairly mature. Children who have experienced love are much more capable of showing love or affection

themselves. The way that the learner has experienced the expression of love during the formative childhood years, will determine how he or she will, during the primary school years, in turn express love, for example by kissing or hugging. These learners, also come to realise that love can be expressed in different ways, for example through community service. In effect the learners begin to act less egocentrically and begin to show love in a more mature manner.

Sex roles and expectations from a boy or a girl, may influence the way in which a learner shows or expresses love, for example boys are expected not to be too gentle, otherwise they may be labelled as being "sissies". In contrast girls are not expected to act aggressively. Stereotyping of roles, in terms of preconceived behaviour patterns, as they relate to a certain sex, can force children to suppress important emotional feelings.

- **Aggression.** During the primary school years, learners show aggression openly, in contrast to the early childhood years, when they showed aggression in order to grab a toy from another child. Primary school age learners want to hurt other learners. If a learner is inclined to act aggressively, during the primary school years, the learner will also act aggressively during adolescence. Boys are deemed to be more aggressive than girls during this stage. A variety of factors varying from biological to cultural variables can act as causative factors.

With the commencement of his or her school career the life world of the learner is changed quite dramatically. While the home still tends to remain a primary influence, the school now also has an important influence on the learner's development. Louw *et al.* (1995:337) and Santrock (1995:318) maintain that *the personality* of the learner is a determining factor, in the sense that it determines the way that the learner experiences school. Meyer *et al.* (1997:12) assume a broader perspective in defining *personality* as "the constantly changing but nevertheless relatively stable organisation of all physical, psychological and spiritual characteristics of the individual which determine his or her behaviour in interaction with the context in which the individual finds himself or herself". The learner's context is now extended in scope to include the school environment and the foregoing definition needs to be seen within the light of this reality.

According to Sullivan (Meyer *et al.* 1997:194), a learner in this life phase, is in terms of his or her stages of personality development in the *youthful stage* and towards the end of the phase in the *pre-adolescence stage*. The youthful stage is characterised by a need for playmates of the

same age and eventually a need for an intimate friend of the same sex. Learners also learn to master the more complex skills of interpersonal behaviour, for example competition, co-operation and compromise. During the pre-adolescence stage which usually lasts up to the onset of puberty, learners experience a need for a best friend of the same sex. A genuine interest in another person is shown in comparison with the previous egocentric focus on their own interests and needs.

In the discussion on *personality* during the early childhood phase, it became clear that sex role identification and self-image form part of the personality. The primary school learner has in reality already established his or her own self-image to a certain extent. The learner will for instance know his or her name, age, gender, placing in relation to a brother or sister, what the learner's abilities entail, and how he or she feels about their bodies and maturing personality. The relationships that learners are involved in with peers provide opportunities for the learner to get to know themselves, a case in point being acceptance by the peer group or not and the reason therefore. In the classroom they behave in such a way that they obtain confirmation of how they perceive themselves, or they change their perceptions of themselves accordingly.

Felker (Prinsloo 1996:124) explains the role of the self-image, as being that of an *internal filter* that makes incoming perceptions more meaningful and links up with the learner's own ideas of him or herself. Teachers therefore have an important role to play, in the sense that they can act as filters that can replace the learner's negative perceptions of him or herself with more positive images. Teachers should also attempt to assist learners, who are unable to deal with their self images, to be able to more effectively cope with their feelings, for example learners can be guided not to internalise all the mistakes they make and not regard themselves as being a failure. Learners need to learn how to accept themselves as they are, together with the mistakes they have made or are still making, as well as to recognise and appreciate their positive points. Teachers who are dedicated can assist learners on an individual basis to evaluate themselves realistically. They can make use of group work in the classroom to enhance a specific learner's perception of him or herself, for example by praising the learner in the presence of other learners (see Chapter 5 and 6 in this regard).

Sigelman and Shaffer (1995:274) show that from as early as the first year of school, primary school children are aware of how they compare with others, and therefore know whether they are as good, better or weaker than others. As in the previous phase, the outcome of this crisis can have a long-term effect on them. Feelings of inferiority, which triggers feelings of incompetency and worthlessness in a classroom, can elicit all sorts of behaviour problems. This can make it

difficult for a teacher to manage the class effectively and to offer learners optimal learning opportunities. Learners with a poor self-image may demand attention and be difficult at times. They may become bullies or give vent to other serious behaviour problems, for instance stealing, to try to impress their peer group.

Feelings of inferiority can cause a child to not explore and discover the world. Newman and Newman (Louw *et al.* 1995:370) regard the primary school years as a critical period for the development of the learner's self-concept. As from six to seven years old, learners begin to develop an idea of who they are, as well as how they would like to be. The learner now starts to describe him or herself in terms of the activities in which the learner partakes. The learner can also develop the ability to assess him or herself. Harter (Louw *et al.* 1995:370) in fact asserts that learners are quite accurate in their assessments of themselves, as their assessments frequently correlate with the assessments of friends and teachers. The learner's self-concept is also influenced by a number of factors, such as his or her personal needs, the expectations that others have of them, as well as the degree to which the learner is in control of his or her behaviour. The faith that the learner has developed in his or her own ability, will have a direct impact on their determination to realise personal goals, as well as social expectations of significant other persons in their environment (see Pringle, par. 2.3.1 for further information in this regard).

The research findings of Coopersmith (Louw *et al.* 1995:371) tend to affirm that the self-esteem of boys hardly changed between the ages of ten and thirteen years. He verified that children with a positive self-esteem, were more inclined to be creative, popular with peers, independent, and far more able to actualise their full potential. His research findings clearly seem to suggest that a positive self-esteem, does have a definite impact on the learner's performance, be it on a behaviour or a scholastic level. Coopersmith (Louw *et al.* 1995:371) emphasises that the way adults, especially the parents, treat children, has an important impact on the development of the child's self-esteem. For the purposes of this study, it is noted that the teacher will tend to have an important impact on a learner's self-esteem.

Santrock (1995:325) maintains that a learner's self-esteem can be improved by implementing the following (see Chapter 5 in this regard):

- the factors contributing to a bad self-esteem should be identified in the first instance, as well as the learner's domains of competence (defining the sources of self-esteem);

- the learner should be emotionally supported, by the significant other role players within his or her environment;
- positive behaviour characteristics should be socially approved and supported (learners should be assisted to identify and value their areas of competence);
- opportunities to succeed should be created for the learner; and
- opportunities need to be generated to allow the learner to cope on his or her own.

Temperament, as part of personality, focuses specifically on the biological and psychological dimensions of the personality. Psychologists focus on the three individual components of the definition separately, namely the role of the person, the situation and the interaction between the role and the situation. These viewpoints are categorised as *personism* (behaviour is determined by the personality of the individual), *situationalism* (the situation is the only or the most important determinant of behaviour) and *interactionalism* (the interaction between the individual's characteristics and the situation). The individual does not therefore only react to the situation, as such, but also to his or her own behaviour manifested in the situation. This interactional perspective is imbedded in ecological systems theory. Implied is the notion that the child who is exhibiting behaviour problems, cannot be studied in isolation of his or her life-world. The child or learner must be studied within the situation where the problem behaviour is being exhibited. His or her behaviour is the outcome of the system, instead of only being a product of the individual or as a result of the outcome between the child and the observable, here and now situation.

Learners who are emotionally secure, who were exposed to preschool experiences outside the context of the home (e.g. attending a nursery school), and who have developed autonomy, as well as control over aggressive impulses, will be more successful in adapting to the new school environment. Older siblings can assist the primary school learner to adapt more easily, as they will emotionally support and familiarise the learner with the environment, the schoolwork and the teachers concerned.

Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:114) describe the "happy child with a stable emotional life" by attributing the following characteristics to such a child or learner: "the learner can face challenges occurring daily with courage and enthusiasm, has a good self-image, although the learner might have experienced failures and succeeds academically and socially". The prerequisites for being a happy child with a stable emotional life are: **warm, loving and secure relationships** with especially the parents and the teacher as an *in locus parentis* person. Santrock (1995:318) maintains that "almost everyone's life is affected in one way or another by teachers". Factors beyond the control of the learner may have resulted in disrupted families, thereby forcing the

teacher to act on the behalf of the parents. Examples are war, the death of one or both parents, the struggle against poverty, and political systems that results in parents "giving up" and thus no longer caring for their children (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:114).

A learner in primary school enjoys *good humour* and thus likes to play practical jokes and tell jokes. As the learner's cognitive development progresses, the learner's ability to appreciate humour increases. Learners can only enjoy humour if they understand the joke. On the other hand if learners have the perception that the material is too simplistic, they do not enjoy it. According to Stone and Church (Louw *et al.* 1995:370), the typical jokes that learners during primary school enjoy stay the same generation after generation. Louw *et al.* (1995:370), in a similar vein, point out that other variables that could have an impact on the learner's enjoyment of humour are influenced by television and play.

Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:120) maintain that the *single most important factor* influencing the learner's socialisation, is the *family*, as here the child's basic needs (food, water, clothing and shelter) as well as psychological or emotional needs, for example the need to be loved, to feel secure and safe, to be treated with warmth, to be praised, are met. On a social level, the child learns to socialise with people, starting off with his or her siblings and parents and relations and friends of the family. He/she also learns how to relate to authority and gets to know himself/herself. The *school* is an important factor that has a direct impact on the child's socialisation process. At school the learners learn to relate to the authority of the teachers, they learn to follow new rules, make new friends and even get along with children from different cultural groups, who may not necessarily be their friends, and they soon acquire knowledge and skills.

On a **social level**, *peers* become more important and learners begin to spend less time with the family. It becomes very important for the learner to be accepted by the peer group, as this forms an essential element of the learner's social development (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:120). They like to play in groups, especially with friends of the same sex. They like to conform to the expectations and demands of peers, for example wearing the same type of clothing. The learners concerned tend to prefer games with set rules. It is important for them to be accepted by their friends, otherwise they easily feel left out and lonely.

During the primary school years, learners interact more with other learners of the same age and sex. They have similar interests and their cognitive development is at a similar level. The peer group initially functions on a flexible foundation which allows any learner into the group and

their play is based on what group members decided at a specific moment in time. Towards the end of the primary school phase, cohesion and a greater solidarity develops within the peer group and admission to the group is often controlled, through, for instance, initiation rituals. Learners like to conform to the type of clothes that group members tend to wear. Gangs flourish during this phase. According to Louw *et al.* (1995: 363-364) the peer group provides members with the following: *comradeship; opportunities for trying out new behaviours, especially those behaviours that adults do not agree on; the facilitation of the transfer of knowledge and information, varying from informal tasks to jokes, puzzles, superstitions and games; the teaching of obedience to rules and regulations; the reinforcement of sex roles; the opportunity to become emotionally more independent from the parents as well as the provision of opportunities to experience involvement with different types of relationships in which they can on equal footing compete with members of the peer group.*

Peer group pressure can harm the learner's sense of reality and logical thinking. The attachment to the peer group can overpower the learner's individual degree of self-reliance and independence. It can also result in the learner taking part in undesirable and illegal activities, because the learner's emotional needs are unmet and he or she is looking for the satisfaction of these needs towards the peer group.

Not all learners, however, are equally popular within the peer group. So for instance Louw *et al.* (1995:366) maintain that popular learners are friendlier, inclined to be extroverts, are more cooperative and are generally more pleasant than their counterparts, who are unpopular with peers. Papalia and Olds (Louw *et al.* 1995:367) describe the unpopular learner as follows:

One of the saddest figures amongst schoolchildren is the child who is chosen last for every team, is on the fringes of every group, walks home alone after school, is not invited to birthday parties, and sobs in despair, "nobody wants to play with me".

Hartup (Louw *et al.* 1995:367) found that if a learner is not popular in primary school, this variable links up with behaviour problems or emotional disorders that the learner experiences later in life. Learners who exhibit behaviour problems also experience problems in terms of social skills and establishing and maintaining social relationships (Gearheart *et al.* 1986:306; Reinert 191980:4). In this regard Bierman's (Louw *et al.* 1995:367) research findings are of relevance, in that they indicated that when social skills have been taught to a learner, that learner's popularity amongst other learners tends to increase. These skills should include, for

example how to conduct a conversation, show an interest in other people, advise others, be of assistance to others, and how an invitation should be worded and be presented. Asher *et al.* (Louw *et al.* 1995:367) found in their research, that the home circumstances and parenting style of parents are relevant to the learner, in terms of being popular or not with friends. A “model” home and “model” parenting style would include the following: families of popular learners are more closely attached to one another, the parents do not condone aggressive or antisocial behaviour in their children, the children typically try not to frustrate their parents, while the parents generally do not punish their children excessively. In contrast they often reassure their children by telling them that they love them, they take great care that their children can socialise by playing with various children, and they buy toys and other equipment that could be used by their children to encourage group interaction and play.

In terms of the preceding discussion it may be concluded that the peer group and learners’ socialisation within a peer group, has substantial significance in an analysis of behaviour problems. In the following section the social development of the learner is reviewed. It is particularly important as socialisation constitutes the process whereby learners learn to conform to society’s expectations in terms of acceptable behaviour.

Aspects of the social development of a preschool child, includes socialisation, prosocial behaviour, and antisocial behaviour. According to Botha *et al.* (1995:285) and Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:91), socialisation (a process during which the child learns to conform to moral standards, to meet the role expectations of others and to behave according to standards of accepted behaviour that is prevailing in the society) during the preschool years aims at:

- ▶ maintaining and controlling biological needs, such as a toilet routine;
- ▶ the development of a greater language ability;
- ▶ the shaping of a conscience;
- ▶ developing an understanding of social relationships;
- ▶ the development of independency and initiative;
- ▶ acquiring appropriate sexual behaviour;
- ▶ acting in a socially acceptable way;
- ▶ the adoption of suitable gender roles; and
- ▶ the development of acceptable social attitudes.

Although the socialisation process differs from culture to culture, Schell *et al.* (Botha *et al.* 1995: 285) maintain that the same individual and social mechanisms are present in learners from different cultures, namely a need to:

- ▶ be accepted, regarded with dignity, to be loved and recognised;
- ▶ avoid unpleasant feelings resulting from rejection or being punished;
- ▶ imitate others; and
- ▶ be like specific role models whom the child respects, love or admire.

Other factors of relevance to the socialisation process, are categorised under:

- ▶ *external factors*, to be found within the environment of the child, for example moral values, traditions, behaviour norms. The learner's behaviour is either directly or indirectly influenced by various socialisation agents or significant other role players; and
- ▶ *internal factors*, genetically determined factors, for example temperament that determines how learners will react to socialisation actions of significant other role players within their life world. Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:91) mention that many of the problems that are experienced in South African schools and communities on the political, social and educational front can be related to a *culture of intolerance* in the country. They maintain that if a child grows up with a sense of intolerance in the home, little hope exists that the child's behaviour in future will be different from those of his or her role models.

Prosocial behaviour is characterised by positive social interaction, including aspects such as: positive social interaction, cooperation, helpfulness and a willingness to give. Prosocial behaviour can be encouraged by means of either modelling or by role play (Botha *et al.* 1995:288). Staub (Botha *et al.* 1995:288) found that role play served as the most effective means for encouraging prosocial behaviour. Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:91) argue that the child will show more prosocial behaviour towards the members of the family than to strangers outside of the family circle.

Antisocial behaviour is directly linked to negative social activities (e.g. selfishness, taking the toys of another child, telling lies, and aggression) that cause conflict within the learner's relationships with significant other role players (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:91). Feshbach (Botha *et al.* 1995:289) distinguishes between *hostile aggression* (wants to hurt someone) that occurred more frequently amongst older learners and *instrumental aggression* (wants to recover something). Young learners were more inclined to be physically aggressive, while older learners are more inclined to show verbal aggression.

Botha *et al.* (1995:291) identified the following factors that could contribute towards the learner acting aggressively:

- ▶ *frustration* that leads to the appearance of aggression;
- ▶ *competition* that stimulates aggression especially if a reward is at stake;
- ▶ *family factors* where a child identifies with family members who act aggressively and where aggression is accepted as a way of self-assertiveness and is even rewarded and
- ▶ *cultural factors* whereas different cultures encourage or prevent children to act aggressively.

Different viewpoints exist on how to control aggression, for example the catharsis-hypothesis presupposes that when aggressive feelings are not allowed to be expressed, they will build up to a violent outburst. It is argued that an expression of feelings is better than a so-called, "bottling up" of feelings. Other studies, however, have indicated that the expression of aggression can encourage it, instead of controlling it. Learning-theorists maintain that aggressive behaviour can be redirected by rewarding the child for prosocial behaviour, rather than focussing on the punishment of aggressive behaviour. The child/learner then has to find alternatives, as to how he or she is going to deal with aggression in a socially acceptable way. Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:91) recommend that when a child is deliberately hurting another child, this type of aggressive behaviour must be actively discouraged.

The peer group offers the following to learners in terms of their total development (Ausubel & Sullivan 1970:335; Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:121): "companionship, enjoying the company of equals, acquiring knowledge and information, getting to know rules and regulations, the strengthening of gender roles and encouraging the learner to become more emotionally independent from the parents and to experience individuality and dignity as a person".

Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:122) advise teachers to keep in mind how important the peer group is to a learner in primary school and they should therefore not attempt to break up groups because they are troublesome in the classroom – other methods should rather be utilized, for example rewarding the group for positive behaviour or success. Teachers need to be sensitive to peer group pressure and the impact thereof on the learner's behaviour and consequently any behaviour problems that may be manifested by the learner. Excessive conformity to a peer group, especially if it is a dubious group, must serve to alert the teacher, as this could be a causative factor of behaviour problems in the classroom.

The self-image of the learner is frequently affected by the response of the peer group and this can be either of a positive or negative nature. Of especially significance in this regard, is the case where a learner is rejected by certain members of the peer group or by the whole peer group. Teachers should discuss the rejection of learners by a peer group in the classroom. The teacher may be able to improve peer group relationships and assist a particular learner in being accepted by the peer group, through the utilization of group activities. Private discussions with members of the peer group or with the peer group when the learner is not present, can also be effective in stabilising peer relationships. Teachers need to keep in mind that learners behave according to the expectations of significant other role players in their life world, such as the teacher, parents and peers. If a certain learner is therefore labelled as stupid, the peers will also label the learner likewise and treat the learner in the same way as the teacher does (Apter & Conoley 1984:74; Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:123). Teachers can thus change the behaviour of learners towards teachers by changing the label that is attached to the particular learner in question.

Erikson (Meyer *et al.* 1997:218; Santrock (1995:38) identifies a crisis of **industriousness versus inferiority** with the synthesis of **competence** in this phase (6-12 years). Learners/children are naturally eager to learn and are curious, which gives parents and teachers a golden opportunity to stimulate them to think and act creatively. Support and understanding from the parents and teachers will stimulate learners to develop a zest for life. If encouragement from the parents and the teacher are however not present, the learner will not be able to cope on his or her own with the school environment and the expectations of significant other role players. The learner may thus experience feelings of inferiority instead (Louw 1995:341). The tendency of children to learn is being met by society in the creation of opportunities for children to learn and to cooperate. Formal schooling in the modern, technological society implies that the child will acquire basic scholastic skills like reading, writing and numeracy. They will also tend to assimilate traditional, cultural skills and habits, as they relate to a specific culture group. If the child does not acquire the necessary skills and habits of his or her culture, feelings of inferiority may well be nurtured, which in turn could have a demoralising effect on the learner. The synthesis of this phase, namely *competence*, thus indicates a balanced feeling of competency, which will enable the child to successfully participate in the typical cultural processes of producing and raising his or her own family.

Children in this phase or stage, experience a lot of initiative and this forces them to come into contact with many new experiences. As they get to the middle and late childhood period, they focus on the mastering of new intellectual skills and on obtaining knowledge. Such learners will work hard and productively with the necessary encouragement. However, if they are

continuously criticised, and their efforts are ignored, they will eventually no longer accept any new challenges and will lose their enthusiasm and self-confidence, which could manifest in various types of behaviour problems, for example attention-seeking behaviour, shyness and withdrawal. Santrock (1995:318) maintains that effective teachers should actually be able to stimulate a sense of industry instead of inferiority. Teachers should also know how to create an atmosphere within the classroom that is conducive to learning, one where learners can feel good about themselves and their accomplishments. They should also know how to understand and assist learners to whom school has become a problem.

When learners are exposed to phenomena like violence, a constant change in schools and unmotivated parents, they will lose their self-confidence and interest. A feeling of inferiority could consequently materialise, which in turn could well have a direct bearing on their behaviour. According to Louw *et al.* (1995:341) if learners experience success in school, they will develop a positive self-image and a good feeling of self-worth. Elkind (Louw *et al.* 1995:341) in a similar sense contends that if a learner experiences many opportunities to partake in different activities at school, the learner will have more opportunities to develop feelings of self-worth and competence.

As regards their *moral development*, younger learners tend to accept the moral values expounded by adults, in order to become part of their life world and not to feel left out. One of the most important moral developmental tasks that the learner accomplishes, is being able to distinguish between “good” or “bad” behaviour and “right” and “wrong” behaviour. Piaget (Louw *et al.* 1995:342; Santrock 1995:263) maintains that a positive link exists between moral and cognitive development. Cognitive development is regarded as a prerequisite for moral development, although a high level of cognitive development does not necessarily guarantee a high level of moral development. Kohlberg (Louw *et al.* 1995:343) did not agree with all Piaget’s research findings. While he tended to agree that children develop different cognitive skills, as they go through the different stages of moral development, Kohlberg (Louw *et al.* 1995:343) did not however, like Piaget, believe that by the end of the primary school years a child’s moral development will have reached complete moral maturity. Kohlberg maintains that children during this stage of life, still need to develop morally as is being characterised by autonomous and individual principles of the conscience (Louw *et al.* 1995:343; Santrock 1995:263). Kohlberg’s theory of moral development was also criticised by theorists.

Kohlberg (Louw *et al.* 1995:343-346; Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:118,119; Santrock 1995:334-335) draws a distinction between three levels of moral development, on the basis of solutions

presented for dealing with the dilemma in a case study called "Heinz and his dying wife". Each level is subdivided into further stages namely:

- Level 1: Preconventional level:** 5-9 years. The child obeys rules to avoid punishment and to get rewards or favours:
- Level 2: Conventional level.** Most adolescent and high school students: The child essentially obeys rules to be accepted and to avoid rejection. The learner accepts rules because he or she can identify with them and perceives them as essential for preserving society.
- Level 3: Postconventional level.** Only a small percentage of adults reach this level. Rules are regarded as contractual agreements aimed at protecting the rights of the individual and promoting the common good. The person acts on self-chosen principles, based on universal values. Notably, the values of parents are no longer accepted unconditionally.

Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:119,120) advises teachers to treat, reprimand or punish learners according to their age group and their level of moral development, for example a six-year-old who tells lies should be treated differently than a 17-year-old learner who is guilty of the same type of behaviour. They advise teachers (and parents) not to threaten learners with a list of punishments if they have violated rules or misbehaved, as this will only reinforce the tendency to persist in an authority-maintaining level of morality. Teachers or parents can also promote moral development by discussing idealised conduct and the reasons why such conduct is necessary. Teachers can for instance offer guidelines on how to behave according the "*Golden Rule of Behaviour*".

The main conclusions drawn from the sections dealing with the *social, personality, cognitive, emotional, and moral development* of primary school learners can be summarised as follows:

- **Social development.** Learners in this life phase are starting to accept a specific sex-role and to develop a sex-role identity that matches their choice. They are becoming more skilled with the application of their social skills, they are more involved with and more concerned about peers than during the previous phase, especially seeing that the peer group becomes very important the older they get during this phase. Research findings indicate that learners that are exhibiting behaviour problems, experience problems with social skills. Learners are becoming more independent in their decision-making than before and can thus now accept responsibility for decisions made.

Learners are getting to know what social norms imply and are structuring their behaviour in line with these norms. They like to please the teacher and get on fairly well with adults in general. The family becomes especially important, as it provides them with an opportunity to practise their social skills, and it creates a chance for emotional needs to be met. The school also contributes towards the shaping of the learner's social skills. Learners, as they progress in this phase, distance themselves more and more from the family in order to link up with the peers. They compare themselves with peers in the classroom so that they know whether they are rated as good, bad or a total failure. The conclusions that they come to, have a direct bearing on their self-images. The faith that he or she has developed in his or her own abilities will determine the way that he/she will be meeting personal, as well as social expectations of significant other persons in the life-world/environment. The same individual and social mechanisms are present in learners from different cultures. According to Erikson, learners in this life phase, are experiencing an *industriousness versus inferiority crisis* with the synthesis of *competence*, as learners have to acquire the tools and general skills (like reading, writing, numeracy) as well as specific skills of their culture group in order to develop a sense of competency as they are able to successfully participate in the cultural activities and respect the cultural norms and values and function as worthwhile members of the cultural group in the community.

- **Personality development.** The learner develops a need for a best friend of the same sex. In the relationships of the learner, his or her self-image is shaped accordingly. Feelings of inferiority can elicit all sorts of serious behaviour problems which can have a direct bearing on his or her determination to realise personal goals as well as social expectations of significant other role players in his or her environment. The impact of the teacher as well as the impact of the familial relationships on the learner's self-image will determine his or her self-image. Warm, loving and secure relationships will ensure a stable emotional life for the learner.
- **Cognitive development.** In terms of cognitive developmental milestones, as defined by Piaget, learners during this life phase are in the operational phase – they gradually become less egocentric, as they progress during this phase. Their understanding becomes truer to reality and they can think of more than one thing at a time and they can see another person's point of view. Learners become less animistic, they begin to decentre, have powerful imaginative skills, can reason and their thinking patterns become more inductive. In the beginning of this phase they still make use of concrete operational

thinking skills, implying that they later will be more able to think on a more abstract level.

- **Emotional development.** This is a time of greater emotional maturity. The transformation is one from helplessness to one of independence and self-sufficiency. Sex-role stereotyping influences the nature and quality of emotional expression and learners become aware of the social rules governing such expression. Learners' fears are essentially related to issues such as a fear of failure and their fears tend to more rational in nature. Those learners who experience love and affection are better able to in turn express love in different ways. They tend to outgrow their egocentrism and become more sensitive toward other people. Learners also begin to display aggression more openly.
- **Moral development.** During this life phase, it is important for the learner to be able to distinguish between "good" and "bad" and between "right" and "wrong" behaviour. At this stage of life, the learner has, according to Kohlberg, passed the first two stages of moral development namely *punishment and obedience orientation* and *naive hedonistic and instrumental orientation*. This implies that the behaviour of the learner has changed from being egocentric, fearing punishment because of unacceptable behaviour, no real conscience has been established to being concerned to meet his or her own needs, acting individualistically and allowing others to meet their own needs. Later during this phase, learners obey rules simply because they want to be accepted and want to avoid rejection. They accept rules because they can identify with them and perceives them as essential for preserving society. They try to please authority figures and to live up to the role expectations of the significant other role players. Learners are trying their utmost to behave well by being concerned about the "golden rule" by being concerned about others and by exhibiting virtues like trust and loyalty. Behaviour tends to be judged in terms of the learner's motive.

2.3.4 The secondary school years (12-18 years)

Adolescence is perhaps the most challenging, interesting and insecure phase of human life. This phase is characterised by complex and diverse physical, cognitive, emotional, personality and moral changes that are constantly taking place. In effect adolescence is nothing less than a journey towards adulthood. It is during this developmental phase that educators often find it difficult to understand or direct the adolescent's behaviour.

According to Mitchell (1979:192), it is a popular myth and untruth that adults like adolescents. He maintains that "youth are a mixture of nuisance, inconvenience and menace and adults do

not know quite what to make of them". Menninger (Mitchell 1979:192) argues that society is inclined to regard adolescents as "an unfortunate inconvenience, a sort of bad moment that we half wish would go away; a distraction or maybe a disruption that gets in the way of real business of living for the rest of us; a kind of incidental way station in life that will surely pass if we wait long enough or hold our breath or look the other way".

Adolescence extends from about 11 to 21 years of age. In practice age boundaries tend to be variable and it is therefore preferable to demarcate the various development stages on the basis of specific developmental characteristics, rather than merely to rely on age as the determining factor. Individual and cultural differences, as well as the nature and character of the society, can influence the onset and end of adolescence. For the purposes of this study the focus will be on the age group ranging from twelve to eighteen years, which is the average age of learners attending secondary school.

Mitchell (1979:192-234) in discussing the myths surrounding adolescence, highlights the following truths that will enable teachers to better understand learners in the secondary school:

- Adults tend to fear adolescents, especially adolescents in the late adolescent phase. Adolescents in the early adolescent phase, irritate adults in terms of their manners, physical appearance and language utilization. The activities that adolescents, in the middle adolescent phase, engage in creates a feeling of resentment within many an adult. The fear of adults towards adolescents is triggered by, for example the fact that they might not be able to control adolescents. They also tend to fear that their values and beliefs might be rejected by the adolescent – so they rather reject the adolescent in advance, before they are rejected. Rules are created to establish a form of adolescent control, by replacing youthful excess with youthful orderliness.
- A frequent belief held by many adults is that adolescents are sexually active, they can find a suitable partner whenever they need to and sexual arousal is part and parcel of their lives. Few myths are further from the truth. Mitchell (1979:201) maintains that adolescents are not sexually active to the extent that adults expect them to be. They regard sex, as something serious, personal, intense, concrete and romantic. Young adults are inclined to be much more involved in sexual activity than adolescents.
- It is contended that the role of the peer group in the life-world of the adolescent is more often than not misunderstood. Because of the fact that adolescents are isolated from adults and family members during the day, they naturally are left with the company of their peers. Adolescents do not inherently favour the values of peers more than those of

adults – they learn to do so, in the absence of having an appropriate adult role model available. Mitchell (1979:205) makes the statement that we “misread youth because we do not understand what they need; we concentrate too much on what they do wrong and not enough on what they do right. We see their actions as caused by age, but they are better understood if we concentrate on social dynamics.”

Adolescents appreciate adults who treat them in a dignified way. The experience, power and insight of the adult, attracts the adolescent. Although adolescents sometimes want to be with peers, they don't want their whole life-world to revolve around peer groups.

Peer groups are functional in the sense that they provide the adolescent with an opportunity to achieve importance and develop a social system with entrenched rules. The adolescent is quite often called “the marginal man” as the adolescent interchanges between acting more adult-like and, all of sudden, acting like a child in the pre-adolescent phase.

- A so-called “generation gap” does not exist – it is rather a conflict between adolescent and adult, created by confusion and unacceptability of messages sent to each other, which results eventually in a power struggle. According to Mitchell (1979:210) these conflicts are not different from the power struggle between the toddler and the parent. More serious power struggles exist between the late adolescent and the early adolescent. Mitchell (1979:209) maintains that “generational differences are often little more than differences in outlook for achieving the same goal”.
- Not all youths experience adolescence as a time of intensive turmoil. Mitchell (1979:216) argues that myths on adolescence, as a period of extreme turmoil, has been clouded by the views of extremists. The theorists that maintain that adolescence is a period of turmoil dealt with youths who were disturbed. Offer (Mitchell 1979:217) in his research on so-called “normal” adolescents, found that not *all* adolescents experienced turmoil. Adolescents who do experience adolescence as a period of turmoil, are experiencing a normal rather than a neurotic crisis.
- Mitchell (1979:220) makes the statement that youths are hypocritical because “their desire for social acceptance, their need to explore forbidden pleasures, and their preoccupation with the present incline them toward social pragmatism and self-centred expediency – the nuclear ingredients of all hypocrisy”. Hypocrisy is stimulated by the fact that adolescents are continuously expected by adults, to be somebody other than

themselves or to live by rules that do not take their needs and aspirations into consideration.

- Adolescents are often judged by adults as *being "incompetent"*. Mitchell (1979:225,226) argues that their inabilities stem from the fact that they are not granted opportunities by adults to prove their competency, nor are they provided with a mentor who could guide them, especially in the onset phase of the assignment. Another factors which can add to a picture being created of adolescent incompetency, is that adolescents are not always occupied with some or other task and they consequently restlessly hang out at public places, mill around and mock one another.

Mitchell (1979:2-6) describes the following typical characteristics of an adolescent learner that, in terms of this study, is deemed to be of specific relevance to teachers:

- They are confronted on a daily basis with the same general interaction problems confronting persons in other life phases, for example they need to learn to get on with others and develop intimate relationships.
- Adolescents are likely to be physical, sensual, hyperactive and experience strong passions. They are energetic and create an impression to outsiders of a chaotic and disordered life-style. Their behaviour is mostly functional and just as adults often need to "let off steam", adolescents are continually in a process of releasing surplus energy.
- They are inclined to get involved in roles that are essentially set aside for adults, for example having a job, and caring for younger siblings whilst the parent is at work. Although they occupy adult roles, there is much of the child still left within them. They also still have strong feelings of dependency on authority figures and on occasions may display immature behaviour patterns.
- Adolescent learners are interested in what the future holds for them. They are inclined to act egocentrically, be self-centred, and focussed on their self-interests. They only partake in an activity when they are particularly interested in the activity concerned. Although they exhibit a natural curiosity as to what the future may have in store for them, they experience a gut feeling of fear of the future. The fear partly stems from cognitive disapproval of society's values and partly from an inherent immaturity within this development stage.
- They are ethic-bound in their decisions or viewpoints on sexual behaviour and are not as many adults believe, mere carriers of sexual energy that can be triggered by any possible suggestive gesture, thought, or picture. They develop their own ethical and moral standards, often modelled on that of their parents.

- Adolescent learners have to a large degree mastered the skill of cheating, exploiting and manipulating significant others. They tend to feel that they are not being understood by their parents and that the rules that have been laid down, do not necessary take their needs into consideration.
- They have acquired the basic virtues of truth, beauty and goodness.
- Adolescents experience sexual problems which relate to personal realities such as body image, self-concept, and feelings of masculinity or femininity.
- They are good at camouflaging their true psychological motives by making use of societal weaknesses and limitations, which makes it difficult for adults to know whether they are acting out their own personal feelings of confusion or whether they are opposing some social condition which they think deserves protest.
- Adolescent learners tend to act egocentrically, which enables them to understand their first-person experiences better. They also tend to role model people who are also inclined to act in a similar way. They are consequently influenced by people that they look up to.
- They act with hostility when adults treat them like young children and fail to acknowledge their integrity and personal identity.

Modern societies tend to require that adolescents need to master the following developmental tasks which will determine their adjustment to an advanced and technocratic society (Thom, 1995:379):

- ▶ acceptance of the changes taking place within their bodies;
- ▶ development of a gender-role identity;
- ▶ establishment and development of heterosexual relationships;
- ▶ emotional involvement with another person;
- ▶ preparation for responsibilities concerning a family and marriage;
- ▶ development of independency from parents and other adult significant role players;
- ▶ acceptance of him or herself, as a person and the development of an identity;
- ▶ development of socially responsible behaviour;
- ▶ acceptance of and the adjustment to groups, with different cultural or religious values;
- ▶ fulfilling of adult responsibilities by the development of intellectual skills and concepts;
- ▶ choosing and preparing for a career;
- ▶ achievement of being financially independent;

- ▶ development of realistic and scientific world views in order to develop a value system;
- ▶ acquiring of guidelines for behaviour by the development of moral concepts and values; and
- ▶ development of an own philosophy of life.

The degree to which adolescents master these developmental tasks depends on the quality of educational support given by the educators. Adolescents need understanding and sympathetic guidance towards the shaping of an identity and in preparing for responsible adulthood. In a complex society that is characterised by discontinuities, the transition from childhood to adulthood is rather problematic, especially if new views, behaviour patterns and roles continuously replace old ones.

In secondary school a learner's *physical development* is characterised by changes taking place as they enter a phase of rapid growth and secondary sexual changes, frequently termed the "adolescent growth spurt" (Thom 1995:385; Papalia & Olds 1975:567). Adolescents who mature physically at an earlier stage, are generally expected to behave more like adults and they consequently acquire a premature personal and occupational identity. They can also be put in a marginal social position, as they are favoured by older boys, although they are not emotionally mature enough to deal with the social relationships that evolve. Girls, however, do not have much in common with peers of their own age group. This is a time of secondary sexual changes. The difference between the physical abilities of girls and boys becomes all the more evident. The emphasis now falls on precision of movement and the integration of coordination, muscle strength, agility and thought. The adolescent learner experiences his or her new sexual identity within his or her interpersonal relationships and attempts to integrate it with the rest of his or her new found identity.

The *cognitive system* of the learner of eleven or older is far more complex and better organised than that of a younger child. The cognitive ability of the adolescent learner extends both on a quantitative and qualitative level, as he or she is better able to master more intellectual tasks than before. As changes take place regarding the thought processes and cognitive structure, learners can think on a more abstract and logical level, with many more possibilities opening up before them. He or she is now able to:

- ▶ think and to draw conclusions about other conclusions;
- ▶ consider all possible solutions to a problem posed;

- ▶ make use of a hypothetical-deductive method of thinking and interpositional logic in their thinking;
- ▶ make use of formal operational thinking, which enables him or her to grasp the concept of proportionality or relationships; and
- ▶ think of all the possible combinations of elements in a set – this ability is a result of proportional thought.

The influence of the adolescent learners' enhanced cognitive abilities is seen in their questioning of their parents' values and viewpoints instead of them merely accepting and idealising their parents and their values. They rebel against the world, their parents, teachers and the norms and values of society in general, as they realise that reality differs from the ideal world that they have mentally created for themselves. They think about all their own experiences and this inclination tends to reverse them to a state of egocentrism, similar to that of the early childhood phase. They create an imaginary audience in thinking primary about themselves, their behaviour, and physical appearance. A case in point being the need to conform to the norms set by their peers. They therefore need to wear denim shorts when they goes out, just like they do. They think that everybody will immediately notice it when they are not wearing similar denim shorts to that worn by their peers. The adolescent learner enjoys his or her uniqueness to such an extent that he or she thinks that nobody has ever loved, as he or she is able to love and more often than not feels that nobody really understands him/her. After the age of sixteen, his or her thinking becomes more objective and realistic, less self-centred and more capable of establishing genuine relationships.

Piaget (Conger 1991:140,143-146) contends that adolescent learners are in the *formal operational phase of cognitive development (12 years and up)*. They gradually lose their naiveness, idealism and egocentrism as they approach the late adolescent phase. Notably, they are now able to look at and judge themselves objectively, and consequently their self-concept is more in line with reality. A shift of emphasis is also now possible, namely from the strictly factual, to the possibility of such a fact existing. Alternatively, the shift may viewed as being from what reality it is like at a moment in real life, as viewed by the adolescent, to what it might be in the future or to how the adolescent might view it in future. This mind shift of the adolescent is one where he or she is thinking on a more abstract level, which allows them to view their life-world in a totally different way. They therefore are able to think more hypothetic-deductively and no longer merely focus on concrete realities.

The adolescent learner is more conscious of his or her own thoughts and tends to think more about the future, than is the case with younger children, who prefer to focus on the here and now. Although the basic thinking processes remain the same, gifted adolescents are more inclined to use their imaginations. They are also more flexible and precise in their exercising of formal operational thinking, than is the case with adolescents that are not equally gifted. Social cognition develops during adolescence and this enables adolescents to think about themselves and the significant other persons in their life-world. They are able to evaluate their inner feelings with regard to the relationships that exists between themselves and the other significant persons concerned.

The *emotions* and *behaviour* of these learners are far more complex and less easy to understand than is the case with a younger learner. The protective mechanisms that adolescents adopt are more sophisticated than those of younger learners and therefore they can mislead their teachers and parents with far greater ease. In addition, their feelings last longer and they cannot forget the emotions they experienced as easily as younger learners are able to do. In this phase a circle of friends is of utmost importance. Girls begin to pay more attention to the opposite sex. Their appearance assumes substantial importance, and they quite frequently develop complexes and a sensitivity, as regards their appearance. Hormonal imbalances frequently give rise to skin problems like acne. They easily imagine themselves to be too fat, too thin, too short or too tall. Girls are often shy if their bodies are less well developed than that of their peers. The situation is further aggravated if others, in particularly boys, comment thereon. They are often unnecessarily critical of themselves and may even have a completely false perception of their appearance.

As previously alluded to, adolescence is a time when the *self-concept* surfaces and becomes a powerful force in the adolescent's life-world. In general, the self-evaluation (self-concept) of children in this phase (self-concept) becomes increasingly accurate and realistic. Adolescents become painfully aware of how wonderful they would like to be. Glick and Zigler (Sigelman & Shaffer 1995:274) have found in their research that the older the learner becomes, the larger the gap between the true self and the ideal self becomes. Hence older learners run a far greater risk, than younger learners, of seeing themselves as unqualified and unacceptable. It is, therefore, quite easy to distort such a learner's self-image. They quickly feel rejected and isolated. Emotional tension can even cause adolescents to relapse temporarily, so that they no longer have the same degree of emotional security they had before.

Simmons (Sigelman & Shaffer 1995:278) have found that it is particularly in their twelfth and fourteenth year that high school learners experience problems with their self-concept. This is the period in which learners move from primary to high school. However, Dusek and Flaherty (Sigelman & Shaffer 1995:279) found that the self-concept of the majority of adolescents is the same at the end of this phase, as was the case at the beginning. In spite of a far more extensive and controlled level of cognitive development, most learners in this phase (12-18/25 years) go through an emotional crisis. Erikson (Meyer *et al.* 1997:218; Santrock 1992:50; Santrock 1995:38) terms this the crisis of **identity versus role confusion**.

An adolescent's feeling of security is all too frequently impaired by the demands of key role players within his or her life-world, in terms of having to make a career choice and having to cope with the physical changes of puberty and sexual maturity. Adolescents continually wrestle with the questions of: "Who am I?", "What am I all about?", "What will I accomplish in life? What am I in the eyes of other people? How can my previously acquired roles and skills fit into the career world and my projected future?" According to Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:160) "identity" provides an answer to the question of "Who am I?". Erikson (Meyer *et al.* 1997:218) identifies this phase, as one of a "quest for self-image", during which the adolescent has to find a balance between his or her self-image and the role expectations of the society. Identity is the personal experience of himself or herself as an independent and unique human being, with a particular place and role within the community – somebody who is experiencing an integration of their ideals, wishes, expectations, abilities, skills and drives, whilst society provides them with opportunities to develop their own unique identity. In order to accomplish this, the adolescent learner needs to integrate the different changes which are shaping his or her identity, so that he or she maintains a unified existing identity. He or she needs to experience a feeling of still being the same person.

An identity crisis is experienced when the adolescent becomes confused in the quest for identity, because of a possible clash with the existing rules, values and norms of society and those of the significant other role players, who are close to the adolescent. Erikson (Meyer *et al.* 1997:219) argues that society is not very tolerant towards the adolescent's search for identity. It, however, provides him or her with a degree of vital support in the form of social institutions, for example universities, vocational training, military service and tribal schools. In a quest for identity adolescents frequently come into confrontation with the rules, customs and traditions of society. The danger here, is that they may become confused in their search for identity and a suitable social role (Meyer 1997:219). A synthesis of the crises of identity, versus role confusion, is termed by Erikson (Meyer 1997:219) as being *reliability* or *fidelity*, implying that

the adolescent feels certain about his or her own identity, is aware of other possible choices that he or she could have made in terms of his or her identity, as well a capacity to act in accordance with his or her social role(s).

Sullivan (Meyer *et al* 1997:194-195) draws a distinction between seven stages of *personality development*. Early adolescence, according to Sullivan (Meyer *et al* 1997:194-195), is characterised by the introduction of physiological changes associated with puberty, together with a strong desire to get involved in an intimate relationship with a person of the opposite sex. He regards this crisis, as the turning point of personality development. The adolescent has to become capable of managing intimate relationships, coupled with the development of a powerful "lust dynamism" leading to the desire for an intimate relationship or relationships with the opposite sex. This stage in effect is one where the adolescent may either become capable of managing intimate relationships or experience substantial problems therewith. Homosexuality occurs when the adolescent cannot make a transition from intimate same sex relationships to intimate opposite sex relationships.

The main crises to overcome during the pre-adolescent period, according to Sullivan (Meyer *et al*. 1997:194), is the establishment of healthy interpersonal relationships. It is essentially during this period that a genuine interest in another person emerges, while the relationships in previous phases are essentially egocentric in nature.

Sullivan (Meyer *et al*. 1997:194-195) stresses that during the late-adolescent stage learners are able to establish a lasting love relationship resulting in the successful integration of the lust dynamism and intimacy. Syntax experiences are important, as adolescents begin to test new ideas, attitudes and ways of living by comparing them with others. They are in effect discovering a personal style of living. They also begin to demand more from the other persons involved in the interpersonal relationships. In entering this stage with an inflated self-esteem or excessive anxiety in interpersonal relationships, the adolescent may well experience negative consequences from a personality development perspective. Notably, the development of self-respect is a characteristic of this developmental phase.

Factors that contribute towards the establishment of an identity are typically the following:

- ▶ the shaping of an integrated and persistent profile of the total self as a person,
- ▶ an association with members of the peer group,
- ▶ the development and final shaping of a sex role identity, and
- ▶ a shaping of a vocational identity.

Identity is shaped from birth to old age and is generally associated with growth and development. Although adolescent learners change and “mature” and their identities expand, they soon reach a peak of scope and intensity during the adolescent life stage. Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:160) contend this is a direct result of ensuing physical maturity, as well as changes taking place at the emotional, cognitive, moral, sexual and social levels. The changes taking place are often threatening to the adolescent learner’s feelings of security, as their stable and established feelings of themselves change to confusion. This in turn may trigger feelings of self-consciousness and tension. Adolescent learners now have to develop an identity that will bridge the gap between, who they have experienced themselves to be as children, how they now experiencing themselves to be, and as to what they ought to become as future adults. Apart from this gap that the adolescent learner has to bridge, they also have to discover who they are in terms of the image they have of themselves and the image that they think other significant role players have of them, and what these role players expect of them.

According to Sigelman and Shaffer (1995:281) and Thom (1995:428,429), the following factors contribute to the shaping of the adolescent's self-concept, their level of independency and search for identity:

- **Cognitive growth.** This enables learners to use their intellect to reject or accept specific information. If a boy who is dumped by his girlfriend; claims that she is stupid and ugly and that he did not want to be seen with her in any case, she will be able to reason that she hurt him and that is why he is going around saying these unpleasant things about her.
- **Parents' behaviour.** Parents who do not want to overprotect their children, but would like to give them the opportunity to “find” themselves, free from the protective influence of the parents, allow their children to satisfy their need for independency. They are also giving them the opportunity to develop a positive self-concept. The behaviour of parents varies from exhibiting a love-hostility relationship to one of autonomy-control, resulting in the adolescent becoming more or less independent as he or she is allowed by the parents.
- **Parenting styles in exercising authority.** An autocratic, authoritarian, democratic, permissive, equalising and laissez faire parenting style can in practice be identified. It spans from not allowing the adolescent to have his or her own opinions and make his or her own decisions, to parents abandoning their parental role and allowing the adolescent to accept or reject parental decisions as he or she wishes.
- **Social experiences outside the home.** The opportunity to make independent choices and decisions outside the home, allows children to develop a positive self-concept.

- **Ambivalent childish and adult behaviour.** Parents and adolescents feel insecure about the adolescent's independence and this causes the adolescent to behave in an ambivalent manner, alternating between childish and more adult-like behaviour. This kind of behaviour is negatively reinforced by parents' inconsistent behaviour towards the adolescent and treating him or her in ambivalent ways.
- **Different expectations according to different sexes.** Expectations regarding instrumental and emotional independence vary from culture to culture.
- **Cultural influences.** These determine what may be expected from a child in a particular situation, as in what can be expected of a nubile young girl, for example.

During adolescence, adolescents redefine themselves and their role in society. All the *old* identities of the adolescent, that have been acquired during previous life phases, are forged into a new identity, via the process of ego synthesis. During the process of consolidating past and present identities, adolescents must be able to experience themselves as unique as well as come to the realisation that they are still the same people they were during their childhood years.

To create a feeling of being part of society and especially adult life and to redefine their identity, adolescent learners have to establish their sex-role identity and their occupational identity. During the period of psycho-social moratorium as Erikson phrases it, the adolescent can, whilst searching for his or her identity, over identify with peers. This could result in their getting involved in negative activities (e.g. drugs) or with peers (e.g. gangs) and this that can give rise to problem behaviour. Falling in love with a partner from the opposite sex provides him or her with an opportunity of finding out who they really are. It simultaneously provides them with degree of status amongst their peers.

Thom (1995:441) contends that the adolescent has to complete the following tasks in order to overcome the identity crises:

- **Time perspective versus time diffusion** (this aspect serves as a reminder to the adolescent that on the one hand he or she has enough time available to complete his or her developmental tasks but that there is a time limit and on the other hand it prevents him from feeling that he or she must act impulsively as if it is a matter of "*now or never*").
- **Self-certainty versus apathy** (the adolescent escapes into a state of apathy if he or she does not develop a sense of self-certainty, independence, and self-confidence, related to social status within the peer group).

- **Role experimentation versus role fixation** (role fixation can occur when an adolescent does not make use of the opportunity to experiment with different kinds of roles to the fullest and fixates prematurely on certain roles, thereby preventing him or her from finding his or her true identity).
- **Achievement expectation versus work paralysis** (work paralysis takes place when the adolescent has misjudged his or her own abilities and sets too high expectations for himself or herself. A similar situation exists when they chose a career that does not match up with their personality or when they live in the shadow of a person they idolised and eventually come to feel frustrated in realising that they are a unique and totally different person.)
- **Sexual identity versus bisexual confusion** (as the adolescent's body changes, he or she becomes sexually mature and also defines his or her psychosexual role, which can result in great confusion. They have to identify with one sex as their sexual identity forms part of their overall search for identity and uncertainty develops if they do not know with which sex to identify).
- **Leadership polarisation versus authority confusion** (authority confusion occurs when the adolescent finds it difficult to accept authority. They also cannot lead when they need to do it. In their search for themselves, adolescents must be able to, in this regard, see themselves as a leader in certain situations and as a follower in other situations.)
- **Ideological polarisation versus confusion of ideals** (adolescents must work out their own set of values which, on the one hand, provide them with a basic philosophy or ideological framework and, on the other, with anchors for their life).

During the adolescent life phase, the central theme concerning the *social development* of the learner, is about the repudiation of egocentrism and becoming a socially more mature person. Physical, cognitive, emotional maturity and social factors (e.g. the attitudes and reactions of society to a specific subculture, the family system and the impact of parents on the family, the complexities of life in modern societies in which the learners are raised) determine the learner's ability to develop a socially acceptable philosophy of life.

Adolescent learners must achieve the following "*social goals*" during this phase: they need to find their niche in society, be able to identify and accept changes in the community life, learn to conform to the existing values and roles in the society in which they live, acquire interpersonal skills, for example to be sensitive to the needs of others, listen to other peoples' ideas and contributions, learn to be tolerant about personal and cultural differences in society, and after feeling good about themselves, develop self-assurance.

The peer group influences the adolescent learner's behaviour substantially. The peer group acts as the point of departure for the adolescent, in terms of the actualisation of the learner's potential for and growth towards independence. Peer group members act as sounding boards for testing a learner's opinion, and they provide opportunities to exchange thoughts on specific topics – especially those that they feel they cannot discuss with parents or teachers. The peer group serves as a means for learners to learn how to listen to others and in particular how to express themselves clearly and logically. Friendships during adolescence develop from being superficial and sharing activities during puberty and early adolescence to being enriched by the personalities of friends and individual differences being accepted during late adolescence. They also provide opportunities for self-actualisation and meeting the needs of learners, in terms of changing physiological and developmental needs, all of which have an impact in shaping the learner's self-image. Opportunities for learners to become socially acceptable, in contrast to living in loneliness or exclusion, are a definite advantage of peer groups. In addition peer groups provide learners with opportunities to conform with group norms, they therefore have an influence in shaping the adolescent's values, that he or she attaches to education. Peer groups provide a learner with emotional support, as well as engendering a feeling of group acceptance. In essence a learning environment is created for the development of skills, concepts, values and attitudes.

Thom (Thom 1995:424,425) maintains that parents, in different culture groups, are still regarded by adolescents as significant other role players in comparison with the peer group. Research findings indicate that adolescents are inclined to follow their own opinion regarding politics, career choice, entertainment, clothing, sexual behaviour and steady relationships, but in matters regarding basic values, for example religion, moral and social behaviour, adolescents identify with the values of their parents. Thom's (1995:425) research findings seem to indicate that English speaking adolescents feel that the nature of the situation will determine whether or not they will consult with their parents or peers, whilst Afrikaans speaking adolescents feel that although the nature of the situation is important, they would still choose to consult their parents. Black adolescents are inclined to always, no matter what the nature of the situation, regard the advice of their parents as valuable.

Heterosexual relationships are a very important aspect of the adolescent learner's social development (Thom 1995:425). The development of these heterosexual relationships seems to follow a fairly similar pattern in different cultures (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:156). Teachers and parents should act sympathetically and with understanding towards the problems that adolescent learners experience in having to deal with in their heterosexual relationships, as these

relationships are a frequent source of heartache, pain and stress. Sympathetic and deliberate guidance in sensitive issues that learners have to deal with, for example premarital sex and sexual promiscuity, will avert many dangers. Because of the conflicting moral values relating to sexual activity, as reflected in the media and in society, many adolescent learners are uncertain as to how they should deal with these issues. Sexual intercourse is increasingly becoming acceptable to many adolescent learners, as they are curious in nature and need to know more about sex. They experience peer pressure to do what others do and to conform to adult behaviour patterns, in order to prevent the other party from breaking up the relationship that develops. The pressure is often directed at meeting a need to furnish a visible sign of commitment to the other party (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:157). Adolescent learners, without doubt, need to be guided to understand the difference between sex and mature love relationships.

Because learners from different culture groups do not interact sufficiently in early childhood, as well as the fact that the formation of adolescent peer groups is mostly determined by factors such as socio-economic classes (e.g. racial segregation), friendships across cultural barriers usually are only formed by mid and late adolescence. Other factors that could influence the formation of multicultural peer groups are, for example, the existing difference among different cultural groups, educational aspirations, academic achievement, their attitudes towards school life and life within the different cultural groups per se. Additional factors relate to a lack of knowledge about and insight into the habits and traditions of other cultures, misunderstandings about different cultures, and intolerance towards one another (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:158). Teachers will have to be trained to understand and assist in the emotional needs of learners from different cultures, in order to prevent behaviour problems and to achieve a good understanding amongst learners from different cultural groups.

When adolescent learners become arrogant in response to the impact of their environment on them, parents and teachers can experience feelings of despair. Teachers in particular may experience, an inability to reestablish a culture of learning in the classroom. They may even be accused of being unwilling, or of not teaching conscientiously and with enthusiasm. Adolescent learners and their educators may even become estranged, because of the violent nature of political conflict. The challenge to remain a devoted teacher, becomes even bigger when dealing with learners whose parents were incapacitated in fulfilling their roles as role models and supporters of their children – especially as the teacher then needs to act as a substitute parent for the learners. Adolescent learners, as a result of political conflict, frequently turn to violence. Criminal acts surround them, rebelliousness prevails, juvenile delinquency abounds, disobedience is rampant, and they are caught up in webs of no return to diligence and regular

learning patterns. Eventually these learners end up dropping out of school and become a future member of society who is unable to fit into society's political, educational, economic and social institutions. These adolescent learners are often stereotyped as being "marginalised youths", rebellious adolescent learners of today who can become the outcasts of tomorrow (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:159). These so-called "marginalised youths" must be supported by teachers and parents by means of a show of warmth, love, understanding and acceptance. The adolescent learners should be accepting authority, via participation in decisions being taken and negotiations to have their ideas and rights accepted.

Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:149) argue that the quality of a learner's development at all levels, is determined by the educational impact of the family. The quality of the fulfilment of social needs of the learner by family members since early childhood, up to the adolescent life phase, determines the quality of the learner's socialisation and the degree to which the community will accept the learner. In addition it will impact on the quality of the adolescent learner's self-actualisation. A positive self-image can only develop if the learner's basic social needs have been met. These needs tend to be similar across cultural boundaries. Parents and teachers are as a rule in a position to satisfy the social needs of learners.

Prinsloo *et al.* (1995:151) contend that learners who grow up in homes, where the parents are not actively involved in the raising of the children, where one parent is absent, or where circumstances are unstable and unloving, are disadvantaged in comparison with learners who are raised in stable and loving homes. He defines the "stable home", as a home where the atmosphere in the home, is loving, where children experience emotional security in order to explore the world and get involved in relationships in their environments (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:151). At school the learners are industrious and are able to cooperate with their peers. Internal control exists in the stable home and parents do not act vindictively, nor do they lack control over the children in the home. These children obey the rules and regulations that are set by their parents, not as a result of coercion, but of their own free will. They gradually develop self-discipline and an inner control, because of the internalised rules. The parents are genuinely interested in their children and try to understand the behaviour of the children, even if they misbehave. They are also willing to support the children, as well as disciplining the children when required. They are available when the children are distressed and experience anxiety, and are prepared to do things with their children. Although they are strict, the children are treated with the necessary respect and know that they can voice their opinions. These children are keen learners and like to explore different relationships. The parents guide the children towards independence, by being neither overprotective, nor overindulgent. Children learn to act

responsively when they enter the adult world. These factors that enhance the possibility of a “stable home” can act as enabling factors, in order to assist the child to actualise his or her full potential. The child also tends to behave appropriately within the class environment at school.

The “unstable home” or inadequate family is defined by Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:152,153) as one where little love exists within the home. There tends to be no internal control, no mutual understanding, nor interest or respect for one another. No adequate guidance towards becoming more independent and gaining control of their inner self exists within these homes. Although research findings seem to suggest that poor large families, appear to be more vulnerable, in this regard, it is important to note that this type of family emerges on all socio-economic and cultural levels. The inadequate family experiences financial problems and tend to live from hand to mouth. They are often overloaded with problems and therefore have little time for attending to their children’s needs. Consequently, a distance amongst family members exists, there is a lack of understanding, the parents are frequently suspicious and teachers are disdained by the parents. The parents generally experience problems in disciplining the children and they do not act as positive role models for the children. They often show shallow affection towards their children.

Teachers, as substitute parents, have a very important role to fulfil. They need to provide substitute acceptance and security for the learners, who need to develop emotionally and become self-actualised. Teachers need to be made aware that they should offer understanding and a little additional sympathy for learners from single parent homes, divorced homes, step-families and street children. If these emotional needs, like understanding and acceptance, are not satisfied, these learners will in secondary school exhibit unacceptable behaviour. These learners are also prone to psychic damage and poor academic performance. Teachers should be sensitive to the needs of these less fortunate learners, for example they need to know if a grandparent is maybe not able to help the children with their homework. Teachers can also contribute towards the elimination of social stigma, rejection and other negative attitudes often associated with divorce. The teachers can in fact assist learners to develop positive self-images, although they are finding life tough. The difference between success and failure is determined by teacher attention, empathy, tolerance, patience and consistency.

One of the main developmental tasks of the adolescent is the achievement of *emotional independence*. This implies that the adolescent learner is heading for total independence by slowly becoming more independent, by relying more on himself or herself and thereby becoming more responsible. The adolescent wants to take responsibility for his or her own decisions (e.g. who to go out with) and moral or value independence (the adolescent wants to

think about and work out his or her own set of values that will guide his or her behaviour). The way that the adolescent learner will be able to deal with feelings of personal security or insecurity and self-confidence, will be influenced by the acquisition of physical, cognitive and social skills.

Adolescence is a time in the life of the learner when he or she experiences a period of conscious intellectual understanding and makes quite an intense emotional assessment of the place and value of an individual person. Developing their cognitive abilities contributes to the daily expansion of experiences, which has got an intense impact on the adolescent learner, for example the emotional conflict which arises as the learner realises the difference between *the ideal self* and *the real self*. Learners are self-conscious during this life phase and this influences their emotional development, for example being irritated and being fretful. Continuous mood changes cause an apparent despondency and fickleness. Emotional outbursts and overreaction are typical of the behaviour of learners during this life phase. Girls blush, giggle and cry easily, while boys try to hide their embarrassment behind brutality or aloofness.

Both male and female adolescents are troublemakers and cause family members to be caught up in a conflict situation. Emotional behaviour like tears, moodiness, irritability and over sensitiveness are typical of this life phase. When learners feel bad about themselves, they usually hide behind a mask of acting arrogantly, rebelliously or nonchalantly. If adolescent learners experience an inadequate and imperfect self-image, they try to defend themselves by acting aggressively, withdrawing, or daydreaming. They are trying to hide their actual need for acceptance by significant other role players in their lives. Becoming independent and responsible, causes the adolescent learner to experience conflicting feelings. They want to be free and independent, but also like to be reassured by the parents, in order to neutralise their incompetence and uncertainty in social situations. Only if an adolescent learner experiences efficient support will they gain enough confidence to part with the safe environment of childhood.

Learners in secondary school learn how to conform with the peer groups without doing away with their own ideas and viewpoints. They get involved in successful relationships with learners of the same and opposite sex. The learner's identity is being shaped and within the family home the learner feels safe and secure. The learner also establishes an own unique identity. These factors collectively assist in enabling the learner to be capable of tolerance and developing an acceptance of other identities and cultures. In order to develop a personal value system the adolescent learner has to question and accept values. The adolescent learner has to reach a

cognitive developmental level of formulating hypotheses, investigating these hypotheses, making deductions from these hypotheses, and to begin to think abstractively, in order to evaluate alternative values and make an assessment thereof in a rational and logical manner.

The development of *moral values* is an important part of the total development of the adolescent learner. During this phase the learner wants to show the world how independent and responsible he or she can be. They can be regarded as morally mature if they are able to make use of conscious knowledge to evaluate whether something is right or wrong and direct their conduct accordingly. The development of a personal value system, is an important facet of personality development during adolescence. Learners observe and question the values of their role models, in developing their own set of values. Thus the educator and significant other role players within the community, have an impact on the values of the adolescent learner. Restrictions that the adolescent learner has to overcome are for example: egocentrism, feelings of inferiority, dependency as well as a fear of adults.

Thom (1995:412,413) alludes to the following factors that determine and shape the adolescent's moral development:

- **Attitudes and actions of parents** (the internalisation of values are stimulated by the parenting style of parents that seem to be warm and loving, who are good role models for moral behaviour, who make use of inductive disciplinary techniques when reasoning with their adolescent children, as well as to illustrate values to their children).
- **Reactions of the peer group** (the adolescent learner conforms to peer group values and standards because acceptance by the peer group is important to him or her).
- **The impact of religion** (moral development and behaviour is affected by the adolescent's attitude towards religion).
- **Sex role** (the *mature* adolescent who is able to think on a post conventional level of moral judgement will act according to his or her own preferences and moral values and not according to stereotyped values and the expectations of social dictates).

Although adolescents do not accept the values of societies unconditionally, they respect the following values: respect for all individuals, to act socially responsibly and to be honest in interpersonal relationships. Spiritual values overpower materialism and competitiveness.

Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:144,145) maintain that the following factors are of relevance in evaluating to the impact of the educator on the moral development of learners during this life phase:

- **The quality of the teacher/learner relationship or the quality of the parent/child relationship.** A conscience develops when mutual acceptance, trust, respect and communication exist in the relationship that evolves between learners and significant other role players, for example teachers and parents (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:144). Adolescent learners are able to make their own decisions, when significant other role players deliberately convey positive expectations, provide sympathetic support and discuss potential ground rules with the learner. Adolescent learners are enabled to acquire principles of their own, when significant other role players create opportunities for them to discover principles that are basic to all rules and regulations that they need to comply with. If the significant other role players, like the teacher or parents, force the adolescent learner to accept whatever values, rules or regulations they want them to accept, arguments and quarrels will cause tension, which will negatively reinforce the learner not to abide by these rules, regulations and values.
- **The intensity and constancy of the parent/teacher/learner interaction and communication.** Factors such as the constancy of the parent/teacher/learner interaction determine the degree to which the learner identifies with the parent or teacher of the same gender. Values and norms are conveyed by means of constant interaction in a positive and warm relationship between the teacher/parent and the learner. Inadequate role identification is the result of insufficient or negative interaction between an adolescent learner and an uninvolved or autocratic parent or teacher. The total absence of a parental model has a detrimental effect on the moral development of the learner, which in turn is manifest in rebellious, aggressive and negative behaviour (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:14).
- **The educational style and discipline of the teacher or parent.** The impact of discipline, be it implemented by the teacher or the parent, will be determined by whether (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:145):
 - ▶ the discipline is applied at random or consistently,
 - ▶ it was implemented in a democratic way,
 - ▶ it has been clearly explained when applied,
 - ▶ it was administered in a just and fair way, and
 - ▶ an attempt was made to avoid punishment and abuse of the learner's dignity, for example by avoiding sarcasm, discrimination, ill-humour, and faultfinding.

The successful application of discipline enhances feelings of security within the learner. Feelings of insecurity can in turn, lead to feelings of fear, confusion, instability, disobedience and animosity. Behaviour problems, such as drug abuse, sexual permissiveness, delinquency and suicide, are often related to poor disciplining (Prinsloo

et al. 1996:146). Significant other role players treat adolescents in a different way than they would treat younger learners when disciplining them. The ultimate aim of discipline, during the adolescent life phase, is to guide the learner to act more and more in accordance with an inner self-control, to become less dependent on discipline and control by teachers and parents. The adolescent learner eventually becomes self-disciplined and develops an active conscience that will guide them in making decisions as how to behave.

- **The impact of teachers and parents as role models.** Teachers and parents can only serve as role models for adolescent learners, if they live out their values and beliefs through their day to day actions. Being a role model for adolescent learners implies that the social, political and moral values of parents and teachers will be questioned by the learner before they will be accepted (Prinsloo *et al.* 1996:146-147). Parents and teachers need to gain an understanding of how important it is to maintain a relationship of trust, understanding and acceptance with the adolescent learner. Such a relationship is fundamental in assisting learners to respect authority and accept moral and religious convictions. If parents and teachers allow rabble-rousers and circumstances to negatively affect their communication with learners or if learners are allowed to lose all respect for teachers and parents because of the adults' irresponsible and indolent behaviour, learners will turn their backs on them and will not accept their advocated values. According to Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:147) the following tragedies experienced in the nineties, are the result of traditional and conservative values that have been discarded, namely:

drug abuse, alcoholism, suicide, gang warfare, people in prisons because of offences being committed, homeless people that litter the streets, sexual molestation of children, sexually transmitted diseases contaminating people, HIV that affects homosexuals and heterosexuals, bad scholastic performance of learners and low pass rate, illiteracy amongst members of the public is increasing, the structures of community have broken down, crime, violence and murder are increasing, people fear of their lives being in danger, public places have become battlegrounds of people being disrupted so much that they are battling to cope with the demands of daily life.

- **The availability and type of opportunities offered by teachers and parents in order to allow adolescent learners to become independent.** Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:148) argue that disruption is inevitable when a society implements and accepts modern ideas and

humanistic viewpoints (e.g. education taking place without considering moral values or accepting the premise that no God exists and therefore no transcendent purpose exists and life has become meaningless). Committed teachers and parents who are willing to guide learners with love and tenacity, is the only safeguard that learners have against life in a society with confused values. Learners desperately need positive role models to identify with and who can by their example assist learners to develop their own conscience.

This stage may be subdivided into more than one sub-stage, the first being **community rights versus individual rights**. Learners begin to understand that values and laws are relative and that moral standards may vary from individual to individual. However, they also realise that laws are necessary, but that they can be changed if needed. The second stage is that of **universal ethical principles**. At this level a learner formulates his or her own moral standards, based on universal human rights. If there is a conflict between obeying the law and his or her conscience, he or she would rather follow their conscience, even if this might put them at personal risk (Santrock 1992:375). It however needs to be noted, that not all people necessarily reach this last phase of moral judgment. Some people spend their whole lives in one of the earlier phases, such as obeying the law, so as to avoid punishment, and never reach an advanced internal conviction, as to what is morally right or wrong (Zionts 1985:141).

Meyer and Van Ede (1995:93) and Erikson (Meyer *et al.* 1997:221) list the characteristics of *optimally developed people* – a person whose emotional needs have been met and who has dealt successfully with the specific developmental crises during each life phase and for whom the successful dealing with these crises has resulted in the acquirement of ego strengths, which will in turn impact in a positive way in his or her behaviour in the following ways:

- Their perceptions of reality and the social environment are realistic.
- They are capable of accepting their own shortcomings and are able to laugh at themselves.
- They are not obsessed with their own personal problems and are thus capable of concentrating on a task.
- They can maintain stable relationships with other people.
- They are capable of living a full life and are interested in what is happening around them, in effect they experience life intensely.
- Their views on life are reasonably systematic and can be regarded as constituting a well balanced outlook on life.
- They can accept another person's views without having to feel that they are obliged to agree therewith.

- They have trust and hope in their partners, as well as the future of their families.
- They are goal-directed in terms of the moral education of the family.
- They are competent enough in order to work hard so that the family is cared for.
- They are reliable to such an extent that the family knows that they can depend on them.
- They are capable of loving their families.
- They have acquired the necessary wisdom and insight into life, identity and whatever decisions have been taken up to now.

The main viewpoints in this section on the normal development of the older learner can be summarised as follows:

- **Cognitive development.** The adolescent learner's cognitive ability develops quantitatively and qualitatively, as he or she is more capable of mastering intellectual tasks with ease and the nature of his or her thought processes changes to more abstract thinking, combinatorial thinking, hypothetical-deductive thinking, proportional thinking, scientific thinking and thinking about the actual realistic situation versus possible other situations. During the onset of the adolescent life phase the adolescent learner is less egocentric in his or her thinking, but as he or she approaches the late adolescent phase, he/she becomes more egocentric in his or her thinking.
- **Moral development.** The adolescent learner has to establish a personal value system. To be able to establish a personal value system, he or she must either question or accept the values of others. Factors that impact on moral development are: parental attitudes and actions, the peer group, religion and the sex role. Competitiveness and materialism becomes less important to the morally *mature* adolescent learner as he or she focus on respecting everybody, acting socially responsible and being honest in interpersonal relationships.
- **Social development.** Social goals to achieve include the finding of a niche in society, to be able to identify and accept changes in community life, learn to conform to existing values and roles in society, to acquire interpersonal skills, for example to be sensitive to the needs of others, to feel good about themselves and to develop self-assurance. The peer group acts as the point of departure for the adolescent in terms of the actualisation of the learner's potential for and growth towards independence.
- **Personality and emotional development.** During adolescence, apart from physical changes that are taking place, the search for identity is regarded as one of the main purposes of adolescence. *Old identities* and *new identities* must be integrated into one holistic, new personality which provides the adolescent with a feeling of uniqueness and sameness. The

adolescent experiences role confusion which is brought on by physical changes taking place during puberty. They need to also establish a sex-role identity and an occupational identity. Certain tasks need to be overcome in order to overcome an identity crisis for example self-certainty versus apathy. Four identity statuses are identified as indicators of to what degree the adolescent has solved the identity crises, for example status/identity achievement, as the adolescent has worked out his or her own set of values and has made a career choice. Factors that impact on the adolescent's search for identity are for example cognitive differences as the adolescent's cognitive ability is important in his or her dealing with/thinking about matters on an abstract level.

The profile of a person that has reached optimal development has, for example, the following characteristics: he or she has realistic perceptions on reality, he or she is capable of accepting his or her own shortcomings, his or her social environment is realistic, he or she can laugh at himself, he or she is not obsessed with his or her own personal problems.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In the preceding section of this chapter, the following theoretical models have been discussed: *the psychodynamic model, the behaviour model, the biophysical model, the sociological model, the ecological model and the countertheory model*. Theoretical models on behaviour are mostly heuristic. Paul and Epanchin (1982:27,28) summarise the purposes of these theoretical models being used as a frame of reference in dealing with behaviour problems in the classroom, as follows:

- Behaviour problems can be readily identified.
- Educational planning and practice can be guided by theoretical models.
- It provides an intellectual framework for reality.
- It leads to better understanding of the behaviour of learners.
- It assists the teacher to be able to make sense out of the situation and explains the behaviour of the learner.
- Theoretical models guide teachers in their evaluation of the meaning and significance of the behaviour patterns, of the learners per se, as well as their evaluation of the impact of the behaviour on the significant others within the environment of the learners concerned.
- It guides the teacher on how to intervene and when to intervene.
- Each model adds to the teacher's understanding of the learner, him or herself.

- It serves as a guide in directing day-to-day activities and as to how teachers should respond towards the learner.

Each of the models discussed, provides different perspectives on behaviour and specifically behaviour problems. Each model prescribes a set of guidelines for teachers to follow if they want to assist the learner with behaviour problems. No model, however, provides teachers assisting a diversity of learners, with a holistic answer, as to how to assist each learner in the classroom with his or her unique needs, in the most effective way. Some models can be more useful than others or more efficient than others. Keeping this fact in mind, the eclectic model or approach poses to be useful in dealing with the behaviour problems of learners, as it takes the best from every theory and applies it to the situation.

A complete model must, apart from providing a conceptual framework, give clear-cut guidelines to teachers, in order to enable them to match the needs of learners with the appropriate intervention strategies for understand and assist behaviour problems in the most effective manner. The ecological systems model, which focussing on the complexity of the environment, matches this description to a large degree. In terms of the ecological model, a holistic approach is adopted in dealing with behaviour problems. This approach links up with the eclectic approach whereby not only one theoretical approach is favoured, but that the best options are selected from all the theories to assist the learner with behaviour problems.

The development of children/learners should be understood by teachers, parents and significant other role players, in order to assess their level of development and thereby render appropriate assistance to the child in terms thereof. The development of children has specific characteristics and they unfold in terms of a particular pattern. A distinction is drawn between the baby, toddler, preschool, primary, and secondary school phases, in the development of children. Each of these phases is characterised by specific cognitive, personality, emotional, social and moral traits which are more characteristic of these particular phases than at any other time and has a direct bearing on the learner's behaviour. Children have to deal with specific crises in these phases. If they are given enough loving understanding and support by their parents and teachers, they will be able to survive these crises without to serious conflict. Each child/learner is, however, unique and should not be labelled "deviant" or "abnormal" on the mere basis of a superficial, subjective judgement. Learners develop at a different pace and this should be taken into consideration in assessing a child/learner's level of development.

In the following chapter on *behaviour problems in international and local context*, behaviour problems that are currently manifested in South African schools, as well as international trends in this regard, will be discussed. To be able to identify behaviour problems in the classroom, the learner's behaviour must be evaluated in terms of the expected so-called "normal" behaviour of a learner of that specific age group. The theoretical models that have been discussed in this chapter will serve as a frame of reference whereby the manifestation of problem behaviour, as well as the causative factors thereof, can be better understood.

CHAPTER THREE

BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

... it has become increasingly clear that the individual/learner is not a passive recipient of environmental influences, but reaches out to the environment and receives feedback which tends to modify behaviour ... individuals/learners are agents in their own development, unwittingly but sometimes powerfully

Clarke & Clarke (1988:4)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Wheldall and Merrett (1988:13) contend that "teachers frequently cite classroom behaviour problems as one of their major difficulties". This contention is supported by several researchers who have come to a similar conclusion in terms of their research findings (Borg & Falzon 1989:251; Burden 1981:28; Kerr & Nelson 1989:173; Stone 1990:15). This, together with the truths reflected in the introductory quotation, namely that a learner's behaviour is determined by the reciprocal interaction patterns taking place within his or her environment, emphasises the need to pay attention to the manifestations of behaviour problems in the classroom, as well as the causative factors that give rise thereto. Undoubtedly, effective strategies that teachers can implement in the classroom, are required for understanding and assisting the behaviour problems concerned. A precondition for developing such a strategy would be the identification of the various types of undesirable classroom behaviour encountered, before the teacher can put in place an appropriate strategy to effectively understand and assist the behaviours concerned (Borg & Falzon 1989:251).

Guttmann (1982:14) argue that interpersonal interactions to a great extent determine the development and persistence of behaviour problems exhibited by learners. The quality of interaction can be affected by the congruence between the reasons and causes cited for the occurrence of a certain behaviour pattern and the responses of various significant other persons in the learner's environmental context. Apter and Conoley (1984:53) tend to support this argument when they assert that "all the children are both victims of and participants in the dysfunctional lives they lead. No child can be held responsible for the abuse that he or she experiences as a child."

There are research findings that seem to indicate that mental health professionals, just like teachers (Meyers in Johnson 1993:166), are inclined to relinquish the responsibility for understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems by transferring the responsibility therefore to the persons who are exhibiting the behaviour concerned (Guttman 1982:15). Significantly, Dwerk and Quarantelli (Guttman 1982:15) assert that this tendency does not keep in mind the impact that significant other role players have on the development and perpetuation of behaviour problems. **This tendency certainly does not stimulate effective understanding and assistance** to a learner with behaviour problems. Meyer (1997:8) similarly argues that “a complete description and explanation of behaviours would only be possible on the basis of a thorough understanding of all the factors which determine behaviour, including the complex ways in which these factors influence one another”. A more inclusive approach is therefore deemed to be appropriate in gaining an insight into learners’ behaviour problems and human functioning is therefore evaluated in terms of a larger systems theory perspective. See Chapter 2 (sec. 2.2.5) and Chapter 4 (sec.4.3) for further information relating to the Ecological Systems Model which has relevance in this regard..

The focus on the social context or environment of the learner and the impact of the significant other role players on the learner’s behaviour and vice versa, seems to suggest that *a major theoretical mind shift is taking place*. It is a shift from the traditional approach of blaming it all on the child or the parent to one of considering environmental factors that may play a role in shaping a learner’s behaviour patterns. Therapy thus aims at altering the functioning of the social system together with an expectation of changing the behaviour of the learner, rather than having to change the learner him or herself (Rutter 1985:929) – see section 3.5 of this chapter.

In order to develop a tailor-made model for teachers in South African primary and secondary schools to more effectively understand and assist with behaviour problems in the classroom (Chapter 5), the following aspects of behaviour problems need to be discussed in *this chapter*.

- The profile of the learner exhibiting behaviour problems in the classroom.
- Manifestations of behaviour problems in primary and secondary schools.
- Specific behaviour problems exhibited by primary and secondary school learners.
- Causative factors of behaviour problems of primary and secondary learners – an international and national perspective.

- A qualitative investigation of behaviour problems in selected South African schools.

In the following section, the profile of the learner exhibiting behaviour problems, will be discussed.

3.2 PROFILE OF THE LEARNER EXHIBITING BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM

A fundamental question that needs to be answered before any assistance programme can be developed or implemented is one of “who is the learner who is exhibiting behaviour problems?” The answer to this question, as found in the literature, seems to vary in accordance with the researchers’ views: some have a negative stigmatising inclination, whilst others regard these learners as ordinary human beings with unmet emotional needs and as children crying out for understanding and assistance.

Strom and Torrance (1973:156) maintain that when learners commence their school career they in effect have entered a marketplace where people are commodities rather than persons: “His self-esteem depends on conditions beyond his control. If he is successful, he is valuable, if he is not, he is worthless. The degree of insecurity which results from this orientation can hardly be overestimated. If one feels that one’s value is not constituted primarily by the human qualities one possesses, but one’s success on a competitive market with ever-changing conditions, one’s self-esteem is bound to be shaky and in constant need of confirmation by others.” The picture presented, of learners as commodities, stands in stark contrast to that which most responsible educators would like to see featured within the classroom.

Apter and Conoley (1984:29) designate descriptions of the characteristics of behaviour problems as *shorthand descriptive language* which is needed when mental health professionals need to discuss childhood disorders, types of emotional disturbances, or develop educational programmes for children with behaviour problems. Different medical and psychiatric classifications (Apter & Conoley 1984:30) have existed in the past and are to a certain extent still used to classify and categorise children according to their behaviour and symptomatology. These typically are:

- ▶ the classification system of the American Psychiatric Association;
- ▶ the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (DSM IV); and
- ▶ the behaviour classification systems developed by Quay.

Apter and Conoley (1984:37), however, warn that persons interested in helping children with behaviour problems should not be too focussed on categorising their behaviour by assigning a psychiatric category or label thereto, but should rather focus on the child and his or her problem.

While keeping in mind the uniqueness of a human being, the following characteristics of the learner exhibiting behaviour problems, or as Apter and Conoley (1984:29) phrase it, "ways that children relate to the world" can be identified, namely (Apter & Conoley 1984:38; Boston & Szur 1983:125; Kaul 1997:83; Kemp 1993:291; Lewis & Doorlag 1995:4; Mcnamara & Moreton 1995:1; Raths 1972:3-5; Silberg & Kluft 1998:38; Van Niekerk 1998:44-46; Williams & Banyard 1999:3,4):

- The intelligence levels of these learners do not differ significantly from that of other learners.
- The appropriate age-related social skills, as well as the necessary study-skills might be lacking.
- The unmet emotional needs of the learner are manifest in the behaviour patterns of the learner as follows (see also Chapters 4 and 5 in this regard):
 - ▶ They are inclined to act impulsively in the expression of their unmet emotional needs.
 - ▶ They experience feelings of not being loved or cared for, being rejected or abandoned, being incompetent and depressed (e.g. feelings of sadness and hopelessness).
 - ▶ They tend to exhibit a poor self-image and place little, if any, value on the efforts they make.
 - ▶ They are inclined to act aggressively towards other people and exhibit little concern for the property of others. The anger they experience is a sign of emotional anguish. They are so badly hurt and the anguish they experience is so great that the learner is unable to deal therewith and it consequently translates into feelings of aggression.
 - ▶ The learners' relationships with significant other role players in their environment are characterised by an insecure attachment.
 - ▶ They seldom are happy or enjoy life in general. Their moods are predominantly sad and depressive, forever depicting a sense of hopelessness and despair.

- ▶ They are inclined to isolate themselves from others, observing events instead of participating, exhibiting regressive behaviour, and in instances can be extremely submissive – as Rath (1972:4) contends: “he is a captive of those around him”.
 - ▶ They are eager to please others and seem to be too afraid of voicing their own opinion on issues. Sometimes this kind of behaviour is associated with crying or whimpering, and feelings of insecurity.
 - ▶ They experience psychosomatic symptoms at certain times of the day, for example a severe headache during a mathematics period.
 - ▶ They feel stressed in general and experience an absence of internal well-being (Rath,1972:5).
 - ▶ They are often not actualising their full potential, as their unmet emotional needs act as barriers to learning and cause them to exhibit problem behaviour.
 - ▶ They tend to act impulsively and in an irrational and immature way (Rath 1972:3-4).
- The learner can experience secondary behaviour problems, as the primary problem is a learning problem which manifests in reading disabilities or attention deficit disorder.
 - Learners who exhibit behaviour problems may attempt to cover up inappropriate behaviour when they realise they have not behaved in an acceptable manner – they are concerned about being caught, exposed, blamed or punished, instead of worrying about the fact that they have behaved incorrectly. Some of these learners do not experience a sense of guilt and are therefore inclined to either blame others or their circumstances for their unacceptable behaviour.
 - The learners exhibiting behaviour problems can be described, for the purposes of the study, as abused and neglected children – children who exhibit behaviour problems because of emotional abuse and neglect. Their lives were dominated by “a continuing need to keep at bay the intolerable emotions of their past experiences of deprivation. They have a pervading preoccupation with the complex of experiences relating to their sense of deprivation which left little space in their lives for anything else, thus diminishing their capacity to benefit from ordinary maturational experiences. One wants to blame someone for not having cared enough” (Boston & Szur 1983:125).
 - The problem behaviour of the learner can be a manifestation of deep seated psychological symptoms and disorders, as a result of being exposed to traumatic events, for example physical or sexual abuse, violence at school, the home, or in the community, the witnessing of a suicide or being involved in a hijacking incident.

- The problem behaviour of the learner can be a way of expressing or acting out the hurt that was caused by a traumatic event via dissociation. These children are inclined to worry a lot. They have realistic and understandable concerns about maintaining relationships and the well-being of those closest to them. These learners are sensitive to the opinions of others and their ability to act appropriately. They experience the usual post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms of fears, flashbacks of the traumatic event, avoidance behaviours, intrusive thoughts on the traumatic experience and traumatic nightmares. Objects, certain rooms, people, and situations stimulate flashbacks and recall of the traumatic experience.

When a learner is inclined to exhibit dissociative behaviour, it is a warning sign that the child may have experienced a traumatic experience which he or she has tried to block-out, but which is still affecting his or her behaviour and emotional life to such an extent that they make use of alternative personalities when reminded of the trauma. A case in point being a learner, who becomes another person, unconnected to the trauma and talking and behaving accordingly. They cannot remember events that occurred, and behave in ways they are unable to explain. These children can be accused of **telling lies**, while in reality the child is actually **dissociating** himself or herself **from the traumatic experience** and therefore failing to remember anything or even fractions of what has transpired. They sometimes are only able to fabricate a story of what transpired on the basis of what other people have told them of the event, as they cannot remember the exact event themselves.

Manifestations of *dissociative disorders* in the behaviour of the child will be manifest in terms of forgetting questions posed and not responding thereto during interviews. Typical manifestations encountered are amnesia during the earlier part of the interview, staring into the distance when asked to answer a question, suddenly changing from being a very talkative to become a quiet child, a change in activity levels, continuous psychosomatic complaints, for example headaches, stomachache, or troublesome sensory experiences, and depersonalization (for example seeing oneself floating in the room, outside one's body). The alternative personalities that the child experiences may cause sudden behaviour changes.

- A common characteristic amongst children experiencing behaviour problems is an inclination to be anxious. They may experience certain fears, resort to

anxiety-reducing rituals or experience a general feeling of sadness which hampers their daily functioning.

- The learner's behaviour and emotional state changes, for example a child that is normally outgoing and spontaneous changes to a quiet and withdrawn child.
- The changes that take place are ongoing and persistent and the child does not return to the previous state of mind, for example the unhappy and sad child remains sad and does not revert back to the spontaneous and carefree child.
- The overall situation of the child is affected, for example health, peer group relationships, classroom behaviour and school performance in general.

Teachers in the past were not generally afforded the opportunity to acquire the required skills to recognise and deal with their *own feelings*, in relation to the feelings of the learner with behaviour problems. These typically include feelings of not being in control of the situation or frustration. ***They need to understand their feelings together with those of the learner with behaviour problems in a positive way.*** Kemp (1993:291) concurs that teachers in many instances have not acquired an understanding of the diverse emotional needs of learners (especially the adolescent learner) during the different life phases and that they consequently need to be specifically empowered in this regard. It is therefore postulated that teachers do not know how to understand and assist with behaviour problems in the classroom (Kemp, 1993:291). They tend to experience frustration when they try to get the learners to change their behaviour patterns, in order to realise their full potential, with little positive results. This frustration is further compounded by the realisation that the learners' behaviour patterns are negatively impacting on the climate within the classroom, thereby further impeding the learning process.

In many instances teachers come to find that the usual strategies they implement to retain control within the classroom situation are no longer effective when it comes to understanding and assisting the learner with behaviour problems. A combination of feelings of frustration and concern for the learners, cause teachers to become disillusioned and exasperated with the prevailing situation within the classroom. The learners themselves are also angry, because of the deep-seated pain that they are experiencing and it would be futile for the teacher to act in anger, as it will not address the learner's pain – it will in actual fact only add to that pain (Mcnamara & Moreton 1995:1,2). Kaul (1997:83) argues that these learners are suffering from *"the poverty of love and nurture, that all children require at least as much as food – the groceries of the soul"*. It is poverty that brings these learners to the

doorstep of the teacher "And I can't do anything. They step in and I am powerless. All I can do is point out doors, steps, openings" (Kaul 1997:83).

In terms of the preceding discussion, an attempt is made to construct an illustrative profile of the learner exhibiting behaviour problems. The learner is someone who:

- ▶ is not specifically mentally retarded, but has a *normal* intelligence;
- ▶ has an emotional need for love, security, acceptance, responsibility, stimulation and trust, and these unmet needs are reflected in the learner's behaviour patterns;
- ▶ may be emotionally abused or neglected/deprived by the significant other role players in his or her environment;
- ▶ may have experienced a traumatic event, which has had a significant impact on their emotional well being, as reflected in their behaviour patterns;
- ▶ can be making use of dissociative behaviour in order to cope with a traumatic experience and such behaviour manifests in for instance the telling of lies or stealing, which could result in significant problems for him or her;
- ▶ can be experiencing problems in relating to other people and in studying effectively;
- ▶ is inclined to act impulsively in expressing his or her unmet emotional needs;
- ▶ may be experiencing learning problems or enduring another form of disability, for example blindness or shortsightedness, deafness and hard of hearing; and
- ▶ is desperately crying out for understanding and assistance – especially to the teacher as one of the significant role players within his or her life world.

In the following section the manifestations of behaviour problems exhibited by the learners in primary and secondary schools, will be addressed.

3.3 MANIFESTATIONS OF BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In the ensuing two sections the manifestations of behaviour problems in primary and secondary schools will be discussed from an international and a South African or national perspective. The latter will essentially be done on the basis of the research findings emanating from the survey conducted as part of this thesis.

3.3.1 Manifestation of behaviour problems in primary and secondary schools

This section is concerned with the nature of behaviour problems that are commonly encountered amongst primary and secondary school learners and that make the teacher's task significantly more difficult. These would not necessarily be the same kind of behaviour patterns that make life difficult for parents.

Behaviour problems are encountered in learners of all ages. The following research findings are but a few examples illustrating the different perspectives from which behaviour problems are viewed. Included in these perspectives or research findings are elements of labelling (e.g. in terms of sex, age characteristics of behaviour patterns), as well as elements of moral judgement. According to Herbert (1987:8,9), the art of labelling is rooted in social judgements made on the bases on social criteria imbedded in society, that the researcher finds suitable, whilst moral judgements are based on *good* or *bad* behaviour which is founded on moral values and consequently exhibited in terms of *moral problems*. Barker (1983:58-72); Conway (1994:313); Herbert (1987:10,11); Lewis & Doorlag (1995:339); McNamara (Houghton *et al.* 1988:309); Wheldall and Merrett (1988:24,87-91); and Montgomery (1990:131) refer to the following points, some of which might be contradictory and not applicable to all learners or groups of learners:

- Behaviour problems are more common among secondary than primary school learners.
- Boys are more likely than girls to display problem behaviour. They are more frequently involved in juvenile delinquency and are more likely to be referred to a reformatory.
- Boys are more inclined to exhibit disruptive behaviour than girls.
- Behaviour problems occur more frequently in urban than in rural areas.
- Emotional reactions or behaviour patterns resulting from unmet emotional needs are not age related and thus the same emotional reactions can be identified (e.g. aggression) amongst younger and older learners. Rutter (1985:362) indirectly supports this notion, when he maintains that there is a correlation between *psychiatric disorders* (in the childhood and adolescent phase) and *parent-child alienation*, as may be seen from his following statement "disorders with an onset in childhood and those beginning in adolescence are both associated with parent-child alienation".
- Certain types of behaviour problems tend to occur in certain combinations. For instance, aggressive behaviour is associated with juvenile delinquency and the use

of addictive substances. Lying is often associated with theft and other severe behaviour problems. In other words, behaviour problems are interdependent and should be treated as such.

- Behaviour problems often make their first appearance within the home (Barker 1983:64), where the earliest symptoms can be detected – lies, disobedience, verbal or physical aggressiveness towards family members, and similar incidents. As the problem gets worse, it begins to be manifest outside the context of the home environment.
- Disruptive behaviour in the classroom is the most common behaviour problem that teachers encounter in practice.
- Girls are more prone to experiencing emotional problems than boys and boys are more inclined to exhibit conduct/behaviour disorders than girls.
- Male delinquents are inclined to outnumber female delinquents.
- The majority of adolescent psychiatric behaviour problems are manifest from early or middle childhood years.
- There is a continuation of early behaviour problems into later juvenile delinquent behaviour, during adolescence.

In this study an accent is placed on the *unmet emotional needs* of learners, as a behaviour determinant and consequently the approach adopted is one of not labelling a learner in terms of specific social norms or judging behaviour in terms of *good* or *bad* moral behaviour when identifying causative factors of behaviour problems. ***All human beings and all children across different cultures on an national and international level, experience the same emotional needs, for example the need to be loved and to feel secure.***

Wheldall and Merrett (1988:13) find it surprising that so little research has been undertaken, in regard to learners' behaviour problems that have the most impact on teachers within a classroom context. One of the factors that underpins this apparent lack of research findings, is that the occurrences of behaviour problems fluctuate widely and unpredictably. Of equal pertinence in this regard is that the definitions attributed to behaviour problems, as seen from a teacher's perspective, seem to differ substantially across research studies. According to Wilson (1987:30), teachers' perceptions constitute a subjective ranking, as to which behaviours impede the daily, orderly classroom routine and activities, for example stealing, interrupting, and destructive behaviour. Wheldall and Merrett (1988:15) draw attention to the fact that the question of emphasis is determined by the perspective from which the behaviour problems are discussed. Previously more attention was paid to the identification

of learners who exhibit problem behaviour. The focus therefore was on the learner him or herself, instead of on the behaviour per se. In contrast the focus of more recent research studies has tended to be on the behaviour of the learner. Wheldall and Merrett (1988:15) warn that *catch-all phrases* without exact definitions of behaviour, lend themselves to variations in incidence, because what is regarded as acceptable behaviour by one teacher, may well be regarded as unacceptable behaviour by another teacher. A further factor which influences the recording of behaviour problems occurring in the classroom is the *severity* of the problem, namely behaviour recorded against *the rate* at which the problem behaviour is exhibited.

In a study involving teachers from a significant number of schools in England, Montgomery (1990:127) identified the following as the most common behaviour problems encountered. The numbers in brackets refer to the percentage of teachers who experienced the problem:

- ▶ attention-seeking behaviour (90%)
- ▶ disruptive behaviour (90%),
- ▶ attention deficit (40%),
- ▶ aggressiveness (40%),
- ▶ negativity – refusal to work or to cooperate with others (10%), and
- ▶ lack of motivation and interest (10%).

The findings clearly indicate that attention-seeking and disruptive behaviour are, from a teacher's perspective, the most common problems encountered in practice.

Other researchers cite "talking out of turn" and "hampering other children" as the two most disruptive classroom behaviour patterns that occur most frequently (Merrett & Wheldall 1988:23; Montgomery 1990:127). "Slowness" or "idleness" is noted to be a less common behaviour problem encountered in secondary schools (Wheldall & Merrett 1988:309). Learners wandering around needlessly in the classroom, whilst the teacher is trying to teach, are also of substantial concern to many teachers. Lying, stealing, truancy, fighting, arson and vandalism are graver problems which also occur among learners, but such behaviour patterns do not interfere with the classroom routine to the same extent, as seen from a teacher's perspective (Hutton 1984:484).

Wheldall and Merrett (1988:23) explain that although behaviour patterns such as "talking out of turn" and "hampering other children" are not regarded as constituting serious behaviour problems, they still tend to remain a disturbing factor to most teachers, because of the frequency of occurrence of such behaviour within the classroom. These behaviour

problems are time consuming, irritating, stressful and eventually could become quite exhausting for teachers to deal with. These behaviours disturb the classroom atmosphere as teachers continuously need to reprimand the learners concerned. Merrett and Wheldall (1984:24) argue that these behaviours are easy to remediate, as they respond positively to simple, positive behaviour modification interventions. Bickel (Pestello 1989:301) concludes that *a good school climate* causes fewer disciplinary problems. Conway (1994:313) and Merrett and Wheldall's (1984:87-91) findings that in primary schools, *distractable* rather than *acting out* learners pose the greatest difficulty to teachers, tends to be confirmed by this conclusion. In contrast Alley, O'Hair and Wright's (1990:69) research revealed that rebellion, insubordination, vandalism, fighting, noise and stealing, constituted the misbehaviour that troubles teachers most of all.

Wilson (1987:26-30) regards the following behaviour problems, ranked by teachers and counsellors, as being more serious in nature: lack of interest, disobedience, defiance, inattention, careless work and lying. Learners taking part in the research, indicated that stealing, lying, cheating, careless work, disobedience, bullying, selfishness and inattention were the behaviour problems that they regarded as being more serious and frequent in nature. From the study in question it may be concluded that a lack of attention, lying, careless work and disobedience seem to be regarded by both learners, and teacher/counsellor groups as constituting more serious behaviour problems. It is interesting to note that the research revealed that teachers identified behaviour patterns such as suspicion, unsociability, sensitiveness and fearfulness, as harmless behaviour. The teachers commented on the fact that the learners seemed uninvolved and did not care about school. Bronfenbrenner (Wilson 1987:25) diagnosed the attitude of a lack of involvement and carelessness, as stemming from the alienation that young people suffer because of the "benign neglect" of families, schools and other institutions. Bronfenbrenner (Wilson 1987:30) goes on to suggest that learners need to experience that someone cares for them, that their problems are noticed and not considered to be of little consequence and in particular that there are people who are willing to assist them with their problems. On a positive side Hunter (Wilson 1987:24) comments that as of late more attention has been focussed on the learner's emotional needs, and this has sensitised teachers to the needs and problems of children/learners.

Charlton and David (1993:18) and Wheldall and Merrett (1984:91) concur with Montgomery's (1990:127) research findings, previously referred to above, citing the following common classroom problems encountered: *talking out of turn, hampering other*

learners (including aggression), non-attendance, disobedience, making unacceptable noises, laziness and unwillingness to work, unpunctuality, and leaving their seats without permission. They, however, also refer to graver behaviour problems, such as verbal abuse of teachers; physical aggression towards teachers and other learners; and destructiveness (vandalism). Mitchell and Rosa (Montgomery 1990:131) found that certain forms of behaviour show a marked correlation with delinquency in later life, namely theft, destructiveness, running away from home, and the telling of lies.

Hammill and Bartel (1995:292) emphasise the occurrence of aggressive behaviour as the most apparent behaviour problem occurring in the classroom. This aggression manifests in fighting, stealing, and the destruction of property. Behaviours that are self-destructive are deemed to be substance abuse, self-injurious behaviour and suicide, which are also regarded as aggressive behaviour although self-inflicted. These behaviours are obviously regarded as being harmful to the learners concerned, as well as to other learners involved in certain circumstances. Less active behaviours, which are inclined to be regarded as more "passive" behaviour, also occur in the classroom, although they are regarded as less obvious behaviour problems, for example withdrawing from interaction, refusing to communicate, and crying. These behaviours prevent the learner from taking part in social activities, as well as excelling scholastically (Hammill & Bartel 1995:292). Of particular pertinence in this regard is the fact that Lawrence and Steed (Wheldall & Merrett 1988:23) have found that aggressive behaviour is occurring in younger children far more often than was previously the case.

The discrepancies in some of the research findings previously discussed essentially relate to alternative perspectives, as to what constitutes the most pertinent behaviour problems encountered in the classroom. If an inclusive approach is adopted they in effect are all of relevance and need to be considered, as they have a significant impact on the learner concerned. Dupont (1975:87) categorises occurring behaviour problems in twelve categories, namely:

- (1) *Attention to classroom activities* (inattention, daydreaming, withdrawal).
- (2) *Physical activity* (restlessness, noisemaking, hyperactivity).
- (3) *Reaction to tension* (emotional upsets).
- (4) *Appropriateness of behaviour* (telling lies, collecting objects).
- (5) *Meeting work requirements* (self-criticism, giving up, not doing work).
- (6) *Interest in work* (playing, doodling, drawing).

- (7) *Getting along with others* (name calling, fighting, passivity).
- (8) *Consideration for group needs* (impatient with others, interrupting others, talking out loud).
- (9) *Response to teacher requirements or instructions* (arguments, rudeness, disobedience).
- (10) *Degree of independence* (seeking praise, attention, support, currying favour).
- (11) *Regard for general rules and conventions* (truancy, tardiness, disallowed objects, destroying property).
- (12) *Integrity* (cheating, tattling, stealing).

Wheldall and Merrett (1984:91; 1988:24) have found in their research that 62% of the responding teachers needed to spend more time and effort than they ought to on problems of order and control. Behaviour problems in the classroom are regarded as not serious crimes but as "time-wasting, irritating, stressful and ultimately exhausting for teachers. They are the kinds of behaviours which elicit the litany of reprimands and desist commands heard so frequently in classrooms".

In conclusion, on an international level, the manifestations of behaviour problems in the classroom, include the following more common and frequent behaviour problems when grouped together:

- ***Disruptive behaviour***, which includes the following types of behaviour: hampering other learners, leaving their seat without permission, wandering around the classroom, being disobedient, not paying attention, making unaccepted noises in the classroom, talking out of turn and attention-seeking behaviour.
- ***Aggressive behaviour***, which includes vandalism, physical aggression towards teachers or peers or objects and verbal abuse of teachers.
- ***A lack of motivation***, which includes a lack of interest in school, (careless work) unpunctuality and truancy.
- ***Lying***.

Some of the less frequent or commonly encountered behaviour problems occurring in classrooms are: *stealing, crying in the classroom, refusing to communicate, shying away, withdrawal and arson*.

In the following section the manifestation of behaviour problems at a national level in primary and secondary schools will be discussed. A more detailed analysis of the more commonly encountered behaviour problems, within the classroom, will be undertaken in section 3.4 of this chapter.

3.4 SPECIFIC BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS EXHIBITED BY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

The following behaviour problems that tended to occur more frequently, as reflected in research findings on a national and international level, will be dealt greater detail in the ensuing discussion:

- ▶ *disruptive behaviour,*
- ▶ *excessive shyness, reservedness and loneliness,*
- ▶ *telling of lies,*
- ▶ *stealing,*
- ▶ *depression,*
- ▶ *aggressive behaviour,*
- ▶ *juvenile delinquency,*
- ▶ *the use of addictive substances,*
- ▶ *anti-social behaviour, and*
- ▶ *lack of motivation.*

The manifestations of the above-mentioned behaviour patterns will be linked to the causative factors, as discussed in section 3.3 of this chapter (e.g. temperament as an intrinsic causative factor of behaviour problems can determine the manifestation of shyness and withdrawal and should also be kept in mind when analysing this kind of behaviour), as well as in Chapter 5 where a model for teachers to understand and assist with behaviour problems in the classroom will be discussed.

3.4.1 Disruptive behaviour

Disruptive behaviour includes a lack of discipline, knife-attacks, uncontrolled behaviour, storming out of the classroom, noisiness, refusal to cooperate, showing off (clowning), teasing, irritating or disturbing other learners, leaving their seats without permission, talking out of turn, calling out while the teacher is speaking, making improper noises, disobedience, wandering in the classroom, not paying attention, and attention-seeking behaviour. While

these forms of problem behaviour are less serious in nature, teachers find them very disruptive and unacceptable – especially since they are established patterns that occur all the time, not sporadically like some of the more intrinsically worrying problems.

Disruptive behaviour manifest by learners makes it virtually impossible for the teacher to teach properly or to pay the necessary attention to learners who really are in need thereof. It also distracts other learners and affects the whole atmosphere within the classroom. It is, however, not only the other learners who are affected by the disruptive behaviour, as it constrains the very children who engage in such behaviour from learning and from getting the full benefit from the material presented in class. At home within the family situation, attention-seeking behaviour also occurs. Just as in the classroom, these children want to enjoy the full attention of the parents constantly, which apart from being exhausting for the parent, causes conflict between siblings. The other siblings become jealous of the attention-seeker and they frequently shy away and either withdraw, or become depressed. This complicates the situation, as the other child or children can experience themselves as rejected and not favoured by the parent.

A further complicating factor presented by disruptive behaviour, is its discouraging effect on teachers. Once teachers show signs of discouragement, it creates a further opportunity for the ringleaders to persuade other learners (who, up to that point, abode by the teacher's wishes and rules) to follow their example. This has a cascading effect with a further loss of control by the teacher.

The following reasons have been cited for disruptive behaviour (Bakwin & Bakwin 1972:74; Burke 1992:11-13):

- Children behave badly because they want to attract attention. This is particularly true of children who feel rejected or overprotected by their parents and other significant persons, such as the peer group, teachers and family members. Their emotional needs are unfulfilled, so they seek attention to meet their need for security, love, interest, understanding, and support. Children who, for whatever reason, feel unable to meet academic demands (individuals with learning problems) escape the learning task by behaving in an attention-getting and disruptive manner.
- Some children are disruptive because their home environment does not nurture an acceptance of discipline or rules. This makes it difficult for them to adapt to the orderly classroom routine. On the other hand, there are children who are actually

trying to clarify the limits of acceptable behaviour. For these learners the classroom may be too unstructured, for instance the teacher might condone behaviour in certain instances that is not permitted in other cases. Completely unmotivated children often behave disruptively. They find it much more exciting to behave badly than to attend to their work.

- Some children feel guilty about something they have done. By behaving badly, they attract the punishment they feel they deserve.
- Children have learnt that they can make use of disruptive behaviour in order to escape or avoid certain kinds of situations, for example a test that they have not prepared for or to avoid being teased by peers for something that they cannot manage.
- Children make use of disruptive behaviour in order to get control in the classroom.
- Children who are experiencing problems to express their feelings, needs and wants make use of disruptive behaviour.
- ¹Children who are not capable of sufficient social and pragmatic skills are inclined to be disruptive.

Hyperactivity and attention deficits have tended to be popular topics over the past few decades, especially with teachers of young children, whose classes were disrupted by learners experiencing difficulty to concentrate for any length of time. The condition which has become known as **attention-deficit-disorder and hyperactivity** (ADDH) is characterised by typical behaviour patterns. In extreme forms, this condition is associated with forms of neurological dysfunctions and is therefore an intrinsic condition. Of late, however, an increasing number of researchers have shown that these phenomena are not necessarily intrinsic. The same symptoms occur in children who show no sign of a neural dysfunction. The following causes have been associated with the occurrence of ADDH: stress and crises in the life of a child (who reacts with disruptive and inappropriate behaviour); allergic conditions (such as allergies to dyes or preservatives); and negative parenting styles (a lack of structure, wholesome routine or consistent rules).

Hyperactivity indicates excessive motor activity. The learners constantly fidget, look around and cannot stay seated, in other words, they remain in motion without any apparent purpose. Everything around them seems to be a temptation to touch, shake, push or overturn. An attention deficit is so commonly associated with hyperactivity that the two are usually linked. In instances it is termed *sensory hyperactivity*, implying that the children's

¹Children is regarded for the purpose of the study as a synonym for the concept "learners" and can indicate a male or female child.

attention is also in constant "motion". Every sensory stimulus (whatever the children see or hear) attracts them so strongly that they are forced to pay attention. Thus, it is not so much a case of inability to attend, as an inability to control their attention. Because their attention is so easily deflected, they find it difficult to complete tasks. Long before they have finished the task, their attention has been deflected to something else. Such children act in an undisciplined and impulsive manner. They cannot listen for long periods at a time and find it difficult to wait for their turn to speak, they consequently appear to be impulsive.

Teachers should not be too quick to identify a child's behaviour as *hyperactive*, for they may without realising it be dealing with an "attention deficit disorder". They should note whether children are simply unruly or bored, or whether they really cannot help themselves. It will also be necessary to question the parents as to the child's behaviour at home. Usually these children sleep badly and need far less sleep than their peers.

School performance is hampered by attention deficit and hyperactivity (Prinsloo 1995:10). These children do not attend properly to their learning tasks, and often their fine motor skills are poorly developed. They are more interested in climbing, jumping or running around, than in sitting still, drawing or writing. Their handwriting usually suffers as a result of this condition. These learning problems, and their effect on the self-image of the learner, may give rise to other behaviour problems as well. In effect their very inner "being" is frustrated by having to remain seated and having to concentrate on a specific task for any length of time.

3.4.2 Excessive shyness, reservedness and loneliness

Shy or reserved children are often perceived as being "good" or "obedient". They do not court the limelight, as attention-getters and disputers do. Kapp (1989:137) noted that shy, reserved learners are slow, even unwilling to establish social relationships with other children/persons, and social skills are not easily acquired by them. As a result, they are thrown back onto their own resources and become so preoccupied with themselves, that they are unable to direct their attention outwards – towards other people or things. Often they escape into a private world of daydreaming or fantasy. According to Kapp (1989:137), the shy learner is not keen on getting involved with peers and is inclined to keep to him or herself. They are in need of proper social skills and are so focussed on themselves that they choose to escape into their own world of make-believe.

This type of withdrawal from the classroom situation or peer group often points to potential depression or a poor self-image. It may be associated with disturbed relationships at home or in general. Because such children are not disobedient in class/at home, do not demand the teacher's attention and simply keep to themselves, there is a danger that teachers, parents, and counsellors will overlook these learners and forget that they too have special needs requiring their attention. It is vitally important to attend to these needs and to understand and assist them to actualise their full potential.

Bakwin and Bakwin (1972:467) suggest that when shy, reserved children are allowed to develop at their own pace, they can make a successful adjustment in later life. If given appropriate assistance, however, in developing a better self-image and overcoming their emotional problems, the adjustment can be just that much more successful.

The shy learner can also be experiencing loneliness and the teacher needs to be sensitive as to the needs of these learners. These learners are inclined to experience emotional turmoil, when their self-image is harmed. The lonely learner often experiences feelings of sadness in being excluded from the peer group, in addition to feeling shy, inhibited, anxious and lacking in self-confidence. Various factors could give rise to learners experiencing a sense of loneliness, such as the death of a parent or another significant person within their life world, the divorce of parents, conflict within the home or at school, moving to a new school or neighbourhood, losing a friend, pet or an object, routine rejection by peers, and early childhood experiences (Bullock 1993:54). The lonely child in his or her state of loneliness, misses out on many opportunities – especially opportunities to be found in interaction with peers. This could in instances give rise to a learner not-actualising his or her full potential. With this in mind, Bullock (1993:56) stresses that teachers need to be observant and sensitive, so as to identify the lonely learner and involve the learner in activities that will be helpful in assisting him or her to be able to express their feelings of loneliness in alternative constructive ways.

3.4.3 Telling lies

The assumption is often made that by the time children enter high school, they will no longer be telling lies. By this time they are well able to distinguish between fantasy and fact and should have well-established moral values. If this has not happened and they still lie repeatedly and chronically, they have a problem. It may become a lifelong problem unless

they make a deliberate attempt to break the habit. This requires a strong motivation, based on inner convictions that stealing is incompatible with their religious or moral values.

Lying is instrumental in harming a trust relationship and forming a barrier between the learner in question and others in that learner's life-world, such as parents, teachers, and even members of a peer group. People have difficulty in believing such a person and tend to assume that what they are hearing is but yet another lie. Even when the learner has overcome the problem, it may take a long time to restore a sense of trust.

From a concept clarification perspective the "telling of lies" is defined by Bakwin and Bakwin (1972:586) as a deliberate distortion of the truth in order to mislead others. Such behaviour, if not discouraged, can become a habit persisting into adulthood (Bakwin and Bakwin 1972:586) with substantial negative consequences for the learner concerned. Lying may initially occur as an innocent form of fantasy or daydreaming, but if not dealt with correctly, could develop into a more serious disturbance in the moral development of a learner, if he or she is unable to distinguish reality from fantasy. The emphasis in the above definition of a deliberate distortion of the truth with the specific purpose of misleading others clearly draws a distinction between mere fantasy and lying.

Bakwin and Bakwin (1972:587) distinguish between the following types of lies:

- **Lies originating in the learner's fantasy world.** This type of "lie" is most common among young preschool children who are not yet able to distinguish between fact and fantasy. For instance, a little boy might claim that he saw a lion in the garden. Such lies are harmless, but children should be made aware that their "stories" have no objective reality and exist only in their own mind.
- **Imitative lies.** Children have a tendency to imitate their parents. If parents are inclined to distort facts, their children may acquire the same habit. It may become so ingrained and natural that the child can no longer distinguish between what is true and what is false.
- **Lies that magnify or "blow up" reality.** Like the proverbial fisherman, learners tend to embellish their stories in order to create an impression. They must be consciously taught to communicate only what they know to be accurate.
- **Habitual and social lies.** The so-called "white lie" is told on the spur of the moment because it suits the tellers or keeps them out of trouble. For instance, a child might say that he left his book at school and therefore cannot do his homework. Adults, too,

often tell this type of lie. If the telephone or doorbell rings at an inconvenient moment, a child is sent to say that her father or mother is not at home. In this way children learn to lie for their own convenience.

- **Defensive lies.** Children often lie to escape punishment – for example, when they have broken the rules. If you own up, you are punished, but if you deny responsibility, adults may not be sure who the guilty party is and you might escape punishment. Some children persist in denying guilt even when all the evidence is against them. Fellow children may aggravate the situation by adding their own lies. Bakwin and Bakwin (1972:588) point out that this kind of lie is just a cowardly way of getting out of a difficulty. Children may also lie to protect others or keep their fellows out of trouble.
- **Lies as a part of attention-seeking behaviour.** Learners sometimes lie quite deliberately in order to capture adult attention. They might, for instance, claim to have completed a task. Even when they know this will not be believed and that they will be punished for telling a lie, they nonetheless make the attempt because they want to avoid displeasing the adult. Many children misbehave in order to capture the attention of adults.
- **Lies as revenge.** Some lies are told out of vengefulness, to get even with parents or teachers. Children are particularly apt at telling lies which they know will annoy the adult. They feel they have the right to do this. Often the lies are associated with an autocratic or unduly strict education. Children also tell such lies when they feel they have been unfairly treated or that others are getting the lion's share of the attention.
- **Compensatory lies.** Children sometimes lie to compensate for failures in other areas, especially when they feel they have fallen short of parents or teachers' expectations in the area of sport or academic excellence. Lies enable them to maintain their self-respect. Sometimes the lie is offered as an excuse for failure. A learner who has done poorly in a mathematics test might say that the work was never dealt with in class. Children do not want to admit that they have failed to live up to adult expectations. They lie in order to maintain their status in the family or class. Such lies may mislead even the children themselves, who end up not being sure what is true and what is a lie.
- **Lying in support of an antagonistic attitude.** Personal antagonism may lead to lies. For instance, a teacher might tell a child whom she does not like very much that she cannot see him during the break because she has work to do. When the child then sees the teacher relaxing over a cup of tea in the staff room, this treatment is

experienced for what it is, a lack of interest and concern. Children do not hesitate to imitate such behaviour and to tell untruths to the teacher.

- **Pathological lying.** Children who are pathological liars will distort the truth even when there is nothing to be gained. According to Bakwin and Bakwin (1972:589), pathological lying generally commences during adolescence and is associated with other socially unacceptable forms of behaviour such as stealing, juvenile delinquency and running away from home or school.

3.4.4 Stealing

Wolfe (1985:404) maintains that stealing is the most common and antisocial disorder, as it can be detected in the behaviour of more or less 5% of primary school learners. The research findings, as depicted in table 3.1, would tend to support the contention that stealing constitutes a significant antisocial behaviour pattern in primary schools, from a South African perspective. When older learners steal, it is considered as being an aspect of juvenile delinquency. Kapp (1989:137) describes juvenile delinquency in terms of burglary, stealing, a physical attack on people, vandalism, the use and abuse of drugs, truancy and sexual promiscuity.

According to Barker (1983:65) and Bakwin and Bakwin (1972:589), most children will at some stage in their life take something that does not belong to them. If such behaviour persists, it's an indication of underlying problems. Rich and Bowlby (Wolfe 1985:404) found that a correlation exists between stealing and the early separation of children from their mothers. Factors that have become identified and linked with stealing are maternal rejection and deprived socioeconomic backgrounds with inconsistent parents. A correlation between stealing, other conduct disorders exhibited and educational failures was also identified. Adolescents that stole objects that could serve as trophies or to show off their masculinity, for example by stealing cars, seemed to have grown up in a home where parental patterns of maternal indulgence and paternal punitiveness existed.

Wolfe (1985:404) contends that "comfort stealing" often occurs in well socialized learners of both sexes. It is believed to be one of the more common types of antisocial disorders. Identified causative factors include feelings of not being loved by their parents, with consequential anger and a fear of being rejected in the event of any expression of feelings of hostility. Wolfe (1985:404) further asserted that stealing and lies are related forms of antisocial behaviour. Both reflect an inner need by the learner to be loved and are

symptomatic of the child's anger for being deprived of parental love. By lying and stealing, the children negatively reinforce the negative feelings they are experiencing of being rejected, not accepted and being unloved by their parents. In terms of Patterson's (Wolfe 1985:405) theory, stealing is a form of noncompliance to unskilled parents, in particular parents that have been guilty of delinquent behaviour themselves when they were young, together with an inadequate attachment to the child.

Several other explanations for stealing can be found in the literature, for example Anna Freud argued that when the child starts stealing money from the mother's purse, it is an indication that the problem is situated in the initial oneness between the maternal figure and the child (Kaplan, Sadock & Grebb 1994:720). Other categories of stealing, as an acting-out behaviour pattern, explain why children steal. It serves for instance as a way to reestablish the mother/child relationship, as an act of aggression, a way of defending oneself against a fear of being hurt, to seek punishment, a "survival" mechanism in order to maintain the self-image in top spirits or to add to the present good feeling about oneself, a reaction to something that is kept a secret in the family, a way to experience excitement, or as a substitute for a sexual act (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:720).

Parents and teachers should think twice before labelling a young child as a "thief", as this may simply exacerbate the problem. The child's moral values are not yet fully established and the problem needs to be handled with great care and sensitivity. Bakwin and Bakwin (1972:590-593) list the following causes of thieving:

- (1) **Lack of respect for the property of others.** Children who have been raised without proper moral values, and without learning to respect others' property rights, have no problem in taking things that do not belong to them. This is particularly likely to happen if a child has grown up in poor socioeconomic conditions and without proper parental supervision. It is also the case when the parents themselves do not respect the property rights of others.
- (2) **Bribery.** Children sometimes steal in order to bribe their schoolmates (for instance, stealing sweets out of a shop). The underlying cause of such a theft is a sense of inferiority and a need to be accepted and acknowledged by their peers. Even children with a good self-image may steal simply to increase their popularity. Usually they are reluctant to admit to a sense of guilt or shame, and refuse to say why they did it or what they did with the goods that they have stolen.

- (3) **The desire to own something.** Children sometimes steal articles which they would like to own, but cannot obtain in any other way.
- (4) **Revenge.** Theft can be a safety valve for feelings of vengefulness against parents or teachers. Children may feel that they have been misunderstood or unfairly treated, and so they do something that will irritate or annoy the adult in question. They enjoy the sensation and feel important because they have managed to do it unaided. Children often steal relatively worthless articles simply to prove to themselves that they can get away with it.

Rich (Bakwin & Bakwin 1972:592) classifies theft by adolescents into four groups:

- (1) **Impulsive theft.** This involves raiding groups who steal without prior planning. According to Rich (Bakwin & Bakwin 1972:593), this type of theft is particularly common among boys from a lower socioeconomic level. Learners from higher socioeconomic levels who do commit this type of theft are generally the offspring of an overemotional, loving, protective, possessive mother and an autocratic father.
- (2) **Theft intended as a proof of manhood.** An example of this would be stealing a car without getting caught.
- (3) **Theft as compensation for a loss of love or hurt feelings.** Children in such a situation steal to compensate for the lack of love and caring which they experience in their lives. They unconsciously try to cheer themselves up by stealing things.
- (4) **Secondary theft.** This is part of a broader behaviour problem. It is committed individually or with a group of friends. Such thefts are planned in advance and precautions are taken against getting caught. Children who embark on raids of this kind are often unstable, impulsive and immature, and frequently show remorse for their actions. In the case of this more serious form of theft, younger boys are often taught by older ones. The older boys act as role models whom the younger ones who are eager to imitate and please. Younger children are sometimes forced to take part – especially when valuable articles are to be stolen. Such articles are usually sold to obtain money for other purposes – for instance, to buy drugs. As these children grow older, they start thieving on their own or in organised gangs. When they succeed in stealing without getting caught, it reinforces the behaviour pattern and as time goes by they can no longer see anything wrong in stealing. The advantages are much more important than the obvious disadvantages. Children arrested for serious thefts may be committed to industrial schools or corrective institutions.

An additional category, not specifically identified or described by Rich (Bakwin & Bakwin 1972:592) needs to be taken into consideration. This form of theft follows a *compulsive, obsessive behaviour pattern*, which qualifies as a psychological aberration and is generally referred to in the literature as *kleptomania*. Kleptomania refers to an ongoing pattern of thefts and not just a single episode. It is more common among girls and often commences during the teenage years. They steal because they feel compelled to do so – often insignificant articles for which they have no use are stolen. It has been found that in some cases there appears to be a link between when the thefts are committed and the commencement of the menstrual cycle.

3.4.5 Depression

Only at around the age of six do children begin to express their feelings in adult terms, such as feeling of unhappiness. Yet, one can generally see by their facial expressions whether they are happy or not. Many children, however, experience mood changes that are characterised by feelings of sadness, feeling miserable and unhappy. Hersov (1985:377) regards these as a normal developmental occurrence, especially seeing that children learn to react to everyday disappointments and losses or stressful events. Usually the child will revert to a “normal” state of being carefree and happy after such an episode. Factors such as genetics and/or a traumatic experiences during childhood, which remained unsolved, are instrumental in learners being more prone to depression. Depression can be regarded as an appearance of emotional disorder, which can limit the full actualisation of the child’s true potential, as the depression is manifest in his relationships, school performance (not paying attention in the classroom, not being interested in school work) and his or her daily life in general. Kapp (1989:136) identifies the manifestations of depression in terms of the following behaviour patterns: experiencing concentration problems, being unmotivated, harbouring a poor self-image, experiencing excessive feelings of guilt, being very pessimistic, as well as experiencing sleep and eating disorders.

Depression in young children is currently receiving considerable attention, essentially because it is on the increase. Signs of depression in young children are visible unhappiness, tiredness or listlessness (Graham 1986:109). Withdrawal is deemed to be a further sign of depression, with the learner withdrawing from engaging in group games and activities. Children can feel firmly convinced that their lives are worthless. As they grow older, they may threaten to harm themselves. The real danger with such threats is that children under the age of ten do not have a proper conception of death (Bakwin & Bakwin 1972:619).

When they threaten to commit suicide, they do not realise that it would mean the termination of their lives. To them, "death" is something abstract that happens to old people. They associate it with immobility, coffins, cemeteries, and funerals, and also with people crying, mourning and feeling sorry that the person is dead. They do not understand that death is irreversible (Bakwin & Bakwin 1972:619).

Hersov (1985:377), in researching emotional disorders, found that severe depression is more common among adolescents, than amongst younger children. The parents of children, who are depressed, are inclined to act suicidal and be depressed. Rutter and Shaffer (Hersov 1985:377) speculate whether depression in adolescence can be associated with antisocial behaviour. Most of the children who exhibited psychiatric disorders, were depressed. Thompson and Rudolph (1996:87) in a similar vein argue that the link between depression and parental behaviour is illustrated by "parents who tended to be depriving, punitive, rejecting, depressed, and drug abusers". Nelson and Crawford (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:87) found that if stress increased during the period of adolescence, anxiety, depression and suicide ideation also increased. Feelings of loss – whether being a significant other person that may have died or moved out of the home or life of the child, or whether a general feeling of having lost something because of emotional deprivation, seem to be dominating factors in many cases of depression. Thompson and Rudolph (1996:87) describe the loss when they state "losses range from loss of contact with a primary caregiver to less traumatic losses, both actual and perceived". Children react to the feeling of loss in terms of acting out behaviour, via aggressive behaviour or by turning the feeling of anger inward and becoming depressed.

Young children who commit suicide, or threaten to do so, often come from homes where there are problems or disordered family relations. They react rebelliously, aggressively, and then commit suicide in an attempt to escape punishment. Baer (Bakwin & Bakwin 1972:623) also mentions domestic problems, problems at school and injured pride, as possible causes that give rise to suicide. Another motive could be one of attempting to hurt people who have treated them badly, self-destruction being a way of giving vent to aggression. "If I die, then my parents will feel sorry" (Bakwin & Bakwin 1972:625). Suicide during the childhood years can be a result of the learner not being able to deal with the loss of a parent, for example during divorce or separation (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:87).

Children who are depressed are in urgent need of understanding and assistance – not only because they are deeply unhappy, but because they cannot learn properly if they feel

depressed. There is however a further and more distressing compelling fact, namely that the suicide rate, even among young learners, is on the increase. Depression in school-age children remains a very serious problem, because it may be a prelude to suicide. It is an established fact that teenage suicide has increased over the past few years to a point where – after accidents, and cancer – it is the third most common cause of death among adolescents. According to Flisher *et al.* (1993:475), factors causative to the increasing incidence of suicidal thoughts, by standard and for both sexes, may be a result of increasing demands from an academic and social point of view. Lester (Flisher *et al.* 1993:475) maintains that if learners have an outside source to blame for the misery they are experiencing and are able to attribute their misery to this source, suicide will less likely occur. The low incidence of suicides amongst South African blacks can be explained in terms of the following factors: cultural factors, for example taboos, relative close family ties, and the ability to express emotions in somatic terms.

The following facts, in regard to teenage suicide, depict the seriousness of the situation that has materialised (Bakwin & Bakwin 1972:613; Schloss, Smith & Schloss 1990:60,61):

- Suicide attempts (note that not all attempts are successful) are three times as common among girls, as amongst boys.
- More boys than girls die by their own hand – probably because they resort to more violent methods of suicide.
- White people are more likely than black people, and city-dwellers more likely than rural people, to commit suicide.
- Boys and girls commit suicide in different ways. Girls tend to use less violent methods, such as an overdose of pills or the cutting their wrists. Boys are more likely to shoot or hang themselves.
- Changes in social custom lead to changes in the means used to commit suicide. Whereas hanging and poisoning used to be common, it is now more usual to use a gun or gas oneself in a car.
- Teenagers commit suicide. Even younger children are committing suicide in increasing numbers. Newspapers regularly report instances of primary school children who have committed suicide. People who belong to a church, or a church organisation, seem better able to resolve their problems and find new meaning in life than people with no such involvement. Suicide is "contagious". It is more common among individuals who know someone else – a friend, relative or other connection – who has successfully committed suicide. Bakwin and Bakwin (1972:623) refer to a

group of teenagers who hanged themselves for no particular reason. We also read of many cases where members of sects apparently make a pact to die together.

- The actual number of teenagers who commit suicide is probably much higher than the statistics indicate. There are essentially two reasons for this:
 - ▶ Families are not always prepared to admit that a child has committed suicide – especially among certain religious groups, such as Roman Catholics and Muslims, where suicide is considered shameful. The death of the child is therefore attributed to an accident rather than suicide.
 - ▶ Many suicide attempts remain unknown because they resemble simple accidents. It is surmised that many car accidents are actually concealed forms of suicide. For instance, it has been found that teenagers with suicidal tendencies are much more likely to die in accidents than teenagers who have no such history. As early as 1986, the World Health Organisation's annual report stated that "*suicide is almost certainly under reported everywhere*".

The effect that the suicide of a child can have on family members and others who were close to the deceased needs to be taken cognisance of. Schloss *et al.* (1991:61) warn that the emotional damage to such people may be severe. They feel guilty because they might not have paid enough attention to the child and his or her problems, or because they were slow to see that the child needed assistance. As a result, they feel partly responsible (Bakwin & Bakwin 1972:613). Parents and best friends might not only feel guilt, but also a sense of shame and a loss of self-esteem.

3.4.6 Aggressive behaviour

Aggressive behaviour is the acting out of an inner emotional state, for example when the learner is feeling depressed, he or she quite often reacts in an aggressive manner instead of merely being sad and isolating himself or herself. Aggressive behaviour manifests in vandalism, bullying, throwing of stones, and assaulting teachers. Wolfe (1985:401) in reviewing the clinical studies conducted by Jenkins, McCord and Olweus, speculated as to the causes of aggressive acting-out behaviour and concluded that factors such as: responding to frustrations within the family, inconsistent parents, parents at odds with each other, a failure to establish rules and to monitor the behaviour of the children, not providing acceptable positive nonaggressive punishments and rewards, not teaching children how to deal with stress or how to compromise without getting aggressive and yet solve the problems concerned, are all deemed to be possible causes. According to Thompson and Rudolph

(1996:183), problem-solving and self-monitoring skills are taught to children who are inclined to act aggressively, so that they can deal with stressful situations in a more efficient way.

The causative factors of aggressive behaviour in so-called "normal" children are similar to those to be found within the circumstances of psychiatrically disturbed children (Wolfe 1985:405). A further complicating factor is deemed to be the complex matrix of interactive causative factors that are associated with aggressive behaviour and that are embedded within the environment of the learner, for example:

- ▶ Genetic factors.
- ▶ Poverty.
- ▶ The family as a system. Working mothers that are irritated and did not meet the emotional needs of their children because of fatigue or divorced parents, substance abuse by a parent, with associated conflict and insecurity, a child so to speak who is abusing his or her family by means of unacceptable behaviour, negative parenting styles and other forms of family pathology serve as examples of the family, as a system, that can act as a causative factor of aggressive behaviour (Walker 1995:9; Wolfe 1985:407).
- ▶ The impact of the significant other role players, such as peers at nursery school, bullying one another when adults are not around to supervise them.

Assertive behaviour is reinforced by aggressive behaviour styles of significant other role players (e.g. peers or teachers or parents) within the environment of the child. Research findings indicated that children who tended to be highly aggressive, kept up their aggressive behaviour, whilst those children who were "normal" acted aggressively after being in contact with aggressive significant other role players and those children who experienced social relationship problems, did not become aggressive (Wolfe 1985:408).

Wolfe (1985:402) has found that acting out aggression, is a way of trying out the limits of safety, as well as children attempting to imitate the aggressive behaviour of the parents when their interaction is characterised by violence and fighting. The environment (e.g. the home, the school, and the neighbourhood) of the learner is a determining factor in the occurrence of aggression (Wolfe 1985:402). Aggression occurs in various forms:

- ▶ *Physical aggression.* Other learners are bullied and abused.
- ▶ *Verbal aggression.* Other learners (or adults, e.g. the teacher, the counsellor, a parent) are insulted.

- ▶ *Nonverbal aggression.* Other learners (or the teacher, parent, counsellor) are glared at, or body language is used to intimidate them.

It is possible to distinguish between these three forms of aggression, but in practice learners may use any combination thereof to express their inner aggression. Hunt (Walker, Colvin & Ramsey 1995:10) distinguishes between five *types of aggression*, which can be either physical, verbal or nonverbal:

- (i) **Excessive or unwarranted aggression.** Such a reaction is out of all proportion to the situation. It is a behaviour pattern common in young children who are easily distracted and hyperactive. It is not meant to be destructive, nor does it serve a particular purpose, it is secondary to the real problem, which is the attention deficiency syndrome. Behaviour of this kind is also known as "catastrophic reaction". Unlike temper tantrums, which relate to specific causes, there is no such clear connection in the case of these excessively aggressive or catastrophic reactions. The child just suddenly seems to reach the limits of his or her self-control and seems unable to help himself or herself.
- (ii) **Impulsive aggression.** Such behaviour arises on the spur of the moment with no warning whatsoever. It can be neurologically diagnosed and is associated with irritation or long periods of passivity. These aggressive episodes are brief, passing over as suddenly as they materialised. Children displaying this type of aggression are subject to regular, intense mood swings.
- (iii) **Emotional aggression.** This form of behaviour occurs in children who are greatly distressed by circumstances beyond their control – for instance, abused children, or children in institutions who have been removed from their parents and do not grow up within a normal family setting (e.g. an orphanage). They are angry, they feel that they have been unfairly treated by life and society, and are "owed" something. Emotional aggression also occurs when there are other deep-seated, unfulfilled emotional needs. This type of aggression is strongly emotional and can be violent and indeed destructive up to a point where such learners can be a danger to themselves and others.
- (iv) **Predatory aggression.** This form of aggression is typical of older children and adults who act in a paranoid manner, emanating from a belief that "everybody is against them". According to them all their schoolmates and teachers are, apparently against them and are working against their best interests. So they are vindictive and vengeful.

- (v) **Instrumental aggression.** This behaviour pattern is commonly used by children to get their own way by fighting with others. They will intimidate, humiliate and dominate others for their own advantage, in order to obtain social control. This type of aggression is associated with psychopathic tendencies, even personality disorders. Children who display such behaviour often come from unstable, chaotic homes or families where one of the parents is excessively dominant and cruel.

Walker *et al.* (1995:9) regard *aggression* as a form of *antisocial behaviour* associated with behaviour problems. Such children/learners often find themselves in conflict with their peers or with teachers. For instance, they would rather disturb their classmates than assist them. They would rather start a fight than make up or keep the peace in the classroom or playground. The causes are similar in that they lead to deep inner frustrations and unfulfilled emotional needs. For example: a disadvantageous background, divorced parents or substance abuse by a parent, with an associated conflict and insecurity, a child so to speak who is abusing his or her family by means of his unacceptable behaviour, negative parenting styles and other forms of family pathology.

Antisocial behaviour is regarded as constituting an *umbrella* term, which includes different kinds of behaviour, linked to distinct behaviour patterns. Overt acts of aggression are: stealing, truancy, running away from home, arrests, scholastic problems, impulsiveness, promiscuity, resistance behaviour, suicide attempts, substance abuse, associating with undesirable persons, staying out late at night, incorrigibility and lying – associated with antisocial behaviour (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:1130). Emotional deprivation, because of a poor parenting experience which leads to low self-esteem and unconscious anger, is regarded as a causative factor of antisocial behaviour (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:1131). Wolfe (1985:402) maintains that if aggressive behaviour occurs during the early adolescent period, it is predicted that the learner will act aggressively, exhibit antisocial behaviour and delinquent behaviour, when he or she is older.

Rutter and Cox (1985:72-74) cite factors such as frustration, catharsis, interpretations and perceptions, response to aggression, imitation and the effects of television, as determinants in the occurrence of aggression. These are briefly reviewed for purposes of clarity:

- **Frustration and catharsis:** Aggression is quite often the result of frustration – depending on the manner in which the child acts aggressively and the reasoning as to the cause of the aggression. However, not all frustration precipitates aggressive

behaviour. If parents do not teach their children to behave in an unaggressive manner when they feeling frustrated, then aggressive behaviour could well be stimulated thereby. A typical profile of parents could include the following characteristics, namely showing little warmth towards and providing little support for their children, being inconsistent in their behaviour patterns, tending to be critical and rejective. Prior frustration is needed for catharsis to occur. Berkowitz's (Rutter *et al.* 1985:72) research findings seems to indicate that aggressive films and participation in aggressive play, tend to stimulate aggression within learners.

- **Interpretations and perceptions:** Research undertaken by Malik and McCandless (Rutter *et al.* 1985:73) revealed that discussions around factors and circumstances that trigger aggressive behaviour, had the positive effect of reducing the occurrence of further aggression. Berkowitz's (Rutter *et al.* 1985:73) recommendation, that the perceptions of learners exhibiting aggressive behaviour patterns need to be changed, certainly has relevance in this regard. He maintains that it is not only a matter of merely becoming knowledgeable, as regards the factors that trigger and stimulate aggressive behaviour, but that it is rather an issue of placing the behaviour pattern in a more positive perspective. In a very similar vein Rutter *et al.* (1985:73) argue that (if within a family setting, or for the purposes of this study the teacher and the learner(s) within a classroom setting), discussions are held in relation to situations and events that could possibly trigger aggressive behaviour, while at the same time focussing on the appreciation of other people, this could well have the positive effect of diminishing aggressive behaviour. In essence, if the perceptions and interpretations of situations and other people are changed, aggressive behaviour can be reduced.
- **Response to aggression, imitation and the impact of television:** Feshbach (Rutter *et al.* 1985:73) maintains that aggression is related as much to the results of aggressive behaviour, as it is to the preceding factors that stimulated aggression. Aggression can be a means used by a learner to gain the attention of a teacher, peers and parents. If successful it could well stimulate further aggressive behaviour. The research findings of Becker and Feshbach (Rutter *et al.* 1985:73) indicate that children who are punished by their parents on a frequent or severe basis, are more inclined to be aggressive or disruptive. This response within the child is elicited by the cold and rejecting attitude of the parent (and for the purposes of this study, the teacher) towards the child, as no alternative, more positive way of dealing with the aggression has been suggested by the parent. Of equal pertinence is the fact that the parents in question have not rewarded nonaggressive responses of the child. In contrast, corporal punishment or the parent shouting angrily at the child, serves as examples of

aggressive behaviour. In effect the model of aggressive behaviour, provided by the parent, makes it far easier for the child to behave in a similar way (Rutter *et al.* 1985:73). If the parent or the teacher for the purposes of this study, wants to minimise aggressive behaviour, discipline should be embedded within a warm, caring relationship with the child and the type of punishment that is dealt out should not trigger a loss of control or aggressive behaviour. An imitation of aggressive behaviour takes place when the child admires a certain person of higher status than he or she, or when the significant person's behaviour is an exaggeration of their style of response, or when the relevant person is dominant or is in control of resources. Imitation of more positive behaviour, can take place within a warm, caring relationship. Research findings indicate that young children are especially affected by aggressive behaviour seen on television. This tendency is more pronounced in cases where the children are already experiencing social relationship problems. Imitating aggressive behaviour, as seen on television, has a long term effect on the child in the sense that he or she accepts aggressive behaviour as the solution and correct way to deal with personal frustrations or problems and that it is normal and acceptable to react in such a way. The significant adult role players (especially the teacher and the parents) in the child's life world need to be made aware of the impact of their behaviour, as role models to the child and specifically in terms of the modelling of aggressive behaviour.

Aggressive behaviour generally has negative results, both for the children themselves and for others. The learners concerned often experience learning difficulties and perform below their normal potential. It is not absolutely clear whether learning problems stem from behaviour problems or whether the converse applies, namely whether learning problems trigger aggressive behaviour patterns in learners. Other behaviour problems may also be elicited, as a result of a negative response to the situation by either teachers or other learners. Peers tend to repay aggressive behaviour in kind and to reject the aggressors. They isolate the aggressive learner, because they know what a disturbing experience it can be to interact socially with such a person.

Apart from depression and antisocial behaviour, aggressive learners may develop other forms of problem behaviour. Walker *et al.* (1995:190,191) for instance noted that bullying behaviour generally gets worse as children grow older. As adolescents they may even display seriously problematic behaviour, such as truancy and thieving (Kirk & Gallagher 1989:404). According to Walker *et al.* (1995:11), numerous references exist within the

literature, linking seriously aggressive behaviour to subsequent juvenile delinquency. Approximately half of all the learners who exhibit antisocial tendencies, tend to eventually become juvenile delinquents and subsequently adult criminals. The problem can therefore not be ignored, but calls for concerted action by teachers, counsellors, parents and the support network.

3.4.7 Juvenile delinquency

Juvenile delinquency refers to youths who transgress the law. Such transgressions may take on many forms – theft, the illegal possession of prohibited substances, and taking part in illegal activities. Youths who are arrested for delinquent acts may be sentenced by the Juvenile Court and sent to a corrective institution.

Lovell (Mahlangu 1989:99) noted the following facts in connection with juvenile delinquency:

- Most juvenile delinquents are not neurotic, intellectually disabled, or totally unfamiliar with moral standards, even though those standards may be low. No conspicuous differences have been noted between juvenile delinquents and other youths.
- Many children go through a juvenile delinquent phase. They might never be caught, and the phase passes as their priorities change or the need to prove themselves loses its urgency.
- Juvenile delinquency is part of a wider range of behaviour problems, such as lying and selfishness.

Burt (Mahlangu 1989:100) cites a number of further causes of juvenile delinquency, namely faulty learner discipline (which may mean either too much or too little discipline, or some variation of these), powerful emotional urges (such as the sex drive or the urge for self-assertion), general emotional instability, feelings of depression resulting from, for instance, antagonism towards the father, a family record of crime, and intellectual disability. That behaviour problems of this nature need urgent attention should go without saying. According to Sheldrick (1985:744) the causative factors giving rise to juvenile delinquent behaviour are: larger sized families, lack of money to satisfy basic needs, parents with criminal records themselves, marital conflict, insufficient parental supervision, cruel, passive or neglecting attitudes of parents, as well as erratic or very harsh disciplinary styles. Within the family home, parents are not interested in the child and no encouragement is provided.

Continuous negative interactions between the parents and the child, characterised by irritation and anger, with no clear set of household rules tend to be the order of the day in these homes.

Apart from punishment dealt out in the courts, treatment of juvenile delinquent children has included, according to Sheldrick (1985:749,750), behaviour contracting and child advocacy components. Behaviour oriented parent training programmes, modelling, role-plays, programmes directed at the teaching of social skills, for example how to deal with peer pressure, psychotherapy and placing children in residential homes in the community are further examples of means applied for dealing with the problem. Research findings indicate that “we should leave delinquents alone whenever possible and that we only intervene in the lives of those who persist in offending, particularly if this is of a violent nature” (Sheldrick 1985:745). Although Sheldrick (1985:751) suggested that delinquent children be left alone, it is recommended that “whatever profession or setting is used, it seems that warmth, consistency, firmness, high but appropriate expectations, and clearly-defined objectives are essential”.

3.4.8 The use of addictive substances

Addiction to drugs or alcohol means that the child’s body can no longer function without these substances. The addictive substances, however, have substantial negative effects. They can in instances alter the mental state or personality, and behaviour patterns to a point where the person becomes a danger to themselves or others. Once a person is hooked, it is not so easy to throw off the addiction. The body is sending constant messages to the brain that the substance is urgently needed. Bakwin and Bakwin (1972:611) describe the following symptoms for which teachers, counsellors, and parents should be on the alert, as signs that learners may be involved in the use of addictive substances. Children in such cases:

- ▶ show a decline in academic performance,
- ▶ bunk classes and disappear from the school grounds,
- ▶ lose interest in their school work and sport,
- ▶ are apathetic and listless,
- ▶ are personally untidy,
- ▶ show a heightened appetite for sweets,
- ▶ display weakened motor coordination and clouded judgment, and sometimes talk in a confused manner,
- ▶ are restless and talkative, and perspire excessively,

- ▶ have bloodshot eyes and a fixed stare which they often hide behind sunglasses,
- ▶ who inject themselves, usually wear long sleeves, no matter how hot it is, to hide needle scars,
- ▶ break off old friendships and form new ones,
- ▶ yawn a lot in class, and
- ▶ look anxious and act furtively.

According to Oppenheimer (Rutter & Hersov 1985:491), studies performed in the United States of America have revealed that different stages in drug taking can be distinguished, namely: a first or initial stage involving alcohol and tobacco usage, considered as socially accepted. During the second stage, marihuana is used. Notably, such drug taking activities can generally be related to peer group pressure and activities. The drug taker then progresses to a more advanced or third stage where use of more illicit drugs and the drug taking are allied with problems experienced in the parent/child relationship, personality, underachievement at school and mood swings. Research findings indicate that parent/child relationships are a problem in many instances. In certain cases it may even be that the parents are addicted to drugs themselves, thereby complicating the situation that exists. In this regard, Oppenheimer (Rutter & Hersov 1985:494) refers to the research findings of Glynn, in which it was found that the actual drug use of family members and peers, seem to be the strongest influences on a young person's drug taking habits. Oppenheimer (Rutter & Hersov 1985:493) mentions that although only a casual connection between drug taking and juvenile delinquency can be established, statistics indicate a link between the two behaviour patterns. Oppenheimer (Rutter & Hersov 1985:493) goes on to quote the research findings of Kandel, stating that delinquency in a minor form, often leads to drug usage at a latter stage.

Oppenheimer (Rutter & Hersov 1985:498) maintains that no single or clear-cut set of causative factors relating to drug taking can be identified, as drug taking is a complex phenomenon. No profile of a typical drug taker can be described. There are a variety of drugs that are used in practice.

3.4.9 Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour can include the following types of problem behaviour: raping other learners, sexual harassment of other learners, engaging in fraud, smoking on the school premises and drug taking, fire setting, lying, stealing, delinquency, disruption and aggressive behaviour (Graham, Turk and Verhulst 1999:241,243). In assessing behaviour and deciding

on whether behaviour can be regarded as normal or abnormal, the views of others in the society, will influence the judgement of professionals (Graham *et al.* 1999:241). In the literature consulted, it seems that *anti-social behaviour* is synonymous to *conduct disorder*. Anti-social behaviour is regarded as the more serious type of behaviour or conduct problem – especially where the learner gets involved with the law, courts and the police. Lying is not regarded as an anti-social problem until the moment when the learner lies in court.

Herbert (1987:3) contends that serious anti-social behaviour in childhood, is an indication of possible serious behaviour problems when these learners become teenagers. Graham *et al.* (1999:251) and Farrington and Wadsworth (Herbert 1987:11) contend that adult antisocial personalities can be traced back to anti-social behaviour occurring in childhood. In adulthood these adults frequently change jobs, get divorced, develop neurotic personalities, schizophrenia, develop aggressive personality disorders and experience difficulties in establishing long-lasting relationships. Graham *et al.* (1999:247) report that once a learner has been labelled as exhibiting anti-social behaviour and especially if the learner has appeared in court, the anti-social behaviour of these learners seems to increase. The behaviour problems of learners who have not appeared in court seem to have a better outcome.

Robins (Herbert 1987:12) found in his research that the parents of anti-social children, were lax in providing proper discipline and supervision. Many of these children who exhibited anti-social behaviour, opposed requirements set by their parents, their schools and their communities. Teachers and parents quite often comment that these learners tend to act first and think afterwards. Other typical complaints from teachers and parents regarding these learners are “doesn’t seem to know right from wrong, he never listens, he is so selfish, he never thinks of anyone but himself”. Anti-social behaviour manifests itself in the fact that these learners have difficulty to fulfil behaviour standards set by teachers or to adhere to the rules and laws, codes of conduct prescribed by members of society (See the manifestations of behaviour problems, section 3.4 of this chapter).

3.4.10 Lack of motivation

A lack of motivation, being negative about school and everything that concerns school and schoolwork, as well as school refusal, are linked to the self-concept of the learner. According to Herbert (1987:248) learners that are underachieving, have poorer self-concepts than

learners who perform according to their abilities. Underachievers are inclined to be lonely, defensive and experience undue restriction of their freedom. Factors like lack of success in school, boredom, resentment, low social standing, being labelled and the lack of successful role models can contribute to a learner not being motivated (Herbert 1987:249, 250). Graham *et al.* (1999:323) contend that a cognitive and emotional component contribute to the final view a learner has of himself or herself. He/she can see himself/herself as in terms of being brighter, or less brighter than other learners and more or less attractive than other learners. On an emotional level he or she can view himself/herself negatively by having a tendency to self-criticism and feeling negative about himself or herself or by feeling positive about himself or herself and self-confident. (See sec. 3.5.2 (*extrinsic causative factors*) of this chapter.)

3.5 CAUSATIVE FACTORS OF BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEARNERS – AN INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The difficulties children experience in school derive from different sources. Sometimes there is a direct link with innate handicap-related factors, though it is often not possible to establish such links in an educationally useful way. More often, the difficulties arise from environmental or school-related factors, or from the interaction within a pupil of different kinds of factors.

Hegarty (1987:39).

In terms of the above quotation it is clear that behaviour problems stem from a variety of causative factors. Zarkowska and Clements (1992:3) support this notion, when they maintain that “it is unusual to find a simple or single cause for behaviour disturbance in people”. Gerdes (1998:8,9) similarly contends that behaviour is influenced by an interaction between numerous factors. In the literature there is a great deal of speculation, as to which of these is a cause of problem behaviour in children/learners. Various researchers tend to place emphasis on a particular set of causative factors, based on their specific paradigms of the problem or on the emphasis of their research. In practice it may well be that collectively these various factors give rise to behaviour problems in learners.

A significant number of studies have focussed on the relationship between the causative factors a person or learner attributes to a given situation and the behaviour that will flow therefrom and several theoretical strategies for effective “classroom management” have been developed. **However, few of the research findings, on which these strategies are based,**

focus on learners' unmet emotional needs as a catalyst for behaviour problems. This notwithstanding, an increasing number of contemporary researchers have come to appreciate the value of adopting an interactional approach in researching behaviour problems. They have found, in many instances, that *it is impossible to understand a learner's behaviour or psychological problems without taking the interaction effect that others may have, into consideration.* So, for instance, Cooper (Farrrel 1995:3) maintains that "problem behaviours are a result of a complex interaction between contextual factors and aspects which the individual brings to the situation" and Conroy and Fox (1994:32) state that "adults and peers in the student's environment may serve to facilitate or inhibit behaviors".

As may be seen from the preceding discussion a long overdue trend seems to be emerging, one where the *environment and its impact on learners' behaviour patterns are assuming far greater relevance.* Meyers (Johnson 1993:166) argues that teachers are inclined to think in terms of "what is wrong with the child" instead of examining the classroom and other systemic factors, such as unmet emotional needs, that give rise to the individual learner's behaviour problems. Safran and Safran (1987:243) in a similar vein assert that "judgements of problem behaviours are not independent of the classroom environment". Ostensibly, **the classroom environment, the reciprocal interaction taking place within the environment, as well as the unmet emotional needs of learners, emerge as dimensions of analysis in developing appropriate strategies to understand and assist learners who manifest behaviour problems.**

Previously, in line with the traditional clinical approach, the learner himself or herself was seen as the scapegoat (the one who is to blame). Van Niekerk (1998:8) describes the traditional approach, as a *blame-saturated description of problems*, in terms of tracing the cause of the problem back to either the parent or the child. Van Niekerk (1998:8) does not support the traditional medical or clinical approach, because she maintains that this kind of approach is based on assigning blame and does little to motivate children to take control of their lives and to attach a different meaning to interactions taking place in their environment. The latter approach is one that has been freed from the cause/effect dilemma, which allows the problem to become the problem once again, without any connections or insinuations being applied to a specific person.

Lately, the ecosystemic approach appears to have gained substantial ground, as a frame of reference, for analysing behaviour problems. The ecosystemic approach represents a certain

way of thinking or knowing. The focus is on systems, where systems represent the different relationships of the child with significant role players within his life world. Aspects of the communication taking place between the different subsystems and systems are interaction, cooperation and counteraction. The communication networks in the systems and subsystems of the child, function by means of language, both verbal, as well as nonverbal body language. The communication network is used to communicate meanings and ideas to the subsystems and systems. The meaning that a child for instance attaches to everything he or she comes into contact with, is personal and subjective and presents reality for that specific child. The reality that the child construes, is reality to him or her and might be quite different from the meaning that another person would attach to it. The person thus determines the meaning attributed to a topic or experience and not vice versa. The network of meanings is a reflection of the way that the child looks at his or her world or environment and serves to paint a mental picture of his or her needs, wishes, goals, values and priorities. It also reflects the needs, wishes, values ideas and beliefs of the bigger systems, of which the child is part, as well as the interactional patterns of meanings of systems, being present (Moore 1997:555, 560, 561).

In terms of this model, researchers are required to view learners within their total (overall) environmental situation. It is therefore necessary to take note of the impact of a child's particular situation and the "significant others" in his or her life-world. The latter *inter alia* include the parents, teacher and peers of the learner concerned. In terms of the ecological model, it is equally true that children/learners, in turn *have an impact on their environment*. Thus: within the *ecosystemic approach* both the internal or intrinsic, as well as the external or extrinsic subsystems, must be acknowledged as forces that determine the interaction between the learner and his or her environment. The impact of this interaction is manifested in the behaviour of the learner – whether problematic or normal. Analysing the forces that determine the communication network between the subsystems and systems, does not imply that this approach supports the cause/effect approach – the focus being on the identification of possible causes and fitting them within a frame of reference of different subsystems and the vice versa interaction between these subsystems or systems. Farrell (1995:13) maintains that "those who work in this field need to be sensitive to these issues and to recognize that they themselves and the way they interact with the pupil may also be part of the problem". Behaviour problems can thus be regarded on the one hand, as a result of the quality of the communication networks within the child's relationships with significant other role players and on the other hand, as a problem that should be dealt with by the subsystems. This fact implies that *emotional disturbances are not regarded as being the result of a physical*

disease only, located solely within the learner, but rather as a “failure to match” because of a disturbed ecosystem (Apter & Conoley 1984:83; Lategan & Stuart 1993:29; Thomas & Chess 1984:8). When the failure to match is resolved and the ecosystem is once more congruent, a state of balance comes into being, that sets the stage for positive behaviour development (Apter & Conoley 1984:83).

Zarakowska and Clements (1992:4) analyse the causes of behaviour problems in terms of *biological, social, emotional* and *cognitive* factors. It is argued that any of these influences can affect a learner's emotional adjustment and consequently impact upon their behaviour. The logical grouping of these factors into these categories is deemed to assist in developing approaches for the management of the problems concerned. Herbert (Lategan & Stuart 1993:29) argues that *biological factors, sociological factors, and psychological factors* are responsible for the occurrence of behaviour problems. Barker (1983:20) identifies the following causative factors to behaviour problems: *constitutional factors, the effects of physical injury or disease, temperamental factors, and environmental factors*. This study focusses especially on the *social or sociological, environmental and psychological factors*.

In addition to the factors previously discussed, Cooper, Smith & Upton (1994:170), Gerdes (1998: 8), Macnamara and Moreton (1995:3,4), and Van Niekerk (1998:2) provide examples of macro systems that can indirectly be a cause of behaviour problems:

- Learners who blame teachers and poor teaching, as the cause of their behaviour problems.
- Members of society labelling the behaviour of learners as defiant. Learners consequently attempt to live up to this label, by exhibiting behaviour that is in line with these labels. “Deviance arises when some other person(s) defines that act as deviant” (Cooper *et al.* 1994:18).
- Behaviour can be regarded in one culture as problematic, whilst in another culture it is regarded as quite “normal”.
- The socio-political climate in the country has added to children's fears and anxieties, for example nightmares, fear of the dark and other exaggerated fears. Many children have experienced crime and violence personally, which is a traumatic situation for any child. It in essence generates a sense of being helpless and out of control.
- The legal system does not provide enough support and assistance to an abused child.
- Children are not being granted opportunities to develop a sense of independence, as they are for instance no longer allowed to ride on their bicycles on their own on the

pavement. Children are thus missing out on opportunities to become independent and responsible adults. Children remain dependent on their parents for far longer periods of time. They tend to experience a level of incompetence, as a result of this lack of independent and are unable to feel good about themselves. According to Van Niekerk (1998:2), this could cause an absence of a clear sense of autonomy and identity. An emerging identity confusion could well give rise to behaviour problems.

- Changes are taking place within the family system in the sense that more and more families are being broken up and more single parent families seem to be coming into being. According to Van Niekerk (1998:2), in terms of divorce statistics, one out of every three children experiences a divorce situation and need to cope with the stresses surrounding divorce. Van Niekerk (1998:2) maintains that "children find themselves in positions that they are not developmentally and emotionally equipped to handle, and the instinct of survival is often what they rely on". When the child is not equipped developmentally and especially *emotionally*, the child is being emotionally abused, and according to O'Hagan (1993:29) this in turn will cripple the child's emotional development, the end result being an emergence of behaviour problems.
- The existence of reconstituted families and working mothers can impinge on the child's feelings of safety and sense of certainty. When a family has been reconstituted, children have to cope with the loss of a parent and the loss of their own family unit, as well as having to be able to accommodate emotionally with the challenge of integrating other people into their hearts and homes. The collapse of the family unit and the security associated therewith, may result in feelings of insecurity. It is a situation where adult figures are not able to provide them with the necessary security they need and they begin to lose trust in themselves and their abilities. Van Niekerk (1998:3) maintains that the emotional stress that results from this situation in many instances gives rise to scholastic and behaviour problems. Typical problems listed are: tearfulness (depression), defiant behaviour, enuresis and thumb-sucking. As a result of the financial constraints confronting the family, mothers are often forced to work full time without the privileges of a day-care centre at work, or being able to work flexi-time as it suits them. The care of children during the day and after school is thus left with domestic workers, who must, apart from seeing to the children, complete chores within the home. Children that are cared for at after-school centres, quite often have to complete their homework at night, when they are tired and have no time left to spend with their parents. Van Niekerk (1998:3) contends that this may give rise to scholastic problems, as well as emotional acting out behaviour and an increase in the stress levels of family members.

- Children are frequently not being reared by their parents and this can impact on the child's emotional well-being. In many South African townships, children need to cope without the support of their parents who, all too frequently, are working in cities and town quite distant from their homes. The children are generally being cared for by grandparents or other members of the integrated family. Quite often they only see the parents once a month. The children are confronted with the reality of growing up on their own. As stressed by Van Niekerk (1998:4) the raising of children under such conditions, has a significant impact on children's lives as "the development of an individual sense of worth, autonomy and an integrated sense of personal and moral values is difficult for any child to grasp for himself, without mediation from the consistent presence of a caring and nurturing parental figure".
- An escalation in knowledge and technological developments, have placed increasing demands on children at school. School curricula cover far greater content than ever before and parents are finding it difficult to assist their children with their homework, as they are not familiar with the learning content. This reality has the potential to increase the stress experienced both by parents and child alike and could well impact on the existing parent/child relationship. The child's eventual scholastic performance could suffer as a consequence of the stressful situation that materialises.
- A different and certainly more positive approach has emerged, in dealing with children who experience barriers to learning. It replaces the negative label assigned to these learners, as naughty and disruptive. The focus is no longer one of attempting to pass them on to someone else to deal with. Teachers in South Africa are nowadays forced by means of the new education policy to cater for the needs of these learners and to treat them with respect and dignity.
- The assistance rendered to learners who experience barriers to learning is frequently inadequate, as teachers experience substantial difficulty in getting through the school curriculum and have neither the time nor the energy to pay additional attention to the specific needs of these learners (Van Niekerk 1998:5). The preceding reality needs to be seen within the light of Donald's (Van Niekerk 1998:4) contention that 40% of school-going children experience special educational needs or barriers to learning and require assistance by means of remedial teaching. Currently the needs of these children are not being sufficiently catered for, with the result that they are becoming marginalised (Van Niekerk 1998:5).
- The allocation of government finances and resources have an impact on the occurrence of behaviour problems, in that "the need for intervention and therapy is great, but the resources are limited, and are being further eroded as government funds

are redirected away from catering for the special needs of the privileged few to providing for the fundamental needs of the majority" (Van Niekerk 1998:5).

- Suitable role models are not always available for the children.
- The context in which children live – a city, country, suburban or squatter camp home – will have an effect on the child's behaviour, in the sense that each setting has its own unique environment in which the behaviour patterns are established.
- The culture in which the child is embedded impacts on his or her moral values, criteria of acceptable behaviour and educational practices.
- The world view, faith or ideology of the parents and community, influences child rearing practices and parenting styles, which in turn impact on the behaviour of the child.
- The support available to a child when in difficulties, be it illness or a family crisis, has an effect on his or her emotional well-being and can be detected in their behaviour.
- Opportunities available to children, such as good schooling and health care, form part of the child's basic human rights and have an influence on their behaviour and the actualisation of their potential.
- The stability or instability of the social system that exists within a country, has an effect on the emotional climate in which a child is raised and develops emotionally. In a war-torn country the social system can be totally different from that exists in countries that are peaceful.

Little doubt exists as to the importance of these factors and that they exert a strong influence in respect to the behaviour problems manifested by learners. However, although the impact of the school and the teaching staff are as important, as researchers have found them to be, they do not represent one of the core causative factors giving rise to behaviour problems, namely the unfulfilled emotional needs of learners. Rutter *et al.* (Lategan & Stuart 1993:29) maintain that the two major types of general child problems encountered, relate to emotional and behaviour disorders. In a study conducted by Thomas (Lategan *et al.* 1993:29) it was found that 81% of learners from their sample, were experiencing psychological problems and showed signs of exhibiting active behaviour problems, namely uncontrolled, impulsive behaviour that was not socially acceptable.

Within the frame of reference of the ecological systems model, the basic emotional needs of learners ought to be met within the context of the environment. Swanson and Reinert (1984:163) argue that "emotional disturbance (behaviour problems) is not exclusive to the

child (learner) but is rather an interaction of the child (learner) and the environment". In effect it is contended that no behaviour exists in a vacuum.

In addressing the behaviour problem, which has materialised, for example as a result of the learner's unmet emotional needs, emphasis is not only placed on the learner's behaviour for purposes of remediation, but also on the different "congruent" components of the various environmental ecosystems of the learner (Swanson *et al.* 1984:164).

The causative factors of behaviour problems are being discussed in this chapter because, as stressed by Molnar and Lindquist (1989:8), "to remove the effect (behaviour problems), the cause must be removed". Erikson (1982:5) concludes that in the case of behaviour disorders "the ultimate goals are to develop effective treatment procedures and to prevent problems through a complete understanding of the factors that cause these problems". Zarakowska and Clements (1992:4) concur with this statement, by emphasising that in order to overcome behaviour and emotional difficulties the underlying causes need to be identified and effectively addressed. Gaining an understanding of the causative factors and complexities involved in dealing with behaviour problems, is therefore considered to be a prerequisite for managing behaviour problems in the classroom.

Apter and Conoley (1984:44) and Van Niekerk (1998:44-46) mention that causative factors to behaviour problems can be related to either external (extrinsic) or internal (intrinsic) causes. Lewis (1999:10,11) however, maintains that these factors or causes are intertwined and interact. They consequently have an impact on one another as the child develops and as asserted by Lewis (1999:10,11) "resilience in children is likely to develop from both internal (or constitutional) and environmental factors".

In any study it would be extremely difficult to deal with all the diverse factors that may give rise to behaviour problems. This study is certainly no exception to the rule. An attempt is, however, made to gain an understanding of the more eminent causative factors relating to behaviour problems. It is also contended that these factors being complex in nature cannot be dealt with, in a simplistic or *linear manner*. Consequently it is no longer possible to argue that a young man's oral needs were not met or satisfied as a child, therefore he has become excessively addicted to smoking. In other words, cause equals result. In contrast it is contended that problems are in effect *multi-causal*. Stated more simplistically, within this study, the focus will be on trauma and especially unmet emotional needs, as the main causes of behaviour problems.

In this study it is contended that trauma and especially unmet emotional needs are crucial in the occurrence of behaviour problems. Lewis (1999:12) maintains that for children to be able to cope with traumatic experiences, they need "a close, loving relationship with a supportive, available caregiver. Such relationships act as a protective shield for the child during times of trauma". If children don't have a *protective shield*, the reality thereof will be manifest in the classroom, in terms of unusual disobedience, disruptive, or quiet and withdrawn behaviour (Lewis 1999:20). Iwaniec (1995:7) argues that unmet emotional needs result in emotional abuse. Wolfe (1991:33) contends that "this disruption is so pronounced and significant that behaviour, emotional, and social-cognitive dimensions of the child's development are impaired to varying degrees". According to Iwaniec (1995:49), the emotional impairment is manifest in different ways during the different life phases of the child. For example during infancy, an insecure attachment to caregivers and delayed psychomotor development takes place, while preschool children will exhibit disturbed social and emotional behaviour, and school-going children will be experiencing learning and behaviour problems. Children are in close contact with teachers for a large part of the day and the following statement by Van Niekerk (1998:6) therefore has specific relevance in this regard, namely "If the child is experiencing emotional difficulties, the adult is likely to be aware of these problems and to have to deal with them, purely because of the amount of time he or she spends with the child. Emotional difficulties cannot simply be left on a shelf outside the classroom to be dealt with by the professional play therapist once a week."

In the following section *intrinsic*, *extrinsic* and *other* factors, that impact on the learner's behaviour, will be discussed.

3.5.1 Intrinsic factors

The following statement by Farrell (1995:5) has significance in analysing the intrinsic factors that impact on a learner's behaviour, namely that "even when the cause is largely within the child there are likely to be other factors in the home and the school which have influenced the nature of the problem". This statement by Farrell (1995:5) underlines the fact that neither extrinsic nor intrinsic factors can be pinpointed as being the only cause of behaviour problems, as they are always in interaction with one another. The ensuing discussion should be seen within the light of this reality.

Various intrinsic factors may give rise to behaviour problems. Typical factors include hearing and vision disabilities, food intolerance, autism, medical conditions (e.g. epilepsy or brain

damage), and psychological conditions (e.g. low self-esteem, psychotic disorders, and levels of intelligence) (Carson & Butcher 1992:96; Jones & Charlton 1996:15-18; Macnamara & Moreton 1995:3; Morgan & Reinart 1991:13). A few of these are briefly considered in the subsequent discussion, namely *genetic deviations, brain damage and brain dysfunction, differences in temperament, physical characteristics, and health and the satisfying of basic needs.*

3.5.1.1 Genetic deviations

A person's genetic composition is determined at the moment of conception, when the mother's ovum merges with the father's sperm cell. Human characteristics are determined by the 13 pairs of chromosomes (26 in total), as well as the hundreds of thousands of genes arranged on these chromosomes. It is frequently alleged that everyone has genetic deviations. However, the effects of these are usually so slight, as to be of little significant relevance. There are cases though where the deviations do have important consequences, such as in *Down's Syndrome*. Individuals with this condition have an extra 21 st. chromosome. Children with Down's syndrome develop such typical physical characteristics, that they tend to resemble one another more than their own families. A doctor or psychologist can generally recognise a Down's syndrome child at first glance, whether the child comes from Africa, Europe or Asia. Regrettably, Down's syndrome children are usually intellectually disabled. They develop slower than other children/learners and act like children/learners who are more or less on the same developmental level.

Klinefelter's Syndrome generally occurs only in males. These persons have one X chromosome too many, namely 47 instead of 46 chromosomes (The X chromosome is a female chromosome.). These individuals are usually tall and thin, with reduced male characteristics. There is evidence that they tend to become involved in criminal activities.

Turner's Syndrome occurs only in females. These girls have one X chromosome too few. They are usually intellectually mildly disabled and could experience learning difficulties.

Several other deviations can be listed, but, for the purposes of this study the above will suffice.

3.5.1.2 *Brain damage and brain dysfunction*

All human activity is dependent on the nervous system. It is through this system that all people gain an awareness of their environment and are able to react thereto. The human brain consists of a very large number of nerve cells or neurons, with a complex and extensive network of nerve connections between the cells themselves and with the different parts of the body. There are three major functional areas of the cerebral cortex, namely the sensory, motor, and association areas (Kisker 1964:77). The sensory areas translate information from the sensory organs into patterns of sensory experience. The motor areas control conscious body movement and the association areas are responsible for the intellectual differences between man and animals. The latter area, as explained by Kisker (1964:77), plays a key role in all “reasoning, planning, foresight, problem solving, imagination, memory and similar high-level intellectual activities”. Brain damage resulting from injury in accidents, infections, toxic conditions, brain tumours and similar conditions, will quite clearly adversely impact on the respective brain functions, depending on the areas where damage has occurred.

Brain damage can occur either at or after birth. Children who have suffered brain damage could in instances be seriously disabled, as in the case of those who are severely intellectually disabled, cerebrally disabled, epileptic or have multiple disabilities. The effect of the damage may also be slighter, as seen in the case of a perceptual problem, attention deficit, hyperactivity, perceptual abnormalities, lack of social perception, and similar cases. Zarkowska and Clements (1992:4) draw a direct correlation between behaviour problems and brain dysfunction and refer to epilepsy as an additional biological factor giving rise to behaviour difficulties

The behaviour of children who have suffered brain damage before or at birth and who are therefore intellectually disabled, is often unacceptable. These problems tend to relate to the fact that they are unable to grasp what is expected of them. They lack insight as to the way they should conduct themselves in a specific situation or are not taught how to behave properly. Their behaviour usually resembles that of children, who are at a lower level of development.

The term *traumatic brain damage* (TBD) refers to brain damage that arises from a traumatic event occurring after the child has already passed through infancy – that is, *not* within the first few days of birth. Incidents commonly associated with such brain damage are a fall

from a high wall or a swing, a heavy blow to the head and in particular head injuries sustained during motor car accidents. In more affluent areas the injuries tend to befall children who are passengers in vehicles, while in the less affluent areas, the injured children are usually pedestrians.

In recent years there has been serious concern about the fact that TBD is on the increase among children in South Africa. Within the United States of America, from 1993 to 1994, there has been a 33.7% increase in traumatic brain damage, involving students between the ages of six and twenty-one (Seventeenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals and Disabilities Education Act. US Department of Education. 1995). This represents the highest percentage increase in all twelve categories of disabilities reported on in the referenced report. Children with Traumatic Brain Damage are likely to develop several problems, which they did not have before, including changes in their behaviour. Of particular interest is the fact that in terms of the 1995 report to the Congress of the United States of America in 1992, previously referenced, only 16.4% of the children who suffered traumatic brain damage were accommodated within mainstream or as termed in the report "regular" classes. Learners with TBD were typically accommodated within more restrictive settings than other learners with disabilities, the most common being separate facilities, according to the referenced report.

3.5.1.3 Differences in temperament and personality

Keirsey and Bates (1984:2) maintain that people are different in many ways ... in terms of motives, purposes, aims, values, needs, drives, impulses and urges "in other words, we rather naturally account for variations in the behaviour of others instead of flaw and affliction. Our job, at least for those near us, would seem to be to correct these flaws. Our Pygmalion project, then, is to make all those near us just like us." Quite often the behaviour of learners is regarded as problematic, if they do not behave as they are expected to behave. They are labelled by teachers, as a learner with problem behaviour, for example Cunningham and Sugawara (1989:371) describe the shy, withdrawn and anxious learner, as a learner who is socially immature. Keirsey and Bates (1984:10) reflect on the feelings of a person who is not being understood when he, or she does not copy the behaviour of another person:

*If you will allow me any of my own wants, or emotions, or beliefs, or actions,
then you open yourself, so that some day these ways of mine might not seem*

so wrong, and might finally appear to you as right for me. To put up with me is the first step to understanding me. Not that you embrace my ways as right for you, but that you are no longer irritated or disappointed with me for my seeming waywardness. And in understanding me you might come to prize my differences from you, and, far from seeking to change me, preserve and even nurture those differences.

According to Keirsey and Bates (1984:100) temperament probably determines the behaviour pattern that the learner exhibits. It is therefore necessary to briefly discuss the different temperament types found in the literature.

Thomas and Chess (1984:2) regard temperament as the “how” of behaviour in contrast to the “what” of behaviour that links up with the abilities of the learner and the “why” of behaviour that is associated with the motivations underlying certain behaviour. Santrock (1995:186) defines temperament as “*an individual’s behaviour style and characteristic way of responding*”.

When two learners or siblings from the same household are compared, their motivations and their abilities can be the same, yet their temperaments could well differ. In other cases, the temperaments of learners may correlate, although their abilities and motivations differ. Plomin (Santrock, 1995:186) categorises temperament into three basic categories, namely: *emotionality, sociability and activity level*. Research findings suggest that temperament is inclined to become more malleable with experience. The older the learner becomes, the more difficult it becomes to identify the indicators of temperament.

The exact factors leading to the development of a certain temperament are difficult to pinpoint. According to Thomas and Chess (1984:2) some studies have focussed on genetic causative factors. Kaplan, Sadock and Grebb (1994:181) report that temperament is interceded by genetics, which links up with the occurrence of behaviour problems. The research findings, however, do not indicate that sex differences are relevant, neither do parental attitudes and practices act as decisive factors in shaping certain temperament characteristics during babyhood. Factors that were identified that could possibly play an important role in shaping the temperament are for example prenatal variations in chemical or physiological influences. Thomas and Chess (1984:4) found that the continuation of a certain temperament characteristic from infancy to early adult life, was evident. Continuity over time implies that it is the result of a stable pattern within the interaction between the person/learner and his or her environment. When the environment is stable, it will allow

a certain temperament attribute to be consistent at different age periods. Whenever the environment is not stable, the temperament will also change (Thomas & Chess 1984:4). Paul and Epanchin (1982:158) and Thomas and Chess (Apter & Conoley 1984:66) refer to three fundamental temperament types – the *easy* child, the *difficult* child, and the *slow-to-warm-up*-child, that have emerged from factor analysis of temperamental traits that are associated with both positive and negative behaviour.

According to Thomas and Chess (1984:4,8) the *difficult* child is deemed to be the most vulnerable, as far as the development of behaviour problems is concerned, especially during early and middle childhood – particularly from two to 16 years. The demands of early socialization results in the generation of a lot of stress for these children/learners, because of their intense negative reactions to new situations and their being slow to adapt to new situations and biological irregularity. If these children/learners are mentally or physically disabled, or if one of the parents is mentally ill, the risk of exhibiting behaviour problems increases.

Although behaviour problems are not connected to any specific temperament pattern, temperament patterns do act as a causative factor in the occurrence of behaviour problems (Barker 1983:11; Lategan & Stuart 1993:29; Thomas & Chess 1984:4). Even the *easy* child/learner can develop behaviour problems, if the learner cannot cope and experiences stress in relation to the demands for change and adaptation. Not one of the temperament patterns is specifically connected to behaviour problems, nor are any of the temperament patterns fated to develop psychopathology. The outcomes of motives, adaptive tactics, defence mechanisms, neurophysiological or biochemical influences on behaviour, and the structure of the environment, are all different according to the temperament of the person/learner. Barker (1983:25) emphasises the fact that, although temperament has been genetically determined, forces from within the environment also affect behaviour. Barker (1983:187) agrees, however, that heredity is a determining factor in the development of behaviour problems. The impact of the environment and heredity on the development of behaviour problems, are dependent on for instance the parent's responsiveness to their children.

Interaction within the family can act as a modifier of temperament, as role modelling and imitation take place. Torgersen's research findings (Barker 1983:26) indicate that although environmental factors are principal factors, they are not the only important factors influencing the learner's behaviour during early and middle childhood.

Thomas and Chess (1984:3) draw a distinction between nine categories of temperament:

- **Activity level:** this indicates the motor functioning impacting on the learner's general functioning.
- **Rhythmicity:** (regularity): the extent to which a learner's feelings of being hungry, feeding pattern, elimination and sleep-wake pattern can be predicted.
- **Approach or withdrawal:** this indicates the way that a learner approaches new stimuli, for example new food, toys, or strange persons.
- **Adaptability:** this indicates how quickly and how easily a learner can modify current behaviour in response to a changed environment.
- **Threshold of responsiveness:** the level of intensity that is needed in order to stimulate a learner to react to sensory stimuli, environmental objects and social contacts.
- **Intensity of reaction:** this indicates the amount of energy that the learner requires to express his or her mood.
- **Quality of mood:** moods can change from pleasant, joyful and friendly moods to unpleasant, crying and unfriendly moods.
- **Distractibility:** the effectiveness of stimuli from within the environment to distract the learner's attention from what he or she is busy doing at that moment in time. These stimuli can either alter or interfere with the direction of the ongoing behaviour.
- **Attention span and persistence:** the amount of time that the learner can concentrate and maintain a certain activity, as well as the ability to continue with an activity although obstacles are experienced.

From the above categories of temperament identified by Thomas and Chess (1984:3), three constellations of temperament were formulated:

- These learners in the first group, are characterised by regularity, positive reactions to new stimuli, adapt easily in a new situation, exhibit positive moods, develop regular sleeping patterns, experience no problems with food, are friendly towards strangers, fit in easily at a new school, stick to the rules of the game and deal with frustration without making a fuss. These children can be classified as "easy" children and do not cause any problems at home or in the classroom.
- The second group is characterised by their irregularity in biological functions, reacting in a negative way towards new stimuli, do not adapt easily to new stimuli, moods are intense and mostly negative. These learners exhibit irregular sleep and feeding patterns, do not accept new foods easily, experience problems in adapting to new

routines, people or situations, and experience periods of loud crying and laughter. Frustrations are manifested in violent tantrums. These learners are described as depicting the *difficult child* syndrome.

- The third group is characterised by a combination of mild, negative responses to new stimuli and slow adaptability. These learners' biological functions are not so irregular, as that of group two. Their reactions to stimuli from within the environment are also inclined to not be so intense, but mild in nature. Initially these learners react in a mild negative way, but when the mild reactions are repeated, over time, with little pressure experienced, these learners gradually become involved and interested. These learners are categorised as the *slow to warm up* children.

The ratings of the children that took part in the longitudinal study, apart from some temperament traits, seemed to be stable over a period of 25 years. The temperament traits that did not stay the same over the 25 years period, were explained in terms of the impact of genetics on the personality of the child. According to Thomas and Chess (Kaplan & Sadock 1991:43), there is an interplay between the following determining factors (nature/genetic and nurture /environment), in determining how stable/unstable the temperament patterns will be:

- ▶ the initial personality traits of the child,
- ▶ the parenting style,
- ▶ the subsequent behaviour of the child,
- ▶ the appearance of symptoms of the behaviour patterns, and
- ▶ the teaching style and impact of the teacher on the child's personality traits.

According to Thomas and Chess (1984:3) not all children or learners can be categorised to fit into one of these three temperament constellations, as individual children exhibit various combinations of temperament traits, manifested in their behaviour. The degree of manifestation of those learners that do fit into any of these three constellations, vary quite substantially.

In general it may be accepted that every child is born with a unique temperament. Any parent will attest to this. Even babies are described as "placid", "good", "contented", "alert" or "restless". These behaviour differences may be ascribed to a number of other factors, such as the child's digestive system – some children tend to have cramps and the child's metabolism – some children tend to be constantly hungry or suffer from allergies which make them restless.

Apter and Conoley (1984:82,83) and Thomas and Chess (1984:9) clarified the concepts' *mismatch* or *goodness of fit*. When an individual or learner does not fit in his or her environment, the *mismatch* is caused by the fact that the learner's own capacities, motivations and style of behaving does not match the expectations and demands of the environment. No *goodness of fit* is possible when there is no consonance, but rather dissonance between the individual or learner and the environment. This misfit results in distorted development and maladaptive functioning in accordance with the values and demands of a specific culture or socioeconomic group.

Even when no *misfit* exists and it seems as if the learner fits in well with his or her environment, stress and conflict can occur, as the learner continuously has to adapt to new expectations and demands for change, as they grow up and reach higher levels of functioning. When a *misfit* or no *goodness of fit* occurs and the learner does not comply with the expectations and demands of the environment, in combination with the learner's own capacities, motivations and style of behaving, consequently excessive stress is present, as well as behaviour problems.

Remediation of the *misfit* situation, implies that parent guidance should take place, where the parent is guided to change his or her behaviour and the attitudes overtly expressed. In addition unfavourable influences in the environment may need to be changed. After identifying the exact *poorness of fit* together with the parent, a strategy is worked out to change the so-called *poorness of fit* to a *goodness of fit*, which might include a revision of the expectations that the learner could not comply with or the repositioning of demands that the learner could manage, which were required to prevent behaviour problems from occurring.

Lategan and Stewart (1993:33) argue that the environment/society should acknowledge a learner's temperament constellation and individuality. It cannot be expected from children/learners to change their temperament. Parents can, however, be guided and requested to change their parenting style. Sameroff (Thomas & Chess 1977:xi) argues that "the message should not be that we are uninvolved with these problems, or that we are not responsible for these problems. Ultimately we are responsible – if not as individuals, or as parents, than as a society. So as a society that we should promote the educational, social, and emotional resources to permit the parental adaptations demanded by the temperament concept." Temperament can thus be regarded as the buffer or agent of intensification of the

occurrence of behaviour problems (Lategan & Stuart 1993:34). Thomas (1982:315) notes that "the temperamentally difficult child with wise parents and teachers has a bright future".

Parental guidance thus focuses on changing specific aspects of the parent(s) functioning and not so much on the changing of covert attitudes and defence mechanisms that could lead to overt behaviour and attitudes.

3.5.1.4 Physical characteristics

Physical characteristics relate to learners *inner life* or subjective experience, in relation to their physical appearance. The learner's inner state of feelings and attitudes are shaped by various factors, one of which is deemed to be their self-conceptualisation of their physical appearance. Bos and Vaughn (1994:359) contend that a correlation exists between the appearance of learners and learning disabilities, which relates to peer popularity. Learners who have acquired a negative image, as regards their physical appearance, can hardly be expected to feel good about themselves and this will have an impact on how they behave. As stressed by Bos and Vaughn (1994:361) "it is not surprising that students with learning and behaviour difficulties often have poor self concepts". It is therefore theorised that children's physical characteristics have an impact on their behaviour.

It is frequently argued that children/learners with well-developed coordination, normal proportions and who are outwardly attractive, have many advantages over those who are not attractive. Because physical beauty is so highly esteemed, nowadays, attractive people experience many more positive responses from others than do the less attractive. This gives them a feeling of confidence and reinforces a good self-image. Outward appearances become especially important during adolescence. If a child has a false impression that he or she is unattractive, this in itself can have negative effects which in turn may lead to behaviour problems.

3.5.1.5 Health and the satisfying of basic needs

The most basic human needs are for food, oxygen, shelter, security, water and sleep. If these are not met, our mental resilience is whittled away (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:257). One of the tragedies of our modern world is that millions of children suffer from malnutrition and under nutrition. Carson and Butcher (1992:110) point out that the long-term effects of this are diminished growth, lower intelligence, and a reduced tolerance for dealing with stress-

inducing circumstances. These conditions are usually accompanied by parental neglect and a lack of stimulation, which compound the disadvantages experienced by the learners concerned.

If learners' needs for food and shelter are not met, they will be unable to concentrate in class, and could well become irritable, aggressive and frustrated at home as well. They may even steal the food and possessions of other learners in an attempt to improve their lot in life.

That they could feel envious of their more privileged class mates, would not be all that difficult to understand. In terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, people's basic needs relate to food, clothing, shelter, warmth and water (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:257). In effect the basic needs are essentially of a physiological nature. If these needs are not met, some persons natural tendency would be directed towards doing just that. As these needs are satisfied, they will have a diminishing influence on an individual's behaviour. Teachers, however, cannot be expected to meet these basic needs within the education situation – they need to refer families who are unable to meet the basic needs of learners to social workers or service organisations within the community.

Loda (1995:10) claims that the basic needs of learners are not always met. The developmental needs of learners, however, should be taken care of, especially if these adolescent learners need to be prepared to cope with the demands of the society. Loda (1995:10-11) identified the following developmental needs of adolescent learners:

- **Positive social interactions:** the need to come into contact with *caring adults*. Communication with youth serving agencies within the community can assist in satisfying this need.
- **Structure and limits:** schools need to involve learners in establishing rules and expectations, which need to be understood by staff members and learners. Rules provide learners with a feeling of security.
- **Competence and achievement:** learners need opportunities to experience competence and success.
- **Creative expression:** learners need opportunities to be able to express their new feelings, interests, abilities and thoughts in a creative way.
- **Physical activity:** structured outlets are needed to enable learners to get rid of pent-up physical energy.

- **Participation in the community:** learners need to work in the community on service related projects.
- **Self-definition:** learners must get to know themselves and understand how they relate to the larger world, in essence, how to get involved in adult society in a meaningful way.

Notably, many of the above needs correlate with the more advanced levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Self-actualisation for instance is situated at the very apex of Maslow's triangle. In the centre of the needs hierarchy are the emotional or social needs that need to be met, for example affection, friendship, understanding, and acceptance. They act as primary motivators for certain behaviour patterns to occur (see Chapter 4, sec. 4.4 in this regard).

3.5.2 Extrinsic factors

Farrell (1995:3) argues that the home environment and the school, basically determine the social and emotional adjustment of children and these factors interact with the genetic predisposition of a child.

3.5.2.1 *The family*

The family's critical function is to provide children with love, emotional support, and security. It further serves to guide the children to behave in a socially accepted manner, in line with the values and norms of society and last but not least, to provide for the basic physiological needs of the children (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:40-41; Wood 1991:414). Children clearly experience different needs. They want to feel *needed* by their families, they want to feel wanted, they want to be *cared for* and *protected*, they want to be regarded as *somebody* with *dignity* and be treated with *respect*, they want to feel *valuable* to their families, they want to feel *accepted*, they want to experience *a sense of belonging*, they want to be *educated*, they want to be guided to act *socially acceptable* and they would like to benefit from opportunities which will provide them with a *feeling of satisfaction*, having done *useful* work and by being *creative* (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:41). The so-called "wants" described will without doubt have an impact on how they behave. The atmosphere in the home must be of such a nature that children can develop a feeling of basic trust, which paves the way for later emotional bonds with other significant other persons in his or her contextual environment. They also need to experience a feeling of independence and self-actualisation.

The child must be able to feel good about him or herself and develop a positive sense of self-esteem. They need to discover their own unique identity. Tolerance towards the learner and the development of a strong value system will enable the child to make the right decisions.

Various dynamics within the home could contribute to a situation where children are deprived of the loving attention they need, for example:

- In families where the harmony is disturbed, the parents are continually quarrelling. They are so engrossed in thinking about their own self-preservation that they are unable to give their children the necessary attention they require.
- With high rates of unemployment there are many families confronted with financial difficulties, which in turn give rise to escalating tension within the home and children's concerns and feelings are attributed far less attention than they deserve.
- In incomplete families (e.g. divorce or death of a parent) where there is only one parent, grandparent or other family member, one person carries the responsibility – in addition to all the others – of supplying the child's need for love and attention. Often there is no role model with which such a child can identify on a continuous basis.
- Where there are parents who are themselves experiencing problems, such as alcoholism, illness or depression, the children are exposed to the negative effects thereof on a continuous basis, every day of their lives.
- Some parents are so busy with their own projects or special interests that their children are largely left to their own devices. The demands of work responsibilities giving rise to the working of long hours each day and the working of extensive overtime, by one or more parents, have a similar effect.
- Parents who find it difficult to deal with stressful circumstances, as a result of their own poor coping skills, sometimes relieve their anger, frustrations and disappointments by venting them on their children.
- Some parents are continually obliged to work outside the home in order to earn an essential income to meet the family needs.
- A father, stepfather or other member of the family might be sexually molesting a daughter or a boy may be similarly be molested.
- There may be physical abuse by (a) parent(s).
- There could be an atmosphere of aggression, stress, restlessness and tension in the home.

- In some homes children receive inadequate care and guidance, largely because the adults engage in inappropriate and immodest practices – possibly even in the presence of the children.
- Some parents have unacceptable parenting styles. For instance, they are over strict and have an aloof way of disciplining their children – the children are given no opportunity to voice their opinions.
- Traumatic events such as witnessing the murder of a parent or other family member or even being the one to discover the body (bodies) of (a) murder victim(s).
- Children who, because of unsuccessful foster care or orphanage placements, might have been in and out of various institutions of care or foster homes.
- A situation where one (or more) parent is constantly denigrating and humiliating children with criticism will give rise to a lack of acceptance, confidence, love and understanding. Children from such homes will feel rejected and unwanted.
- A lack of meaningful communication between family members will give rise to inadequate emotional involvement.
- Insufficient space and privacy caused by overcrowding of the home is another factor that inhibits the giving of love and attention.

Kaplan *et al.* (1994:50) postulate that a family living under the same roof and in harmony, presents the best possible contextual situation for child development to take place. The following problems can, according to Kaplan *et al.* (1994:50), be expected when a disharmonious situation occurs:

- ▶ The children will be suffering from low self-esteem.
- ▶ Divorce may occur if these learners eventually get married at some future point in time.
- ▶ The possibility of the occurrence of mental disorder becomes a reality, for example depressive disorders and anti-social personality disorders.
- ▶ Child abuse can be a possibility.

The problem of child abuse is on the increase worldwide and deserves special attention in all research projects concerning communal welfare. Child abuse and child neglect are unmindful of the sex of the child, the cultural group to which he or she belongs, and even the age of the child. It occurs at all different socioeconomic levels, all ages, within all ethnic groups and children of both sexes. According to Kaplan *et al.* (1994:786) and Brown (1991:166), abused and neglected children suffer from a variety of psychiatric disturbances and behaviour. They, in many instances, are inclined to be aggressive, anxious, paranoid,

depressed, and obsessive-compulsive. Frequently problems relating to physical contact with the opposite sex emerge as they grow older. In some cases suicidal tendencies may stem from the fact that the child is suffering from post traumatic stress. Many of these children may even experience sexual problems during marriage.

Children that are at risk, because of an already existing vulnerability, for example temperament type, are more inclined to suffer from psychiatric disturbances after having been abused or neglected. The typical symptoms to be found within children that have been sexually molested include the following: poor self-esteem, dissociative disorders and substance abuse. Children who are vulnerable, act aggressively and violently when exposed to continuous maltreatment (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:786).

According to Kaplan *et al.* (1994:792), the most favourable outcomes in cases of physical and sexual child abuse, can be anticipated when the child is able to deal with the abuse on a cognitive level, the abuse is recognized and stopped whilst still in an early phase, and the complete family of the child is prepared and able to participate in the therapeutic healing process. Factors that will play a substantial role in determining the outcome of the treatment of an abused and neglected child relate to the severity and duration of the abuse or neglect, the nature of the abuse per se, and the possible vulnerabilities the child is exposed to. Factors that could negate against a good outcome or prognosis are, for instance, a child having been diagnosed as mentally retarded before the abuse or neglect took place, children who are physically disabled, learners who are inclined to act disruptively because of some other problem or unmet emotional need, children suffering from an attention-deficit disorder, children abused for a long period of time, for example since babyhood up to adolescence, and in cases where mental disorders may have developed, for example a dissociative or a major depressive disorder. A further factor that impacts negatively on a good prognosis of recovery, in cases of child abuse or neglect, is the nature of the relationship that exists between the perpetrator and the child. This needs to be coupled to the availability and amount of adult support available to the child after the abuse or neglect has been disclosed and reported.

Kaplan *et al.* (1994:786) list the following factors which are deemed to play a role in the development of child abuse and neglect:

- A parent of an abused or neglected child that has been subjected to abuse or neglect, as a child, themselves.

- Long-term exposure to pain and physical torment.
- Parents, whose parents made use of harsh corporal punishment and cruel treatment in order to discipline the children, who consequently continue with the pattern of discipline concerned, as learnt from prior experiential learning.
- Parents who regard the physical abuse of a child, as constituting an acceptable means of disciplining the child.
- Parents who are doubtful about the way that their parents disciplined them, but because of not having ample coping mechanisms, find themselves to be trapped in the same pattern of disciplining their children.
- Stressful conditions and circumstances under which people live, including overcrowded accommodation, poverty, alcohol abuse by a parent/husband/wife, and financial problems where the child earns money by offering her body to the perpetrator.
- Social isolation, no available support system, and the abuse of substances by parents.
- Financial problems, unemployment, over crowding whereby the child is exposed to the witnessing of sexual intercourse, and similar related housing problems.
- The impaired thought processes and judgement of a mentally disturbed parent.
- Depressed or psychotic parents, or parents with severe personality disorders, who view their children as inherently bad or as trying to drive the parents crazy.
- An increased vulnerability because of certain childhood characteristics.
- Premature children, mentally impaired and physically disabled children or children that are very demanding.
- Children perceived by their parents as being different, developing slower than other children, being bad or selfish or who are considered to be difficult to discipline and hence appear to be giving the parents an arduous time.
- Hyperactive children – especially if the parent has limited capacities to nurture a difficult child.
- Pedophilia where the adult is sexually aroused by a child rather than being aroused by an adult partner.
- A passive, sick, absent or incapacitated mother who makes room for the daughter to be regarded by the father as his sexual partner.

The research findings of Kaplan *et al.* (1994:787) indicate that men usually abuse children sexually and that women assist the men in abusing the child. Women on their own, appear to be more involved with child pornography. In many cases the perpetrator is usually known to the child. Males are the perpetrators in 95% of cases of sexual abuse of girls and

approximately 80% of the cases of sexual abuse of boys. In many cases the perpetrator, as a child, was a victim of sexual or physical abuse him or herself (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:787).

Regarding the parents, research findings indicate that the mother is more inclined to be the perpetrator in the physical abuse of children. One parent is usually the active batterer, while the other passively accepts the abuse of the child. Notably, 80% of all child batterers live in the same home as the child. The average age of mothers battering their children is 26 years and of the fathers, 30 years. Battering seems to take place more often in homes where parents experience substantial financial constraints and where families are inclined to be socially isolated. A reversal of dependence needs is identified, as the abusive parents are looking to their children to satisfy their unfulfilled emotional needs, for example reassurance, nurturing, comfort, security and affection (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:787).

The phenomenon of abused learners is sharply on the increase (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:786). Brown (1991:156) distinguishes between the following types of abuse: physical, neglect, emotional, and sexual abuse. These are briefly analysed in the ensuing discussion for the purposes of attaining clarity.

■ Physical abuse

Physical abuse can be suspected when a child has bruises or injuries that cannot be explained to an adequate extent or that does not correlate to the history provided by the parent. Physical indicators can be found on both sides of the face, the back, the buttocks and the thighs. Quite often physical bruises on these parts of the body reflect the shape of the instrument used to abuse the child, for example a belt or a certain type of burn occurring on the body (symmetrical round scars caused by cigarette burns or doughnut-shaped burns from boiling water). Many spiral fractures, occurring in the baby's body, may be the result of physical aggression. Haemorrhages of the retina, in an infant child, can be caused by the shaking of the child. Parents can also abuse the child by injecting toxins or by giving the child medicine in order to cause diarrhea, dehydration or other symptoms and then very worriedly seek medical attention and assistance. This kind of pathological behaviour, of the parents, makes it difficult to at a first glance identify the abuse concerned.

Physical abuse includes the violent use of objects to inflict injury, as when a mother breaks a hairbrush over the head of a child who won't stand still while her hair is being brushed. Other forms of abuse may be deduced from scars, bite marks, burns, fractures or marks left

from a beating or other form of assault. While these forms of abuse take place at home and are usually inflicted by the parents, teachers have an obligation to watch out for such signs and, where necessary, to refer the case to the appropriate authorities for further investigation. Children's behaviour problems are often a symptom of deeper-lying emotional problems related to abuse, especially sexual abuse. It is imperative that the vicious cycle of abuse is stopped at all costs, by ensuring that the children receive appropriate assistance in time.

Brown (1991:157,158) cites the following signs of physical abuse for which a teacher can be on the alert: *behaviour indicators* (e.g. mood swings, a constant fear of impending danger, nightmares, sleep disorders, sleepwalking, a change in scholastic patterns), and *physical indicators* (bruises or even bloody marks, unexplained recurring injuries, and weight loss or gain).

Physically abused children are inclined to be withdrawn and frightened or may be acting aggressively, present labile mood swings, are depressed, have a poor self-image and suffer from anxiety attacks. As they are frightened, they are inclined to cover up evidence of scars and pretend as if nothing has happened. A delay in certain developmental milestones can occur, problems within the peer relationships might be experienced, or they may depict self-destructive or even suicidal behaviour (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:787).

■ **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is common. Perpetrators that sexually abuse children are not concerned with the age of the child. Children are sexually abused from babyhood up to adolescence. According to Kaplan *et al.* (1994:787,788), many children get sexually abused by perpetrators within the close and extended family of the child. Children grow up with the perpetrator as a trusted and respected person, who has good contact with the child and is in a position of authority over the child, for example a school principal, the biological father, stepfather, other family members, friends of the parents who are known to the child, or even teachers. When the child has been sexually molested by a close male relative, for example the father or stepfather, it is called incest. Mother-son incest is universally regarded as being taboo and according to Kaplan *et al.* (1994:789) the strongest dislike towards this kind of incest exists. It does not take place as frequently as father-daughter incest. Mother-son incest is generally indicative of more severe psychopathology in the participants, than is the case of father-daughter incest.

According to Kaplan *et al.* (1994:790), in about 75% of the reported cases, it is the father who sexually abuses the daughter. Usually the daughter had a close relationship with the father through her early childhood and may thus accept it when he approaches her to satisfy his sexual needs. Fathers usually become sexually stimulated by daughters when they are 10 years old. As the sexual relationship carries on, the daughter feels bewildered, confused and frightened. When she becomes an adolescent, the relationship with the father as well as the physical changes bewilder her. She is confused and doesn't know whether the father is a parent or a sexual partner. The mother can alternately be a caring or competing parent. The mother eventually does not believe the daughter's reports and refuses to confront the husband. The abused daughter's relationships with other siblings in the home are disturbed, as they feel threatened by her, being the blue-eyed girl of the father. They eventually treat her as an outsider. The father in turn becomes frightened that the abused daughter will report the abuse and interferes with the development of her peer relationships, which eventually causes her to experience peer relationship problems.

Cases of homosexual incest, while not very common, have been reported, that is, father-son or mother-daughter. It usually occurs in families where the father acts violently, is dependent on alcohol or is psychopathic. As a rule the mother is not able to protect her children against the violent father. Family roles and individual identities are not clearly sorted out. Not only is the son sexually abused by the father, the father quite often abuses the daughter as well (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:790). Statutory rape is deemed to be a nonviolent act. It is assumed to take place when the female child is under the age of consent, which varies depending on the legal interpretation thereof, and is forced to have sexual intercourse with the perpetrator.

Children are often ashamed to say that they are being molested. They may even feel guilty and responsible for the abuse in certain instances, as a result of ignorance or tolerance. Many factors impact on the reporting of such cases. A medical doctor may even be reluctant to admit that the child has been abused. Courts may also insist that strict rules regarding the evidence should be followed. Children may fear that the family might be broken up by the disclosure, for example where the stepfather abuses the child and she does not want to wreck the mother's happy marriage and cause financial problems for the family if the stepfather decides to divorce the mother. Abused children may be threatened to be killed by the perpetrator, if somebody gets to know about the assault.

Many keep it to themselves for years, telling nobody, until the situation becomes unendurable – until they can no longer sleep at night, have nightmares, get depressed or

even suicidal. Abused children have said that the longer they put off doing something about their situation, the worse the emotional implications became and the more they felt overcome by the problem.

Brown (1991:166) and Kaplan *et al.* (1994:788) have listed the following signs that serve as indicators of sexual abuse: an unusual knowledge of sex or sexual acts, excessive moodiness, a sense of insecurity and impending danger, changes in eating patterns, depression, and the use of addictive substances. Physical indicators of sexual abuse include the following: sexually transmitted diseases, bruises or bleeding of sexual parts, pain, constant stomach aches, disorders of the colon, weight loss or gain, itching in the genital region, urinary tract infections and vaginal discharges that keep on occurring, vaginal discharges and difficulty in walking or sitting.

Manifestations of sexual abuse, in the behaviour of the child, can be detected as a result of a young child having a detailed knowledge of the sexual act, which serves as an indicator that the child has either been witnessing the sexual act, has been sexually molested, or has participated in sexual behaviour. Young children often exhibit their sexual knowledge through play and in their attempts to duplicate the adult sexual behaviour with their peers. Children may act aggressively or fearful of adults, especially males, if they have been abused by a male perpetrator. Kaplan *et al.* (1994:789) assert that children who have plucked up enough courage to report sexual molestation must be listened to carefully. Their stories may not necessarily be consistent and in communicating what has transpired retractions and contradictions may well be encountered, due to the anxiety associated with the situation and in having to relive the experience, by talking about it.

Adults assisting children who have been sexually molested, and for the purposes of this study, teachers in particular, need to be patient with the children concerned. Particular care should be taken to make careful evaluations and not ask leading questions, which can change the information presented by the child completely. Such a situation will frustrate the attempts of the police and court officials to get a true reflection of what occurred from the child. Although anatomically correct dolls can be used to reenact the abuse scene, Kaplan *et al.* (1994:789) contend that the use of these dolls is surrounded with controversy. Although children under the age of three years cannot retell the abuse or trauma situation in detail, they can reflect their experiences in play and fantasies.

Sexual abuse can have long-term and destructive effects on the child. Children who have been sexually molested have a poor self-image and tend to be hyper sensitive to any form of aggression, which results in them not being able to deal with their own aggressive impulses towards others in their life world or aggression directed towards them. They have a distinct tendency towards depression and are distrustful of adults. Feelings of depression are usually coloured by feelings of shame, guilt and a sense that permanent harm has been done to their body. Thus the child acts in a destructive manner and has poor impulse control, apart from being suicidal. Posttraumatic and dissociative disorders are present, which may be detected from the fact that the child cannot remember details of the abuse situation, is unable to experience any pain and in instances experiences feelings of being outside of their bodies. Children with histories of sexual abuse can be categorised as borderline personalities.

The parents of physically or emotionally neglected children are quite often inclined to be overwhelmed, depressed, isolated and impoverished, unemployed, a single parent, and may be guilty of substance abuse (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:791). Mothers of neglected children seem to be either passive or withdrawn and quite often have been neglected or abused themselves by their parents. The mothers are often young, inexperienced, socially isolated, ignorant, and temporarily unable to properly care for their children. Mothers that are particularly difficult to assist are those suffering from mental disorders and who regard their children as evil or as driving them crazy on purpose.

It is essential for teachers and counsellors to identify problems of child abuse and to report them to the appropriate people as soon as possible, so that the learner can receive the necessary assistance required. An educational psychologist and social worker should ideally be involved in the establishment of an assistance programme for the learner. The child's fears and anxieties need to be constructively dealt with and their self-esteem boosted in such a way that he or she can come to believe in themselves once again. The child must be able to experience the security and acceptance to be found in a trusting relationship, in which he will not experience exploitation or betrayal. The child must be assisted to cognitively place the abuse in perspective, in order to enable him to understand the circumstances surrounding the events that have taken place. For the purposes of this study, the teacher together with the psychologist can for a partnership assist the learner via their relationship and involvement with the child.

In summary it needs to be reiterated that child abuse and neglect are increasing at an alarming rate and are associated with a wide range of emotional problems and psychiatric symptoms. Teachers need to be empowered to be able to identify cases of potential child abuse and to render appropriate assistance to these learners. It is proposed that a holistic approach be adopted for dealing with such cases, namely one that involves all the key role players in the situation. Therapists in turn will need to understand and assist with the immediate and long term implications of the abuse that has taken place in cooperation with the teachers concerned. Ideally each abused child should be afforded the opportunity to benefit from a well-formulated intervention plan, based on a thorough assessment of his or her particular situation.

In the following section the causative factors of behaviour problems will be discussed.

- ▶ Child abuse could be a possibility.
- ▶ Divorce might occur, when these children eventually get married at some future point in time.
- ▶ The possibility of the occurrence of mental disorders becomes a reality, for example depressive disorders and antisocial personality disorders

Rizzo and Zabel (1988:133) maintain that if parents behave in the following ways, the probability of the occurrence of behaviour problems in children/learners increases:

- ▶ continuous conflict,
- ▶ inconsistent, harsh and erratic disciplinary practices,
- ▶ the absence of adequate supervision,
- ▶ aversive parental behaviours such as nagging, verbal abuse, physical abuse,
- ▶ parental delinquency, criminal behaviour, alcoholism, drug addiction, as well as parental mental disorders.

In reporting on the vulnerability of one child, in comparison with another child, Rutter (Kaplan *et al.* 1994:50) clearly states that sex (boys are affected more than girls), age (the younger child is more vulnerable), and the inborn capabilities of the child are determining factors in relation to some children being more or less affected by unstable, disharmonious circumstances. Children with a placid temperament, in comparison with hyperactive children, will be less likely to be affected by the environment and emotional turmoil. In reviewing research findings, Kaplan *et al.* (1994:50) conclude that the most effective parenting style is one where consistency, rewards and punishments are embedded in a warm and loving environment. Pretorius and Coetzee (1994:87) maintain that in order to rear

children to eventually be happy, emotionally stable, competent, and socially well-adapted adults, parents should act in a loving, warm and democratic manner. They found in their research that the child-rearing practices of the parent are meaningful in terms of the development of the personality of the child/learner. Learners whose parents adopt an autocratic parenting style, are inclined to have a low self-esteem and tend to experience problems in their social interaction with others.

In contrast to the preceding situation described, Montgomery (1990:131) lists the following characteristics of families whose conduct is deemed to be exemplary:

- The family clearly approves of the children themselves, their activities and their friends.
- There are healthy, harmonious relationships within the family.
- There is a good domestic routine, but this is not rigidly applied.
- The demands on the child are handled in a consistent and supportive manner, with a little more concession than severity.
- The parents discuss with their children the sort of behaviour they expect of them, and how they will understand and assist with misbehaviour.
- Children develop strongly positive feelings towards their parents, and these feelings are eventually transferred to others.

Barker (1983:61) adds that the more stable, secure, accepting and consistent a family is, the better will be the chances that the children will identify with their parents and conduct themselves in accordance with their parents' expectations and wishes.

Beavers (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:42) identified the following characteristics of adequate functioning families:

- *Clear generational boundaries are needed* – in the family clarity exists as to the role of the parent the child. Parents therefore do not need to fight to maintain their status within the family, nor do the children have to take over the roles and responsibilities of a parent.
- *Relative equality of power* – parents are fulfilling complementary, rather than competitive, roles in problem solving activities. No power struggles take place between children and parents. There is virtually no role symmetry in these families, which implies that the parents do not share with the children, any tasks that need to

be completed, or any responsibilities or workloads to be dealt with. They rather operate like a well-organised sports team, with each member of the family taking responsibility for certain tasks, according to that member's specific talents and abilities

- *Consistent encouragement of autonomy* – family members are not blaming one another, neither do they attack one another personally, nor do they make a scapegoat of a specific member of the family. Children are allowed to make mistakes. The children do not have to defend themselves for making mistakes, but need to learn from their errors.
- *Family members enjoy one another's company and comfort each another.*
- *Skilled negotiations* take place in these families.
- *Significant transcendent values* are shared by the whole family.

Beaver (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:42) noted that although these families seemed to be functioning adequately, they like other families, experienced tensions, frustration, anger, pettiness and even jealousy. The difference, however, was that these adequately functioning families seemed to be able to let the children experience sufficient love, trust, and respect, to be able to relate to significant others in their environment in a way that is growth-promoting.

Rizzo and Zabel (1988:49) stress that in terms of the ecological systems approach, the mutual impact of parents on the children and vice versa, as well as the impact of society, needs to be kept in mind. From infancy onwards children have an impact on parental attitudes, feelings and their behaviour towards the children, as the family is deemed to be an open system and hence influenced by other systems. It is thus an oversimplification to assume that parents are the cause of learners' behaviour problems. It is rather, the continuous interactions taking place within the family, as well as the interactions between the family and the larger environment outside the family boundaries, that act as causative agents for behaviour problems to occur.

Although the family may be viewed as the chief causative agent of behaviour problems among children, it is important to realise that teachers are frequently not in a position to do anything about the situation. The best they can do is to take cognisance of the situation and then refer it via official or correct channels to the relevant experts, such as a social worker, to deal with.

3.5.2.2 Peers and friends

Peers and friends, together with the parents and teachers of the learner, are one of the more significant role players that impact on the behaviour of the children. Prinsloo, Vorster and Sibaya (1996:121) maintain that “parents and teachers must never underestimate the value and importance of the peer group in the social development of the primary school child and the adolescent”. The influence of the peer group on the behaviour of children and adolescents is discussed in detail in Chapter two.

3.5.2.3 The environment

The environment in which children are raised plays an extremely important role in the way their behaviour develops. The following factors can be distinguished:

■ **Low social status**

There is a very clear correlation between low social status and unacceptable behaviour. The following are a few possible reasons that could give rise thereto:

- ▶ The parents have a relatively low level of education and a low work status. The result of this in instances is that the parents themselves very often do not see the value of schooling and therefore do not motivate the children to excel and behave well at school. (This, however, is not true in all cases, as some poor parents are already doing all they can to enable their children to perform well at school.)
- ▶ Since they have to work long hours, parents are absent for much of the day, and are thus unable to supervise their children's behaviour at home. A similar situation exists in the case of single parent families.
- ▶ Some parents are offenders themselves and cannot therefore serve as good role models for their children to emulate.
- ▶ This type of environment tends to produce all sorts of criminal elements and in fairly large numbers. It often happens that young children are deliberately involved in criminal activities. Bribery is a common method of persuasion.
- ▶ Children are exposed to violence and upheaval. Gangs in certain areas and peer pressure to join in the disruptive activities of these gangs, are a major factor of concern in certain areas. From an early age, children in these environments are aware of violent behaviour erupting all around them.
- ▶ There is no uplifting stimulation, such as one may find in story books, informative and edifying hobbies, good language models, and similar activities,

which could do so much to facilitate the children's alignment with the academic demands of the school. Children who are deprived of these experiences tend to find school an alienating and difficult experience.

■ *The anti-child climate in contemporary society*

Prinsloo, Vorster and Sibaya (1996:316) contend that because societal factors have become so negative, educators are caught up in a conflict situation between educational and societal influences. The manifestation of this conflict can be detected in different value systems of the school/teachers and the home or community which in turn impact on the learner's behaviour.

Smith, Le Roux and Le Roux (Prinsloo, Vorster and Sibaya 1996:316) maintain that "the disintegration of the family and community life, overcrowding, undernourishment, inadequate educational facilities, political violence and a loss of vision of the future complicate the role of educators to such an extent that children experience their families and society as situations in which they have no legitimate place".

According to Brown (1991:xxiv) since 1933 in the United States of America the statistics on rape has increased by more than 700% and those on murder by more than 233% during the past 20 years. The after affects of these traumatic events as well as child abuse (sexual/physical), violence in the home and in the community, family murders, killing of teachers, parents killing themselves and/or family members, are described by Brown (1991:xxv) as "a life-long process of surges and regressions and of struggles and victories. It is also the process of coming to terms with life's most complicated dichotomies". Mc Cann and Pearlman (Brown 1991:12) indicated that the impact of trauma can be noted in the behaviour of the traumatised person, for example aggressive behaviour/anti-social behaviour, substance abuse, suicidal behaviour, social withdrawal, decreased school performance and peer relationship problems (see sec. 3.5.2.1 of this chapter on "child abuse").

Barkhuizen (1990:11) argues that "even more frightening than the daily suffering, hunger and brutalization is their future in a country where violence is wrapping its tentacles around them and the economy is shrinking". Educators have a difficult task to guide learners toward self-fulfilment in an overcrowded world, where the essential amenities such as accommodation, recreational facilities and educative opportunities are not adequately

provided. An abnormal increase in the birth rate and urbanisation acts as causative factors of the above-named problems.

■ *Other environments*

Although the incidence of behaviour problems appears to be higher in children from poor environments, children from all environments manifest problems. In relatively affluent areas other factors come into play, such as the availability of money, the quest for adventure, and the rebellion against the high expectations of parents. Modelling or imitating the behaviour of significant other persons within the environment of the learner shape the behaviour pattern of a learner, for example if learners identify with successful aggressors, they will also act aggressively (Wood 1991:415).

3.5.2.4 *The school*

It is possible for the school environment to cause or prevent behaviour problems in otherwise well adjusted children. Hegarty (1987:151) for instance argues that “schools create emotional and behaviour difficulties in learners, just as they create learning difficulties”. The following are contributory factors.

■ *The curriculum*

Learners who find the curriculum meaningless or pointless, not targeted at an appropriate level, or even view it as irrelevant to their future work related needs, distance themselves from the task of learning, and may as a consequence display various forms of unacceptable behaviour. Such behaviour may typically include not paying attention in class, not completing their homework, not preparing for tests, and in certain circumstances may even give rise to truancy (Jones & Charlton 1996:19).

Findings show that if the curriculum does not reflect learners’ culture, home language, unique history and familiar life experiences, they find it strange, with the result that they fail to identify with the curriculum. It is a teacher’s task to present the study material in a manner that is in line with their life-world, thereby engendering it with meaning and relevance for the learners concerned. Learners need to be encouraged to evaluate the study material and to make judgements in this regard and not merely accept everything presented as fact. Clearly this implies a degree of learner involvement in dealing with the study

material. By implication the contents should at all times relate to the learner's world and teachers should endeavour to make the material presented, as interesting and meaningful as possible. In culturally diverse classes, this is certainly no small task and the larger the class and the greater the diversity that exists, the more complex the task involved.

■ ***The organisation of the school***

The organisation and rules of the school should make sense to the children, so that they may accept and respect them. Too many or unnecessary rules, applied in an autocratic manner, will merely lead to frustration and rebellion.

■ ***The atmosphere within the school (school ethos) and in the classroom***

The overall atmosphere or ambiance that resides within the school should convey a message that the learners are important, respected, and that a great deal is expected of them. (See Chapter 5 in this regard.) A culture of learning, academic excellence and caring creates an atmosphere that brings out the best in children. Learners must be made to realize that they are not supposed to hurt one another or attempt to injure a teacher in any way. Rockwell (1993:5) maintains that the teacher can apply the principle of "people are not for hurting", by arranging the classroom furniture and equipment in a creative way, staying calm even if the behaviour of learners is disturbing and being alert for any signs of potential trouble that may arise from a particular situation or event.

The opposite remains equally true, if the message emanating from the school is one of nonacceptance and negative expectations, the learners concerned will not be motivated to cooperate and excel. A culture of learning is best nurtured within an environment where the accent is on caring and mutual respect (Rockwell 1993:4).

■ ***The teacher***

The behaviour of learners is a great determining factor in terms of the teacher's attitude towards a specific learner. According to Lewin, Nelson and Tollefson (1983:188), high achieving, socially skilful and motivated learners are more favoured by teachers. When learners are aggressive, outspoken and act disruptively in the classroom, they are rejected by teachers and labelled as learners who are exhibiting problem behaviour (Lewin et al. 1983:188; Ritter 1989:562; Sibaya & Malan 1992:225).

The single most importance influence on the lives of learners, apart from the impact of the parents, is that of the teacher (see Chapter 5 in this regard). For the greater part of the day, learners are under the direct supervision of their teachers at school. The impact of teachers, on the behaviour and scholastic performance of learners is therefore without doubt quite substantial. An illustration of this point is to be found in the research findings of Good and Weinstein (Gersten, Walker & Darch 1988:433), who maintain that the expectations of teachers, whether it be high expectations of a learner's performance or no expectations, correlates with the learner's eventual academic achievement. This from a behaviour perspective, is of substantial significance in terms of assisting learners to excel academically.

Silberman (White, Sherman & Jones 1996:55) noted that learners in the classroom model their behaviour towards another learner, based on the behaviour of the teacher towards that specific learner. The teacher's attitude towards a learner thus determines the attitudes of learners towards a peer in the classroom, especially in the case of younger learners. Wood (1991:101) points out that, apart from parents, teachers are among the most *significant other role players* in the life-world of learners. Lewin *et al.* (1983:189) similarly stress that the teacher remains a key figure "for a child to have a successful school year".

The teacher/learner relationship consists of different interacting components which collectively determine the quality of this relationship. Typical components being the gender of the teacher, the amount of teaching experience that the teacher has acquired, the age of the teacher, and whether the teacher is teaching at a rural, urban, mainstream, or "special" school. An example of the impact of the above factors is that regular classroom teachers were found to be inclined to rate boys as being a more at-risk factor in terms of externalizing behaviour than the girls (Ritter 1989:562). Ritter (1989:559) also found that teachers from mainstream schools were more inclined to rate the behaviour of learners as problematic, than would be the case with special education teachers. Borg and Falzon's research findings indicated that as teachers progressively became more experienced, they were more inclined to be tolerant towards undesirable behaviour of learners (Sibaya & Malan 1992:226). Bainer (1993:1) quotes the research findings of Hunter and Haberman which argues that teacher preparation courses are often not in line with reality and that they thus do not prepare the student teacher for the real world of teaching – especially in rural areas. Courses are aiming at preparing student teachers for teaching at suburban schools.

Tisdale and Fowler (1983:279) mention that teachers tend to be inclined to be quicker in identifying learners as experiencing behaviour disorders, than the fact that learners might be

experiencing an emotional handicap. The researchers quote as reasons the contention, that teachers may feel incompetent in terms of assisting learners who are experiencing emotional handicaps and consequently in referring these learners exhibiting more serious behaviour to specialists or special educators they would be admitting their incompetence. Bainer (1993:1) found in her research that teachers are frustrated by the presence of different psychological and emotional needs of learners that they have to deal with in the classroom – especially the learners from troubled homes. Soodak and Podell (1994:50) found that teachers are in many instances overwhelmed by the problems of learners that they have to deal with and are thus inclined to refer these learners to other professionals to attend to the problems of learners – especially if the home environment is a causative factor to the behaviour problems in the classroom (see Chapter 5). Cruickshank (Bainer 1993:1) maintains that teacher problems can be divided into five categories, namely: affiliation, control, parent and home relations, successful academic performance of the learner, and time. Bainer (1993:1) supported especially the “time management problem” as she found in her research that time is “the most frequent and bothersome source of problems”. She qualifies the aspects of the “time management problem” by listing the following: routines and responsibilities of teaching, for example the administrative and clerical chores associated with teaching, having time available for both teaching and diagnosing or evaluating learning, having enough preparation time and free time, overcoming classroom interruptions and completing all the work planned especially with large classes.

Van Acker (1993:31) warns that teachers should be dealing with the “whole” learner and teachers therefore need to not only focus on “what we teach”, without recognizing the importance of skills and knowledge of the learner. Learners who pose a threat to the teacher, because of their challenging behaviour, generate fear, anger, avoidance or overreaction within the teacher “teachers therefore, must be prepared to recognize and address their own attitudes and emotions, as well as those of their students. Teachers must be skilled in using the setting, the curriculum, and most especially their relationship with the child to provide an atmosphere that promotes both academic and social development – teachers must work smarter not harder” (Van Acker 1993:31).

Molnar and Lindquist (1989:4,11) draw attention to the fact that the teacher’s perceptions and classroom behaviour, are part of a fixed pattern of perceptions and behaviours that have an impact on the behaviour of learners in the classroom. Perception is the active process whereby a teacher draws on his or her social history, in order to give meaning to what he or she is presently sensing. It is the meaning a teacher attributes to a specific event or to the

behaviour of a particular learner, as well as their interpretation thereof, that influences the teacher's behaviour towards the learner. Mangham and Overington (Brown & Chazan 1989:94) concur with Molnar and Lindquist (1989:4,11) in this regard, in maintaining that "through reference to something which we already know past experience, taken as a whole, is the frame within which we encounter the present". Cullinan (Mullen & Wood 1986:169) believes that teachers regard learners with behaviour problems as "behaviour misfits at school, likely to cause the consternation of teachers and almost certain to be avoided or rejected by their peers". Mullen and Wood (1986:169) warn that if teachers and peers persist in negatively labelling learners with behaviour problems, this process can "actually exacerbate early difficulties and increase the probability of later, more serious psychiatric problems". Teacher perceptions can for instance bias peer group perceptions (Mullen & Wood 1986:175).

Dupont (1975:93) lists the following behaviour patterns of learners that trigger a negative emotional reaction within teachers:

- ▶ *Lack of self-control (hyperactivity, emotional outbursts).*
- ▶ *Lack of interest in school work (almost no work done, bad attitude towards schoolwork).*
- ▶ *Belligerence, destructiveness, or aggressiveness.*
- ▶ *Dependent or attention-seeking behaviour.*
- ▶ *Disregard for feelings, needs or rights of others.*
- ▶ *Disorderliness, disobedience, or a lack of manners.*
- ▶ *Unreliability or dishonesty.*
- ▶ *Slowness in learning.*
- ▶ *Lack of cleanliness, physical disability or unattractiveness.*
- ▶ *Unpleasant manner or personality.*
- ▶ *Minority or disadvantaged background.*

Rosenthal (Wood 1991:101, 103,106-107) believes that a "warm, socio-emotional climate" stimulates maximum academic achievement. Mullen and Wood (1986:175) conclude from their research that "the task of creating more therapeutic school environments may be more complex than the already difficult challenge of changing teacher attitudes and behaviour". They argue that "a fully responsive approach will need to change the attitudes and behaviour of peers as well as teachers toward student problem behaviour" (Mullen & Wood 1986:175). Wood (1991:101) goes on to state that the teacher's attitude has such an impact on the learner's interaction and achievement that she regards it as a "major catalyst". Kaul (1997:91)

illustrates this point by saying: "If they are crazy we made them so. If they're truant, leaving was the best choice we gave them. If they're fighting, it's within the walls of our notions of honor."

The attitudes of learners themselves towards their own experienced behaviour problems, as well as the attitudes of other learners towards them, are shaped by the people they come into contact with. The teacher's attitude can therefore have a major impact on the learners, as to how they regard themselves or regard other learners exhibiting behaviour problems. Wood (1991:128,129) provides a checklist for teachers, in relation to their possible contribution in the occurrence of learners' behaviour problems:

- ▶ *Is the teacher consistent in responding to learners' behaviour?*
- ▶ *Is the teacher rewarding the correct behaviour?*
- ▶ *Is the teacher's demands and expectations appropriate for the learner's abilities?*
- ▶ *Is the teacher tolerant enough of the learners' individuality?*
- ▶ *Is the teacher providing instruction that is useful to the learner?*
- ▶ *Is the teacher a desirable role model to the learners?*
- ▶ *Is the teacher inclined to be generally irritable and over reliant on punishment as a control technique?*
- ▶ *Is the teacher willing to try a different tack on the problem or to seek the help of colleagues or consultants?*

Morgan and Reinhart (1991:42), in training teachers, request them to deliberately think back to the teachers they had at school. They have discovered that most teachers still have very definite associations with certain of their erstwhile teachers. It is for instance recounted that, one teacher remembers needing to go to the toilet when she was in grade two, and not being allowed to do so by an inconsiderate teacher. As a result she wet her pants in the classroom. The other learners teased her and nicknamed her "baby" with disastrous consequences to her self image. Thirty-nine years later she still felt the pain and humiliation of that incident, as well as the feeling of hatred towards that teacher. This incident demonstrates how deep and far-reaching the impact of a teacher's actions can be on the life of a learner, placed under his or her care and supervision.

This gives rise to the assumption that if teachers were to change the way they treated and behaved towards learners, they might be able to change the learner's behaviour in a positive sense (Westwood 1993:41). McNamara and Moreton (1995) concur with this assumption

when, in referring to learners with special educational needs, their comment to teachers is expressed as follows:

I am not who I think I am.

I am not who you think I am.

I am who I think you think I am.

Many truths are embodied within the above comment. It is not simply through their attitude that teachers have the capacity to influence the behaviour of learners in a positive or negative sense. They may encourage learners to behave unacceptably, by the way in which discipline is maintained in class. Westwood (1993:41) asserts, in this regard, that teachers could be reinforcing – and even maintaining – learners' behaviour problems by the way they react to the conduct. When, for example, teachers are uncertain as to how to understand and assist undisciplined learners, and feel threatened by them, they could convey the impression to the learners that they are not in control of the situation. Consequently these teachers frequently are in constant conflict with certain learners. The behaviour problems, particularly attention-seeking and disruptive behaviour, are therefore continually being reinforced by the way the teacher reacts thereto. Teachers may well encourage unacceptable behaviour by:

- Poor classroom management. Teachers who do not organise classroom activities properly, create a general sense of chaos. In such an atmosphere of disorder the learners are being "invited to join in" the chaos.
- Not preparing their lessons properly, and appearing to be uncertain about what they intend doing in the classroom – and how they intend doing it – could rise to unacceptable behaviour.
- Displaying a poor command of the subject, they are teaching. They certainly, in such cases, will not gain the respect of the learners, nor will they be accepted by them. The learners' interest in the subject will be lost, and they will not give full attention to the subject. Disruptive behaviour could well ensue in such an event.
- Appearing to have no interest in their job, being absent from work for any possible reason, watching the clock to see when the period will be over, and getting away from the school as fast as possible, thereby stimulating a casual, offhanded attitude towards teaching, and the school in general. The atmosphere created can be hardly conducive to effective learning and the creation of a sense of interest in the subject concerned.

- Displaying a total lack of interest and concern in the work undertaken by learners. This attitude of disinterest is for one reflected by not marking learners' homework or tests with any sense of urgency. This will have a tendency of creating the same "devil-may-care" (nonchalant) attitude among the learners concerned.

Canter and Canter (1993:25-34) list the following characteristics of unsuccessful teachers (see Chapter 5 in this regard):

- They fail to act pro-actively to prevent the development of behaviour problems.
- They wait until the behaviour problem manifests itself and then react to it in an emotional and ineffective manner.
- They take the negative remarks or unacceptable behaviour of learners as personally threatening and are easily hurt by them. Consequently they are aggressive and confrontational in their reaction to these learners.
- Because they view learners who display behaviour problems and who are difficult to handle, as failures, they tend to withdraw and ignore them. This in turn, evokes reaction from the learners concerned, reinforces their negative behaviours, spoils the mutual relationship between teachers and learners, and increases the stress levels of both parties in the classroom.

Canter and Canter (1993:23) recommend that teachers should deliberately refrain from acting in this manner and act positively. Instead the following dictums are proposed, as representing a more positive approach to the problem:

- ▶ I can't change my students' lives, but I can choose how I respond to them.
- ▶ I can't control what these students will do, but I can control *my responses* to make the situation better for both them and me.
- ▶ If all I'm going to do is yell and get angry I won't get anywhere.
- ▶ The way I see it, that means I need to make sure *I don't scream and yell I need to make sure I do something different.*

Since teachers have such a substantial impact on learners' lives, they need to be appropriately trained to understand and assist in the challenges and issues concerned. They need to be able to identify the potential problem situations that may arise and be skilled in handling these situations. Where relevant, they need to be able to refer learners with behaviour problems they are not trained to understand and assist in, to the correct sources for assistance. In his 1997 State of the Union address, President Clinton of the United States

of America issued a ten-point call to action for American education in the 21st century. Of these, a key point was to make sure that a talented and dedicated teacher is placed in every classroom. He went on record to say that “we should reward good teachers, and quickly and fairly remove those few who don’t measure up” (President Clinton’s 1997 State of the Union address). Clearly, this underscores the importance attributed to teachers in having to educate and shape future generations to be able to take their rightful place in society. South Africa is no exception in this regard.

Where there are teachers who are experiencing personal difficulty in dealing with learners’ behaviour problems, as a result of “unfinished” business from their childhood or problems with which they are battling in their private lives, they need to be afforded assistance in order to come to terms with the situation. There might be teachers whom themselves have had poor relationships with their teachers at school, or who were “damaged” by a specific teacher, and who have never been able to free themselves from the consequences. Such teachers could be frustrated and aggressive in their handling of learners. It is therefore crucial for school principals **to be sensitive to the needs of their teaching staff, and to recognise personal problems in staff members when these arise**. Such teachers ought to be referred to the appropriate agencies for help or counselling when necessary.

3.6 A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

3.6.1 Qualitative investigation of behaviour problems

The qualitative investigation conducted as part of this thesis serves as an essential source of information in exploring and analysing the manifestations of behaviour problems, from a national perspective. It was structured to complement the extensive literature study that has been undertaken, as a point of departure for the study (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, sec. 3.1-3.5) and is specifically directed at gaining a practical perspective of the problems encountered within the South African context. The personal experiences of the people interviewed provide valuable information for conducting a comparative analysis of the information obtained from the literature study. The practical analysis, just like the theory, contains exploratory, descriptive and explanatory components that may be used for developing a model to assist South African teachers. It is reiterated that the research is analytical descriptive, rather than statistical in nature.

The purpose of the study is to provide teachers with a model to understand and assist with behaviour problems manifest by learners in the classroom more effectively. The study focusses on teachers at primary and secondary schools, including (according to the principles of inclusive education as specified in the Education Policy) specialised or special or Industrial schools for learners who are experiencing definite identified barriers to learning (e.g. learning problems, serious behaviour problems and intellectual impairment). The selected sites for conducting in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, were mainly at schools or the various campuses of the University of South Africa. The persons selected to be interviewed or involved in the focus group discussions, were teachers, but in certain instances significant other role players were also included, namely social workers, ministers of religion, and nurses. The semi-structured questionnaire was used during in-depth interviews with individuals or small groups of teachers, whilst discussions based on the outcomes of individualised in-depth interviews were conducted with focus groups.

The following characteristics that qualified the study as qualitative are applicable (Gall, Gall & Borg 1999:289; Lemmer 1989:128,129; McMillan & Schumacher 1993:14,15; Prinsloo Vorster & Sibaya 1996:287):

- ▶ it is field focussed,
- ▶ it constitutes an in-depth study of the phenomenon of behaviour problems occurring in the classroom and the strategies implemented by teachers to assist learners with behaviour problems,
- ▶ it does not presuppose a radical idealism,
- ▶ it attempts to discover the “real world” situation that exists within the classroom, which stand in contrast to theoretical deductions,
- ▶ it is based on a naturalistic-phenomenological philosophy,
- ▶ it incorporates an emergent design, as decisions about strategies to collect data are made during the study,
- ▶ it is ethnographic as it assists the researcher to understand the multiple constructions of the reality of behaviour problems in the classroom,
- ▶ it takes into account the possibility of subjectivity in the analysis of data and interpretations,
- ▶ it develops context-bound generalizations by believing that human behaviour is influenced strongly by the situations in which it occurs,
- ▶ it is an insider’s perspective on behaviour problems occurring in the classroom and the difficulties encountered by teachers, who neither understand the situation or know how to deal therewith,

- ▶ the researcher seeks to experience what the subjects of the study, namely the teachers and the learners, are experiencing,
- ▶ the researcher attempts to acquire, analyse and interpret the information, in order to finally develop an appropriate model from the insights gained,
- ▶ it deals with subjective data on aspects of behaviour problems in the classroom, as expressed during partly structured interviews and which are reflected in an semi-structured questionnaire,
- ▶ it emphasizes the importance of data collection by a skilled and well prepared researcher, in contrast to the use of an instrument,
- ▶ it reflects the participants' perspectives and understanding of the phenomenon of behaviour problems,
- ▶ the researcher endeavours to reflect a true, complete, valid, and reliable picture of the research problem identified for the study,
- ▶ it explores concepts such as "unmet emotional needs" the essence of which could be lost in adopting a quantitative approach – concepts such as disempowerment, love, security, understanding need to be studied in the context as experienced by practitioners on a day-to-day basis in real life situations and relationships,
- ▶ it especially focusses on "disciplined subjectivity", self-examination, and the quality of the data obtained, while the problems encountered in the process are critically analysed,
- ▶ a partly structured interview and a partly open-ended questionnaire are used for conducting the interviews, and
- ▶ the researcher becomes immersed in the classroom situation that currently exists and that existed in the past, with specific reference to the phenomenon of behaviour problems encountered.

The study while being deemed to be a qualitative study, has an empirical component that may be regarded as being "field focussed". In terms thereof it was necessary to interview teaching staff, principals, and psychologists at industrial schools in order to determine what kind of behaviour problems occur in South African classrooms and the causative factors associated therewith. Undoubtedly, an appropriate model for dealing with behaviour problems, as encountered within South African classrooms, can only be of value if it addresses the reality as reflected in the day-to-day situation confronting the people concerned.

As the study is of a qualitative nature, the researcher attempts to analyse and interpret the information acquired during the interviews utilising a partly structured interview questionnaire as a basis. During the interview, although time-consuming, the answers to open-ended questions can be clarified. The interviews are therefore regarded as being a flexible way of obtaining and exploring information (Vockell 1983:87). For the purpose of this study the interviews can be regarded as being both exploratory and structured in nature. The semi-structured interview questionnaire (see Appendix A) includes open-ended questions and structured questions in order to allow the respondent to take the initiative in deciding on his or her answer to the question or to choose between specified options. The semi-structured questionnaire was implemented during the interview so that the researcher could structure the interview accordingly. The insights gained from the survey need to be analysed and seen within the context of the findings derived from the literature study.

3.6.2 Sampling

In conducting the respective interviews at schools, District N3 was purposefully chosen, as it was deemed to be an “information rich” district. Two hundred schools are included in this district, covering a spectrum of different forms of education, namely:

- *Mainstream primary and secondary schools:* where a diversity of learners from different income groups and backgrounds are educated – some of these schools are situated in areas where the majority of learners belong to a certain cultural group, for example predominantly Indian or Black learners.
- *An independent school:* which caters for the needs of learners of a specific affluent, cultural group. For example predominantly black learners of affluent parents.
- *Hospital schools:* assisting learners who are institutionalised in a psychiatric hospital on a long term basis and girls who have become pregnant and are unable to any longer attend mainstream schools as they are in the final stages of pregnancy.
- *Special schools:* for mentally impaired learners.
- A centre for mentally impaired and physically disabled learners.
- Specialised schools: for learners who experience certain specific barriers to learning which prevents them from being able to attend mainstream schools, for example learners who are hearing impaired, learners who experience learning problems, learners who are physically disabled and learners who suffer from Down syndrome.

An industrial school for boys and an industrial school for girls, although not within the boundaries of District N3, were also included in the sample. (See sec. 3.6.2.1 of this chapter for motivation as to why industrial schools were included in the sample.)

3.6.2.1 The selection and size of the school sample

A relatively small sample of twenty three schools was used. The sample consisted of twenty public schools administered by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and three independent schools. There are researchers who contend that such a small sample is characteristic of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen 1982:2; McMillan & Schumacher 1993:382). Most qualitative studies use small samples on account of the following methodological considerations.

Qualitative research seeks not only to merely identify behaviour but to understand the meaning thereof in a far more complex manner and thus lends itself to the use of a small sample approach (Condrin 1975:86). Such research focuses on the detail and quality of an individual or small group's experience rather than the way behaviour traits or individuals with specific characteristics are distributed in a known population (Powney & Watts 1987:22). Therefore, the validity of the sample depends not so much upon the number of cases studied, as upon the degree to which an informant faithfully represents a certain cultural experience (Mead in Honigmann 1982:83). Thus, "the researcher legitimately sacrifices breadth for depth". (Lofland & Lofland 1984:62).

The nature of the schools selected are detailed as follows:

- Seven secondary schools.
- Seven primary schools.
- Two specialised schools for learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- Two special schools.
- Two hospital schools.
- Two industrial secondary schools.
- One independent primary school.

Industrial schools were included in the sample for the following reasons:

- Within the Education Policy (NCSNET document 1997:11), in which inclusive education is embedded, these learners may in future be included in mainstream education.
- Learners with serious behaviour problems are accommodated in industrial schools and experienced teachers and principals at these schools can provide useful guidelines, on a preventive basis, that could be used by teachers in mainstream schools.
- Guidelines and insights obtained from teachers, principals and psychologists at industrial schools can be included in the development of the proposed model for teachers to more effectively understand and assist with the behaviour problems of learners in mainstream education.

3.6.2.2 Selection and number of participants/interviewees

As the investigation is of a qualitative nature, it was difficult to determine exactly how many schools or how many teachers should be included in the sample. Factors influencing how many teachers and schools and which schools should be included in the survey, were:

- the need to ensure that a representative sample of opinion was obtained, as to what constitutes the difficulties confronting teachers;
- the quality of the information that the researcher could obtain from the respective interviews, in terms of the various teachers' experience and understanding of problem behaviour per se and the role played by the various significant persons in the learners' life world in dealing therewith;
- if it materialised that stereotyped or repetitive answers were being obtained in terms of the questions posed, as incorporated within the questionnaire, no more interviews would be conducted, as little purpose would be achieved thereby;
- the need to acquire a suitable sample of schools which accommodates learners from different cultural backgrounds (e.g. black, Indian, white and coloured learners), as well as schools that are multicultural, double medium (Afrikaans and English learners in one classroom), parallel medium (Afrikaans and English learners in separate classrooms), of one gender only (e.g. an all boys school), and suburban and city schools. This was deemed essential in order to endeavour to be representative of all the different types of schools that are accommodated within District N3.

It should be emphasised that the interview and the use of a semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix A), as one of the methods implemented to collect data in a qualitative study, were primarily directed at gaining an understanding into the situation confronting teachers and therefore tended to be analytical and insight based and not of a statistical nature. This is deemed to be a typical representation of a qualitative study (Lemmer 1993:127,128; McMillan & Schumacher 1993:373). Approximately 40 principals and teachers were interviewed. Some of them were guidance teachers and members of a disciplinary committee responsible for maintaining discipline within the school, in addition to having to understand and assist with the scholastic and behaviour problems of younger and older learners. Individual teachers were selected by the principals. Teachers who are dealing with behaviour problems in the classroom at present, although they feel disempowered to understand and assist these learners effectively, are regarded as “*information rich key informants*” to be utilised in an in-depth study (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:378).

Both primary and secondary schools were selected, as international research findings suggest that both the younger and older learner experience the same unfulfilled emotional needs, that eventually manifest in problem behaviour.

As mentioned in section 1.2.3 of Chapter 1, unmet emotional needs can give rise to behaviour problems (Mcnamara & Moreton 1995:2; Pringle 1986:82). Dealing with the emotional needs of learners, by significant other role players within the environment of the learners, forms an essential rationale of this study and will be a determining factor in the development of the model that may be used by teachers for dealing with the behaviour problems of learners in the classroom.

3.6.3 Data collection strategies

3.6.3.1 Interviews

A semi-structured questionnaire was used with individual teachers or within a small group of teachers and the principal or within a larger group where all the staff members were present. Interviews took place in either the teacher’s office, the classroom, the principal’s office or in the staff room. McMillan & Schumacher (1993:374) mention that “the multiple realities are viewed as so being complex that one cannot decide *a priori* on a single methodology”. The in-depth interviews with the teachers at the schools were thus followed up with discussions with teachers, social workers, ministers of religion and nurses grouped

together in focus groups whilst completing a Certificate Course in Dealing with Problem Behaviour of Children at the University of South Africa.

In all instances the researcher's visits to the schools were welcomed. Some interviews conducted, took three to four hours to complete as the teachers enjoyed sharing their concerns relating to learners with behaviour problems and their own feelings of disempowerment. The teachers' responses were either documented by the researcher or were written by a teacher himself or herself. The researcher and the nature of the investigation were introduced to respondents by means of an accompanying letter signed by the researcher. All confidential data that was disclosed by respondents was treated with the necessary confidentiality. (A description of the semi-structured questionnaire, in terms of some of the questions included in the questionnaire, is given in the following paragraph.)

The semi-structured questionnaire is based on the assumption that no model can be developed to assist teachers to deal more effectively with behaviour problems in the classroom, unless the model is based on insights gained from teachers and principals in implementing strategies and interventions to deal therewith in practice.

The behaviour problems reflected in the semi-structured questionnaire (question 1.2) were derived from:

- ▶ information obtained from teachers attending "In Service Training Workshops" at the University of South Africa during 1996 and 1997, as well as from information gathered at focus group workshops during 1998;
- ▶ the provincial *Gazette Extraordinary* 480, April 1998, Gauteng Department of Education; and
- ▶ international literature relating to the occurrence of behaviour problems.

The semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix A) was utilised, during interviews, as a guideline for structuring the interviews. It should be noted that the recorded responses were in effect subjective in nature in that they related to the teachers' particular perception of the problems concerned and the frequency thereof. It needs to be reiterated that the results, as tabulated within table 3.1, should therefore be seen to be analytical descriptive in nature and directed at gaining an insight into the behaviour problems that exist within the schools concerned, from a teacher's perspective.

During interviews the researcher aimed at obtaining relevant information to:

- ▶ find answers to the questions posed, and
- ▶ correlate practice and theory by checking the international research findings against the South African findings, in order to develop a model that will relate to the South African education situation.

The model **must** be **appropriate** to South African educational circumstances, as models being used in developed countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, where specially trained people are available at schools to assist learners and support teachers, will not necessarily be appropriate within the South African situation. The model must take into account factors such as a lack of support, the nature of the problems per se, the cultural diversity, the situation in rural and urban areas and similar factors that are particularly pertinent within the South African context.

A fundamental question posed during interviews, was: **How should behaviour problems be managed in South African schools?** This question in itself poses a number of related questions, as reflected in the semi-structured questionnaire, namely (see Appendix A):

- Do teachers know what is meant by the following concepts: behaviour problems, misconduct and emotional problems?
- What behaviour problems were exhibited by learners in the classroom?
- What strategies did teachers implement in the past in order to understand and assist with misconduct?
- What factors can be highlighted as negative contributing factors to the ineffective dealing with behaviour problems of learners?
- Which specific strategies contributed to the effective dealing with the behaviour problems of learners?
- What other strategies/changes/interventions need to be implemented, to enable teachers to more effectively understand and assist with behaviour problems?
- What guidelines can be suggested to enable teachers to understand and assist with behaviour problems in a more effective manner?
- What changes must take place to enable teachers to effectively understand and assist with behaviour problems of learners?
- What does the profile of the teacher look like, who is effective in dealing with the behaviour problems of learners?
- Do teachers feel to be sufficiently empowered to understand and assist with behaviour problems in the classroom?

- Can “personal barriers” hinder a teacher in dealing effectively with learners with behaviour problems?
- What factors could create these barriers?
- How can these “personal barriers” be eliminated?
- In what way could the community become involved in assisting teachers to remove barriers that keep the learner from actualising his or her full potential?
- In what way can the parents of learners become involved with the education of their children?
- Do teachers think that a concerted effort by the significant other role players in the environment of the learner can have a bigger impact in rendering assistance to the learner?
- Do teachers make use of behaviour modification, as a technique to control behaviour and assist a learner to change his or her behaviour patterns?
- Do teachers think that the ecological systems theory model is a possible workable model that could be utilised in teachers’ dealings with learners with problem behaviour and what are their reasons for answering either “yes” or “no” to this question?
- What factors do teachers regard as causative factors to behaviour problems of learners?
- What do teachers regard the emotional needs of learners to be and in what way can these needs be satisfied by the teacher, the school as an entity, and the community?

3.6.3.2 Interviews with teachers attending In-Service Training Workshops (INSET) and focus groups with students completing a certificate course in dealing with problem behaviour of children

It appears from the focus group discussions, that the professional persons concerned felt that the behaviour problems of children are becoming more intensified and serious in nature. Increasingly, significant other role players (e.g. the parents), give up on these children and are inclined to “dump” these children at the offices of social workers or at the door of the teacher who are then expected to take care of and responsibility for these children. The professional significant other role players, however, in many instances don’t know how to assist or whom to refer the children to for assistance, as no other resources appear to be available. People in the community, in many cases, appear to not be prepared to care for the children either. Many learners are roaming the streets, as they are on a long term “time out” system because of behaviour problems exhibited at school. Teachers are frustrated as

they have too many learners in the classroom to understand and assist and cannot attend to a specific learner exhibiting behaviour problems. Teachers are inclined to give up easily on a learner and to overreact to behaviour problems (especially disruptive behaviour) by reporting it to the principal who then in turn instructs the learner to stay at home for an indefinite period or requests the social worker to commit the learner to a clinic or industrial school where learners exhibiting behaviour problems are educated within a strict disciplinary system. (See Chapter 5 in this regard.)

Social workers are requested by principals and teachers to intervene and to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems by presenting "Life Skills" programmes or to understand and assist learners exhibiting behaviour problems. Social workers, however, report that although they are invited to the schools, they are simultaneously shut out to a certain extent and do not have full access to the schools. The need for social workers to become permanent members of staff at schools emerged from the interviews, yet apart from a few social workers appointed at certain independent schools, no social workers are being appointed at schools. Principals report that behaviour problems, for example aggressive behaviour, unwanted pregnancies, and drug-taking, are at present being encountered at primary schools. This indicates an emerging trend, as in the past such problems essential were confined to secondary schools. A time shift of 6-8 years has consequently taken place, as **younger learners are currently exhibiting serious behaviour problems**, previously associated with older learners. It is a trend also reflected in the responses of the teachers interviewed.

3.6.3.3 Researcher role

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:374) the researcher becomes "immersed" in the situation and the research phenomenon. Because of their interactive roles, skilled, experienced, prepared and trained researchers, record their observations and interactions with respondents in many different situations and in the most possible objective and scientific way. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:393) record that invalidity of the data can be eliminated by the researcher spending enough time in the field and by either conducting a certain number of ethnographic interviews or by searching for documents to provide data from several perspectives and different kinds of sources. Data that has been obtained from informants and respondents is valid although it may represent a particular view or may be the subjective view of the researcher. The recording of data becomes problematic when the data is claimed to be representative beyond the context. The following measures can be

implemented to prevent data from becoming problematic or invalid: extended time available to collect data which will allow the researcher to corroborate data and to identify sources that will most probably produce artificial, contrived or biased information. The most effective techniques to identify observer effect or researcher bias, are the reactions of respondents, independent corroboration, and confirmation of data done at all stages of the research process.

3.6.4 Analysis of data and presentation of findings

3.6.4.1 Findings grouped in terms of questions posed to respondents

During interviews with the teachers, principals and educational guidance teachers, answers to the referenced questions were reflected on the semi-structured questionnaire, namely:

	<p><i>Do teachers know what is meant by the following concepts: behaviour problems, misconduct and emotional problems?</i></p>
	<p>The concepts were defined by the respondents as follows:</p> <p><i>Behaviour problems</i> are: any form of disobedience; antisocial behaviour; disruptive behaviour; the result of emotional problems; problems with homework or attitudes towards a school and schoolwork, manifest as misconduct; a deliberate attempt to violate school rules, stemming from some underlying problem experienced by learners.</p> <p><i>Misconduct</i> is deemed to be: the type of behaviour patterns that are more difficult to change, namely criminal behaviour, disciplinary problems, inappropriate behaviour within a certain set of circumstances, and more serious and threatening behaviour, for example assaulting a teacher.</p> <p><i>Emotional problems</i> imply: actions, attitudes and behaviour that stem from psychological conflicts that the learner experiences; concentration difficulties due to problems experienced, other than learning problems; problems encountered at home or in their personal lives, for example abuse, lack of parental support, violence at home; problems that learners are experiencing because of their mental state, which may lead to him or her being incapable of effective learning; problems that exist because of circumstances within the home environment; self-image and his or her involvement with matters that he or she is not yet capable of dealing with, for example alcohol, drugs and sex.</p>

	<p><i>What strategies did teachers implement in the past to understand and assist with misconduct?</i></p>
	<p>Punishment, for example detention classes; speaking to learners; involving social workers, ministers of religion, psychologists, the principal and school guidance counsellor; warning learners as to the consequences of their behaviour, for example expulsion/suspension; referring the problem back to the parents – it remained their task to solve the behaviour problems encountered, as it was not deemed to be the responsibility of the school to understand and assist with the problems concerned.</p>
	<p><i>Which specific strategies contributed to effective dealing with behaviour problems of learners?</i></p>
	<p>Focus on and highlight the positive behaviour of learners. Create opportunities for learners with learning problems to excel in another area, for example athletics. Work on building relationships with the learner, for example giving them a hug, openness and trust. Treat learners like your own children. Treat learners with respect. In the past teachers were only responsible for teaching subjects that they had been trained for and guidance teachers had to pay attention to behaviour problems, something which has now become a luxury. Punishment has to be consistent and in line with the problem behaviour. Motivate learners to improve his or her life experiences by talking to teachers about the problems encountered. Good parent/teacher communication is required. Establish a proper guidance system. Make the learner feel wanted and part of the learning process. Teachers need to be informed about available sources in the community. They must be committed to assist learners and be learner-centred, working together as a team. Parents must be involved and “own” the problems of their children.</p>
	<p><i>What factors can be highlighted as negative contributing factors to the ineffective dealing with behaviour problems of learners?</i></p>
	<p>The non-accepting attitude of teachers towards learners, anger towards learners, the violation of confidence by the teacher, the fact that the different types of punishment were not consistent, behaviour problems were dealt with by teachers as if they were ordinary disciplinary problems, too many learners in a classroom make it difficult for the teacher to be able to devote attention to the learner; The rules and regulations of the Department of Education make principals powerless; Teachers were inclined to make idle threats and did not follow through; Suspension and expulsion are frowned upon by the Dept. of Education – the learners know the red tape involved in such action; Parents have not been involved as partners in the education of their children; Behaviour problems become more serious because of the fact that proper disciplinary measures cannot be taken. Parents do not see their child in the same way at home, as he or she is behaving at school; Communication with parents is time-consuming and ineffective as not all parents do have telephones.</p>

	<i>Which specific strategies contributed to effective dealing with behaviour problems of learners?</i>
	<p>Focus on and highlight the positive behaviour of learners. Create opportunities for learners with learning problems to excel in another area, for example athletics. Work on building relationships with the learner, for example giving a hug, openness and trust. Treat learners like your own children. Treat learners with respect. In the past teachers were only responsible for teaching subjects that they were trained for and guidance teachers had to pay attention to behaviour problems and as such did not necessarily have to teach learners – something which has now become a luxury. Punishment has to be consistent and in line with the problem behaviour. Motivate learners to improve his or her life experiences by talking to teachers about the problems encountered. Good parent/teacher communication is required. Establishing a proper guidance system. Make the learner feel wanted and part of the learning process. Teachers need to be informed about available sources in the community. They must be committed to assist learners and be learner-centred, working together as a team. Parents must be involved and “own” the problems of their children.</p>



What guidelines can be suggested to teachers, in order to understand and assist with behaviour problems more effectively?



They must not take the problems of learners personally. Learners need to be treated with dignity and in a reasonable manner. Teachers should be consistent in administering rewards and punishment; they ought to be able to relate behaviour problems to a learner's specific background situation. They need to be motivated, to establish a stable teaching staff compliment. They must be knowledgeable, in order to identify behaviour problems. They should not get upset, overreact or become aggressive towards learners. Fewer learners in the classroom would be an advantage. Corporal punishment should be introduced once again. A proper disciplinary code of conduct should be created and enforced. Teachers need to be sensitive towards learners' needs and be prepared to look for causative factors giving rise to behaviour problems. They must be able to act in such a way that learners, parents and members of the community respect them. Learners need to be kept occupied with activities – if they are busy there is no opportunity for behaviour problems to be exhibited. Teachers should care for learners, talk to them personally and do home visits, in order to get to know the learner and his or her family better. Teachers should be able to collaborate with others to assist learners. They must know themselves and the learners. They should receive training to improve learners' social skills. Teachers need to feel good about themselves. They ought not to shout at learners, they need to believe in themselves and act as role models for learners. Teachers must be positive and enthusiastic. The influx of learners should be dealt with more effectively, so that learners remain in the same class for the duration of a full year, enabling teachers to get to know the parents and build a relationship with them. Empowerment of dedicated teachers who are prepared to really get involved with learners with behaviour problems is essential. Time management skills should be taught to teachers. The Department of Education "must get their act together". Proper job descriptions are needed to clarify the roles of teachers. All teachers should work the same hours. Reality and "insight" therapies should be explained to teachers. The teacher must be in control of himself or herself and the learners. The school and the parents should be partners in education, in order to insure congruency in the way learners are treated at school and at home. The learner must know that if any problem occurs, the parents will be contacted. Know the learner by becoming involved. Refer the learner if the teacher cannot understand and assist with the behaviour problems of the learner. Teachers are overloaded with far too many responsibilities, multiple roles and tasks, and too much accountability. Teachers must be supported. Schools need to appoint a personnel officer who can attend to the needs and problems of staff members.

	<p>A special teacher should be appointed who can just understand and assist with the problems of learners. All teachers should be involved in compulsory "In-Service Training". The disciplinary code of conduct should change to what it has been in the past. Parents must become partners in education and parents must be positive towards the school. Learners must experience a feeling of belonging to the school, as well as a feeling of caring. A constant acknowledgement of results of learners is vital. Teachers must be able to act emphatically towards learners. Physical contact with learners must be permissible without being accused of sexual harassment. A "whole school approach" should be adopted to the benefit of all learners, in order to make learners experience a feeling of being part of one big family. Love, understanding and no criticising of one another should be the rule. Learners must not be subjected to the same negative circumstances at school as at home, for example fighting. Teachers need to be "aware" of learners' problems and needs. Learners who are depressed should not be told by teachers to pull themselves together. The expectation of the different significant other people in the lives of learners should be balanced. A learner must be able to get to know a teacher, and in order to determine the genuineness of a teacher's actions to assist the learner.</p>
	<p><i>What changes must take place to enable teachers to effectively understand and assist with the behaviour problems of learners?</i></p>
	<p>Teachers' rights have to be highlighted on both personal and professional level; teachers/schools need a support system by making use of the services of a school guidance counsellor, social workers; parents should be involved in the education of their child as well as to be informed about the expectations of the school towards them, for example to assist the learner with his or her homework; more power of control in the classroom must be given to the teacher, reintroduce a system of guidance teachers; school psychological/support services must be more proactive in the consulting/dealing with the problems of learners; teachers should have free periods to be able to attend to a learner who is experiencing problems, career guidance as a subject must be reinstated; empowering courses should be available to teachers.</p>

	<p><i>What does the profile of the teacher, who is effective in dealing with the behaviour problems of learners, look like?</i></p>
	<p>The teacher must be strict, consistent and fair, reasonable, rational, calm and respect learners. They ought to be confident and self-assured, as a person and an educator, sensitive and caring towards learners, and able to treat personal matters of learners confidentially and emphatic. Teachers must be able to discipline learners. They should be well prepared, be able to boost a learner's self-image, able to accept a learner as he or she is, and treat learners as human beings with dignity. A teacher must have a love for children, be motivated, prepared to "walk the extra mile" with the learner, and know the names of all learners, as well know learners personally. They should be sympathetic, able to relate to learners, and be available for learners. Without doubt they must have a good sense of humour.</p>
	<p><i>Do teachers feel empowered enough to understand and assist with behaviour problems in the classrooms?</i></p>
	<p>Teachers focussed on disciplinary problems as their main behaviour problem that is causing them to feel disempowered; They did not always know what the correct strategies are to understand and assist with this matter and felt that they need support from the Department of Education, the parents and the whole school in this regard. The fact that they feel disempowered has a negative impact on their self-images, as they experience a feeling of not being in control of their situation, that they are useless as a teacher and in general is not a person of good stature. Options available to schools for disciplining learners are totally insufficient and time consuming. Teachers fear, being conscious of their accountability from a legal point of view, the breaching of learners' rights.</p>
	<p><i>Can "personal barriers" hinder a teacher in dealing effectively with learners with behaviour problems? What factors could create these barriers and how can these "personal barriers" be eliminated?</i></p>
	<p>Teachers agreed that "personal barriers" can hinder a teacher. A typical factor is the difficulty experienced in change attitudes of learners that have been shaped by their parents and the attitudes of parents towards the teacher. A real problem encountered is the red tape of the administrative office and Department of Education. Teachers fear repercussions in bringing problems of learners out in the open. The fear that a teacher might not be able to understand and assist with a particular type of behaviour problem of a learner, often exists. Teachers become desensitised with regard to matters that result in problems for learners, for example the divorce of parents, with the result that they are inclined not to be able to put themselves in the shoes of the learner. Educators should be given more respect and higher standing by the school management and other authorities. Teachers should be given greater authority, to a reasonable extent. They should not be quick to pass judgement on learners and other teachers.</p>

	<p><i>In what way could the community become involved in assisting teachers to remove barriers that keep the learner from actualising his or her full potential?</i></p>
	<p>Getting involved in school activities, for example school sports and fundraising. Obtain police support where and when necessary (adopt-a-cop project). Professionals from the community and students from technikons/ university must get involved in rendering the necessary services needed. Establishing caring groups run by parents. Societies and NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) in the community, for example CANSA can educate learners on cancer and similar issues. Members of the community should get involved in relieving the problems of learners and understand learners more effectively. Establishing support structures for the school, learners and teachers.</p>
	<p><i>In what way can the parents of learners become involved with the education of their children?</i></p>
	<p>Parents think that the school must solve all the problems of the learner and that they can sit back and be onlookers who are allowed to criticise what has been done by the school. They must visit classrooms or workshops to obtain an understanding of the problems teachers are dealing with. Parents should be more supportive emotionally and by ensuring that the circumstances at home are also conducive to learning. They must supervise homework, ensure that learners have textbooks and pack their bags according to the timetable and visit the school regularly. The problem behaviour of the learner must be handed back to the parent(s) so that the parents know about the learner's behaviour problems. Parents do not want to get involved – in fact they tell lies to support their children's lies. Parents do not want to get involved – they are single parents, work long hours and are tired. The church and parents should become more eminent partners in education – if they are involved, the behaviour problems of learners will be far fewer.</p>
	<p><i>Do teachers think that a concerted effort by the significant other role players can have a bigger impact in rendering assistance to the learner?</i></p>
	<p>Although teachers did not quite understand what the full implications of a concerted effort would be, they indicated that they think that this kind of effort can be of significant value to the learner. Possible answers would be the fact that learning is not an activity solely confined to the school; It involves the interaction between the learner and his or her immediate environment. It is only through interaction by all the role players that the learner can learn effectively.</p>

	<p><i>Do teachers make use of behaviour modification, as a technique to control behaviour and to get a learner to change his/her behaviour?</i></p>
	<p>Only a few teachers make use of behaviour modification techniques.</p>
	<p><i>Do teachers think that the ecological systems theory model is a possible workable model, that could be utilised in teachers' dealings with learners with problem behaviour and what are their reasons for answering either "yes" or "no" to this question?</i></p>
	<p>Teachers who answered "yes" to this question were by far in the majority. Not many teachers knew what the ecological systems model was about and a brief explanation of the model was required. Those teachers that gave a negative answer to this question said that learners must learn to fend for themselves. Getting "cushioned" too much may give the learner a false picture of reality. The learner must learn not to blame somebody else for his or her bad behaviour – they must take responsibility for their own actions as "you are not what you want to be". Others answered that they do not have enough time to implement the model.</p>

	<p><i>What factors do teachers regard as causative factors to behaviour problems of learners?</i></p>
	<p>The behaviour of parents, problems of parents, peer group pressure, the negative impact of the media, for example TV, aggressive role models, socio-economic problems at home, and parents not spending enough time with children – working too long hours. Different value systems existing in the school and home (for example do not agree on sexual behaviour and parents do not mind the type of behaviour exhibited by their children). Important factors relate to cultural differences, communication problems, and the fact that the school is always blamed when things go wrong with the learner. No more corporal punishment causes great problems, as well as the exploiting of “the rights of the child” idea. Bad home circumstances – eliminate the input of the teacher – financial problems, parent/child relationships, moral values are missing, parents are not involved in the education of their children, no culture of learning at home. Afrikaans speaking learners have lost their self-pride. No partnership between the school and the parents exists. The tendency of people in general not to respect authority – parents are negative role models in this regard to their children, as they warn the teacher not to take action against their children. Boys don’t respect girls anymore and girls don’t behave like girls anymore, which could be related to the fact that mothers are working and competing with men at the workplace. Many parents have either an identity problem and don’t know whether they are teenagers or adults or are too strict and act in an autocratic fashion, when disciplining the children. Physical and sexual abuse of children at home. Alcohol problems of parents. Parents don’t take responsibility for their children – children are being dumped. Social deprivation resulting in relationship problems, no proper available role model, the disintegration of discipline in the home, as well as security and authority, single parent families, families where the parents are living together with other persons who are not interested in taking responsibility for the children. Inability of learners to cope with subject matter, their lack of interest in school due to too many other distractions which seem more important than their school careers. The learner is exposed to matters that he or she cannot understand and assist with, for example pornographic material, sexual abuse of children with the consent of parents. A general culture of “lawlessness” in certain sectors of society where there is no longer respect for others or their property.</p>
	<p><i>What do teachers regard as the emotional needs of learners?</i></p>
	<p>Looking for attention, the interest of the teacher, affection, routine (security), acceptance by peers, wanting to belong to a peer group, to identify with a role model, to be trusted, to feel confident, to experience a good self-esteem, to be treated like an individual, recognition of any achievements, to be treated with dignity and respect, parents showing an interest in the child, warmth, acknowledgement of uniqueness.</p>

	<p><i>In what way can the emotional needs of learners be satisfied by the teacher, the whole school and the community?</i></p>
	<p>The appointment of a guidance teacher who can focus on the problems of the learners. Contracts must be signed up with parents to get them committed. Parents and teachers must know and respect one another. Teachers must be sensitive to the feelings of learners. The teacher should be able to put himself or herself in the shoes of the learner. The disciplinary code of conduct must be clearly defined and implemented. Learners should not be embarrassed in front of peers. Teachers must ensure that learners' reasonable needs are met by working together and not against one another. Functioning as a team can make a difference in the life of a learner, especially seeing that parents are not involved at school or in the lives of their children and the support systems of the Department of Education do not function anymore like they used to.</p>

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above tabulation of answers:

- Teachers are confused, in that they do not quite know what the difference is between behaviour problems, misconduct and emotional problems. This uncertainty could result in either the teacher being inclined to erroneously label learners who are not exhibiting behaviour problems, as learners who are exhibiting behaviour problems and/or teachers being unenlightened as to when a learner is in fact experiencing behaviour problems and consequently being unable to identify these learners in time.
- In the past all kinds of strategies to understand and assist learners with behaviour problem, were implemented varying from disciplinary action and punishments of various kinds to networking with other professional role players such as like social workers and ministers of religion. A specific strategic issue of concern being the fact that the school gave up on the learner and referred the problem and the learner back to the parents to take responsibility for the problem behaviour of the learner. ***Very few people have in effect thought of looking at learners' unmet emotional needs and the impact thereof on their behaviour – including in many instances those in the professional disciplines concerned. No real major changes have therefore taken place, as nobody was "spot on" in their interventions with learners with behaviour problems which negatively reinforced the behaviour problem.***
- Regarding *effective strategies to understand and assist learners with problem behaviour*, these included elements of attending to the unmet emotional needs of learners (e.g. giving learners a hug, openness and trust in the teacher/learner

relationship, treating learners like your own children and treating them with respect), which could have substantial positive outcomes. Other positive aspects of successful strategies relate to teachers becoming committed to assist learners with behaviour problems, that is, "learner-centred" and working together as a team. Of specific strategic significance is the fact that parents must be involved in the education of their children, as partners with teachers and other related professionals. *In summary, attending to and focussing on the unmet emotional needs of learners has in the past been regarded by teachers as an effective strategy to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.*

- Guidelines suggested by the respondents as well as the data, for the development of a possible model to understand and assist with behaviour problems of learners, are summarised in the following table:

Teachers

- need to be motivated
- should not get upset with a learner or become aggressive
- community and parents should respect and support teachers
- need to conduct home visits and get to know the learner and family members
- must be a role model for learners
- need to be positive and enthusiastic
- should build relationships with parents – become partners
- require appropriate job descriptions
- should refer a learner to other professionals if required
- teachers need support
- must be able to understand and assist with their own problems effectively
- need to be able to show empathy and make physical contact

Learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must be treated with dignity and respect • need constancy in being disciplined by the teachers • require a sensitivity, as to their needs • must be occupied with activities to keep out of trouble • need to experience caring by teachers • must feel good about themselves • ought to acquire a feeling of belonging to a larger school “family” • need to experience love, understanding, without extensive criticism • must not be subjected to the same bad circumstances at school, as experienced at home • require the expectations of significant other role players to be balanced • need to be able to get to know the teacher and experience a genuine honesty and caring
Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the teacher must be able to identify learners with behaviour problems • teachers must have an insight into the causative factors giving rise to behaviour problems • teachers need to be aware of the learner’s background • teachers should know how to teach learners social skills • teachers ought to be aware of reality and insight therapy • teachers must obtain the relevant knowledge and skills required to assist learners – no knowledge implies not being empowered and being unable to assist a learner
Classroom and school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fewer learners in the classroom would be a definite advantage • corporal punishment needs to be reintroduced, but only applied in instances where it is really warranted • a “whole school” approach to assist learners with behaviour problems is required

It is meaningful that the *unmet emotional needs* of learners are highlighted, as guidelines for future strategies to be implemented by teachers, for example consistent discipline (security), a sensitivity in general as regards the emotional needs of learners, a culture of caring (love/affection), good self-image, a feeling of belonging and a sense of security and understanding, genuineness (interest/understanding). Many of the teachers are of the perception that the ensuing factors could well be determinative in understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems in the classroom and that attention should therefore be paid to them.

The following characteristics, identified by teachers, will to a large degree determine whether or not a teacher will be able to *meet the unmet emotional needs* of learners and are suggestive as to the *profile* of the “effective” teacher, namely: being consistent, respectful of learners, sensitive and caring, showing empathy and sympathy, able to boost a learner’s self-image, accepting a learner as he or she is, being available and prepared to commit themselves to “walk the extra mile” with the learner:

- The *barriers* that teachers experience that hinder them in dealing effectively with learners with behaviour problems essentially relate to barriers within their environment, for example problems stemming from the involvement of the Department of Education and their stipulations, and the fact that teachers are not given the authority to bring problems of learners out in the open for discussion. On the other hand teachers need support systems, for example from the community, to prevent them from becoming desensitised to problems of learners. Personal problems centre around their own fears and feelings of not being empowered to understand and assist with the behaviour problems of learners.
- *Parents* of learners should become involved in the education of their children, in partnership with teachers, in contrast to a passing era where parents used to criticise instead of “dirtying their hands” by getting involved. In essence parents must form a partnership with teachers in order to effectively understand and assist with the learners’ problems and not merely cover up the existing problem behaviour by lying for the children. Teachers are inclined not to fully acknowledge parents, in all aspects of the education of their children, as fully fledged partners and instead often attempt to delegate matters concerning learning content to the parents. If any serious behaviour problem occurs, teachers pull up their shoulders and hand over the problem to the parents. No proper partnership can survive in this way. The consequential impact on a learner can in practice be quite substantial.
- *Behaviour modification* is only used in a few instances by teachers. Most teachers do not know what this technique entails in practice.
- *Ecological systems theory*: It is clear from the answers of teachers, that they do not know what the theory implies and they consequently attempt to defend themselves by saying that they do not have enough time to implement such a theory or that the learners must fend for themselves. *Both these cognitive strategies have been unsuccessful in the past as may be ascertained from the occurrence of behaviour problems in the classroom which just seem to be getting worse. A model for understanding and assisting with behaviour problems of learners that makes use*

of this theory as a frame of reference will thus have to acknowledge the fact that teachers need to become knowledgeable as to the theory concerned.

- Regarding the *causative factors* relating to behaviour problems of learners it has become clear that teachers focus on different factors from within the environment of the learner, for example *parents* (the behaviour of parents and their personal problems; parents not spending enough time with learners; financial problems of parents; parents not being involved with learners, social problems, e.g. sexual abuse and alcohol abuse; parenting styles; parents that do not want to take responsibility for their children and dump them on the school); *peer group pressure*; *the negative impact of the media* (learners are exposed to situations that they are not ready to deal with); *different value systems of the school and home*; *cultural differences*; *communication problems* (between a learner and parents / a school and parents); *corporal punishment* (must be brought back); *no proper existing partnership between school and parents*; *and subject matter* (learner not being able to deal with subject matter, and no culture of learning at home).
- Teachers generally knew what the concept *emotional needs of learners* entailed. Teachers would like a guidance teacher to be appointed once again to attend to learners' unmet emotional needs and behaviour problems. They also would prefer to involve parents in dealing with these matters. Collaboration and teamwork have also become more of a reality to teachers, as they regard it as a necessary strategy to deal with behaviour problems effectively. Teachers are still inclined to want to refer the learner with behaviour problems to some other educationist or professional person, like a social worker or psychologist or even psychiatrist. This could in effect be regarded as a strategy to transfer the problem to someone else instead of dealing with the problem themselves. *Teachers need to feel empowered, in order to become committed and available to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.*

3.6.4.2 Identification and incidence of behaviour problems

The following table reflects the manifestation of behaviour problems within the above-named schools, as ascertained from the teachers' responses to the questions concerned:

Table 3.1 Behaviour problems manifested in the classrooms of primary schools and the estimated percentages of these behaviour problems being experienced

Behaviour problem	Estimated percentage
Aggression and antisocial behaviour	5-70%
Assaulting teachers	3-5%
Assaults or threatens to assault another person	2-60%
Attention seeking behaviour	2-30%
Attention deficit	7-50%
Bullying	10-70%
Disobedience and lack of discipline	5-80%
Display of uncontrolled behaviour such as screaming	3-12%
Engages in any act of public indecency	1%
Found in possession of pornography	1-10%
Found in possession of a dangerous weapon	1-10%
Gossiping about teachers	10-20%
Insults the dignity of or defames a staff member	1-10%
Is under the influence of alcohol/uses addictive substances	1-5%
Juvenile delinquency (only one school)	1%
Knife attacks	1%
Lack of motivation and interest, being negative	5-30%
Maliciously damages another person's property	1-15%
Sexual harassment (only one school)	5%
Smoking on school grounds	1-8%
Stealing	5-35%
Storming out of the classroom without permission	20-80%
Telling lies	10-80%
Temper tantrums (younger learners)	3-50%
Throwing stones	5-40%
Truancy	1-15%

While it is acknowledged that the estimated percentage ranges, in instances, tended to be rather wide, it may be concluded from the results as reflected in table 3.1 that the types of behaviour problems that tended to occur more predominantly in the schools involved are as follows:

- ▶ *aggression and antisocial behaviour,*
- ▶ *bullying, assault or threats to assault another person,*
- ▶ *attention deficit,*
- ▶ *attention seeking behaviour,*
- ▶ *lack of motivation and interest, being negative,*
- ▶ *disobedience and a lack of discipline,*
- ▶ *storming out of the classroom without permission, and*
- ▶ *stealing and telling lies.*

The more commonly occurring behaviour problems, which teachers from **all the schools** agreed upon, were:

- ▶ *a lack of motivation and interest,*
- ▶ *negativity,*
- ▶ *attention seeking behaviour,*
- ▶ *disobedience and a lack of discipline,*
- ▶ *as well as the telling of lies.*

From the research findings, the following behaviour problems seem to be more common amongst learners **that are learning disabled**, in comparison to learners in mainstream schools (see sec. 3.3.1 in this regard):

- ▶ *aggression and antisocial behaviour,*
- ▶ *temper tantrums (younger learners),*
- ▶ *insults the dignity or defames a staff member,*
- ▶ *maliciously damages another person's property,*
- ▶ *attention deficit,*
- ▶ *lack of motivation and interest and being negative,*
- ▶ *gossiping about teachers, and*
- ▶ *stealing.*

The occurrence of certain problems such as *stealing and the telling of lies* in instances seems to be linked to cultural values, as to be found within specific communities who believe that lying is not such a serious offence, as long as nobody gets to know about it.

Schools catering for a diversity of learners from different cultures, seem to be experiencing more behaviour problems than schools where a majority culture is present, although different cultures were allowed to enrol in the schools concerned. A variable that might have influenced the estimated percentages of occurring behaviour problems relates to whether the teacher responding to the questions was an experienced or inexperienced teacher. Inexperienced teachers estimated behaviour problems to be more serious in nature than that indicated by more experienced teachers. The more inexperienced teachers also seem to think that behaviour problems should be controlled by applying stricter disciplinary measures.

It appears that in South African schools, behaviour problems do not just relate to disruptive behaviour patterns, as suggested by Conway (1994:313) in terms of his international research, but in effect also include far more serious problem behaviour patterns of aggression and antisocial behaviour. Some of the abovementioned problems do, however, also relate to disruptive behaviour, for example disobedience and a lack of discipline, attention seeking behaviour, and even a lack of motivation. More serious patterns of behaviour problems, with **emotional problems as a possible causative factor**, could be identified as that of stealing, a lack of motivation, attention seeking behaviour and telling lies. This tends to support the notion, as has been suggested in Chapter one, section 1.2, that concepts such as *misconduct*, *behaviour problems* and *emotional problems* are interrelated and cannot be separated or seen in isolation of each other. Emotional problems can result in problems of misconduct, which in turn can result in behaviour problems, if the unfulfilled emotional needs are not met. These findings tend to differ from the overseas findings, where disruptive behaviour seems to be the most bothersome and most prominent behaviour problem encountered (see sec. 3.2.1 in this regard).

From the interviews conducted with teachers and school principals substantial confusion seems to exist, as to whether a learner's behaviour can be regarded as problematic or not. The implementation of a code of conduct, as drawn up by a school, was the focus point in defining problem behaviour. Quite frequently behaviour that can be regarded, as constituting more serious behaviour problems is regarded as "misbehaving" or "misconduct" implying that the behaviour is actually disruptive to the rest of the class as well as the teacher. The punishment to follow was also in line with acts of misconduct or actually disruptive behaviour and many hours are spent on preparing for disciplinary hearings or updating records on the learner's bad behaviour. Teachers either were not interested or did not have the time, or felt disempowered to understand and assist with the emotional

problems of learners. The fact that **they are suffering from burnout** and just cannot cope with any additional demands, might be the cause of **apathy** towards getting involved with learners' behaviour problems and walking that extra mile with a learner. Teachers are confused as to what the concepts "misconduct", "emotional problems" and "behaviour problems" entail. This confusion can, apart from impeding teachers from getting involved with the behaviour problems of learners, make them **feel insecure** and disempowered.

In analysing the existing situation in South African primary schools the following factors appear to assume particular significance:

- In the first instance, the problems experienced at many primary schools in South Africa seem to be of a more serious nature than among comparable learners in certain other countries. At the University of South Africa's *In-service Teacher Training on Special Needs Education* for primary school teachers (1996,1997) in Gauteng area, held in Pretoria, the following severe behaviour problems were for instance reported as being common in the classrooms and schools of the teachers attending the course:
 - ▶ temper tantrums,
 - ▶ knife attacks,
 - ▶ vandalism,
 - ▶ truancy, storming out of the classroom without permission,
 - ▶ aggressiveness,
 - ▶ bullying other learners,
 - ▶ disobedience,
 - ▶ lack of discipline,
 - ▶ sexual harassment of other learners,
 - ▶ stealing,
 - ▶ throwing stones,
 - ▶ uncontrolled behaviour such as screaming,
 - ▶ gossiping about teachers,
 - ▶ telling lies,
 - ▶ smoking on school grounds,
 - ▶ assaulting teachers,
 - ▶ raping other learners, and
 - ▶ use of addictive substances such as glue, dagga and alcohol.

It may therefore be concluded from the information gathered from teachers attending “In-Service Training Workshops”, as well as the findings emanating from this study, that in South African schools **teachers experience more serious behaviour problems than teachers in other countries where behaviour problems are more related to disruptive behaviour.** However, further extended research is needed to support or reject this conclusion.

- In the second instance, the incidence of behaviour problems at many primary schools appears to be very high – particularly schools that serve poorer communities. One reason for this situation may be that children at South African primary schools are often much older than usual. In instances learners aged 16 to 20 years may be in the same class with younger learners. Physically they are much bigger and stronger than the younger learners and consequently manipulation and abuse occur with greater ease. They also have much more life experience, and because they are often physically mature, their needs and interests are different from those of the younger learners. The new curriculum may make a difference to this situation.

Table 3.2 Behaviour problems being manifested in the classrooms of secondary schools and the estimated percentages of these behaviour problems

Behaviour problem	Estimated percentage
Accused of raping other learners	1%
Aggression and antisocial behaviour	1-20%
Assaulting teachers	1-5%
Assaults or threatens to assault another person	5-50%
Attention deficit	1-50%
Attention-seeking behaviour	5-60%
Bullying	1-30%
Insults the dignity of or defames a staff member	1-20%
Knife attacks	1-10%
Found in possession of a dangerous weapon	1-20%
Maliciously damages another person's property	5-20%
Member of a gang	0,5-5%
Lack of motivation and interest and being negative	10-70%

Behaviour problem	Estimated percentage
Disobedience and lack of discipline	5-70%
Storming out of the classroom without permission	1-40%
Display of uncontrolled behaviour such as screaming	2-70%
Gossiping about teachers	2-20%
Sexual harassment	1-20%
Is found in possession of or distributes pornography	1-20%
Stealing	2-40%
Telling lies	5-50%
Engaged in fraud	2-60%
Traded in any test or exam paper or involved in any attempts to bribe any person in respect of any test/exam to enable him or herself or another person to gain an unfair advantage therein	2-5%
Is under the influence of alcohol/uses addictive	2-40%
Smoking on school grounds	10-40%
Unwanted pregnancies	1-2%
Depression/attempted suicide	5%
Physical or sexual abuse	10%
Juvenile delinquency	10%

From the information presented in table 3.2 it may be inferred that the most common behaviour problems exhibited in secondary schools are:

- ▶ assaults or threatens to assault another person,
- ▶ attention-seeking behaviour,
- ▶ attention deficit problems,
- ▶ being under the influence of alcohol or being dependant on drugs,
- ▶ display of uncontrolled behaviour,
- ▶ disobedience and lack of discipline,
- ▶ engaged in fraud,
- ▶ lack of motivation and being negative,
- ▶ smoking on school premises,
- ▶ stealing,
- ▶ storming out of the classroom, and
- ▶ telling lies.

From this group of identified more common behaviour problems, the following behaviour problems seem to be more prominent: *engaged in fraud, attention-seeking behaviour, lack of motivation and being negative, disobedience and a lack of discipline, and a display of uncontrolled behaviour.*

Table 3.3 A comparison between the most common behaviour problems occurring in primary and secondary schools

Behaviour problem	Primary school	Secondary school
Engaged in fraud		Yes
Attention-seeking behaviour	Yes	Yes
Lack of motivation, negative		Yes
Disobedience	Yes	Yes
Display of uncontrolled behaviour		Yes
Telling lies	Yes	
Lack of discipline	Yes	Yes

From the above table, the following behaviour problems seem to be present at primary schools and at secondary schools:

- ▶ *attention-seeking behaviour,*
- ▶ *disobedience, and*
- ▶ *a lack of discipline.*

The *telling of lies* mostly commonly occurred at primary schools: 80%, in comparison with the 50% occurrence at secondary schools. Although the *telling of lies* does not occur as commonly as at primary schools, it is still a matter of substantial concern to teachers. From the interviews with teachers it appeared that they have started to come to the conclusion that almost all learners are inclined to tell lies at some stage or other, some learners just do it more frequently than others. This finding causes concern as the telling of lies, causes mistrust in the teacher/learner relationship and might have a negative effect on the teacher's willingness as well as that of the significant other role players, to meet the emotional needs of the learner.

Behaviour problems that seem to be occurring more frequently at secondary schools are:

- ▶ *being engaged in fraud (usually to forge the parent's signature),*
- ▶ *lack of motivation and interest,*
- ▶ *being negative, and*
- ▶ *uncontrolled behaviour.*

Being engaged in fraud also occurred within primary schools (10%), but not to such an extent as in secondary schools (60%). Lack of motivation and interest and negativity is a matter of concern to primary school teachers (30%), but not to the same extent as at secondary schools (70%). Uncontrolled behaviour, while a problem at primary schools (30%), is far more of a problem at secondary schools (70%). These indicated tendencies of specific behaviour problems, occurring to a far greater extent at secondary schools, than at primary schools, are a matter of significant concern, as it indicates that the specific behaviour problem is already occurring at primary schools and that it is inclined to become more serious when the learner attends secondary school. This finding emphasises the importance of the prevention of behaviour problems.

Secondary school learners manifesting behaviour problems are possibly an even greater problem to teachers than those in primary school. These learners are physically larger and stronger, and consequently find it easier to intimidate teachers. It is not uncommon to find that teachers often feel powerless to handle the problems of these learners. One way in which teachers understand and assist these learners with behaviour problems can empower themselves, is by gaining an understanding of the problems concerned and how best to assist therewith. In effect they need to know how these problems are manifest, and why. This will enable teachers to identify behaviour problems at an early stage and address the issue before they get out of hand. Teachers need to realise that problem behaviour has many disadvantages for the learners themselves. Not only does it interfere with their school work, causing them to perform below their ability, but it can lead to juvenile delinquency, with the result that they drop out of school and thereby place their entire future at risk. There are many cases where learners at risk were assisted by caring teachers with the appropriate skills required and who were hence able to take their rightful place in society.

Teachers who are interested in and declared themselves to be available to assist learners, are responsible for the welfare of the learners. They therefore need to be able to identify, understand and give appropriate assistance and support to learners with behaviour problems. In the following section the more pertinent and commonly encountered

manifestations of behaviour problems will be discussed, as it will be too difficult to discuss every possible behaviour problem that may be manifest by secondary school learners.

3.6.5 Conclusions of and recommendations derived from qualitative investigation

The following *conclusions* and *recommendations* in terms of the qualitative investigation, on the foregoing paragraphs can be formulated:

- The concept “behaviour problems” need to be clarified, as teachers do not quite know what is implied by this concept.
- **(Recommendation:** A set of criteria according to which the behaviour of learners can be evaluated, as to whether they are exhibiting behaviour problems or not, must be compiled and be made available to teachers.)
- Teachers tried to pass problem behaviour on to other professionals to deal with or to hand it back to the parents so that teachers did not have to understand and assist with problem behaviour. Expulsion and suspension are used to get rid of learners who are regarded by teachers and principals as being difficult as they are exhibiting behaviour problems in the classroom.
- **(Recommendation:** Teachers will have to be empowered in order to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems themselves – especially seeing that in terms of the new education policy, it is expected from a teacher to render assistance on a first level.)
- It is difficult for teachers and principals to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems in the most effective way, because of the following factors: the non-accepting attitude of teachers towards learners, anger towards learners, the violation of confidence by the teacher, different types of punishment are not consistent and thus ineffective, too many learners in the classroom so that the teacher cannot pay individual attention to one learner at a time, the rules and regulations disempower principals, parents are not involved or acknowledged as full partners in education, communicating with parents is difficult because of practical obstacles, proper disciplinary measures cannot be taken.
- **(Recommendation:** Teachers and principals must stop focussing on the wrong and ineffective way to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems in the classroom. As the old strategies were not very successful according to the rise in statistics on learners with behaviour problems, it is necessary to consider new, more effective strategies to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems. Too

much attention is paid to disciplining learners. Parents as one of the more significant other role players, should become more involved in the education of their children. Teachers and principals thus need to be trained on how to get parents involved and committed to the education of their children, as well as to realise that in terms of the ecological systems model parents as a system must be acknowledged and utilised. The attitude of the teachers towards learners with behaviour problems, must change drastically so that they are able to understand and assist these learners. **Teachers' attitudes will change if they experience that their emotional needs within the workplace have also been met.)**

- Teachers experienced a sense of powerlessness, because they did not experience themselves as being empowered with appropriate knowledge on how to understand and assist with disciplinary matters in terms of the new rules and regulations of the Department of Education, as well as not being knowledgeable about understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems. **As teachers feel disempowered, their self-images are not good and they experience a sense of not-being-in-control of their situation and especially being useless teachers. Teachers feel more inferior as they fear the breaching of learners' rights.**
- ***(Recommendation: It is important that the emotional needs of teachers are met. It will be to the detriment of the learners if teachers' emotional needs are unmet, as teachers will not be able to meet the emotional needs of learners if their own emotional needs in the workplace are not met.)***
- If authorities and governing bodies want to meet the emotional needs of teachers (e.g. need to feel safe and secure within the job situation, to be granted responsibility to make certain decisions, to be granted new experiences in the sense of being empowered, to be recognised and acknowledged by authorities, to be respected, to feel good about themselves, to be in control of their situation, not to feel accountable to learners, their parents or authorities or the principal or the governing body, to be regarded as a professional person), the following matters need to be taken into consideration: teachers' rights have to be highlighted on a personal and professional level, teachers need a support system in place in order to enable them to take the right decisions on the future, strategies to understand and assist them as well as on a personal level for example debriefing, positive self-regard; The system of guidance teachers, support services, who can understand and assist learners with behaviour problems must be reintroduced; Support Services should be more proactive in the dealing with behaviour problems in the classroom; Teachers do not

have enough time available to understand and assist a learner with behaviour problems.

- **(Recommendation:** The unmet emotional needs of teachers in the workplace need to be identified, acknowledged and attended to. Teachers are crying out for a support system which can assist them to, in turn, understand and assist learners with behaviour problems. Apart from the support and assistance, teachers also need *understanding* from the officials, principals and governing bodies, as many things are expected from them and they do not have enough hours in a day to do everything.)
- Personal barriers in the sense of it being an unmet emotional need, can be a barrier to a teacher when the teacher wants to understand and assist a learner with behaviour problems, for example becoming desensitised in the sense that the teacher cannot place him or herself in the shoes of the learner.
- **(Recommendation: Personal barriers can only be removed when the emotional needs of the teacher are met.)**
- Teachers are of the opinion that the unmet emotional needs of learners can be met by appointing a guidance teacher, who can focus on behaviour problems of learners, as well as that parents who become committed and responsible for the behaviour of their own children, the disciplinary code be clearly defined and implemented, collaboration among the different significant other role players, teachers being sensitised to the needs of learners and the changed attitude of teachers. Teachers have identified the unmet emotional needs of learners as identified by Pringle and Raths (see Chapter 4 and 5 in this regard) as follows: looking for attention and to arouse the interest of the teacher (need for security, love, praise and recognition), affection (the need to be loved), routine (the need for security), acceptance by peers (love, praise and recognition), wanting to belong to a group (need to belong), to identify with a role model (the need to be in control of his or her life ... need to feel secure), to be trusted (need to be accepted and trusted), to feel confident (the need for praise and recognition), to experience a good self-esteem (the need for praise and recognition), to be treated like an individual/uniqueness (the need for praise and recognition), recognition of any achievements (the need for praise and recognition), to be treated with dignity and respect (the need for praise and recognition), parents showing an interest in the child (the need for love, praise and recognition, security) and warmth (the need for love, praise and recognition. ***The unmet emotional needs of learners link with the unmet emotional needs of teachers.***
- **(Recommendation:** Teachers need to become empowered to understand and assist unmet emotional needs of learners with behaviour problems more effectively.

- Authorities, principals and governing bodies and even parents, need to understand the impact on learners, of the unmet emotional needs of teachers in the workplace.)
- Teachers are not really familiar with behaviour modification techniques or the ecological systems model as could be gathered from their answers which varied from an affirmative answer that this model can be a workable model when understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems to the fact that learners must learn to fend for themselves and the fact that they must not be “cushioned” too much and the fact that they will not have enough time to implement the model. Suggestions towards “bribing” linking up with the matter on rewards as proposed by the behaviour theorists and the fact that teachers don’t like to bribe learners to perform well, was mentioned.
- **(Recommendation:** During In-Service Training Workshops the ecological systems model and behaviour modification, must be explained in great detail and in a simple manner to the teachers so that teachers will understand the proposed new model as well as strategies to be implemented to understand and assist behaviour problems in the classroom.)
- Teachers expect parents to visit the classroom so that they can see what kind of problems teachers have to deal with in the classroom, as well as that parents must be more supportive towards teachers, must supervise homework, ensure that learners have got the right books in their bags when they go to school, must visit school regularly; Parents must stop protecting learners and apologising on the learner’s behalf; The same value system must be installed at home and at school in order not to confuse the learner. The church must also together with the parents become involved.
- **(Recommendation:** A working contract between parents and teachers should be drawn up so that parents can experience the feeling of being a real partner in education. Workshops, seminars, conferences must be held in the community to bridge the present gap between teachers and parents. The ethos of the school and the attitude of the principal and governing body will also allow parents to feel welcome at school and to become partners in education.)
- Communities can get involved in the education of learners who experience barriers to learning, by either first becoming empowered by knowledge, for example courses, conferences, seminars, workshops being presented in the community or to be linked with a specific project. Caring groups must be established in the community. If the school ethos reflects caringness, it will be easier to stimulate the organising of caring groups within the community. The principal and governing body should draw up a

- list of needs and approach the leaders in the community to assist with the identified needs. It is important that members of the community also, like the teacher, understand and assist learners with behaviour problems. and that all the different significant other role players have the same understanding and an interlinked network of services to be rendered.
- **(Recommendation:** Teachers and principals will have to be empowered how to organise groups/people in the community and to get them involved, committed and interested in the school and the activities and needs of learners. The social workers and human resource specialists in the community can assist in organising the involvement of community members in the school.)
 - **Teachers know more or less about the impact of unmet emotional needs** and the importance of support systems and networking in terms of services provided, the fact that it is a necessity that learners together with their teacher should experience a feeling of “belonging” and yet it is not regarded as a point of departure in understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems. **The biggest focus is however, on the code of conduct and to streamline disciplinary measures.** Some teachers who did not want to pass the learner and his or her problems back to the parents or to another professional or a guidance teacher, did advocate for therapeutic techniques to be introduced to teachers, for example reality therapy and some “insight” therapies.
 - **(Recommendation:** The focus of teachers, educationists, educational planners, principals, governing bodies, members of the community should be able to make a mind shift and to adopt and accept another viewpoint namely the fact that unmet emotional needs trigger behaviour problems so that more children can be assisted and understood in a concerted way.)

(The above recommendations link up with those in Chapter 5 and should be read and understood as such).

3.6.6 Possible limitations of the qualitative study

Although the qualitative study is small and of a limited size and care must be taken when research findings are generalised to other districts or provinces in South Africa, the comparability, validity, translatability and typicality of the research findings is, however, established by the fact that teachers and students attending In-Service Training Workshops and focus group discussions, compared and supported the findings. This fact creates the

basis for extension of understandings providing for research findings to be translated for applicability across other regions in South Africa (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:395).

Another possible limitation is the fact that the original research (i.e. interviews with teaching staff) was conducted during the middle phase of the completion of the study. Although the research findings need to be extended by further research with individual teachers, in order to conduct an update of the findings and to improve on the comparability of these findings, the continuous and regular feedback by students at focus group workshops, provided, although limited, an opportunity to check on research findings and to keep track of any new trends on behaviour problems. These focus groups also provided an opportunity to listen to the views of other professionals and non-professional members of communities, across the country, who are concerned about the well-being of learners exhibiting behaviour problems.

While this research study is descriptive analytic and not statistical in nature, the estimated percentages of behaviour problems in South African schools were researched:

- ▶ they serve as a reflection of *the nature* of behaviour problems exhibited in South African classrooms, and
- ▶ they reflect the degrees of severity of the type of behaviour problems occurring in South African classrooms, for example serious behaviour problems or “behaviour problems” related to disruptive behaviour that can eventually result in more serious behaviour problems.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The following very important conclusions can be drawn from this chapter:

- A learner’s behaviour is determined by the vice versa interaction patterns that are taking place within his or her environment. Thus: the learner’s behaviour has an impact on his or her environment and the behaviour of the significant other role players has an impact on his or her behaviour “all the children are both victims of and participants in the dysfunctional lives they lead” (Apter & Conoley 1984:53).
- Many studies have focussed on the causative factors a learner attributes to a given situation and the behaviour that will flow therefrom. Several theoretical strategies for effective classroom management have been developed. **However, few of the**

research findings, on which these strategies are based, tend to focus on learners' unmet emotional needs.

- The behaviour of the learner is judged by significant role players, for example the teacher, in terms of whether he or she acts *normal* or not and is being matched with a profile of psychiatric categories (DSM IV) where after a diagnosis is made. The descriptions of the characteristics of behaviour problems are used as *shorthand descriptive language* by mental health professionals in order to discuss childhood disorders, types of emotional disturbances, or develop educational programmes for children with behaviour problems (Apter & Conoley 1984:29). Although enough proof is to be found in the research findings (Kemp 1993:291; Raths 1972:4), the learner is never "judged" as a person who has unmet emotional needs that influence his or her behaviour and that those need to be attended to before behaviour could change. **These needs are human needs which support the notion that they are not tied to a specific cultural group.**
- The causative factors on both a national and international level as have been reflected in this chapter are not viewed in terms of cause/effect as would have been the case with the old medical model. **Within the frame of reference of the ecological systems theory, causative factors are seen as being embedded within the environment and as part of the vice versa impact of the environment on the learner and his or her impact on the environment.** Assistance programmes to follow on the identified so-called *causative factors* will be keeping this fact in mind in order to be effective. Several extrinsic and intrinsic factors are discussed in this chapter that could act as *causative factors*. *Temperament types* as an intrinsic factor is an important causative factor to keep in mind when the behaviour of a learner is evaluated and quite often a learner is regarded as a learner who is exhibiting behaviour problems, when in fact it is part of the learner's temperament type to behave in a certain manner.
- Deep seated psychological symptoms and disorders as a result of being exposed to traumatic events, for example physical or sexual abuse, violence at school or at home or in the community, can cause behaviour that can be regarded as behaviour of a psychiatric nature, for example dissociative behaviour. By focussing on the unmet emotional needs this kind of behaviour can be changed without categorising this learner as a person suffering from a psychiatric disorder and being a *nut case* (Boston & Szur 1983:125). In the classroom dissociative disorders can manifest in terms of, for example, lying and stealing.

- The type of behaviour problems that manifest in the classroom on a national basis compare well with the type of behaviour problems that manifest in the classroom on an international basis. The most common behaviour problems that occur are: *aggressive behaviour* (bullying, threatens to assault peers/teachers), *disruptive behaviour* (lack of discipline, storming out of the classroom without permission, attention-seeking behaviour, disobedience, display of uncontrolled behaviour), *lack of motivation* (being negative and not motivated).
- Teachers are confused about the concept *behaviour problems*. This uncertainty can either lead to labelling taking place or a teacher not being sensitive to a learner who is experiencing problems. The *unmet emotional needs* of a learner remain unattended and are not regarded by teachers as a causative factor of behaviour problems. They are more inclined to focus on factors within the environment that can cause behaviour problems, for example the parents, the peers and scholastic problems. Although the *unmet emotional needs* have been disregarded by teachers as a causative factor of behaviour problems in the classroom, they do acknowledge the presence and impact of emotional needs when drawing up guidelines to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems more effectively. The profile of the *effective teacher*, drawn up by teachers, includes personality characteristics such as reaching out to a learner who is exhibiting behaviour problems and whose emotional needs are unmet, for example caring, empathy, a willingness to “walk the extra mile” with a learner, sensitivity towards a learner and his or her problems. Teachers on the other hand, feel unprepared for dealing with behaviour problems of learners as they do not experience themselves as empowered in terms of knowledge and authority to make decisions concerning the learner and his or her problems. **They desire greater respect and want to enjoy support from within the educational structure** (Department of Education, principal) as well as the community. Some teachers are keen to hand back the learner and his or her problem to the parents to take responsibility for the behaviour problems being exhibited. Teachers are hesitant to become involved with the problem behaviour of learners and are inclined to pass the responsibility on to some other person or professional to understand and assist with it. A model for teachers on how to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems in the classroom will have to keep this factor in mind.
- Teachers are **not acquainted with the Ecological Systems theory** and thus do not structure their thinking patterns within the frame of reference of this model. They can

thus not see in what way this model can make their interventions with learners with behaviour problems more effective.

- In the discussion of behaviour problems that manifest in the classroom more often, both according to research findings on an international level and by the research being done for this study, it became clear that *unmet emotional needs* are central to causing these behaviour problems.

The above information as discussed in this chapter has paved the way for the discussion to be followed in the next chapter (Chapter 4), namely **Understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems in the classroom: an emotional needs perspective**. In this chapter the specific South African circumstances have been explained and it became clear that in many instances similarities can be detected, for example the type of behaviour problems that manifest in the classroom as well as that *unmet emotional needs* are a universal phenomenon.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNDERSTANDING AND ASSISTING LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM: AN EMOTIONAL NEEDS PERSPECTIVE

A deviant is created not by what they do, but by how we react to it. In itself no act is either deviant or normal, it takes on that character only in relation to other persons and their responses

Mangham and Overington (Brown & Chazan 1989:90)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers, parents and peers are in effect all very significant role players within the life world of the learner (Charlton & George 1993:17; Morse *et al.* 1980:ix). While learners' behaviour may be deemed to be the product of a whole range of variables, the influence these role players have in shaping these behaviour patterns is of particular interest. Apart from the parent, *the teacher(s) with whom the learner spends many hours of the day, is one of the most important significant other role players within the life-world of the learner.* Pringle (19880:51) maintains that "The child's progress will come to be powerfully affected by his teacher's attitudes, values and beliefs; some of these will be overt and deliberate; others may be implicit and incidental; still others may well be unconscious but just as powerful in influencing his learning. **Many a child has had new doors opened by, and chosen his life's work because of, an inspired teacher.**" Lane (1994:12) similarly supports the view that teachers through their attitudes can greatly influence behaviour and the learning that takes place within the school environment.

Within the context of this study the accent is placed on how to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems more effectively. The introductory quotation incorporates many truths in understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems, which are of particular significance to teachers. Disruptive, inappropriate and problem behaviour constantly provides the teacher, with a *challenge* to skilfully understand and assist learners with behaviour problems within the classroom. Behaviour is best analysed and understood within the context of the interactions in which it occurred, be it within the school or within a related context, namely the home or playground (Upton 1993:114). In researching the impact of the teacher on the learner's behaviour Charlton and David (1993:3) contend that

“what schools offer and how they offer it, helps determine whether pupils respond in desirable or undesirable ways”. Teachers can act as positive role models for learners and optimally influence their behaviour patterns by eliminating confrontational approaches. Substituting confrontational approaches, with one where cooperative relationships are established with learners manifesting problematic behaviour, is deemed to be far more effective and meaningful, from both the teacher and the learner’s perspective. This by implication means that the teacher needs to be involved in a degree of self-analysis, whereby proof of the existence of a behaviour problem and the teacher’s behaviour expectations, are reviewed and closely analysed.

According to Davie (1993:54) “schools make a difference to their pupil’s behaviour – for better or for worse. Therefore, in some instances the ‘*problem*’ may lie with the *school* and not the *child*”. Reynolds and Sullivan (1981:54) in a similar vein maintain that the school can influence academic and behaviour outcomes, especially if teachers are willing to understand and assist with the problems that learners experience. *From an ecosystemic perspective, behaviour problems are not regarded as only originating from within the learner, but from within the interaction taking place among learners and between learners and their teachers.* Upton (1993:115) summarises the situation as follows “both learners and teachers have a rational basis for behaving in the way they do but are often locked in a circular chain of increasingly negative interaction from which neither can readily escape”.

Teachers are quite often shocked, discouraged, angry and in some instances even feel threatened by the behaviour that certain learners display in class. Citing various examples to support this contention, Miller (1994:33) stress that in many instances teachers experience *a sense of feeling alone, being worried and concerned about their learners, and of being solely responsible for having to understand and assist with learners’ problem behaviour.* Miller (1994:32) similarly concludes that teachers and non-teachers alike experience an emotional impact, as a result of learners’ problem behaviour. *The challenge for the teacher is therefore one of having to effectively manage his or her own feelings in order to be of assistance to a learner exhibiting behaviour problems.* A further factor that could influence the effectiveness of the decisions taken by teachers, is that in many instances they have no readily available measure, as to the effectiveness of a particular response within a specific context. It therefore remains difficult for a teacher to change his or her response to the learner’s behaviour, as it is not easy to determine immediately whether or not a particular intervention will be successful or not. Redl (Gallagher 1988:18) maintains that *“adults working with troubled youth must develop an imaginative awareness from within ... there*

is no substitute for getting a 'feel' of what it is like to be an emotionally disturbed child or to be in a 'state of conflict'.

The behaviour of learners can, however, be modified if a teacher implements an appropriate strategy to understand behaviour problems manifest by the learner. If teachers respond to the behaviour problems of learners in a destructive or counterproductive manner, the negative view that learners hold of the school context, their abilities and themselves as persons will be negatively reinforced by the teachers' inappropriate responses. In creating a therapeutic, growth-supporting environment, the daily decisions made by the teacher, as to *what to do, when and how* are vitally important. In support of this contention Charlton and George (1993:18) contend that teachers preoccupied with berating learners when they misbehave, *yet ignoring them when they behave appropriately, may be precipitating the very behaviours they are attempting to eradicate.* In understanding the behaviour of learners, it is therefore essential that teachers should be in control of their own feelings and emotions, so as to be able to make the correct decisions required in particular situations. Fuel can all too easily be added to the fire when the learner is angry and the teacher in turn reacts in anger. A quick redirection, a calm encounter or a redirection of focus onto some other event or situation, could in many an instance prevent the emotional outburst that may ensue.

From the preceding discussion it may be concluded that the teacher *is a significant other role player* in the life-world of the learner and consequently the vice versa interaction process taking place between the learner and his or her teacher needs to be explored. In this chapter an attempt is made to gain an insight into the most appropriate way to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems. The fundamental objective being to identify the most effective strategy that may be implemented, by the teacher in the classroom, when understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems. The following issues are addressed in this regard, namely:

- The historical background relating to the development of a strategy to assist learners with behaviour problems.
- Theoretical approaches relevant to understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems more effectively.
- Satisfying emotional needs of learners.
- Effective schools and behaviour problems in the classroom.
- Models implemented in classrooms to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.

In the following section the historical background in relation to the development of a strategy to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems, will be discussed.

4.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY TO UNDERSTAND AND ASSIST LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

Historical information serves the purpose of providing a basis for understanding children and their behaviour, as part of a process of searching for new methods to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems. Rich (1982:3) for instance asserts that “what is past, influences the present”. Reinert (1980:7) similarly argues that today’s practices are put in perspective by looking at the background from which the present practices have emerged. ***Analysing mistakes made in the past, provides educationists with a golden opportunity to not make the same mistakes again, but rather to focus on positive approaches that have had a meaningful impact on the lives of the learners concerned.***

The medical model (see Chapter 2 in this regard) essentially served as the forerunner for many of the subsequent behaviour theories that evolved over time. Freud, a medical doctor with an intense interest in psychopathological manifestations, focussing on the neurotic patients that he treated. In so doing he in effect became the founder of the theory of human behaviour known as *psychoanalytical theory*. His theory is “so comprehensive and it has had such a wide influence on twentieth century thinking” (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:35, 94). Early approaches to classification were essentially based on the medical model (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:7). A key element of the medical model is the accent placed on observable signs and symptoms, as manifestations of an underlying problem. While the medical model has been useful in understanding a variety of medical/psychiatric problems, it is argued that its utility in understanding behaviour disorders is limited (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:7). It is important to note in this regard that many of the *models* developed to gain an insight into human behaviour *tend to be rather narrowly focussed* (Zarkowska & Clements 1998:5). It is acknowledged that while most models contribute a valid perspective in gaining an understanding of behaviour problems manifest by learners, only the ecological model examines the possibility that behaviour disorders may arise at the point of interaction between the learner and his or her environment (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:21).

Emotionally disturbed children essentially only gained the attention of educationists during the sixties (Paul & Epanchin 1982:1; Rich 1982:3; Rizzo & Zabel 1988:14). In this regard Kanner (Apter & Conoley 1984:3) contends that it is not true to assume that emotional

disturbance in childhood is a recent phenomenon – in the past adults were simply not very concerned about the emotional well-being of children and did not focus on the needs of children. They were rather more concerned with the needs of individual adults instead. Within the frame of reference of the medical model, adult patients were diagnosed and treated as being “mentally ill”.

According to Rizzo and Zabel (1988:14), in the period preceding the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, children were socially depersonalized. They were judged in terms of their military, or economic significance or in terms of what specific contribution they could make to their families well-being or to the society that they were part of. So for instance in agrarian and pre industrial societies, the more children a farmer had, the bigger was the piece of land he could get and the richer he would eventually become. In Greece, male children were of greater value, as they could become warriors. Children who were physically disabled were in effect insignificant to society in terms of furthering the aims of the society concerned. Disabled children were consequently regarded as liabilities to families or societies. Rizzo and Zabel (1988:15) suggest that these children were in effect left with one of two opportunities, namely either to fend for themselves (if they did not offer the potential to be exploited to someone’s advantage), or to be dependent on others. These children, however, also had a need to be regarded by others as *persons of value*. The rather dismal situation that existed during the period concerned should be seen within the context of the following more enlightened statement made by Pringle (1980:117):

How well a handicapped child makes out in the long run depends far less on the nature, severity or onset of his condition than on the attitudes of his parents first and foremost, then on those of his peers and teachers, and eventually on society’s. These determine how he feels about himself and his handicap.

The little assistance rendered to disabled children during this period, essentially focussed on children whose impairments were obvious and understandable, for example a blind or cripple child. Children exhibiting emotional and behaviour problems, however, enjoyed little understanding or assistance, either from individual benefactors or from society itself (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:15). They were in fact viewed as *social misfits* – persons who were unable to contribute to society or to their families, because of their fears and inhibitions or because they could not conform to the norms and values of the community. In instances members of the community even regarding them as possessed by evil spirits. Although documents from ancient times until the early 1800s for example do not describe conditions

of emotional impairment to be found amongst children explicitly (Apter & Conoley 1984:3; Rich 1982:3), sufficient proof exists to witness a “progressively more humanitarian philosophy on the handicapped”. Hewett (Rich 1982:4) correlates this progression in terms of four primary historical era’s, namely the survival, superstition, science and service era.

The treatment of children deemed to be a liability to their families and society, during the first two of the above referenced eras, was to say the very least rather harsh. Torture of the children concerned was not uncommon within these eras. During the science era the accent changed to one of gaining an understanding of what was deemed to be disturbed behaviour. Biological reasons were viewed as constituting a primary causative factor for what was termed *disturbed* behaviour. In terms of the medical model, an attempt was made to categorise the various forms of disturbed behaviour within the science era. The service era is characterised by the adoption of a more humanistic approach which is dealt with in greater detail in this section.

The discussion on the historical background to the development of assistance rendered to learners or children with behaviour problems, will for the purposes of this study focus on the twentieth century or service era. Brooks and Sabatino (1996:vii) claim that the field of educating children with emotional disturbance is in fact a twentieth-century development. It was a very distinct and important era, which in terms of the now famed statement made by the Swedish sociologist, Ellen Key, has become known as “the century of the child”. Currently the research findings and contributions from this century are still applicable and of relevance in gaining an understanding of the behaviour problems manifest by learners.

Child psychiatry established itself as a field of specialisation within the medical discipline at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although many theorists were interested in children and their disturbed behaviour, very few made any formal attempts to study their specific psychiatric problems before the 1900s for example. According to Kanner (Reinert 1980:10) dramatic changes have been made during this era, concerning the special needs of children with emotional problems. The writings of Pestalozzi, Darwin and a few others paved the way for the new science of developmental psychology.

Humanistic concerns that took root during the nineteenth century led to a *more humanistic* approach during the twentieth century, for the well-being of children that were disabled – especially those with impairments in terms of vision, hearing and intellect (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:15). Theorists who were leaders in this field are for example Jean Marc Itard, Edouard

Seguin, Samuel Gridley Howe, Thomas Gallaudet, Walter E. Fernald and Maria Montessori. Various new intervention techniques and concepts were developed by these theorists and their students – their most **significant contribution** being that *disabled individuals could be assisted to function productively despite any impairments that they might be suffering from*. This gave rise to a situation where **children** who exhibited disturbed behaviour, personality problems, conduct disorders and pervasive developmental disorders **could be assisted**. Societal attitudes, however, still reflected an insensitivity towards these children and the need to blame disabled children for their handicap could still be detected in certain instances. According to Reinert (1980:15) the changes that took place were essentially as a result of the impact of the juvenile justice system, class action suits and psychological and psychiatric practice, rather than in terms of an enlightened education system or forward-looking legislation.

During the nineteenth century, biogenetic theorists believed that medical science would provide answers to many of the questions relating to mental illnesses, by linking the illnesses concerned to a physical cause. These expectations were transposed into the twentieth century and at the onset of the twentieth century people still expected medical science to come up with all the answers concerning the causes of mental illnesses. As stated by Coleman (Reinert 1980:10), they were unfortunately to be disappointed, as more than half of the patients studied did not show any organic pathology. As a consequence theorists (Reinert 1980:10) started to explore an alternative psychological approach and interest in the organic perspective waned. Theorists committed to the medical model, however, did not give up all that easily and when phenylketonuria (PKU) was discovered, the organic viewpoint once again gained in popularity. PKU is a rare biochemical disorder that is related to mental retardation. It can be treated or eliminated if detected at an early stage by means of a urine or blood test and a specific diet is subsequently followed in cases of a positive test result. Although the discovery of PKU gave the medical science approach a “facelift”, so to speak, none of the later medical breakthroughs during the last decade, concerning the treatment of mental illnesses, proved to be valid.

The first formalized psychological testing took place during the twentieth century and this resulted in the development of psychological tests for children, for example the intelligence tests developed by Binet and Simon, and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for children (WISC). Notably, the latter is still currently used by psychologists. These tests were especially significant to clinicians, to evaluate children in conflict, as it enabled them to distinguish between children who were mentally retarded and those that were mentally ill.

As previously stated, Binet developed his intelligence test during this era and it is still used to determine a child's level of intelligence. Projective tests, such as the Rorschach test, were developed after the initial development of the intelligence tests, to measure specific personality variables, thereby enabling the clinician to evaluate a person's inner life. These tests are also still used at present by psychologists.

Froebel, a follower of Pestalozzi, introduced the concept of *kindergarten education*, whereby a child could be stimulated to actualise his or her potential by active participation in the educational process. Significantly, a child study movement came into being and they took extensive interest in the behaviour of children, with the result that eventually developmental or child psychology was established as a field of specialisation. During the period concerned Gesell founded a Child Guidance Clinic at Yale University and Freud placed on record his theories relating to childhood sexuality (Rich 1982:12).

In the past many possible causes of behaviour problems were presented. Many of these provided a partial explanation, without offering a total explanation for the behaviour problems encountered. Some of these beliefs are still encountered and are well-known, namely "He learned that from his father", "He hangs around with the wrong crowd" or "She was just born that way" (Rich 1982:12).

It was only during the twentieth century that non-physiological theories, for example the psychodynamic, behaviour and environmental theories, were taken into consideration, as *causative factors* to be considered in relation to disturbed behaviour. Rhodes and Tracey (Rich, 1982:13) tried to explain behaviour problems in terms of five basic theories of causality, namely:

- **Biophysical theory.** Disturbed behaviour is regarded as a pathological disease resulting from physiological deficiencies within the person. The locus of the disturbed behaviour is thus within the learner.
- **Behaviour theory.** All behaviour whether acceptable or unacceptable is regarded as being reinforced by means of positive reinforcement or punishment, consequently disturbed behaviour is learned from within the immediate environment of the person and the locus of the behaviour is within the learner.
- **Psychodynamic theory.** Biological predeterminers and interactions within the environment result in maladaptive psychological processes that cause disturbed behaviour to occur and the person concerned experiences internalized feelings of

guilt, anxiety, fear, and inadequacy. Disturbed behaviour is thus the result of an inadequate ego development because of dysfunctional mental processes, as a consequence the person cannot exhibit behaviour in accordance with expected behaviour within their environmental context. The locus of the behaviour is thus within the learner.

- **Sociological theory.** Social interaction is determined by social rules and a child who violates these rules, is deemed to be exhibiting disturbed behaviour. Behaviour is not related to behaviour per se, but to the *labelling* effect of authoritative persons who determine the social rules that need to be obeyed. Disturbed behaviour is thus a function of social expectations and is therefore not located within the learner.
- **Ecological theory.** Disturbed behaviour cannot be traced back to the learner him or herself or the environment as such, but to the interaction between the learner and his or her unique environment. This theory is a *combination of all the preceding theories and as an overarching* theory it extends the limitations of the previous theories.

Sociologists and anthropologists were simultaneously working on possible *causative factors* that could give rise to disturbed behaviour and in the process built up a reservoir of evidence to suggest that a correlation existed between socio-cultural factors and mental illness. Factors associated with possible causes of disturbed behaviour patterns were the impact of the child's home and community, the value systems embedded within a society, and the role of existing technology in the life-world of the child. The impact of these socio-cultural findings on psychology and psychiatry could be detected, as these disciplines tended to become more socially orientated. Sociological thoughts impacting on the above referenced theoretical frameworks, can be seen in the manuscripts produced by prominent researchers of the time, namely Adler, Horney, Sullivan and Fromm.

A holistic approach, as suggested by the ecological systems theory, brought parents, siblings, peers and significant others into the picture, in providing an understanding of the behaviour of the child within his or her life-world. In addition it served to unify organic, psychological and sociological viewpoints. Reinert (1980:12) suggests that the ecological systems theory, although resembling the sociological model in many ways, actually stems from the biological sciences.

During the twentieth century educational thought processes were greatly influenced by psychodynamic theories. Visiting teachers employed during 1907 by the Public Education Association of New York had a background in both Social Work and classroom teaching.

Their insights and thinking, however, enjoyed little support or acknowledgement until 1920 when the mental hygiene movement came into being. In the period between 1921-1927, the number of visiting teachers increased from 90 to more than 200 teachers. After World War II, visiting teachers were employed in ever increasing numbers and almost every community made use of their services. The advantages of the visiting teacher movement impacted favourably on special education, as public interest in special education techniques, individual diagnostics and prescriptive educational programming, was stimulated. Notably, many of these visiting teachers were trained in special education and this had a definite impact on evolving teaching practice.

Collaboration and teamwork were advocated by the visiting teachers in dealing with learners behaviour problems. They consulted or referred children with problems to psychologists and psychiatrists. Currently within the South African context, some schools and especially private schools do have posts for social workers. They effectively act as mediators between teachers and learners, learners and their parents, and between the school and various community related institutions, in order to assist learners' with their problems (Reinert 1980:12).

During 1909 Healy established a Juvenile Psychopathic Institute, which assisted the Juvenile Court. He advocated the concept of putting together a multi-professional team to understand and assist with the problems of adolescents. This concept is currently still advocated and is regarded as an extremely effective means for dealing with the problems experienced by learners. During the 1920s and 1930s, although without legislative support, Child Guidance Clinics spearheaded efforts directed at understanding and assisting children with psychological problems. The first public action groups advocating compulsory public education for all children, including children with special needs and learners regarded as being "disturbed", came into being during this period.

Two influential groups concerned with the development of children's emotional needs were established, namely The Council for Exceptional Children and The American Orthopsychiatric Association. Kanner (Apter & Conoley 1984:10) points out that studies in relation to severe emotional disturbances/psychiatric problems of children, were launched during the 1930s. Several researchers were working on *childhood schizophrenia* and eventually their research enabled Potter to give a more detailed description of the syndrome. The first psychiatric hospital in the United States was built on Rhode Island during the 1930s

for example and Bender's efforts, at the Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital in New York, resulted in the eventual establishment of hospital schools.

During the 1940s Bettelheim founded the Orthogenic School at the University of Chicago, which is recognised for its contribution in developing a model to be used in a therapeutic milieu. Redl, Wineman and colleagues in assisting aggressive and delinquent boys at Pioneer House, devised the *life space interviewing* technique, which is still in use. During the 1940s for example and 1950s for example interest in childhood psychosis increased and Kanner's research findings on *infantile autism* were published in 1943. In this regard it should be noted that Mahler also published a book on *symbiotic infantile psychosis* and Bergman and Escalona published books on *unusual sensitivity to sensory stimulation*. In contrast to the past, researchers were far more motivated to provide detailed descriptions of disturbed behaviour.

During the 1940s two groups of theorists with different viewpoints emerged. The first group advocated a return to the pre Kraepelinian period, where children were labelled and categorised in terms of their behaviour. The rationale provided for this return to nonspecific classifications of behaviour, being that theorists regarded the detailed classification of behaviour as fruitless and unnecessary. Other theorists, for example Rank (Reinert 1980:12), wanted to move away from classifying behaviour in terms of specific categories and proposed the concept of the *atypical child* whereby no differences would be recorded between conditions such as childhood psychosis, mental retardation and any other type of childhood disturbance. The second group believed that differences, as to the causative factors, do have a direct bearing on the eventual treatment of the child, for example Kanner with his outline of *infantile autism* and Mahler with her outline of *symbiotic infantile psychosis*.

During the twentieth century, children who exhibited severe disturbed behaviour, were diagnosed as suffering from mental diseases, insanity or dementia precox. These classifications were, however, too general and too pervasive. Kanner (Rich 1982:11,12) claims that most emotional disturbances were diagnosed as predominantly psychotic or schizophrenic. He further argues that generic concepts needed to be defined in greater detail and specific categories. Broader classifications of handicapped children, were subsequently developed to classify and categorise behaviour. Notably, the descriptive data revealed differences within these broader categories. The processes of classification and categorisation continued during the twentieth century.

Educators became dissatisfied with the predominantly medical frame of reference when classifying disturbed behaviour and they spontaneously started to use concepts such as *behaviour problem* and *conduct disorder* instead of concepts such as *disturbed behaviour*. Wood and Lakin (Rich 1982:12) noted that there are about twenty alternative concepts that could be substituted for the concept *disturbed behaviour*. Medical treatment was not generally available and the costs associated therewith was quite expensive. Schools and social institutions therefore had to take responsibility for children manifesting disturbed behaviour. Learners could therefore not be simply passed on to psychiatrists when they exhibited psychiatric or disturbed behaviour. As a consequence educators developed their own classification system, not to label learners, but to put in place effective strategies to assist the learners in dealing with their behaviour problems.

Healy was a driving force in the development of a therapeutic understanding of children with conduct problems. During 1941, he proposed that some of the features of the British Borstal System be accepted. This system focussed on correcting problems that adolescents and younger children experienced when coming into conflict with the law. His efforts led to the development of a movement during the 1940s and 1950s directed at gaining an acceptance, by state and federal government, of focussing on psychological and educational interventions, rather than the incarceration of the children concerned. By implication this implied a need for intervention by occupational and psychotherapists.

During the middle of the twentieth century, the ideas that Healy sparked off, namely that the child's entire life-world could be regarded as a *therapeutic milieu*, led to the development of the ecological approach, whereby the impact of the environment on the behaviour of the child was recognised. Of specific relevance was the realisation that behaviour patterns may be elicited by the impact of the environment on the child. Educators now became more aware of the need for more specific educational planning, when assisting learners manifesting behaviour disorders. Many educators also decided to take on the responsibility to speak out on a behalf of these children.

During the 1950s, more specific attention was attributed to "*special education*" as an independent discipline. At public schools, the so-called "disturbed" children were assisted by means of special programmes. Screening instruments were developed by Bower and Lambert (Apter & Conoley 1984:11; Reinert 1980:48) to identify disturbed learners in public schools. As asserted by Apter & Conoley (1984:12), a lot of diverse activities took place in the field of children's disturbed behaviour during the 1950s. The *psychodynamic* model was

deemed to be the most acceptable model for assisting troubled children during this period. However, the *behaviour* model, that would be in full bloom during the 1960s, was also starting to emerge. In Tennessee, strategies were being developed by Hobbs and Rhodes to provide troubled children with a more effective support system. The need for teachers to be trained to understand and assist with troubled children became far clearer during this decade (Apter & Conoley 1984:12).

Behaviour theory made great strides in the 1950s and had a significant impact in schools at the time. Before acceptance of the behaviour model, theorists compiled information on mental processes by means of introspection or by means of projective techniques. Watson demonstrated, with his techniques of behaviour conditioning that the behaviour of children could be conditioned and consequently controlled (Apter & Conoley 1984:161; Reinert 1980:13; Rizzo & Zabel 1988:35). With these behaviouristic theories, Watson opposed the traditional German psychoanalytic viewpoints that were generally accepted by theorists. Watson in fact became "the torchbearer for those who were seeking a theoretical construct based on conscious thought processes" (Reinert 1980:13). In this way, he equalled Freud who was recognised as the dynamic force behind the recognition of the impact of the subconscious on behaviour. Woody (Reinert 1980:13) argues that Watson's ideas and formulations were to "have a greater impact on programming for children in conflict than any other theory of our time". It could be argued that this was specifically true in terms of the practical application of his ideas by practitioners and theorists in their dealings with children in conflict. Many difficulties, however, still remained and Kauffman (Rich 1982:10) warns that "we have made progress – but less progress, I think, than we would like to believe".

During the 1960s interest in Special Education intensified and a nationwide survey on special classes for disturbed children was conducted in the United States of America. A new professional group for children with behaviour problems, was established, namely The Council for Children with Behaviour Disorders (CCBD) (Apter & Conoley 1984:12; Rizzo & Zabel 1988:313). Various groups and individuals researched and described psychodynamic, behaviour, humanistic, ecological and psycho-educational approaches for educating disturbed children.

Various psychopathology classification schemes within the psychiatric/medical frame of reference, had come into being to facilitate communication between professional practitioners. During the 1960s disturbed behaviour was more specifically diagnosed and

classified, for example, hyperactivity, shyness, withdrawal and aggressive behaviour. The American Psychiatric Association for instance in 1968 published its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-II) handbook (Apter & Conoley 1984:30-31; Rizzo & Zabel 1988:8-10) in an attempt to standardise diagnostic nomenclature. Revision IV of this manual is currently still used by psychiatrists and psychologists. It provides a comprehensive approach to the classification of *mental* disorders, but from an educational perspective it is not without its critics, in that it reflects its *medical* heritage.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, emotional disturbances were defined by mental health professionals, in terms of *behaviour problems*, *learning problems*, and *social interaction problems*. This placed the problem of emotional disturbance more within the realm of the teaching profession, as they are accustomed to dealing with social behaviour, peer group relationships and learning problems. By making use of alternative instructional strategies, some discovered by trial and error and yet others by means of research, new strategies were developed to enable teachers to act as primary interveners. The public school system as a result became the primary service delivery system to assist learners that are emotionally disturbed. These new strategies implied that new curricula, teaching methods, and appropriate administrative arrangements had to be put in place.

During the 1970s, Rhodes and his colleagues at the University of Michigan gained an interest in the phenomenon of "emotional disturbance". Nick Hobbs simultaneously started work on a classification system for exceptional children. As a consequence the education of troubled children, regarded as being handicapped, was legalised by being signing it into law (Apter & Conoley 1984:12). Children in effect were treated in a far more humane manner, than in comparison with previous centuries.

The attack by counter theorists on school programmes and the actual programming taking place enjoyed a lot of attention. They in essence focussed on aspects of the education system, namely that of labelling, grading, segregation, classification by grades, making misuse of intelligence as a descriptive tool, and the contribution of teacher training institutions to education in general. Thus far studies in relation to children in conflict reflected an illogical attack on childhood deviance. As the concept *emotional disturbance* had not been clearly described by theorists, it was surrounded by a substantial degree of confusion. Disturbed behaviour is currently more effectively understood, as the theories are a product of historical explorations of the "behaviour" concept, especially disturbed behaviour. Multiple explanatory statements, based on the resultant theories, have lead to

improved and more effective services being rendered to learners with behaviour problems.

The following strategies were implemented by educationists:

- ▶ *structured strategy*. Especially relevant for learners regarded as being hyperactive;
- ▶ *behaviour strategy*. Three methods essentially used, namely respondent conditioning, modelling, and operant conditioning or behaviour modification;
- ▶ *psycho-educational strategy*. The strategy focuses on personal relationships, coping with feelings, and dealing with psychological crises; and
- ▶ *environmental strategies*. The strategy stresses the importance of the environment and its contribution towards disturbed behaviour, for example. the teaching style of the teacher.

The availability of alternative strategies meant that more options were available to educationists, in order to assist learners exhibiting behaviour problems. They no longer needed to function purely within the ambit of the medical or the behaviour model. Teachers could make use of strategies that would be more appropriate to the needs of learners exhibiting behaviour problems and the teaching style of teachers per se.

From the early 1900s up to the 1960s the responsibility to assist emotionally disturbed children was assigned to the mental health system. During the late 1950, for example research studies indicated that the needs of these children were far more complex than could be dealt with by the *mental health* systems limited knowledge base. The knowledge base had to be broadened with the introduction of new concepts, procedures, and above all the training of a new cadre of professionals, to be able to assist children exhibiting disturbed behaviour. Theorists such as Morse, Hobbs, Hewitt, Rhodes, Trippi and Bower (Paul & Epanchin 1982:39) were driving forces in building bridges between the old traditional mental health practices and the new psycho-educational, behaviour and ecological approaches. These theorists proved to mental health professionals that educational institutions could provide a worthwhile alternative for dealing with disturbed children.

The attempts of the above referenced theorists, to prove their argument, were in many instances so successful that they gained the support of professionals from other disciplines. A psychiatrist, Szasz, for instance questioned the relevance of the concept "mental illness" in assisting learners exhibiting disturbed behaviour (Paul & Epanchin 1982:39). He maintained that the so-called *mentally ill* were not actually sick, but rather experiencing difficulties in adjusting and coping with the daily crises of life. Sociologists such as Goffman

were exposing the negative effects of stigmatisation, by labelling or categorising children in terms of the manifestations of their behaviour problems (Paul & Epanchin 1982:39).

Psychologists and psychology as a field of specialisation, contributed greatly in assisting disturbed learners in the classroom. Professionals, concerned about the children and their well-being, were asking questions such as “*Who are these children?*”, “*What needs to be done to assist them?*”, “*How must instructional methods be changed?*”, and many similar questions. Eventually with the input from diverse professional groups, with different philosophies, technical languages and methodologies, a new educational system came into being, one directed at assisting learners with behaviour problems. During the 1960s education created the opportunity for interdisciplinary teamwork to assist learners in need. The needs of the learners had, however, to be clearly defined and the goals of an assistance programme needed to be of such a nature, as to be clearly understood by all teachers, thereby enabling them to intervene and assist the learners concerned.

During the late 1960s, a renewed emphasis on human rights within the United States of America resulted in the rights of children being reviewed. Children’s rights to take full advantage of community-based services, including in particular mainstream education, came under the spotlight. In the process the placement of learners, labelled as handicapped, in special institutions came under attack. The ethics of placing learners in institutions where they would be deprived of opportunities afforded to others was questioned and their right to due process was legally established. As a consequence the accent was on “the least restrictive placement” of learners, or as it has become known “mainstreaming” which is directed at integrating handicapped learners as far as possible into the regular education system (Paul & Epanchin 1982:41- 44).

Theorists accepted that by placing a child in an institution there was a tendency for them to be labelled and stigmatised. The negative impact of *labelling* and even the special placement of children were causes of great concern. Theorists concluded that academically it was recommendable to place learners in a normal, mainstream classroom, but socially it was better for the child to be in a special class where he or she is amongst other children that will understand his or her feelings and have similar needs (Paul & Epanchin 1982:42). Currently this argument still has relevance and without doubt has had a definite bearing on the drafting of the new Education Policy of inclusive education, whereby all children have equal opportunities in mainstream education “to enable all learners to participate actively

in the education process so that they can develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society" (NCSNET 1997:i).

The 1970s gave birth to a new era in education. More attention was focussed on adopting *a holistic approach* and on *the rights of the child*, when dealing with children in conflict. These two principles served as a point of departure for education, psychology, and health care professionals in dealing with the problems confronting learners. A new awareness, as to the value of all persons, irrespective of gender, colour or potential, was established. Reinert's (1980:14) contention that "schools are discovering that they must provide for all those who are exceptional, not just for those who are exceptionally capable" should be seen within this context.

In the 1980s educationists recognised the complexities involved in classifying behaviour problems. They suggested that broad distinctions need to be made between disturbed behaviour and personality problems. They further acknowledged the necessity *to study the individual child within his or her ecological context*. So for instance Cooper, Smith and Upton (1994) contend that the ecological approach is "informed by a specifically educational perspective, which emphasises the distinctive qualities of the school/classroom situation, and the existing specialised skills of teachers." The insights gained from this approach were deemed to be so meaningful that to date and for the purposes of this study, ***the ecological systems theory*** is still regarded as constituting ***the most applicable approach*** for studying and understanding children's behaviour problems. Of relevance in this regard is Charlton and David's (1993:10) contention that "currently there is an increasing trend within education which focuses upon a more realistic and equitable perspective of the causes of pupil (mis) behaviour in school". In a similar sense Rizzo and Zabel (1988:60), in researching behaviour disorders, assert that ***"an individual's behavior must be considered within its ecological context"***.

The twentieth century does not imply an end to unacceptable historical determiners, for example superstition and labelling, they merely became of lesser importance in *an era of service*. According to Rich (1982:11) the coming together of *four historical threads* during the 1970s caused the positive swing towards the more humane treatment of children. He defined the four threads as *the establishment of alternative classification systems* to diagnose disturbing behaviour; the *changed focus on non medical theories* to explain the causative factors of disturbed behaviour; the *availability of more specialised educational strategies*

to assist disturbed persons; and *litigation* (decisions made in courts) and *legislation* (laws) that emerged in order to support and assist handicapped and disturbed persons.

The main conclusions drawn from the preceding discussion on the historical development of services rendered to children with behaviour problems, are briefly summarised as follows:

- The behaviour problems of children and possible strategies to deal therewith, were only highlighted during the sixties.
- Children were in the past viewed from within a psychiatric frame of reference. Behaviour problems were consequently regarded as constituting a psychiatric problem. Progressively a more humanitarian approach free from superstition and fear emerged.
- During the twentieth century theorists became more service oriented, especially in the light of the fact that it was proclaimed *the century of the child*.
- The strong impact of the medical frame of reference, when evaluating problem behaviour, is easily identifiable. The belief that *troubled people are sick people* reinforced this belief. Proof of this contention is to be found in the use of medication and psychotropic drugs to cure patients. This by implication meant that problem behaviour had to be *diagnosed* and *classified* in order for the relevant *medication* to be prescribed for the patient.
- Psychological testing and the establishment of Child Guidance Clinics became a reality during the twentieth century.
- Sociologists and anthropologists built up a reservoir of evidence in order to prove the validity of a correlation between socio-cultural factors and the occurrence of mental illness. It was acknowledged that the behaviour of the child is best understood within his or her life-world. *The ecological systems theory emerged, with its focus on the child-in-his/her environment and the vice versa interaction taking place. Blaming and labelling, as in the past, is no longer deemed acceptable.*
- The psychodynamic and behaviorist models, as well as the ecological systems theory dominated theoretical perspectives on behaviour. These theoretical perspectives stand in contrast to the old, traditional mental health practices, based on psychiatric theories, which in turn originated from the medical model.
- It was acknowledged that learners exhibiting behaviour problems could be educated and that they did not necessarily belong in mental institutions. The public school became the primary service delivery system to assist emotionally disturbed learners and in the process new strategies came into being to assist these learners.

- A human rights culture evolved the ethics of placing learners in institutions where they would be deprived of opportunities afforded to others was questioned. Their right to due process was legally established. As a consequence the accent was on *the least restrictive placement* of learners, or as it has become known “mainstreaming” which is directed at integrating handicapped learners as far as possible into the regular education system. Theorists debated the issue as to whether a learner with special educational needs, should be placed amongst other learners in the classroom, or whether the learner should be placed in a special school.
- The **1970s** gave birth to a new era in education with a positive swing towards the more humane treatment of children. A holistic approach, based on **Ecological Systems theory**, was adopted, focussing on *the rights of the child* in dealing with children in conflict. These principles served as a point of departure for education, psychology, and health care professionals in dealing with the problems confronting learners. A new awareness, as to the value of all persons, irrespective of gender, colour or potential, was established.
- Educators started to speak out on the behalf of children with behaviour problems. They became more aware of the *need for more specific educational planning* when intervening to assist children with behaviour disorders. *They stressed the necessity to study the individual child within his or her ecological situation.*
- The American Psychiatric Association published its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders handbook in an attempt to standardise diagnostic nomenclature. Revision IV of this manual is currently still in use. It provides a comprehensive approach for the classification of mental disorders, but from an educational perspective it is not without its critics, in that it reflects its medical heritage.

Striking *similarities* may be identified between the tendencies that occurred during *the twentieth century* and the *present* situation that exists in *South Africa*, in terms of the latest Education Policy. (See Chapter 5, sec. 5.3.3 in this regard.) The following similarities are highlighted:

- Educators, psychologists, policy makers and other professional persons are mostly service oriented and attempt to involve the *whole school, all sectors of the community and especially parents*, as partners in education. Collaboration and team work are rapidly increasing in importance. The *holistic* impact of the ecological systems theory is visible in all spheres of services rendered to children. The latest education policy specifies that teachers need to collaborate and not compete with

one another and that each and every person is responsible for assisting the learner with his or her problems.

- While there are still practitioners who adhere to the old medical model, by and large most professional persons have come to accept and implement the Ecological Systems Model. Learners are no longer to be blamed or stigmatised in terms of their behaviour problems. A **holistic approach**, involving all stakeholders, is in effect adopted in assisting learners to understand and assist with their behaviour problems. In terms of the inclusive education policy, learners with behaviour problems are to be kept in mainstream schools and should not be placed in industrial schools.
- Teachers need to be empowered to develop new, accommodating strategies to render assistance to learners with behaviour problems.
- *The rights of the child* are increasingly being accentuated in legislation. According to the South African constitution, Chapter 3, clause 3 (Kleyn & Viljoen 1995:255), a learner enjoys the right to be treated with dignity, may not be unfairly discriminated against, are entitled to receive a basic education and are to have equal access to educational institutions. These rights are not in conflict with the historical developments previously discussed, but in fact merely serve to give legal emphasis and support to the processes concerned.

In the following section the application of theoretical approaches relevant to behaviour management will be discussed.

4.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES RELEVANT TO UNDERSTANDING AND ASSISTING LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS MORE EFFECTIVELY

In Chapter 2 (section 2.2) the *theoretical perspectives* relating to the development of behaviour (biophysical, behaviour, psychodynamic, sociological, ecological and counter theories) were discussed. Each of the perspectives tends to focus on different aspects or approaches for assisting learners with behaviour problems. Collectively they provide persons, attempting to assist a learner with behaviour problems, with a framework on which the assistance strategy may be based. By focussing on a single theory, their ability to assist the learner with behaviour problems may be significantly constrained in practice. It is argued that behaviour can best be described and understood, by means of the underlying assumptions of each of the theories concerned. These assumptions serve as guidelines, as to how learners can be understood and assisted in order to lead more fulfilled lives. As previously mentioned in section 2.2, no one particular theoretical model provides all the

answers, as to why people behave in a specific manner. Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1997:7,22) argue that "a personality theory can provide a better and more complete explanation of human behaviour than common sense can. *However, the theories have special, significant implications for all those who work with people, including parents, teachers, clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists, psychiatrists and personnel officers*".

In the ensuing discussion particular attention is attributed to the practical realities associated with the implementation of the various theoretical perspectives and approaches previously dealt with in section 2.2. Possible strategies that may be used to alter learners' behaviour patterns to engender more acceptable forms of behaviour are also addressed in the discussion. Many of the techniques, knowledge, values and skills embedded within the frame of reference of these theoretical models, are aiming at "teaching children to become their own counsellors for changing their behaviour to better meet their needs" (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:198). They also serve to inform the counsellor/therapist and for the purposes of this study *the teacher*, as to means that may be utilised (without becoming pseudo-psychologists) to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems more effectively. In this regard it may be noted that Morse, Ardizzone, Macdonald and Pasick (1980:5) are of the conviction that "teachers can become the critical stabilizing force in many pupils' lives. Teachers are child upbringers, the professional agents of society in this regard".

The therapeutic techniques (see Chapter 5) discussed provide guidelines that may be implemented by the teacher within the classroom, in assisting learners with behaviour problems. These guidelines or techniques are deemed to be of substantial importance, especially since "practical techniques that parents and teachers are able to implement in careful, consistent fashion and that result in significant changes in behaviour are not easy to find" (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:140). In Chapter 5 the relevant guidelines will be integrated and moulded into a holistic model for South African teachers to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.

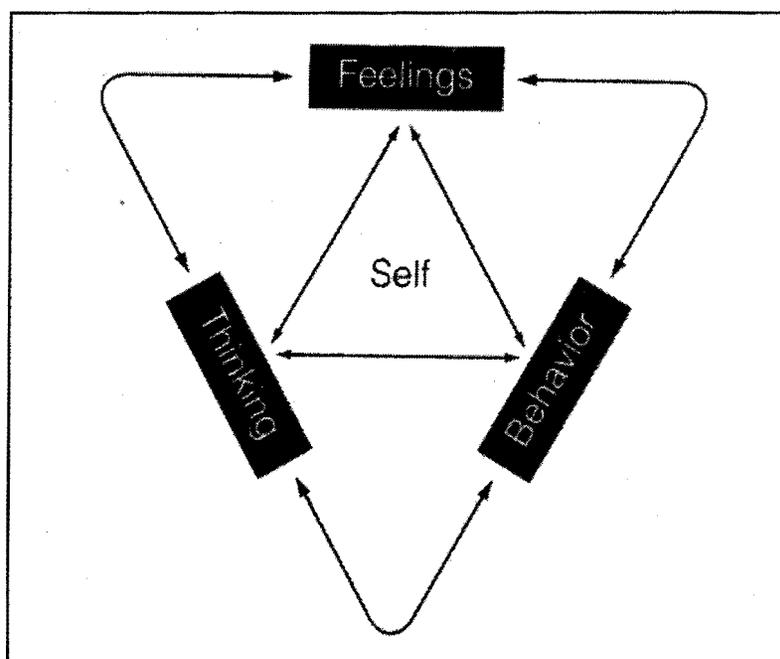
Although Gillis (1994:10) claims that there is no one particular counselling theory that is generally accepted and preferred, Charlton and David (1993:10) argue that *ecological systems theory*, with its eclectic nature, is still regarded as being the most applicable approach to study, in order to understand and understand and assist a learner with behaviour problems (see also section 2.2 in this regard). Of relevance in discussing the various theories

is Apter and Conoley's (1984:55) contention that "emotionally disturbed children have been observed, studied, poked, and prodded with increasing intensity since the turn of the century. *A number of ways of explaining what is observed about troubled children have been developed*". Yet, as highlighted by Thompson and Rudolph (1996:26,27), comparative studies have revealed that ***no single system has proved to be consistently the most effective***. Rather, various counselling approaches based on different theories, while keeping in mind the variety of individual needs of children, appear to be more effective in understanding and assisting learners with diverse behaviour problems (Thompson and Rudolph 1996:26,27). A multimodal, comprehensive, eclectic framework, inherent within ecological systems theory, can be of more practical significance in assisting learners with a multiplicity of varying needs. *The new Education Policy is also based on the ecological systems approach, as it incorporates whole school and community-based approaches* (NCSNET 1997:101).

The theoretical therapeutic approaches, discussed in this chapter, are addressed from within the context of the *ecological systems model*. They need to be seen in terms of a practical perspective adopted in counselling or assisting learners within real life situations. These theoretical approaches are included in this chapter, in order to serve as a frame of reference for developing a model for South African teachers, as to the most appropriate means of understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems in the classroom.

Thompson and Rudolph (1996:28,29) state that each of the various theoretical approaches used in counselling, has a variety of techniques or applications available that may be adapted to accommodate learning style differences between learners. They further state that eight theories can be identified, which focus on intervening in the lives of learners exhibiting behaviour problems. These theoretical approaches in turn are ordered in terms of three fundamental components, namely ***the affective component*** (person-centred counselling, Gestalt therapy), ***the behaviour component*** (behaviour counselling, reality therapy, individual psychology), and ***the cognitive component*** (rational-emotive behaviour therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, psychoanalytical counselling, transactional analysis). *Feeling, thinking and behaving* (see Chapter 5 in this regard) cannot be isolated and because of the integrative relationship that exists between the components, an overlap exists between the different counselling theories and consequently a change in one of these areas, will impact on the others (see Figure 4.1 in this regard). Corsini (1984:6) while supporting the referenced views of Thompson and Rudolph (1996:28,29), however, maintains that "*we cannot really work directly with the emotions and must reach them indirectly through the intellect or the body*".

Figure 4.1 Classification of counselling approaches



Source: Thompson & Rudolph (1996:29)

In the ensuing sections the different theories addressing *feelings, thinking and behaviour* of learners will be discussed, together with suggested strategies of how these theories can be utilised in assisting learners. The focus in this study is on the *unmet emotional needs* of learners.

4.3.1 The affective (feeling) component

Theoretical approaches that relate to the *affective (feeling)* component of the personality are: the person-centred theories, accentuated by Rogers (Moore 1997:461; Thompson & Rudolph 1996:116) and **Gestalt theory**, with Fritz Perls as its architect (Meyer *et al.* 1977:366; Thompson & Rudolph 1996:140). The person-centred theories have in common that they try to include and explain all aspects of the person and tend to view behaviourism as being inadequate, in that only aspects of the person are studied (Meyer 1997:19).

4.3.1.1 Person-centred theories

The person-centred theorists, such as Rogers, Murray, Allport, Maslow, Kelly, Frankl and Perls (Meyer *et al.* 1997:366), believe that counsellors need to look at *a person as a whole human being*. They do not favour theories advocating the following viewpoints:

- The human being is somebody who is at the mercy of internal and external forces and who has to develop defence mechanisms to be able to compromise between the demands of the psyche and the demands of the society (psychoanalytical theory).
- A person is a mechanistic human being who functions on the same level as an animal (behaviourist theories).
- External factors determine a person's behaviour.

The *premises* on which the **person-centred theory** is based are briefly described as follows (Gillis 1994:16-26; Meador & Rogers 1984:142-193; Meyer *et al.* 1997:357-368; Moore 1989:169-228; Thompson & Rudolph 1996:115-135):

- The behaviour of the client/child can only be understood from his or her *internal frame* of reference or *cognitive map* – only he or she can perceive his or her private world in a unique way. The therapist must therefore try to establish how the child perceives his/her world – look at the world through “*the eyes of the child*” **in order to understand and assist him or her**.
- While many of a person's perceptions exist at an unconscious level, the majority, however, are at a conscious level. People and their reactions to the inner and outer stimuli, need to be seen in terms of their being “*whole*” persons and therefore able to react both in terms of their conscious and unconscious perceptions.
- Self-actualisation is a basic driving force within all human beings, as clearly depicted within Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Prinsloo 1992:433). This implies a satisfying of physiological needs, namely a need to relate to others, to feel good about oneself, as well as to become more productive and self-regulated persons, who are in control of themselves and their lives.
- **A self-concept is shaped by a child's internal experiences and environmental perceptions.** The behaviour/response of significant other role players on the self-concept of the child, influences the child's expectations of how other people will treat him/her. *The development of a positive self-concept, as the goal of therapy, is only possible when a sense of congruence exists between what the child values within him*

or herself and how he or she perceives what is valued by parents and significant other role players. If an incongruent state of mind exists, the person will either resort to the use of defence mechanisms, or distort and deny the reality of experiences. This eventually results in cognitive rigidity or personality disorganization, together with an experience of overwhelming anxiety. Prochaska (Moore 1989:174) stresses the importance of a positive self-concept when arguing that ***“the needs of children for the positive regard of others, their needs to be prized, to be accepted, to be loved, are so addictive that they become the most potent of all needs”***. Rogers found in his research that positive reinforcement of the self-concept constitutes a significant need within children. Children do not accept themselves and believe that they are not “O.K.” *The therapist² must find ways to make the child feel good about him or herself, to feel accepted, and as being worthwhile.*

- Development is deemed to proceed in accordance with a need hierarchy. Consequently, the therapist needs to attempt to nurture an *atmosphere* in which the client² can grow and flourish. This is one in which especially the child’s needs for ***security, love and self-respect*** can be fulfilled. The child must be able to express feelings and thoughts openly without feeling unsafe. The therapist needs to guide the learner to understand his or her own needs deficiency, as he or she plays a determining role in satisfying these needs. ***The environment cannot merely be regarded as a manipulator of behaviour, as it also provides opportunities for needs satisfaction and self-actualisation.*** The therapist must assist children who see their problems, as being caused by others, to take responsibility for themselves and to become self-directed.
- The *therapeutic relationship* is the most significant factor in assisting a client/child. Characteristics of this relationship are: a person-to-person relationship; being human in nature; constituting a relationship of reciprocity, displaying a sense of commitment and honesty; and implying a voluntarily involvement of the client, with mutual respect and trust, as well as *a genuine, unconditional acceptance and an emphatic understanding of the client as key considerations*. The feeling of being understood and unconditionally accepted allows the child to open up and experience a feeling of safety. The therapist must respect the client’s need for confidentiality. The relationship fosters an empathic focus on the needs and feelings of the client, a

²For the purpose of the study, the concept “therapist” will be used as a synonym for the concept “teacher” and the concept “client” will be used as a synonym for the concept “learner” or “child”.

relationship that is liberating, open-ended and in which outcomes are determined by the client, based on a sound working alliance. The therapist must believe in the child's ability to become self-directing and his or her ability to take charge of his or her life. They need to accept the child's right to choose to change or not to change his or her attitudes or behaviours, which impact on him or her and his or her relationships with significant other role players within his or her environment.

- *Core conditions* of the effective assistance process are: **empathy, respect and a sense of genuineness**. The therapist must be careful not to stimulate a child's defence mechanisms and feeling of less self-worth by judging, moralizing, lecturing and asking "why" questions.
- *Important skills* that the therapist should have acquired are: **simple acceptance** (the therapist gives an indication of encouragement), **reflection** (the therapist reflects the words, feelings and attitudes expressed by the child, so that the child hears what he or she has said, and can feel, understood and begin to accept his or her feelings), **summarization** (the therapist summarizes/ties together/focusses in a few words the essence of the feelings, thoughts and experiences the child has expressed), **confrontation** (the therapist with empathy confronts the child with discrepancies, distortions or game plays that the child reveals), **immediacy** (the therapist reports on the therapist/child relationship and shares genuine feelings and thoughts, whilst assisting the learner), **self-disclosure** (the therapist shares his or her own feelings or experiences regarding similar situations, whilst trying to help the child gain a more in depth understanding), **open-ended questions** (the therapist asks these kind of questions in order to uncover the true feelings of the child and to explore the events, experiences and thoughts of the child), **silence** (the therapist allows moments of silence to enable the child and himself herself to think through what has been said), and **reflection of deeper feelings** (the therapist reflects the feeling that the child actually experiences, but is not aware of and thereby promotes a better understanding).
- Therapists can make use of activities to stimulate the young child and build up a rapport with the child. The ultimate objective being to see into the child's world by means of , for example, drawings. The child's world is in essence explored in terms of thoughts, experiences and feelings. The therapist must assist the child to work out strategies to deal with expressed concerns. **These strategies must be practical and should fit in with the child's needs and wishes.**
- A therapist must not take on the role of a "fixer" but must rather focus on how to create conditions that will enable the child to learn or relearn the attitudes and

behaviour that will result in the realisation of a positive identity. *Therapists must be careful not to be dishonest, as the child is quick to spot "a phony"*. The child will tend to hold back on any bad news and will initially not want to reveal inner feelings with painful associations. The therapist must thus be as open as possible in his or her approach with children and must request teachers and parents to do the same.

- Play can be fruitfully used to recreate the child's world and his or her relationships therein. Young children with short attention spans or who experience difficulty in expressing themselves verbally and children who are emotionally or developmentally immature, will find play an effective means to express their feelings, thoughts and experiences. Play provides freedom and is instrumental in reducing stress levels. Play allows the therapist to enter the world of the child. Although a slow process, play remains an effective medium for assisting both troubled and normal children to change their behaviour and attitudes, while offering the possibility to let children feel "OK", and as being in charge of their life-world.
- Adolescents quite often lack confidence in themselves and in their life-world because of emotional "swings", peer pressures, eating disorders, changing sexual morals, family disorganization, drugs, school and job decisions. Therapists can assist adolescents in this regard by reassuring them that the therapist believes in their abilities to be self-directive and able to find solutions for the problems they encounter in their lives. The *core conditions*, as set out by Rogers, should determine the adolescent's relationship with the therapist, namely *empathy, respect and genuineness*. Therapists, when dealing with adolescents, need to make use of the same techniques and skills, as used when dealing with younger children. These techniques and skills are only implemented in a more sophisticated way in order to link up with the more developed cognitive and abstract thinking processes of adolescent learners. Fundamental elements of therapy are that of listening in an accepting, empathic manner and accepting that the therapy should not be rushed. Adolescents should be granted appropriate opportunities within the therapist/adolescent relationship to feel free to explore who they are, what they want and what their feelings are, in order to accept or reject these feelings. Empathetic confrontation and encounter by the therapist can assist the adolescent to become more objective in terms of his or her contradictory thoughts, feelings, values and behaviours. The therapist should not attempt to *give advice* to the adolescent learner, nor be curious, wanting to verify facts or make use of *why* questions, as such behaviour is inclined to make the adolescent feel defensive or hostile. The therapist and the adolescent *need to talk frankly with each other and develop a joint learning experience*, that is,

“You and me are in this together”. The therapist makes use of skills, activities, and materials to positively reinforce the adolescent learner’s self-concept, to enhance his or her self-understanding and to promote his or her independence and decision making.

- *Group work with children is highly effective and therapeutic, especially within a school setting.* It offers an opportunity to group members to have honest and open interactions and to drop their facades. The group climate of safety, openness, risk taking, and realism fosters a sense of trust, which assists members to recognise and change their self-defeating behaviours, test out more innovative and constructive behaviours, and begin to relate in a more open and effective manner in everyday life situations. The group process embodies three phases, namely: an **initial phase** of confusion, awkwardness, a clinging to past experiences, a sharing of feelings and an exploration of personal issues. The **second phase** consists of a gradual expression of negative feelings and an exploration of material that is of personal value to the client. Facades are cracking at this stage, whilst confrontation and feedback are taking place. The **final phase** gives rise to an expression of deeper feelings and personal meanings, while the client begins to accept him or herself to a greater extent and becomes more committed to change. Unstructured groups are not suitable for younger children and the therapist therefore needs to plan activities directed at clarifying, identifying and understanding feelings, while talking freely about their ideas and concerns, and experiencing more rewarding relationships with peers within the group, that will enhance the self-esteem of group members. The behaviour of learners who are *unmotivated*, have lost interest in their schoolwork or are misbehaving, ***can be changed, by enhancing and reinforcing in a positive way their self-esteem.*** Group work offers an opportunity to share in concerns that are common to adolescents, for example. developing friendships, getting along with siblings, not being understood by parents, teachers, friends, boyfriends or girlfriends. The therapist facilitating groups should realise that adolescents feel easily embarrassed, and constrained in a group situation. The therapist therefore needs patience, understanding and faith in the group process. The group can either be structured or unstructured, as in practice the actual structure is of lesser importance. Research findings indicate that adolescents who do not have regular contact within the same school or class, are inclined to be less shy and withdrawn and will tend to share feelings and experiences, far easier than when they are familiar to group members. Parents permission is required when bringing children together in groups, for example. a group for children from divorced homes. The aim of a group will be to for instance to explore members’ feelings and to assist

them to understand what is happening in their lives. A group offers children and adolescents the opportunity to be of assistance to one another, to acquire a better self-understanding of each individual member, improve relationships with one another and to adjust to their environment.

- By nurturing a *non-threatening atmosphere in the classroom*, teachers enable learners to experience trust, and to learn to evaluate themselves. If a teacher facilitates the process of learning (not by teaching or instructing the learners), the learners will be allowed to set their own goals and decide on how best to achieve them.
- A person-centred approach implies that when members of a *parenting skills group feel safe and understood*, they will be able to develop insights which will motivate them to change their parenting practices. Thomas Gordon (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:374), one of Rogers's students, specialised in parent effectiveness training and discovered that parents are more often blamed than trained. He portrayed faith in the abilities and willingness of parents to acquire new methods and skills to relate more effectively to their children. Gordon (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:374) drew up a list of verbal behaviour that parents/therapists/teachers should avoid when dealing with children: *ordering* (telling the child or ordering the child to do something); *warning, admonishing, threatening* (forecasting negative results if the child does not obey); *exhorting, moralizing, preaching* (telling the child what should or what ought to be done); *advising, giving solutions or suggestions* (telling the child how to solve a problem, giving advice, or providing answers); *lecturing, teaching, giving logical arguments* (trying to influence the child with logical arguments, to convince the child of the correctness of your opinion); *judging, criticizing, disagreeing, blaming* (evaluating the child in a negative manner); *praising, agreeing* (offering a positive evaluation, judgment, or evaluation of the child); *name-calling, ridiculing, shaming* (shaming, making a fool of, or categorising the child); *interpretation, analysing, diagnosing* (analysing why the child is doing something, telling the child what his or her motives are); *reassuring, sympathizing, consoling, supporting* (resorting to feelings and emotions in an attempt to make the child feel better); *probing, questioning, interrogating* (trying to find reasons, motives, or causes, by searching for more information to solve the problem); and *withdrawing, distracting, humouring, diverting* (trying to remove the child from the problem or getting the child to withdraw from the problem). Gordon (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:374) suggests that the therapist/parent/teacher should respond to children in such a way that they feel free to keep talking, feel less guilty and less inadequate, thereby reducing their defensive mechanisms and resentments. The therapist/parent/teacher has to actively and

empathically listen to the child, when he/she is talking or responding and rather make use of "I messages" (the child is not being blamed, but the therapist/parent/teacher tells the child how he feels about the child's behaviour), instead of "You messages" (the child is being blamed for his or her unacceptable behaviour). Active or empathic listening allows the therapist to enter the world of children and to reflect on children's feelings and meanings, allowing children to eventually take ownership of their problems and experience a feeling of being understood. Gordon (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:374) developed the "*no lose method*" whereby parents or teachers or therapists and the child are brought together in an encounter situation, where the adult requests the child to assist him or her in finding solutions for existing problems that will be acceptable to both parties concerned. The solutions are critically evaluated by both parties and eventually a final solution for the problem is proposed and accepted by both. No bargaining or selling of an idea takes place after the solution has been accepted. There is no need for power or coercion, as both parties have agreed to the solution.

The outcomes of the person-centred approach are as follows (Moore 1989:218-221, 206-209; Thompson & Rudolph 1996:132,133):

- Rogers's focus on the therapist/client relationship that has proven to be the most crucial component in rendering assistance to clients. Moore (1989:218) concluded that "the relationship alone has been not only necessary but sufficient in about one-fourth of child counselling cases, especially when the child is **emotionally deprived**". Rogers modelled a humanistic and phenomenological understanding of clients. His formulations were, however, unlike in the case of other theories (the psychodynamic theory) testable. Certain skills ("core conditions") used by therapists will determine the level of disclosure and exploration of concerns.
- Constant patterns of changed and improved behaviour can be recorded during the counselling process. People are able to function in a more flexible manner in contrast to the rigid way that they have functioned in the past. Person-centred therapy can be effective in many settings, for example educational settings, conflict within the marriage, or relationship problems. The self-concept of the person improves as a result of therapy and the client gains an insight into his or her problems and hence experiences a sense of relief. With the assistance of the therapist, self-exploration is made possible, by reflecting on the feelings expressed by the client. Successful adjustment to the environment and fewer feelings of anxiety are positive outcomes

of the therapy. The person-centred therapy can easily be combined with other theoretical approaches. Person-centred counselling can be used in different cultures and is accepted across many cultures (Moore 1989:214; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:463).

- Rogers claims that teachers preferred to make use of the person-centred method of learning in contrast to the old, traditional approaches consisting of a prescribed curriculum, similar assignments for all learners, lecturing as the primary mode of instruction, standard tests to evaluate learners and instructor-chosen grades, as a way of learning. Educators requested that the *curriculum* should include ***an affective component*** to assist learners in gaining a greater self-awareness, self-understanding and self-responsibility. Creativity, divergent thinking, inquiry learning and problem solving, as well as a respect for the uniqueness of the perceptions, values, feelings and beliefs of learners, are all a reflection of the typical goals set by these educationists.
- Moore (1989:207) argues that although the person-centred approach, as a result of its humanistic character, is too compelling to ignore and do away with in a democratic society, the impact of earlier influences still remain identifiable. The person-centred theory's contribution within the school system focusses on the development of *communication systems* and *positive self-concepts*, via *encouragement of accomplishments* and *personal abilities*, assisting learners to clarify values and beliefs, and *portraying a trust and faith in learners' ability* to make their own choices and take responsibility for their actions. The person-centred approach has in particular impacted on the curriculum in the following ways: assisting teachers to arrange classroom meetings on a regular basis, thereby allowing children to communicate freely in an open and honest manner and develop personal responsibility; stressing the importance for a teacher to include in their daily programme opportunities to explore their feelings, beliefs, values and attitudes by means of planned activities or by making use of spontaneous activities that take place during regular teaching sessions, ***to compile and demonstrate affective-programmes and materials to be used in the classroom in order to compliment the cognitive learning that is taking place***, to conduct classroom guidance on a regular and preventative basis. These activities are deemed to be growth enhancing and can assist learners in adjusting to their environments. The person-centred approach has forced educators to review their patterns of communication and methods of teaching, in order to enhance learner development. These guidance experiences stimulate constant personal, emotional and social growth of learners.

4.3.1.2 Gestalt theory

Gestalt theory places emphasis on the thoughts and feelings people experience within a particular point in time. The theory, which is also grouped together with the person-centred theories, was pioneered by Perls, who postulated that “our bodies and feelings are better indicators of the truth than our words, which we use to hide the truth from ourselves” (Rudolph & Thompson 1996:141). In terms of Gestalt theory, the following techniques (Rudolph & Thompson 1996:144,145) can be used with young children:

- “I” language. The client uses the word “I” instead of a generalized “you” when talking. This technique will assist children to take responsibility for their own feelings, thoughts and behaviours.
- Substituting “what” and “how” for “why”,
- Substituting “won’t” for “can’t”.
- No gossiping (the child talks to an empty chair using the present tense, if he/she must talk about someone not present, thereby making believe they are talking to the person concerned).
- Changing questions into statements (this method allows children to be more direct in expressing their thoughts and feelings).
- Taking responsibility (the child must fill in words in blank spaces as an alternative way of managing their lives).
- Incomplete sentences (this method helps the client to become aware of how they help and hurt themselves).
- Bipolarities (the method is directed at solving conflicts by making use of opposites).

The following statements explain the *underlying premises* of Gestalt theory (Simkin & Yontef 1984:279-315; Thompson & Rudolph 1996:139-160):

- The present thoughts and feelings of the person are important. The human being reacts as a whole being. The lives of many people are fragmented by concentrating and paying attention to many variables at the same time, which in time result in an ineffective living style with outcomes ranging from low productivity to serious accidents.
- People are capable of becoming self-regulating human beings, when they have achieved a sense of unity and integration in their lives. Their bodies (e.g. headaches) and feelings are indicators of the truth. Rather than listening to words which can hide

the truth from the person, the language of the body, can tell the truth. An awareness of feelings is needed for a person to take control. A mentally healthy person will maintain their awareness without losing concentration as a result of various environmental stimuli. People who are self-regulating and in control of themselves and their lives, can experience their own needs and find alternatives within their environments to meet these needs. People who experience a high level of self-awareness of their needs and are aware of the stimuli from the environment, will be able to know which problems and conflicts can and cannot be resolved. Successful adjustment is regarded as the taking of responsibility for one's life and responding to one's environment.

- A mentally healthy person focuses on one need at a time and when this need has been gratified, they attend to the next, while the previous need moves into the background. The Gestalt is thus closed. Mentally healthy persons will know what they need and how to manipulate themselves and their environment in order to satisfy these needs. Neurotic people cannot run their own lives – they manipulate others to do it on their behalf.
- Feelings must be acted out and thus the therapist makes use of *an empty chair*, representing significant other role players in their lives. Perls (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:139-160) drew attention to additional dimensions that are of relevance within the therapist/client relationship, namely body posture, voice tone, eye movements, feelings and gestures.

In the preceding paragraphs the theories focussing on the *affective level*, namely the person-centred theory and the Gestalt theory, were discussed. In the following section *behaviour counselling* reflecting on the behaviour domain of the personality of a child/learner, will be discussed.

4.3.2 Behaviour counselling

A key aspect of the behaviour approach is its emphasis on the study of observable behaviour and the influence of the environment as a behaviour determinant (Meyer 1997:19). Theoretical approaches that relate to *behaviour* specifically are: the **behaviouristic model**, **reality theory** and **individual psychology**. The latter was introduced by Adler, a medical doctor, who focussed on the individual rather than on establishing general laws governing human behaviour. The three approaches will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

4.3.2.1 Behaviouristic model

During the 1900s theorists developed a need to employ scientific principles when they studied human behaviour. Watson developed the Behaviourist model, which is based on a pure, scientifically founded method of studying behaviour (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:35). Behaviour is observed and measured before and after counselling. Observed changes in the behaviour during or after therapy, would indicate the outcomes of therapy. The logic used in effect constitutes a measurable cause effect relationship.

Behaviour therapy is especially effective in dealing with eating disorders; weight loss; study habits; assertiveness training; communication skills; an addiction to drugs, alcohol and smoking. It is also of value in addressing stuttering; anxiety in relation to school subjects and exams; changing classroom behaviour of hyperactive children; a need to reduce anxiety; mild peer rejections; school-refusal; teaching safety skills to prevent sexual abuse; and sleep disorders.

Behaviour therapy includes techniques such as role modelling, role-play (role reversal is especially effective when communication breaks down between the parent/child, teacher/learner, between peers, or between the therapist and a client). Young children (2-7 years) are better able to understand what they are seeing, hearing or experiencing, when role playing the roles of other children or people, as they are cognitively not yet capable of showing empathy towards others. Techniques such as relaxation training, extinction, positive reinforcement and coping strategies have specific relevance from a behaviour therapy perspective.

The **premises of the behaviouristic model** are deemed to be the following (Brown & Thompson Prout 1989:233-293; Gillis 1994:30-48; Thompson & Rudolph 1996:192-222; Wilson, 1984:239-274):

- Behaviour, whether good or bad, is learned through interactions and within relationships with significant other role players in the environment.
- Behaviour problems or undesired behaviour is the outcome of a learning process that can be changed or unlearned by making use of appropriate techniques. New, changed and desired behaviour patterns can be taught to a child.
- Behaviour modification techniques, which are based on the principles of conditioning, shaping and systematic reinforcement, aim at (1) strengthening existing

patterns of the desired behaviour or creating new ones and (2) reducing or eliminating undesired behaviour.

- Behaviourists regard human beings as neither good nor bad, but as mere products of their environments. They believe that a child is born neutral, as a blank slate or *tabula rasa* with the same potential for good or evil, rationality or irrationality. People respond to their environments, when appropriate conditions appear, in terms of a learned response.

In contrast to other theoretical approaches used in therapy, which focus on changing a person from within, the behaviouristic model or *behaviour counselling approach* (although it may be regarded as manipulative) tries to *change specific undesired behaviour patterns* directly, by making use of a planned system of rewards. The therapist attempts to assist clients to achieve goals that they have set for themselves, via the implementation of reinforcement principles. The behaviour therapist focusses on two kinds of behaviour, namely **operant** and **respondent** behaviour. Behaviorists prefer the term *desired or undesired behaviour* instead of acceptable/unacceptable behaviour.

The objectives that the therapist and the child set out in terms of desired behaviour, can be achieved by making use of positive and negative reinforcement. *Positive reinforcement* must include something which is desirable or pleasant for the child, while *negative reinforcement* could include inter alia: verbal threats, not satisfying the child's biological needs (primary reinforcers), retraction of privileges or rewards in the form of tokens, for example special beads, paper stars, or tangible reinforcers such as material items, that is, candy, toys money, or social reinforcers – not being allowed to attend a party (secondary reinforcers). Reinforcers can be used on a continuous basis or intermittently when the child gets rewarded periodically.

In order to achieve the primary objective of behaviour modification techniques, namely *to strengthen existing patterns of the desired behaviour or to create new patterns of desired behaviour*, the following techniques could be used: behaviour rehearsal, modelling and assertiveness training. To achieve the subsidiary aim of behaviour modification, namely *to reduce or to eliminate undesired behaviour*, the following techniques could be used: punishment of undesirable behaviour and extinction, the removal of positive reinforcement and satiation. Typical techniques, based on these objectives, are briefly discussed in the subsequent discussion.

Systematic desensitisation as a technique is used to reduce excessive anxiety and fear, for example, of exams or dogs. A response incompatible with anxiety, such as relaxation is paired with weak and then progressively stronger anxiety provoking stimuli. It should, however, be noted that systematic desensitisation could be too difficult for younger children, as they are not always competent in dealing with sequential behaviours. In a similar sense conscious relaxation and visualization may also be too difficult for young children. The technique is founded on the principle that all responses are learnt and therefore reconditioning can extinguish them. Relaxation being more rewarding than anxiety can therefore for instance replace anxiety in response to an anxiety-evoking situation.

Flooding or reactive or internal inhibition, as the direct opposite to desensitization, starts off with the most feared stimulus in the stimulus hierarchy. It is a process whereby an anxiety-evoking stimulus is presented on a continuous basis, leading eventually to fatigue and the eventual unlearning of the undesirable response. A typical case in point being to tell the child to get back on the horse after the horse has just thrown him/her off its back. The initial response will be that of anxiety or panic, which wears off after a while.

Counterconditioning implies the pairing of a stronger pleasant stimulus, as a procedure for overcoming the anxiety that exists because of the aversive stimulus, for example a young child may be given his or her favourite teddy bear to play with whilst sitting in the classroom that he/she fears.

Problem solving is another technique that may be used, especially with adolescents. The adolescent is taught a systematic approach to problem solving. *Decision making* is an outcome of the problem solving process. Although the process is the same for both these techniques, decision making has a more structured basis for making choices, rather than focussing on the finding of solutions.

Shaping is directed at stimulating new behaviours by reinforcing behaviour similar to the desired behaviour. Each successful approximation of the desired behaviour is reinforced until the desired behaviour is acquired. In effect the learner is caught in the act of appropriate behaviour and this behaviour is then reinforced.

4.3.2.2 Reality therapy

Reality therapy has the same goal as behaviourism, namely “to teach children basic social skills to help them interact more effectively with their peers and with adults in the school setting” (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:94). William Glasser, the architect of reality therapy, maintains that a correlation exists between a person’s lack of success in meeting his or her needs and the degree of his or her distress. Evidently implied therefore is that psychological problems stem from an inability to fulfill one’s basic needs. Much of Glasser’s research (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:94) focussed on children and teachers. Teaching children social skills, makes the theory and practice of reality therapy applicable within classroom situations. It is interesting to note that reality theory embodies elements of other theories, for example gestalt, rational-emotive, existential, cognitive, and ecological systems theory. The theory focuses on the significant other role players within the environment, as possibilities for building up a support network. Borrowing from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, Glasser focussed his treatment plan on teaching people to love and be loved, and to feel valued by oneself and others (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:93).

Paradoxical intention and dereflection can be used as additional brief counselling methods when either the problem or the client resists change. Paradoxical strategies focus on prescribing the symptom, for example a child who wets the bed once a week, is told to wet the BEd every night of the week. Dereflection strategies are inclined to reduce anxieties related to certain events in the client’s life. Reality therapy claims to be straightforward and to the point, it enables the client to develop logic in order to meet needs of love and self-worth without keeping others from satisfying their needs.

The **premises of reality therapy** are as follows (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:92-111):

- All psychological problems stem from a person’s denial of the reality of the world around them.
- A “*success*” identity is derived from the fact that the person knows how to love and knows how it feels to be loved and valued by oneself and others.
- If a child has built up a network of friends and supportive people and has acquired a healthy self-esteem, he or she can experience success.
- A child can learn ways to fulfill his or her needs and become a responsible adult.
- Reality theory is based on the three R’s : **responsibility** (the potential to meet one’s own needs, without infringing on the rights of others to satisfy their needs), **right and**

wrong (looking at the child's feelings will be an indicator of responsible and correct behaviour), and **reality** (a willingness to accept the logical, natural consequences of one's own behaviour).

- Many behaviour problems are a result of *disorders of responsibility*. Neurotic people are inclined to be too responsible whilst other people couldn't care less and do not act responsible at all. Reality therapy is based on the following point of departure – *in what way does one's behaviour affect other people*.
- Adjusted persons are responsible persons who can fulfill their needs without infringing on the needs and rights of others. A primary aspect of consideration to be regarded as a responsible person is an increased feeling of self-worth.
- Glasser has developed the **control theory** based on two themes, namely:
 - (1) Mental pictures are controlled by the person him or herself. The person can change them, put them in, exchange them, throw them out, add to them and choose which picture or goal needs to be satisfied.
 - (2) Instead of depressing or developing a psychosomatic illness, a person has the option of choosing something more satisfying.
- Children need to be empowered instead of overpowered. Teams as supportive networks are important to meet the learners' needs for belonging, power, friendships and achievement.
- The reality therapist makes use of statements and not questions. Questions are inclined to change the atmosphere of the interview in a teacher-student question-and-answer session according to the plans of the therapist, instead allowing the child to take ownership of his or her behaviour and to be in control of the session as a practice run for being in charge of his or her life. An example of a question turned into statement being: "What are you doing to solve the problem? **An alternative way according to reality theory would be: If you are ready to do this, we can begin by looking at what you have been doing to solve the problem**" (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:101).

The *outcomes* of reality therapy are deemed to be the following:

- Renna (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:96) researched the effectiveness of reality and control theory, as applied within the classroom situation and found that Glasser's reality theory, in which the control theory is embedded, was effective in mainstreaming disabled learners.

- Learners who experience difficulties with abstract reasoning can also be assisted by making use of reality theory, which is action oriented instead of insight orientated. Experiential learning is more useful to learners with cognitive disabilities.
- Reality therapy enables all learners to fulfill their basic needs of achievement (work) and relationships (love). Learners who are out of control, as a result of a crisis situation, can be assisted by means of reality theory to think and focus on reality.
- Edens (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:96) found *lead management* instead of *boss management* to be more effective. Lead managers-teachers engage students in debate, request learner input, and encourage exploration. As a consequence, suspensions, office referrals, fighting and truancy were reduced by 50% when this strategy was implemented in schools.
- Classroom meetings and cooperative learning teams can be of substantial value to the teacher in dealing with behaviour problems in the classroom. Omizo and Cubberly (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:97) recommend classroom meetings for dealing with the problems of learning disabled learners.
- Parish, Martin and Khramtsova (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:97) found control theory to be effective in assisting learners to develop congruence between their real and ideal selves.
- Edens and Smryl (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:97) reported that disruptive behaviours decreased after implementing control and reality theory.

4.3.2.3 Individual psychology theory

“Individual psychology” was introduced by Adler, one of Freud’s students who rejected Freud’s hypothesis and developed his own theory. Adler postulated that a sense of inferiority is developed by all people, as they are born completely helpless and are doomed to remain in that state for a long period during childhood. Body or organ defects (real or imaginary), being overpowered by older and more dominant siblings because of parental neglect and being rejected or pampered are all examples of factors that negatively reinforce feelings of inferiority. The Adlerian approach favoured a parenting model, which entailed a move away from the power model in favour of a more democratic model where parents and children cooperate. Adler argued that it is difficult to undo in adulthood, the wrongs that were done during childhood. The P.E.T. (Parent Effectiveness Training) and the STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) programmes are all outcomes emanating from Adler’s theory.

The **premises on which Individual psychology** theory is based are summarised as follows (Thompson & Rudolph, 1996:257-293):

- Personality development is an evolutionary process whereby, as it unfolds the person either develops feeling of superiority or inferiority – feeling good or bad about him or herself. The “inferiority feeling” thus refers directly to the self-concept of the person.
- A person’s state of mental health is determined by friendship, love and work relationships.
- Behaviour (including emotions) is always goal directed.
- The causes of behaviour are not important. It is more important to focus on what children want to achieve – whether in the real world or in their imagination.
- Immediate behaviour goals are more important than long-term goals, when dealing with children as clients.
- Every person experiences a need to belong to a group.
- Children who are misbehaving are discouraged children.
- Three factors within the environment impact on the development of the child’s personality, namely the family atmosphere, family constellation and the prevalent methods of education and training.
- Human problems can be categorised in terms of three categories: social, occupational and sexual.
- The ideal child’s profile has the following qualities: he or she shows respect for others, is tolerant of others, is interested in others, likes to cooperate with others, doesn’t mind encouraging others, acts courteously towards others, has a strong self-concept, has a feeling of belonging, develops socially acceptable goals, makes a genuine effort to achieve goals, is willing to share whatever needs to be shared, is concerned about how much “we” can get instead of focussing on him or herself and on how much “he/she” can get.
- The adult person has internalised a certain style of life during childhood.
- The child’s place in the family constellation is important; The family constellation is an indicator of family relationships.
- The family atmosphere reflects the modelled style of coping with life that has been modelled for the child. Family atmospheres that adversely affect children are:
 - ▶ **Authoritarian** (unquestioned obedience is expected from children. Children are well-behaved and mannerly, anxious and outwardly-directed and change from a shy child to a rebellious child).

- ▶ **Suppressive** (children are not allowed to express their thoughts and feelings. They are only allowed to express their opinions in terms of what the parents want to hear. Children experience problems in expressing their feelings).
 - ▶ **Rejective** (children feel unloved and unaccepted. Parents reject children and not their deeds, and do not know how to show love. Rejection of the child, stimulates feelings of discouragement).
 - ▶ **Disparaging** (the child is being criticised by everyone in the family, leading to interpersonal relationship problems and cynicism).
 - ▶ **High standards** (children in these homes may experience the feeling that “I am not loved unless I make all A’s”. Children are turned into perfectionists who experience stress, with the result that they do not perform as well as they should because of the stress and tension experienced).
 - ▶ **Inharmonious** (power becomes very important, as children learn that it is important to control other people, instead of being controlled by others).
 - ▶ **Inconsistency** (inconsistencies in parenting practices due to inconsistent disciplining of children, unorganised home routines and disharmony, result in a lack of self-control, low motivation, self-centeredness, instability and poor interpersonal relationships).
 - ▶ **Materialistic** (children come to believe that self-worth depends on possessions and on comparisons of what peers own).
 - ▶ **Overprotective** (children fail to become independent because parents do too much for them. The reality of the situation is denied because children are protected from the consequences of their behaviour, resulting in *helplessness* (the child feeling helpless, dependent, and reliant on others for approval), *pitying* (children are prevented from relying on their own resources to solve problems), *hopelessness* (a sense of hopelessness becomes part and parcel of a life style portrayed by parents as the role models). and *martyr* (children grow up in a home where the parents have a poor self-esteem, experience a sense of hopelessness and discouragement, with the result that they come to believe that life is treating them unfairly and they feel that people should treat them better. There is a tendency for these children to remain dependent on their parents).
- Nystul (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:274) asserts that “the child’s most basic psychological need is positive relationships with significant others” and goes on to recommend that one should “*look beyond the goals of children’s misbehaviour to*

the special reasons for misbehaviour". Adler claims that it is of little use to ask children why they misbehave.

- Establishing a relationship with the child is a very important step in the assistance process. From within the counselling relationship, it is assumed that the child and the therapist are equal partners and that the child can act responsibly by satisfying his or her own needs. Faith in human beings is restored by the therapist's caring attitude toward the child and the therapist's hope and faith in the child.
- Children are regarded as the artists of their own personalities. They are continually moving towards self-consistent goals.
- Misbehaviour of children occurs when they feel discouraged and regard the misbehaviour as the only way to draw attention to themselves. "Children need encouragement as plants need water and sunshine. Telling children they can be better implies they are not good enough as they are" (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:283).

4.3.3 Cognitive approaches

Cognitive-behaviour strategies are primarily directed at achieving increasing self-control of behaviour through self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:233). Learners need to be taught to analyse their own behaviour and within the context of the classroom self-monitoring remains, but one aspect of multi-faceted efforts to teach learners social skills. In this section the theoretical approaches that focus on the cognitive domain of the personality, namely **rational emotive theory**, **cognitive behaviour theory**, **psychoanalytic theory** and **transactional theory**, will be discussed.

4.3.3.1 *Rational emotive behaviour theory*

Albert Ellis is widely recognised as the founder of what has become known as *rational-emotive-behaviour therapy* or (REBT). The underlying assumption of the theory being that many individuals are disturbed because of their inaccurate and distorted perceptions of events (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:229) or as so well phrased by Ellis (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:164) "What disturbs men's minds is not events, but their judgement of events." Irrational beliefs are as a rule associated with intense emotions, as expressed in individuals negative acclamations, such as "I have failed the examination, so I'm stupid and a failure" (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:229). Rather than focussing on past events REBT practitioners place emphasis on the present and how to react thereto. As previously stated in section 4.3.2.2,

reality theory embodies elements of rational emotive behaviour and cognitive theory and reality therapists' contention that one needs to ignore the past in favour of dealing with the present and future has specific relevance in this regard.

Notably, Ellis (Meyer 1997:152) is quoted as stating that "my own system of rational-emotive psychology was profoundly influenced by Adler ... It is difficult to find any leading therapist who in some respect does not owe a great debt to the Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler." Seen within the context of this statement by Ellis, section 4.3.2.3 dealing with individual psychology also has significant relevance from a REBT perspective.

A key element of REBT theory is the contention that while people have little control over events or what actually exists, they do have choices and control over how they view the events and react thereto. People consequently are seen as having control over their ideas, feelings, attitudes and actions. These responses are, however, influenced by an element of "irrationality" which according to Ellis (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:165) leads to a circular process of self-hate, which leads to self-destructive behaviour and eventually hatred of others. This in turn causes others to react irrationally towards the individual and the cycle is repeated. The three principal areas in which people hold irrational beliefs are: they must be perfect, others must be perfect and the world must be a perfect place to live in.

In terms of REBT theory people are responsible for their feelings about themselves, others and their environment, and whether they are prepared to be disturbed constantly thereby. Counselling from a REBT perspective therefore has two fundamental objectives, namely to show emotionally disturbed clients how their irrational beliefs or attitudes result in dysfunctional consequences and to assist them to replace the irrational elements with rational elements. Once irrational beliefs, ideas, emotions and actions are recognized they are disputed and challenged by the counsellor. Ultimately the objective is to get learners to recognise the irrational elements, think them through and dispense with them. Rational-emotive-behaviour education attempts to teach learners how feelings evolve, how to discriminate between valid and invalid beliefs, and especially how to think rationally.

4.3.3.2 Cognitive behaviour theory

Cognitive behaviour theory is a combination of behaviour-change and thought-restructuring methods with outcomes of changed behaviour. These two approaches have been amalgamated to complement each other. Cognitive behaviour theory lends itself to be

combined with problem-solving skills training and can be of use to understand and assist with aggression, anxiety, depression, obesity, panic disorders attention-deficit hyperactivity disorders, as well as preventing children from exaggerating negative events.

Winnett, Bornstein, Cogswell and Paris (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:178) introduced their Cognitive Behaviour Model for treating childhood depressive disorders. Four levels of treatment are addressed:

- Social interaction is enhanced by making use of contingency, reinforcement, shaping, prompting and modelling techniques.
- The pairing of successful task completion with positive self-statements and reinforcement of the self-statements.
- Cognitive interventions are used in conjunction with social-skills training, role-playing and self-management.
- Self-control procedures, such as self-evaluation and self-reinforcement.

The *premises of the cognitive behaviour theory* are (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:177-188):

- Cognitive distortions result from dysfunctional thinking.
- Self-acceptance of a child implies that the child is more than a set of behaviours.
- Behaviour can be changed and thoughts restructured to produce behaviour and feeling change within clients.
- Clients need to actively take part in an attempt to identify irrational thoughts, to initiate internal dialogues, halt automatic thinking and change automatic thoughts to mediated thoughts.
- Cognitive behaviour theory provides the client with a means of gaining control of his or her life and being able to improve on those areas that he or she has control of.
- The client must feel accepted by the therapist, in order to eventually accept him or herself and refrain from labelling themselves negatively.

4.3.3.3. Transactional analysis

Eric Berne (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:229), the architect of transactional analysis, believed that children are born princes and princesses, but after the impact of the environment and their parents' behaviour towards them, they turn into frogs. All people, however, have the

potential to turn into princes and princesses, on condition that they learn and apply the lessons learnt from transactional analysis to their lives. So for instance role reversals can be used in order to exchange negative and positive feedback and to build and create a feeling of empathy within the child, for other family members. Role reversals also create an opportunity for communication and interaction. Techniques like “reparenting” (a method to replace the inadequate parenting practices of the past with new parenting practices), “rechilding” (creating a new past in the present as a support for the future) and “regression therapy” are well known within the frame of reference of the transactional analysis.

The *premises* underlying transactional analysis are:

- Early childhood years are critical to the personal development of learners.
- Children start to form their *life-scripts* and develop a sense of either being “O.K.” or “not O.K.”. They also draw conclusions as to how much “O.K.” or not “O.K.” another person is.
- Life is based on processes of continuous decision making and problem solving. People have the ability to act rationally, are free to make decisions as required, and solve problems in a way they see fit.
- Transactional analysis (TA) theory, in relation to human nature and relationships, stems from data collected through four types of analysis:
 - (1) **Structural analysis:** The individual’s personality is analysed in terms of three separate and distinct sources of behaviour, namely the ego states of *parent*, *adult* and *child*. They each focus on patterns of behaviour, emotions and experiences as perceived by people during their childhood years. Two types of *parents* are distinguished, *the nurturing parent* and the *critical parent*. The *adult* operates non-emotionally, logically and to the point. The *child* contributes joy, laughter, creativity, spontaneity, intuition, pleasure and enjoyment. Two types of *child ego states* are distinguished, namely the *Adaptive Child* who obeys all the rules and conforms to authority, and the *Natural or Free Child*, who is free, impulsive, untrained, self-loving, pleasure-seeking. According to Berne (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:229), “the well-adjusted person allows the situation to determine which ego state is in control, striking an even balance among the three”.
 - (2) **Transactional analysis:** The study of the transaction forms the core of TA. It deals with what people say and do to one another. The messages can either be verbally, physically, or within a transaction that has taken place between two people’s ego states. Three kinds of transactions are distinguished:

- complementary, crossed, and covert or ulterior transactions, where more than one ego state of each person is involved.
- (3) **Script analysis:** It deals with specific life dramas that people seem to compulsively enjoy. A psychological script provides an indication of what people are hoping to achieve in their lives and the paths that will lead them to their destiny. The person consciously or subconsciously acts in accordance with this prescribed programme. People are born "OK" but difficulties originate from bad scripts that they have learned during childhood. Scripts tend to comprise five components: directions given by parents, a corresponding personality development, a confirming childhood decision about oneself and life, a penchant for either success or failure, and a pattern for behaviour.
- (4) **Game analysis:** Ulterior transactions (game playing) are analysed to detect any payoffs. Berne (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:235) claims that all games are basically dishonest and are not fun. People apparently play games because they are longing for homeostasis in terms of the following areas: biological, existential, internal psychological, external psychological, internal social and external social. Game playing is inclined to undermine the stability of relationships. The motivation to play games is derived from the need to be *stroked*. Strokes are used to get attention – either negative or positive attention.
- People portray four different *life positions* as projections of how they feel about themselves and how they see the worth of others:
 - ▶ *I am OK – you're OK.* The person is mentally healthy, has realistic expectations, experiences good human relationships, solves problems constructively.
 - ▶ *I'm not OK – you're OK.* The person is in an introjective position and feels powerless. They experience symptoms of withdrawal and depression.
 - ▶ *I'm not OK – you're not OK.* The child is unable to depend on the parents for positive reassurance/stroking. The child is not OK and perceives that the parents are also not OK. Parents need to be involved in counselling procedures. Children see themselves as OK if they experience that parents also see them as OK. The child draws the conclusion that "If my OK parents think I'm OK, then I really must be OK" (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:244). These people are losers who are helpless, suicidal and homicidal.
 - ▶ *I am OK – you're not OK.* These people experience themselves as victimized, brutalized and battered. This is the type of position that the criminal and the psychopath occupies. Other people are always blamed for whatever happens.

- Berne (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:240) theorises that people become involved in transactions in order to satisfy their need for stimulation and stroking. James and Jongeward (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:240) concluded that if the needs are not satisfied, infants may not thrive, and it could contribute to feelings of abandonment and not OK-ness in children and adults. Phillips and Cordell (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:240) conversely assert that “satisfied hunger yields feelings of OK-ness and release of creative energy”. Negative strokes include a lack of attention when somebody is talking, shin kicking, hatred and humiliating comments, They are “Not OK-messages”. Positive strokes are usually of a complementary nature. Children can be taught self-stroking (doing nice things for themselves); physical strokes (hugs, kisses, pats, back rubs, handshakes); silent strokes (winks, nods, waves, smiles); verbal strokes (“I like you”, “Good job”); and rewards or privileges (letting younger siblings do things with you).
- *Rackets* are learned from parents and are used as excuses for behaviour and feelings. The I’m OK-you’re OK person doesn’t need excuses. Rackets is a concept used in transactional analysis to describe the “stamp collecting enterprise”. People save up stamps (bad feelings) to cash in for a psychological prize. Brown stamps are saved for all the bad things that people do to them and gold stamps are saved for all the favours that others owe them. Gray stamps resemble lowered self-esteem, red stamps anger, blue stamps depression and white stamps purity. The full bad stamps book is cashed in for things like a free divorce, custody of children, a love affair, or a nervous breakdown.
- Transactional analysis views the counselling process as one of teaching and providing the necessary nurturing or supportive environment, which enables clients to get rid of restrictive measures. Contracting is a frequent technique used by transactional analysts. Even children are taught how to make use of transactional analysis to become more proficient in identifying their ego states and transactions and to become conscious of their unique scripts.
- Children are taught *“how to analyse their own transactions and see how their behaviour affects others and vice versa”* (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:243).
- It is difficult to change a child’s negative script, without the parents also changing the messages that they convey to the child. *“Everything parents do and say to children tells them they are OK or not OK, depending on what life position the parents themselves occupy. People attract not what they want but what they are. People also rear not the children they want but children who reproduce the parents”* (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:244).

4.3.3.4 *The psycho-analytical approach*

It is often contended that Freud's psychoanalysis can be regarded as the only "all inclusive" theory of human psychology (Meyer 1997:55; Thompson & Rudolph 1996:60). Although he adjusted his original theory, as new theoretical insights developed, his basic concepts remained intact. The influence and durability of the psychoanalytic theory can be detected in that almost all counselling theories include some of the basic premises on which the theory is based and tend to portray the character of psychoanalysis.

Freudian theory can be classified in terms of three topic headings: **structural** (id, ego and superego), **dynamic concepts** (instinct, libido, cathexis, anticathexis, anxiety) and **developmental concepts** (defence mechanisms). The following concepts are represented in his writings and tend to depict key aspects of the approach: **defence mechanisms** (The underachiever might say "I know of a high school learner who dropped out and is earning more than he would have with a matric certificate. School is a waste of time"); **displacement** (the anger towards a parent can be redirected to a sibling for fear of a parent); **repression** and **suppression** (repressed material is forced into the unconscious and puts a lid on it to prevent it from resurfacing – a painful thought is unconsciously removed from memory. Suppression implies the same activity, but on the conscious level); **projection** (a teacher states that the children do not like him or her, but in reality he or she dislikes the children in the class); **reaction formation** (attitudes that develop exactly opposite to the ones repressed – "I enjoy alcohol" in contrast to "Liquor should be declared illegal"); **rationalization** (an attempt to justify and rationalise one's behaviour – "I would have passed, if the boy or girl next to me did not cough the whole time distracting my attention while writing"); **denial** (a refusal to face unpleasant consequences. Denial is a common tendency amongst young children, but when teenagers make use of denial it must be regarded as a sign of maladjustment); **fantasy** (a way of seeking needs satisfaction through fantasy); **withdrawal** (ego involvement is reduced and the person becomes passive in order to avoid feeling hurt); **intellectualization** (the normal affect or feeling is separated from an unpleasant or hurtful situation); **regression** (a return to earlier developmental phases where less was demanded from the learner); **fixation** (failing to move to next developmental stage thus remain at the present level of development); **undoing** (an attempt to fix the problem – glueing a lamp back into shape after it broke); **acting out** (anxiety reduced by expressing forbidden desires); **compensation** (covering up a problem or weakness by focussing on desirable traits) and **sublimation** (redirecting of energies and libidinal desires into productive and acceptable activities and outlets).

Freud, was of the opinion that counselling should activate the unconscious and make it conscious and this consequently forms a primary goal in counselling from a psychoanalytic perspective. In terms of psychoanalytic theory depression stems from the internalisation of aggressive impulses, as a result of intense superego refutations against aggression (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:102). There are supporters of Freud's theories who believed that childhood depression is linked to parents' rejection of the child. They contend that the parents are frequently depressed themselves and that they tend to emotionally deprive the child of love and act punitively towards the child (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:87). A child who cannot and must cope with the increased stress, as well as a child who feels helpless because of a loss of self-esteem will tend to respond by suppressing their anger. Researchers maintain that anger turned inward eventually results in depression (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:87).

Rutter (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:89), one of Freud's followers, added the following modifications to psychoanalytic approaches in dealing with children:

- More definite strategies, a clearer focus on existing problems, distinct goals and a short-term treatment programme are needed in comparison with past practice.
- Conflicts situated in the conscious and current environmental stresses require greater attention.
- The treatment of the individual needs to make way for the treatment of the family as a group.
- The child/therapist or counsellor relationship must be highlighted more than merely focussing on the interpretation of intrapsychic mechanisms. Play therapy and the expressive arts should be used more in counselling sessions with children.

Sachs (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:87) maintains that "psychoanalysis is one of the few games that has maintained the play spirit". This intimates free association, uncensored, spontaneous involvement in play and the use of metaphors. Play activities, within the frame of reference of psychoanalysis (the unconscious mind determines the behaviour), allow thoughts and feelings from the unconscious mind to return to the conscious mind so that they can be owned, recognised, confronted and treated. When unconscious, repressed material is brought to the conscious mind, the patient can be assisted to face resistance that makes him or her ill.

The *premises* underlying the psycho-analytical approach are (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:59-89):

- People need a deep understanding of the forces that stimulate them, in order to take the necessary actions to achieve a sense of balance. People function as energy systems that are putting psychic energy into to the id, ego and superego. Human behaviour is determined by biological and instinctual drives, psychic energy distributed to the id, ego and superego, and unconscious motives. Mental life consists of a continuous manifestation of cause-related involvements with other people.
- Adult personality development is influenced by psychosexual events during the first five years of life.
- According to Sugarman (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:61), Freud regards a human being as someone who:
 - ▶ has a dualistic nature being of a biological and symbolic nature,
 - ▶ is both an individual person and person that can fit in with a group,
 - ▶ strives to achieve certain goals and to uphold certain values,
 - ▶ finds meaning in life,
 - ▶ values the internal world, including the unconscious, more than overt behaviour,
 - ▶ has a supreme need for interpersonal relationships,
 - ▶ is active and flexible, and
 - ▶ enjoys a certain amount of independence within the boundaries of reality.
- People do not always understand their feelings and/or actions, as they are embedded in the unconscious mind. *Notably, 85% of the material in the mind resides on the unconscious level.*
- An over gratification of needs could result in the child becoming fixated at a particular stage. Deprivation implies a reverse in a developmental stage that did not offer any demands.
- Psycho-analytic counsellors when searching for causative factors of problem behaviour, maintain that “severe trauma is often associated with damaged egos, low self-esteem and anxiety disorders; however, counsellors can overlook the devastating effects on self-esteem of the daily onslaught of negative criticism heaped on some children throughout their developing years” (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:70).
- The important issues determining children’s level of mental health are their schoolwork and their relationships with their families, peers and significant other role players.
- Simon (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:71), one of Freud’s followers, maintains that the self-concept is a by-product of the actual productive *activity* and the child’s relationships. Receiving positive responses from the environment regarding the self-concept cannot be acquired via self-affirmation activities. According to Simon

(Thompson & Rudolph 1996:71, self-esteem implies that the following factors influence the nature of the self-concept:

- ▶ *Belonging* (children need to feel part of a family where they belong – whether it is their natural biological family or a substitute family. As they grow up, belonging to and being accepted by the peer group become very important).
 - ▶ *Child advocacy* (children need a person who can be trusted to assist them when a crisis is experienced).
 - ▶ *Risk management* (self-esteem increases, as the child gains confidence to tackle new situations on his or her own).
 - ▶ *Empowerment* (children need to become independent and accept responsibility for their own deeds).
 - ▶ *Uniqueness* (children need to know and feel that they are special. Unique qualities can be highlighted and focussed on and as a result act as “anti-suicide” factors allowing the child to feel better about him or herself).
 - ▶ *Productivity* (encouragement and reinforcement to be productive can assist children in feeling competent when undertaking tasks, as rewards are part of accomplishment).
- When an assessment is made of how well the child’s basic needs are met within Freud’s identified five stages of development, attention should be paid to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.
 - Freud maintained that the degree to which a person is capable of managing his or her relationships and his or her career, determines the level of his or her mental health.
 - Psychoanalytic counsellors maintain that “*Children who receive proper nurturing during their dependent years do not seek parent figures in their adult relationships. Treatment for children educates parents to be better models of how to provide the right amounts of love and nurturing*” (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:73).
 - Children model their parenting styles according to the parenting styles of their parents, as they carry the internalized views of parenthood over to their peer group and eventually adult world.

The following *pertinent aspects* of the *theoretical approaches* discussed are deemed *relevant* in terms of the rationale of this study and serve as *guidelines* for the development of a model to assist teachers in understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems in the classroom.

■ ***Teacher/learner relationship***

The teacher/learner relationship is a person-to-person relationship. It is of a human nature and is a relationship of reciprocity, commitment and honesty. This relationship implies voluntarily involvement of the learner, mutual respect, trust, genuine unconditional acceptance of the learner, and an emphatic understanding of the learner's feelings and needs. *Unconditional acceptance* by the teacher of the learner, allows the learner to feel free to express his or her thoughts and to experience feelings of safety. Personal issues need to be treated in confidence by the teacher. The teacher/learner relationship has a liberating characteristic based on an open-ended relationship in which the learner determines the outcomes of the relationship. It in effect is based on a working alliance. The teacher must believe in the learner's ability to become self-directing.

Core conditions of the teacher/learner relationship are: empathy, respect and genuineness. The teacher and the learner need to work together as a team to achieve goals that have been set. The focus should be on letting the learner feel good about him or herself. Teachers need to guide learners as to how to become responsible persons and how to fulfill their needs without infringing on the needs and rights of others. The teacher wants to activate inner growth. Their role is that of a *caring*, older significant person or role player, who respects the learner and wants to assist him or her by breaking down his or her defence mechanisms, in order to rediscover him or herself and actualise his/her potential. Although the teacher knows what the problem of the learner is, it is not discussed in the open. Learners listen to their own experience via the teacher's reflections thereof. Behaviour should be understood in terms of the learner's internal frame of reference. *Teachers are expected to look through the eyes of the learner to effectively assist and to understand the learner.*

■ ***Skills needed by the teacher to assist a learner with behaviour problems***

Key *skills* that the teacher should acquire in order to understand and assist the learner are: that of acceptance, reflection, summarization, confrontation, immediacy, disclosure, open-ended questions, silence and reflection of deeper feelings. In addition teachers need skills in group facilitation techniques, which is deemed to be of particular importance within the school setting. They need to refrain from giving advice to the learner – especially the adolescent learner, being curious or wanting to verify facts. Teachers should be able to “talk together” with the learner and to “experience together” with the learner. A feeling of “you and me are in this together” should be created. The teacher should be skilled in

eliminating and replacing “*why*” questions with “*what*” questions. They should remember that they should *lead* and not *boss* learners they are attempting to assist.

■ ***The emotional climate in the classroom***

The emotional climate in the classroom ideally should be *warm, trusting and open*, so that the learner will feel free to express his or her innermost fears, anxieties and concerns. The teacher thereby becomes involved in satisfying the emotional needs of learners. Teachers should note that the atmosphere in the home and in the classroom influence the emotional development of the learner. The atmosphere in the classroom has to be *nurturing and supporting*. A non-threatening atmosphere enables learners to experience trust and to learn to evaluate themselves. Teachers understand and assist learners in setting their own goals and implementing strategies to actualise them. In understanding and assisting learners they need to *refrain* from the following verbal behaviour: *ordering, warning, admonishing, threatening, exhorting, moralizing, preaching, advising, giving solutions, lecturing, giving logical arguments, judging, criticizing, disagreeing, blaming, praising, agreeing and name-calling*. The atmosphere must be conducive to personal growth and fulfill the needs of a child for security, love and self-respect. Learners must feel and know that they can express their feelings and thoughts openly without feeling unsafe. *Behaviour problems occur when learners feel discouraged and are trying, by means of their behaviour, to attract the attention (although it may be negative attention) of the significant other role players.*

■ ***General guidelines***

Behaviour is learnt through interaction and within relationships established with significant other role players. Undesirable behaviour can be unlearned, eliminated and replaced with more desirable behaviour patterns. New changed and desired behaviour patterns can be taught to the child. Existing patterns of desired behaviour can be strengthened. The significant other role players can form a supportive network for the learner. The degree whereto the needs of the learner have been met, determines the degree of the learner's distress. *Logic must be used to meet needs for love and self-worth.* Learners' should be empowered not overpowered.

Learners need to learn how to express affection and love towards others. They should have experienced love themselves and know how it feels to be valued by others. A teacher must assist the learner to be in control of his or her life situation. Self-evaluation and self-

reinforcement are needed in order to gain self-control. Thoughts can be restructured to engender a change in the behaviour and feelings of learners. A learner should actively take part in learning to identify irrational thoughts and attempt to initiate internal dialogues to arrest automatic thinking and convert automatic thoughts to mediated thoughts. Talking about feelings and behaviour remains an important activity.

Early childhood years are important in the development of the learner. Relationships that are established will have a significant influence on the child's development. Messages conveyed between people are significant and determine interaction. Game playing undermines the stability of relationships. A continuous manifestation of cause related involvements with other people, plays a role in determining mental health. A human being is both an individual and a member of a group striving to achieve specific goals and uphold established values, that give meaning to their lives. They have a predominant need for sound and healthy interpersonal relationships. Games are played by people in order to gain attention – be it positive or negative. The way that a learner feels about himself or herself is reflected in his or her feeling of: "I am O.K. you are not O.K. or I am O.K. you are O.K." or "I am not O.K. you are not O.K. or I am not O.K. you are O.K." (cf. sec. 4.3.3.3). ***Relationships play a role in shaping how people feel about themselves.***

Adult personality development is influenced by psychosexual events during the first five years of life. The unconscious mind should be activated and made conscious, as many influences from the unconscious mind dominate behaviour continuously. Learners make use of the following strategies when exhibiting behaviour problems: ***defence mechanisms*** by finding reasons for misbehaving, ***displacement or transference*** where anger towards somebody else or another teacher is redirected towards the teacher, ***repression and suppression*** when a learner is trying to "block out" traumatic experiences in order to prevent it from resurfacing, ***rationalization*** in order to justify behaviour, ***denial and fantasy*** in order to seek satisfaction of needs, ***withdrawal*** to avoid getting hurt and thus rather become passive, ***intellectualisation*** where emotions and feelings are suppressed by thinking, ***fixation*** by covering up, ***sublimation*** which is a redirection of energies put into acceptable activities. Learners are taught to analyse their own transactions and to see how their behaviour affects others and vice versa. The learner can be assisted to face resistance that makes him ill, when unconscious, repressed material is brought to the surface of the conscious mind.

■ *Self-concept and emotional needs*

Parental neglect and being neglected per se, negatively reinforces feelings of inferiority. It is difficult to undo the wrongs of childhood in adulthood. Personality development involves the development of feeling either good or bad about himself or herself. Inferiority feelings refer directly to the self-concept of the person. Love and work determine the level of the mental health of a person. Every person experiences a need to belong to a group. *Misbehaving learners are as a rule discouraged learners.* A correlation exists between a learner's lack of success in meeting his or her needs and the degree of his or her distress. A healthy self-esteem and a network of friends and supportive people are key elements for success. Learners can learn how to fulfill their needs and become a responsible adult. Teams, as supportive networks, are important in meeting the learner's needs for a sense of belonging, power, friendships and achievement. The learner's most basic psychological need is for positive relationships with significant other role players.

Learners need encouragement in order to behave in an acceptable manner and to excel academically. Telling learners that they have got to improve implies that they are not good enough as they are. Successful task completion combined with positive self-statements and reinforcement for the self-statements give rise to a more positive self-concept. The personality of a learner manifests itself in his or her behaviour by acting as a **parent** (nurturing or criticising), an **adult** (operates non-emotionally, logical, factual), or as a **child** (joy, laughter, spontaneous – a free child or as an adapted child who obeys all the instructions of others). A state of homeostasis should exist when the learner is in control of his or her life. The "bad life scripts" of learners originate from bad scripts that they have learned during childhood. A life script reflects on the quality of a learner's relationships. It is difficult to change a learner's negative script without the significant other role players also changing the messages that they convey to the learner. Everything that significant other role players do and say tells them that they are O.K. or not O.K. Satisfied, psychological hunger yields feelings of "O.K.-ness" and releases creative energy. Positive strokes (attention) are usually of a complementary nature. Learners can be taught to stroke in different ways, namely self-stroking (doing nice things for yourself), physical strokes (hugs, kisses), silent strokes (winks, nods), verbal strokes (saying to somebody: "I like you"), and rewards (doing things together with a learner). Positive strokes and respect are essential in drafting a winning script.

Childhood depression stems from parent rejection. Frequently parents themselves are depressed, abuse drugs and get divorced. Parents emotionally deprive the child of love or

act punitively towards the child. As a consequence the child feels helpless and experiences a sense of loss of self-esteem. Anger turned inward results in depression. Adolescent depression is frequently associated with ineffective parental communication and lower levels of family cohesion.

An over gratification of needs can result in the learner becoming fixated at a particular stage of development, whereas a deprivation of needs results in a regression in a developmental stage that did not offer any demands. Causes of behaviour problems are related to severe trauma, whereby ego's have been damaged, resulting in a low self-esteem and anxiety. Daily criticisms heaped on a poor self-esteem, is often overlooked by significant other role players. Schoolwork and relationships determine the degree of a learner's mental health. Self-concept is a byproduct of schoolwork and relationships. Factors impinging on self-concept are: a need to belong, the availability of someone the learner can trust and who will support him or her, empowerment of the learner, becoming independent and taking responsibility for own actions, experiencing a sense of uniqueness, and being able to excel after having been encouraged and positively reinforced. Learners who experience proper nurturing during their childhood years, will not seek parental figures in their adult relationships.

Self-actualisation remains a basic driving force in all human beings. In the classroom this implies an actualising of potential in terms of scholastic performance and successful relationships, resulting in the learner being able to take control of his or her life situation. Self-concept is shaped by the learner's inter experiences and environmental perceptions. Teachers need to assist learners to experience congruence in terms of their internalised self-concept and the messages they receive from the environment. If a state of incongruence is maintained, the learner will either revert to the use of defence mechanisms or distort the reality of experiences, which eventually results in cognitive rigidity or personality disorganisation, together with overwhelming feelings of anxiety. Learners need to be positively regarded by others, their need to be prized, accepted, and loved are so addictive, that they become the most potent of all needs. Positive reinforcement of the self-concept remains a significant need among children. Teachers need to find ways to encourage, assist the learner to feel good about him or herself, to feel accepted and feel worthwhile.

■ ***A profile of the ideal learner***

The ideal learner's profile is one where the learner:

- ▶ shows respect for, are tolerant of, and interested in others,
- ▶ cooperates with, and do not mind encouraging others,

- ▶ is willing to share with others,
 - ▶ makes a genuine effort to achieve goals, and
 - ▶ focusses on “we” instead of “I”.
- ***Parenting styles that impact on the emotional development of the learner.***

The following parenting styles are deemed problematic in the emotional development of the learner:

- ▶ an authoritarian parenting style,
- ▶ a suppressive, rejective and discouraging parenting style, and
- ▶ an inconsistent, materialistic, giving-up-hope, high expectations kind of parenting style.

While children are in therapy, parents are taught how to be better role models and how to provide love and nurturing for their children. Learners’ model their parenting styles, according to the parenting styles of their parents. They carry internalised views of parenthood into peer and eventually adult life.

It is clear from the discussion that the *self-concept*, the *teacher/learner relationship*, and the *classroom atmosphere*, are especially important and as such need to be incorporated within the model to be developed for teachers. These elements relate directly to the underlying rationale of the study, namely that unmet emotional needs are a cause of behaviour problems. The theoretical approaches to counselling, and the providing of assistance to learners have been dealt with in significant detail in the preceding sections of this chapter. As previously stated the relevant guidelines originating from the discussions, will be taken into consideration when developing a model for teachers to effectively understand and assist with behaviour problems in the classroom (see Chapter 5 in this regard).

In the following section, the necessity for meeting *emotional needs*, are discussed.

4.4 SATISFYING EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF LEARNERS

Tompkins and Tompkins-McGill (1993:15) noted that practice in education has swung heavily towards behaviour modification techniques during the past two decades and the focus has mainly been on factors concerning overt behaviour. No light was shed on the

possible impact of covert factors, such as the unmet emotional needs of learners impacting on their behaviour. The result of the focus on overt behaviour, is that “teachers and students have struggled merely to survive in schools, understanding of environmental influences and **emotions** has often been lost” (Tompkins & Tompkins-McGill 1993:15). In a very similar vein Osher and Hanley (Illback & Nelson 1996:11) comment as follows on schools: “schools are sorting station(s), wherein children and youth first ... come to think of themselves as consistently inadequate or dumb, and especially as bad or troublesome. Schools label students, parcel out credentials and access to academic and vocational training, and sustain an environment in which students define themselves”. It is within this context that Rizzo and Zabel’s (1988:227) proposal of administering “*emotional first aid*” to learners needs to be seen. It’s directed at offering learners emotional support and reassurance to get them back on track.

It will only be possible for a learner to experience an inward sense of emotional well-being, as the outcome of emotional needs being met, if the learner feels secure within himself or herself, is freed from deep feelings of fear and guilt, and is free to consult alternatives and to choose the one he favours (Raths 1972:3). In particular learners need to experience a sense of self-respect and of belonging, as well as the satisfaction of assignments successfully completed. As a consequence he experiences a broadening of his or her skills and acquires a realisation of himself or herself as being more competent. The world is starting to make sense to him and he feels confident that social conditions are not of an anarchic nature. He also feels reasonably secure about his or her financial position (Raths 1972:3). The situation described may be correlated with the concept of the *emotional bank account* suggested by Covey (1992 a:189). The emotional bank account is used metaphorically to describe the trust built up in relationships. Nowhere is this more relevant than in the case of the teacher – learner relationships built up within the classroom. When the balance in the account is high, it will be possible for the learner to experience a sense of emotional well being.

Pringle (1980:33) stipulates that “*the essential driving force of the will to learn has its roots in the quality of relationships available to the child right from the beginning of life*”. For the purposes of this study “relationships within the context of unmet emotional needs of the learner must be met”, will imply the learner’s involvement in relationships with significant other role players – the teacher/learner, parent/child and peer/learner relationship being cases in point. According to Tompkins and Tompkins-McGill (1993:16,17) the “*teacher/child relationship is a kind of centre of gravity, around which the resources and interactions of a healthy education system revolve, like the planets around the sun. it is the*

teacher's relationship with the child that comprises the core of the system, orders its elements and holds them all together".

It is argued that teachers can make a difference in a learner's life – especially if the teacher, lets the learner experience a feeling of *"my teacher cares about me – my teacher likes me – my teacher thinks I am a worthy individual and my teacher wants to help me"* (Tompkins & Tompkins-McGill 1993:69). Within such a context the balance within the metaphorical bank account will be high.

The teacher/learner relationship can develop into a therapeutic relationship and as stressed by Tompkins *et al.* (1993:177), "the effects of therapeutic relationships are powerful and numerous". The therapeutic outcomes emanating from the teacher/learner relationship, for the learner exhibiting behaviour problems, are greater in the following ways:

- ▶ inner freedom that enables the learner to learn and develop normally,
- ▶ emotional growth that fosters more appropriate behaviour responses,
- ▶ respect for the teacher as an adult role model, which results in the desire to identify with the admirable qualities of the teacher,
- ▶ positive self-image, as the learner feels good about himself or herself and feels accepted by significant other role players, and
- ▶ receptiveness to academic, social and other developmental process, triggered by a feeling of emotional well-being.

The teacher/learner relationship can act as a "turning point" in terms of an increased sense of self-esteem, creative accomplishment, individuality and effective living. Such a meaningful relationship in school can have long-lasting effects for the learner, as it lays the foundation for the learner's future relations and "may make the difference between a teaching failure and a teaching success" (Tompkins *et al.* 1993:177,178).

Pringle (1980:21) maintains that "the capacity to respond to and benefit from, education inevitably depends on the level of a child's intellectual, language and emotional maturity". If a learner's emotional needs thus remain unmet, apart from exhibiting behaviour problems, the learner will not be able to actualise his or her potential to the fullest.

According to the latest NCSNET document (1997:11) available on the Education Policy, it is stipulated that "the main objective of any education in a democratic society is to provide quality education for all learners so that they will be able to **reach their full potential and**

will be able to meaningfully contribute to and participate in that society throughout their lives”.

From the preceding discussion it is clear that South African schools and specifically teachers will have to pay serious attention to the quality of teacher/learner relationships in terms of satisfying the unmet emotional needs of learners. If unmet emotional needs are not satisfied in the classroom and at school, the objectives, as introduced by the NCSNET document, will not be realised. The statistics relating to learners exhibiting behaviour problems, the crime rate and violence, general corruption in communities and in the country at large, can be expected to rise even higher, as has been the case thus far. As stated by Pringle (1980:81) “the consequences can be disastrous both for the individual and the society”.

The different needs of learners, have been described by authors and according to Pringle (1980:34) long lists of psycho-social needs can be drawn up. In the literature study it became clear that *many different types of needs* have been identified by researchers – these “needs” were, however, not categorised as psycho-social needs: Maslow, well-known for his needs theory focussing on self-actualisation as the ultimate goal in life, identifies the following needs: physiological, safety, affiliation and love, self-esteem and self-actualisation or self-realisation needs (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:439). *Although some of these needs relate to the needs identified by Pringle, Maslow did not specifically focus on the needs of children, as did Pringle and other researchers referred to in this section.* Maslow’s needs are structured in a hierarchy implying that if the lower need in the hierarchy is not met, needs at a higher level cannot be met (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:439). Pringle (1980:34) however contends that although the relative importance of meeting specific emotional needs changes during the different developmental phases and the level of their fulfilment differ to a greater or lesser extent, emotional needs have to be met, from the cradle through into adulthood. All human needs are in a subtle, complex way, interrelated and interdependent. If one of the basic emotional needs is not met or even inadequately met, the child’s development may be distorted or slowed down. Maslow (Moore 1997:444) maintains that if a person does not realise his or her full potential, the following causative factors could have contributed thereto, namely: a lack of self-knowledge and self-insight; obstructions preventing the person from actualise their potential; the person running away from their talents and responsibility (termed the “Jonah” complex); or the presence of a superiority complex causing the person to make no attempt to fulfil his or her potential; and seemingly opposing needs, not integrated within the individual. ***Pringle (1980:33, 82) contends that apart from not actualising his or her potential, when the learner’s emotional needs are***

unmet, these unmet needs are exhibited in the behaviour of learners. Anger, hate, a lack of caring, vandalism, violence and delinquency are examples of behaviour problems associated with unmet emotional needs.

Specific issues referred to by Maslow, that are of relevance to this study are (Moore 1997:439-452):

- The therapist (or teacher) should imitate an older brother who respects his younger brother and who wants to be of assistance to the younger brother. The therapist must create circumstances in which the younger brother can grow and flourish and in which the learner's needs for security, love and self-respect can be met. The therapist (or teacher) must have a basic confidence in the learner's goodness so that he can discover and respect the learner's true potential. The therapist must assist the learner to find ways to meet his or her emotional needs within his or her environment.
- The ultimate goal of assisting the learner, is the realisation of the learner's true potential.
- Learners feel safe in a structured environment where there are set boundaries and limits and where fixed patterns and routines apply. The environment must be predictable and known to the learner in order to feel safe. Learners who do not feel secure within themselves will be inclined to be followers instead of leaders and will be more prone to be influenced by others.
- When the physiological and safety needs of the learner are met, the learner experiences a feeling of wanting to belong somewhere and to give and receive love.
- ***Unmet needs for love are at the root of psychopathology and for the purposes of this study, behaviour problems.***
- If the need for self-esteem has been met, the learner will feel good about himself or herself and if this need has not been met, the learner *will feel inferior, weak and helpless*. It is psychologically dangerous to rely on the opinions of significant other role players in the environment – the learner's self-esteem should be founded on his or her actual worth and not be depending on external factors outside his or her control.
- The learner will only be able to actualise his or her full potential when he or she is able to make use of all his or her abilities, talents and potential. Different learners will, however, actualise their own unique potential in unique ways, for example the one learner will be good at art, the other at music and yet another at sport. The teacher can assist a learner to discover his or her highest potential.

In the following paragraphs the emotional needs of learners or children, as described by D'Evelyn (1957:6-41), Howells (1971:100-124), Mitchell (1979:99-121), Pringle (1985:35-58), Rath (1972:40-60), and Thompson and Poppen (1972:3-22), will be discussed. Apart from the fact that these needs will be structured in terms of *Pringle's four main categories of needs*, namely *the need for love and security, praise and recognition, responsibility, and the need for new experiences*, these needs must be met within the eight stages of emotional development as described by Erikson (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.2 in this regard). The different stages of emotional development emerge as the child solves the emotional *crises* experienced during each stage. The child solves these crises whilst he or she is in interaction with the environment. Pringle (1985:81) and Maslow (Moore 1997:441) maintain that if one need remains unmet, the development of the child/learner will be harmed.

4.4.1 The need for love and security

For the purposes of this study, the following needs as identified by researchers, will be included in this section on the need for love and security, namely the need for belonging, to be free from feelings of fear, and free from intense feelings of guilt.

4.4.1.1 The need for love and affection

This need can be met only via the child's meaningful, stable, continuous, dependable and loving relationships with primarily the mother and then the father or any other permanent substitute(s) person(s) for the parent(s). Parents, however, also need to experience a meaningful, stable, continuous, dependable and loving relationship with each other. The initial relationship with the mother and subsequently the father, paves the way for the child's involvement with a gradually, ever widening circle of significant other role players. These relationships provide the child with opportunities to realise who he or she is and whether he or she is worthwhile or not. These initial relationships with the parents form the basis of all later relationships, such as with the extended family, friends, colleagues and when the child has matured, his or her own family. The end result of these initial relationships are the healthy development of the personality, an ability to respond meaningfully to affection shown to the child, and the possibility of becoming a loving, caring parent him or herself. The more love learners receive, the more love they will be able to give and receive themselves. Clearly implied is a cyclic process of positive reinforcement.

The parental love for the child must be unconditional and for the child's own sake. Factors such as gender, appearance, abilities or personality are irrelevant – love is bestowed on the child without any expectations or demands of gratitude. The child must never be made to feel guilty about the constraints he/she imposed upon parents' freedom of movement, their time spend with him/her, or the use of their finances. This unconditional love needs to be experienced by the child through all the interactions that take place between the parents and the child – be it via the physical care taken of the child, responding to his or her first smile, or protecting the child from or initially introducing the child into the social world. This even applies in cases where punishment is dispensed for going beyond the limits of acceptable behaviour. When the child is not loved unconditionally, the child experiences the parents' love conditionally. The teacher and parents need to separate the deeds of the child from the child as person, by indicating to the child that his or her behaviour is not acceptable, although he or she as a person is still acceptable. A typical response, in this regard, could be: "What you are doing makes it difficult for me to talk with you, even though I have high expectations of what you can do and become". Moore (1997:441) claims that "*modern first world societies take care of many physiological needs but people seem to be less caring about one another*" with the result that loneliness and isolation occur.

The parents' attitude towards the child impacts forcefully on the child's self-image. His or her approval and acceptance by others is deemed a prerequisite for the child to accept him or herself. The reciprocal love relationship between the parent(s) and the child, has the following spin-offs for the child, which are vital to his or her development:

- ▶ accelerated progress, stimulated by the mother's loving encouragement, anticipatory interest and delight of his/her behaviour,
- ▶ rewards for his or her efforts made and to stimulate him or her to continue to achieve the physical milestones sooner than other children who are not as privileged to be involved in a similar meaningful and loving relationship with their parent(s);
- ▶ the opportunity to learn through mutually rewarding relationships with first the mother and then in other relationships with significant other role players, to acquire self-control and moral values,
- ▶ the recognition and establishment of a personal identity,
- ▶ the experience of unique love and devotion, tailor made to suit his or her own unique needs, which are acknowledged as being different from those of any other child.

Because of the special quality of the parent/child relationship, such love is difficult to replace and it will cause the child to be *emotionally vulnerable*, when deprived of this love. Newson (Pringle 1986:37) describes the situation as follows "a developing personality needs more than that: it needs to know that to someone it matters more than other children; that someone will go to unreasonable lengths ... for its sake".

Raths (1972:51) summarises the urgency and necessity of this need for love and affection to be met when he asserts that "emotional security, affection, intimacy, someone in whom to confide are wonderful possessions! *To be deprived of them, to feel unloved, to have no one to like intensely are terribly severe deprivations*". With this in mind, Thompson and Poppen's (1972:9) contention is of meaningful relevance, namely "perhaps the best way to assist young people in meeting their need to give and receive love is to try to function as models who are able to give unconditional love to others".

In contrast to the unloved child, one who experiences too much love and affection, may be too scared to venture into the unknown. A close tie develops between the child and the parent, and the parent experiences difficulty in letting go of the child. The child is metaphorically "*wrapped up in cotton wool*" and therefore experiences problems in becoming independent, as the child feels fearful of facing the uncertainties of a less safe and unknown world outside the family home.

4.4.1.2 The need for security (including the need for economic security)

The child experiences feelings of security, when this need is met by the establishment of stable relationships within the family. Stable and dependable relationships in this regard relate to mother/child, father/child, child/siblings, and child/close relative relationships, the latter typically include the child's relationship with the grandparents. Other factors that provide to the child with a sense of security are a familiar place, a known routine where everyday events take place in exactly the same manner and sequence, the availability of a familiar object or cherished possession, such as a favourite teddy bear or blanket which provides reassurance, and something that they can take to bed with them or that they will not have to part with in a stressful situation. A stable, marital/ relationship is, however, as previously stated, of utmost importance to the child in order to experience security. Determinants that can impinge on the security of the child are at times of such a nature that adults may consider them to be irrelevant. Typical determinants are the unpredictability of a glass falling on to the floor, the water overflowing from the bath, or preschoolers being

scared to go to the toilet fearing that they may fall through the seat into the toilet. Irrational fears often are a fundamental cause of insecurity and consequential anxiety in learners, as may be seen from the preceding discussion in relation to rational-emotive-emotive behaviour theory.

Once the child knows what is expected from him or her, growing up becomes a little less difficult. Parents who clearly define acceptable and reasonable standards of behaviour would by implication do away with uncertainty as regards what is deemed acceptable behaviour by their children. Reasonableness and predictability are key issues in defining limits and conveying these limits to children. If young children regress and seem disobedient, it could be because they need to test the limits to which they may go or because they have forgotten the rules. Consistent discipline, whether it is inclined to be rather strict or lenient, will have an impact on learners' feelings of security or insecurity.

Personal continuity is provided by family stability, in the sense that the child is aware of his or her past, and has an idea of his or her future destiny. Photographs, recording events that took place during the child's early childhood and that parents and grandparents remind them of, as well as speculation on future possible trends in their lives, assists the child in acquiring a coherent self-image and self-identity. They are also deemed important in terms of the development of the child's personality. By hearing parents and teachers say, "when you were younger" or "when you are older", the child is able to create a mental picture of himself now and in the future within the larger family system (Pringle 1985:38). Human relationships enable the child to develop a personal identity. These factors provide continuity and predictability in the child's life-world and as a consequence a sense of security. The importance of such security needs to be seen within the context of a contemporary world where change and a need to constantly adjust to changing situations has become the norm, rather than the exception to the rule. Maslow (Moore 1997:441) concurs that children feel safe within a structure with set limits and boundaries. The needs for safety can be met by a *measured freedom* instead of an *unbound freedom*.

For persons to experience feelings of security, Pringle (1985:37) postulates that "if the whole framework of his or her life is secure, it provides him with the needed reassurance to venture out, knowing that he can again return to its comforting safety". His or her feelings of self-worth can be stimulated by allowing him or her to express himself or herself, to enjoy his or her individuality and to acknowledge his or her sense of self-determination (Pringle 1985:38).

The teacher acts *in loco parentis* during the many hours of the day that the child/learner is at school or as a result of parents' physical or mental absence. Their role in meeting the learners' needs for love and security, within the learner/teacher relationship cannot therefore be over accentuated. Pringle (1985:39) cites the research of Rosenshine (1971), who found that devoted teachers are especially geared to be sources of **enthusiasm** and **warmth** and that these characteristics in turn can create for the **whole class**, a **climate of caring** and **availability in the sense that learners are involved with each other, with the teacher and with learning.**

A child can be disciplined by means of reasoning and deliberation, which makes way for a more relaxed understanding of parental standards and expectations (Pringle 1985:38). Disapproval implies a withdrawal of love, which is experienced by the child, long before he or she can actually talk or understand what the adult is saying. Speech may not even be necessary, as non-verbal communication serves as an indication of adults' feelings. (Conditions of insecurity that have their origins in adult disapproval engender feelings of anxiety within the child. The disapproval of the other significant other role players in his or her life world, will at a later stage also make him or her feel anxious.) The loving relationship nurtured by the mother after birth, provides the most effective and basic motivation for the learner to act in accordance with the expectations of the significant other role players. The more stable the warm, loving relationship between the parent(s) and the learner, the fewer disciplinary problems will be experienced. If the parent or the teacher acts as a consistent role model for the child, he or she will come to understand what is expected of him or her.

As the child gains insight into his or her behaviour, instead of blindly obeying a parent or teacher because of a fear of physical punishment or as a result of emotional blackmailing in withholding affection, the basis for moral insight is laid. Inner-directed behaviour creates feelings of guilt and shame, when he or she displeases either his or her parents or himself or herself. A conscience gradually develops and the child is capable of increasingly behaving in a more mature, self-directed, independent, and responsible manner. A child learns to care if parents set the example of caring and concern.

Pringle (1985:41) draws attention to the following factors that are conducive to the stimulation of the value of internal controls:

- ▶ expectations consistent and relevant to the child's age and level of understanding,
- ▶ punishments consistent and logically related to the unacceptable behaviour, and

- ▶ an open and democratic family environment, where disagreement regarding behaviour is frankly discussed and the reasons for any disagreement are clarified in a logical manner.

Outer-directed behaviour is in a sense *ad hoc* behaviour, where “love-orientated methods” of discipline do not apply, as there is no stable, loving and meaningful parent/child or teacher/child relationship, within the child’s relationship with adults – be it the parent or the teacher. It may also be that no consistent and appropriate pattern of parental expectations exists. Continuous adaptation to the expectations of a particular person or situation, at a particular moment in time, is expected of the child. Behaviour in effect can be regulated and conformity ensured, by means of autocratic discipline originating from an external source, namely an adult telling the child how to behave (Pringle 1985:41). In contrast “love orientated methods” focus on a temporary withdrawal of affection, as a means of indicating disapproval and use the warm and loving relationship that exists between the mother/father or teacher and the child, as a way to control behaviour. From early childhood, a child can detect when the mother is displeased with him or her and hence becomes anxious.

If significant role players, within a child’s life world, assume a meaningful importance to the child, he or she would not like to experience their disapproval of his or her behaviour and therefore try their utmost to please the persons concerned. An attempt will therefore be made by the learner to adapt to the expectations of the adult role players in his or her life-world, so as to retain their approval and affection. In an attempt to avoid anxiety situations stemming from the disturbed relationships with the adults concerned, the child actively desists from displaying behaviour patterns that would endanger his or her relationship with the adults involved. Parents and teachers can assist learners to understand what is expected of them, by providing the learner with a caring environment, that stands in sharp contrast to environments that are characterised by a temporary loss of basic affection and concern (Pringle 1985:40).

A caring parent or teacher can teach children how to care (Pringle 1985:40). The response that the child elicits serves as an indication of whether a person cares about him or her or not. Learners come to understand what is expected of them by viewing the consistent behaviour of adults as role models. The child will certainly be influenced by how readily he or she is able to understand what the expectations are and role models play a definite role in conveying these expectations to the child through their own behaviour patterns. Parents

and teachers constitute the most intimately observed role models and hence their norms and values will be significant in shaping the child's behaviour.

4.4.1.3 *The need for belonging*

According to Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1997:442) many psychologists regard the unmet need for love as a causative factor of psychopathology (or for the purposes of this study, problem behaviour). Marlow (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1995:441) maintains that once a person's psychological and safety needs are met, the person becomes aware of the fact that he or she has a need to belong – either with someone or with a group of people in order to receive and to give love. Although first world societies see to the satisfaction of psychological needs, societies cannot be regarded as caring societies. *Little time causes people to interact on a superficial level, with the result that intimacy is lost and people feel lonely and isolated.* According to Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1997:441), the growing number of single parents can be an indication that the need to be loved is not fulfilled. The need to belong can, however, also be met by experiencing a feeling of belonging to a family and a neighbourhood. According to Raths (1972:42,43), the need to belonging stimulates the following feelings within a learner, if this has been satisfied in comparison to an unmet need for belonging:

TABLE 4.1: THE NEED FOR BELONGING

Unmet need for belonging	The need for belonging met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He/she feels lonely • He/she feels left out • He/she feels unaccepted by other learners • He/she is nobody's best friend • He/she feels different from other learners • He/she has no one to whom to confide his/her secret concerns, secret ambitions, worries • He/she feels inferior • He/she feels uneasy • He/she feels insecure • He/she feels depressed • He/she feels helpless • He/she feels unwanted • When praised, he/she feels like rejecting the praise • He /she does not always want to feel he/she must make a good impression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He/she feels socially accepted • He/she feels important and like somebody's best friend • He/she feels he/she fits in and belongs with the others • He/she feels accepted and appreciated by a special friend(s) • He/she feels confident and good about himself/herself • He/she feels at ease in the company of others • He/she feels safe and secure • He/she feels happy and carefree • He/she feels in control of their lives • He/she feels wanted • He/she happily accepts praise and recognition • He/she can just be themselves without having to make a good impression on others

4.4.2 The need for new experiences

It is argued that just as the body needs food to maintain it, the child needs new experiences in order for mental growth to take place (Pringle 1985:41). Each life phase has tasks that are appropriate to that specific life-phase, which have to be accomplished so that the child can progress to more complicated tasks during the next life-phase.

Intellectual growth is especially stimulated by parents or in later life the teacher, by discussing issues, concepts and idea with the child, instead of merely leaving the child to watch television or become engaged in some other mundane activity. The negative impact of an unstimulating environment, can be detected by observing the limited language skills of these children. New experiences provide the child with opportunities to learn, how to

learn and in the process enjoy a sense of achievement. Nowhere is this seen more clearly, than in the “cloud nine” experience of learners who have achieved what others have believed to be impossible. The admiration of peers, parents and teachers, when a learner excels or experiences success, acts as a catalyst for the child to seek new fields of exploration.

The child’s responsiveness for accepting challenging diverse tasks, is dependent on his or her inborn capacity, mental mindset and the encouragement received. Intellectual growth can be impaired by the emotional and cultural climate that exists within the home or classroom, as well as parental involvement and aspirations. The child’s progress in the early childhood phase is dependent on the teacher’s implicit, incidental, unconscious, deliberate or overt attitudes, values and beliefs. *If the teacher is enthusiastic, receptive to new ideas, and has a wide and varied interest, these can rub off on the child and they could react in a very similar manner.*

Pringle (1985:46) argues that play offers learners an opportunity to meet their need for new experiences, by enabling them to get to know the world they live in and in presenting them with a means for expressing their emotions and learning how to deal with complex and conflicting feelings. Through play children can establish a synthesis between their inner and the outer world, as well as between rational and irrational processes. The child’s unique store of prior ideas, images, feelings and wishes provide him or her with a new understanding of the inner and outer world. Language in particular enables the child to learn to reason, to think and to understand their life-world. Learners need language for establishing relationships with adults or peers. Learners use language to not only express themselves, but to come to terms with life as well. Their scholastic performance will be strongly influenced by their ability to express themselves, whether in an oral sense or in written assignments and examinations.

The teacher’s role is described by Pringle (1985:51-53), as that of *bridge builder*, by focussing on:

- The bridge between emotion and learning. This implies a need for the teacher to adopt teaching methods which will minimise the weaknesses of each learner and rather focus on their strengths or on developing a curriculum which captures the interest of learners by taking into consideration their stage of development.
- The bridge between the parental home and the broader community. Teachers can involve parents, learners, the community and themselves in activities, or they may get

parents to understand the purpose of the new teaching methods, so that parental interest can improve.

- The bridge between education and the other professions involved in the development and well-being of children. The teacher must attempt to get everybody involved with the education of children, on a multi-disciplinary basis, to work together.
- The bridge between the child being an innovator and their need for new experiences. Teachers need to continually realise that education is not only for today, but also for tomorrow – if teachers are flexible in their thinking, they will succeed in stimulating a receptive and adaptive attitude within learners.

4.4.2.1 The need to be free from intense feelings of guilt

Feelings of guilt arise when the learners themselves or their parents or teacher expect too much of them and they have disappointed them.

General unconstructive comments by adult role players may include the following (Raths, 1972:55): “No one ever did that in class before!”, “You’re a very naughty child!”, or “I never expected that from you!”. Raths (1972:54) adds that adult role players keep on reminding children of the mistakes they have made, as if they themselves have not made mistakes and this intensifies the feelings of guilt that arise. Another problem is deemed to be that adult role players often do not allow children to express their feelings about certain situations or events and as a consequence the child may have a certain motive or underlying rationale for his or her behaviour, while the adult draws a completely different conclusion based on wrong assumptions.

4.4.2.2 The need to be free from feelings of fear

It is more difficult to teach a fearful learner with anxieties, than a learner who is calm, relaxed and stable. Children and especially younger children express their fears verbally to teachers. They may for instance tell the teacher that they are scared that their mother may die if she goes to a hospital for an operation.

Adult role players enhance the feeling of fear within the child, by telling the child: “The police will take care of you”, “If you do that, you will never go to heaven”, “You’ll end up in Reform school”, “I’ll put you in the closet if you’re not good”, “Don’t go near the dog, he will bite you!” or “You’d be sorry if I die”. Many such utterances are made without a

regard for the consequences they may have on children's emotional well-being. *If a child is experiencing intense feelings of fear, they could be devastating and could well be the proverbial "last straw that broke the camel's back".*

4.4.3 The need for praise and recognition

For the purposes of this study, the following needs as identified by researchers, will be included in this section on the need for praise and recognition, namely the need for a positive self-concept, self-actualisation, for sharing, and self-respect. These needs together with the need for praise and recognition will be discussed in the following paragraphs:

4.4.3.1 The need for praise and recognition

A strong incentive is needed by the child, in order to understand and assist with the difficulties, conflicts and setbacks that he or she will experience whilst dealing with emotional, social and intellectual learning on the route to adulthood. Without doubt, the best incentive that serves as encouragement for children to progress or excel in their endeavours, is the excitement and emotions expressed by their parents or teachers when they are informed of their achievements. They know that these adults love them and they also love them, and hence they would like to please them. They are spurred on to persevere until the very end, by the encouragement and reasonable expectations expressed by their parents and teachers.

The child's self-concept is shaped by the views expressed, both directly and indirectly, by significant role players within his or her life-world, especially those he or she has come to respect and look up to. Learners' academic performance is determined by their attitude towards themselves, which in turn is influenced by the way they experience themselves within their relationships with others. Teachers are one of the most important significant role players within the life world of the learner, as they have the opportunity to meet the learner's need for praise and recognition in the classroom. By praising the learner for his or her achievements, they in effect shape his or her attitude towards learning. Teachers should keep in mind that each learner has unrealised potential for development and that they should not be misled by the opinions of others, as to the learner's potential, but rather need to preserve a believe in the learner's potential. Of significance in this respect is Pringle's (1985:54) contention that "a child's self-concept is developed through the views others hold of him or her. Even bright children may think of themselves as failures if their ability remains

unrecognised; the number of such misfits, as I have called them, is by no means negligible – thousands of them pass through our schools each year”.

With the above in mind, it is important that teachers give serious consideration to determining how children can be assisted to achieve and experience success during their school careers (Pringle 1985:99). Especially in the classroom the teacher has the opportunity to recognise the efforts that learners make, instead of merely focussing on their achievements. The child with emotional problems in particular “has no chance of shining and always finds himself near the bottom. Such constant failure inevitably damages self-esteem and motivation”(Pringle 1985:101).

The following case study, presented by Pringle (1985:101), serves to illustrate the impact that a teacher has in assisting learners to realise their full potential. Two groups of learners were initially evaluated to have the same abilities. The teachers, however, were led to believe that the one group of learners had the potential to do better at school and they, as a result, expected more of these learners. Although matched for ability at the outset, the learners whom the teachers believed had the ability to excel, were in fact found to be doing better than the others. This proved that the expectations of teachers could be correlated to the performance of learners. By implication if a learner is labelled, by the teacher, as being slow or bright, it will eventually become a self-fulfilling prophecy. **“Self-confidence and motivation are fostered or extinguished by the way teachers think about and treat their charges”** (Pringle 1985:102). Without doubt, this realisation places an awesome responsibility on the shoulders of already overburdened teachers and lecturers within our educational institutions.

Effective learning is dependent on the learner’s attitude towards learning and expectations of himself or herself. These tend to be reinforced by recognition and encouragement received from teachers, parents, and peers. Pringle (1985:54) predicts that if a learner’s need for praise and recognition is fulfilled, it will act like “immunisation against a mental illness for an indefinite period of time. Such an individual should be able to surmount crises and periods of great stress without suffering too much.”

As Maslow (Moore 1997:442) has demonstrated, self-esteem may be correlated to the need to evaluate oneself in a positive sense. The need for self-esteem succeeds the need to be loved. Maslow (Moore, 1997:442) analyses the need for self-esteem in two subcategories, namely in the first instance needs based on the person’s achievements, these relate to a

sense of efficiency, capability, achievement, confidence, personal strengths and independence and in the second instance, the needs that relate to the esteem of other persons. Typical factors are social standing, feeling important, and being treated in a dignified manner and with appreciation. It is important to each and every person, to experience recognition and to feel valued. According to Maslow (Moore 1997:442), the benefits stemming from a good self-esteem are a person who is satisfied, feels confident and acts competently, feels needed, and experiences meaningfulness in life. It accentuates the fact that genuine self-esteem is based more on actual experiences than on the opinions and judgements of others. They maintain that when a person relies too much on the judgement of others, rather than on their own ability, achievements and adequacy, the person runs the risk of in what Hjelle and Ziegler (Moore, 1997:442) term *psychological jeopardy*.

Thompson and Poppen (1972:9) warn that when a learner feels useless, unwanted, unchallenged and unneeded, it can be regarded as a danger sign which can result in escapism or withdrawal via drug taking activities. Holland (Thompson & Poppen 1972:9) further stresses that "the need to escape via drugs or any other mechanism is obviated if we have someone who cares enough about us to set limits, and if we feel worthy and useful to others through our ability to make a positive contribution to society". The consequence for adults is one of having to be aware of and to meet the need to positively reinforce the self-esteem of children during their early childhood years. Parents and teachers should refrain from careless statements, often made in anger and frustration, or treating children without the necessary dignity and respect. Particularly damaging can be criticism levelled at children or negative comparisons made of them, in front of their peers. A case in point is a teacher saying to a learner "I cannot understand why you cannot get this right. Your brother who was also a learner in my class never battled with his assignments". Thompson and Poppen (1972:10) refer to the habit of degrading a learner, as "ego-puncturing".

Teachers can have a lifelong impact on learners when they "set limits, maintain certain standards of excellence and had high expectations for your personal performance and development" (Thompson & Poppen 1972:11). Significant role players should reward learners continuously for successes achieved. Focussing on the strengths of learners, instead of focussing on their weaknesses, will strengthen their egos. Thompson and Poppen (1972:14) cite the case of a teacher that used to phone a child's parents three times per week to bring to their attention how well their child had been doing that week. Teachers should give parents regular positive feedback concerning the learner, in order to positively reinforce the learner's self-esteem, as well as to inspire and serve as a role model for parents

to follow. Teachers should implement *personalised learning* by not only being able to address their learners by their first names, but by associating learners with their special areas of interest (Thompson & Poppen 1972:13). The learner will get the message, that the teacher cares about me, enough to want to listen to me and to react to my preferences.

A need for achievement is clearly reflected when a learner expresses the wish to have “*done it better*” or in offering all sorts of excuses for not completing an assignment as well as he should have. Typical statements are “I would have done it right, if I did not have to go to the toilet” or “The teacher is always picking on me” (Raths 1972:43). Their experience is one of other learners or people being superior to themselves and they wish that they could be as good as they are. These learners have a need for praise and would feel so much better if the teacher would indicate that they too have an ability to pass. They are inclined to focus too much on small achievements and cry out for recognition thereof. The learners concerned are genuinely dissatisfied with their own achievements and tend to comment that they could be better persons just like ... and then name persons that they view as a role model. They are constantly complaining about the teacher and their schoolwork, and are inclined to blame circumstances for their failures.

Factors that contribute to the learners’ yearning for achievement are that significant other role players very seldom grant the learner an opportunity to show what he or she is able to accomplish, nor do they note that the goals that are set for the learner are frequently far too high. Related factors are that these learners are often not assisted sufficiently by the teacher to be able to master the assignment successfully or that parents are keeping the learner occupied with numerous responsibilities in the home, so that they have little or no time left to complete their homework and assignments. The learner may experience that the need for achievement is intensified by demands made within the home, the classroom and on the playground.

4.4.3.2 *The need for a positive self-concept and an understanding of the learners’ “life-world”*

“Unfortunately, most children’s negative feelings about themselves are formed from adult’s evaluations” (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:545). This introductory statement is quite a serious accusation and unfortunately one that has serious implications for many learners. Of further concern is Thompson and Rudolph’s (1996:545) contention that “*once formed, a negative self-concept is difficult to reverse*”. It is not difficult to understand that when a learner feels

confused and bewildered by the environment and things happening to him or her which he or she cannot always understand, he or she starts to doubt himself or herself and his or her abilities to deal with the situations with which he or she is confronted. In effect our self-concept to a large degree stems from a self-evaluation of ourselves and our abilities to deal with our "life-world". It is an evaluation that as seen from the introductory statement, is affected by feedback received from others. Within the life world of the learner, peers, parents and teachers play a significant role in this respect. Functionally the learner's self-concept consists of a set of personal beliefs, values, understandings, assumptions and attitudes, in relation to his or her life-world, that directs his or her behaviour.

Feelings of insecurity result in children wishing that somebody would assist them in making up their minds when they do not know what to choose. They often experience confusion in regard to personal beliefs and values, a confusion aggravated by the diverse perceptions that others hold and which are conveyed to them. Their life as a consequence becomes one of a search for truth and meaning. It may be seen as a journey of exploration, one where teachers and parents can play a meaningful role in shaping the learners' understanding of the issues concerned. Gaining such an understanding shapes the learners' self-concept and provides him or her with an understanding of his or her "life-world". An insecure child will easily accept the opinions of others and is influenced by peer group members to abide by their norms and values, although these may not be in line with those of their family or society. They can become aggressive in their search for information and in the asking of so many "why" questions. All too frequently adults are inclined to attempt to circumvent the questions posed by telling the child they will only be able to later understand the issues, when they are older.

4.4.3.3 The need for self-actualisation

Self-actualisation is the highest need in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This need will, however, never be completely satisfied, because as soon as a person has achieved a certain level of accomplishment, he will seek new challenges. Maslow (Moore 1997:442) maintains that the basic needs and the meta-needs (the need for growth, justice and meaningfulness, beauty, order, simplicity, perfection) should be met, before the need for self-actualisation can be realised and maximal growth is ensured. "Self-actualisation is the process of becoming all one is capable of being, making full use of all one's abilities, talents and potential" (Moore 1997:443). The way that self-actualisation is realised differs from person to person. The one person can be the best artist possible and regard that as constituting self-

actualisation, while another person can be the best parent possible or get involved in charity work, and regard that as self-actualisation.

4.4.3.4 The need for sharing and self-respect

The pressures on learners to conform to adults' expectations are quite extensive and more often than not they have little say about the ground rules that are established, as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within particular situations. Frustration stems from not being consulted and merely being told what to do. It is therefore not surprising that learners develop a need for sharing or to put more bluntly, to be shown some consideration when decisions are to be made that have an impact on them and their lives. Within the school context, learners in particular tend to have little say as to how they are treated. In removing a child's privilege to share or express an opinion, it is contended that their need for sharing is accentuated, as it impacts on their self-respect and feelings of self-worth. Charlton and David (1993:87) stress that under achievers more often than not have a low self-concept which results in a lack of motivation. It may be argued that the concept of self resides within the inner human spirit and a positive self-concept can only stem from the development of an inner self-respect.

Many of the above manifestations have been stated in a negative sense. Rephrasing them in a positive context will provide an indication as to how a learner's needs for sharing and self-respect may be actualised. The *self-concept* and consequently *self-respect*, is significantly shaped by what Covey (1992b:58) defines as our "*social mirror*" which reflects the perceptions, actions and behaviour of people around us. This has specific relevance in the actualisation of learners' needs for self-respect, particularly in instances where they have an external locus of control.

4.4.4 The need for responsibility

Responsibility is granted to the child when he/she is given the opportunity to gain personal independence by, caring for him or herself in relation to matters of his or her daily routine and care, such as feeding, dressing, and getting ready for school. He or she wants to be as responsible as parents, seeing that he or she is constantly modelling himself or herself on them. Although he or she struggles to be independent and to master all the tasks, he or she is experiencing an increasing demand for greater independence. The parents should gradually allow them greater freedom in choosing their own clothes and eventually their

Children can only learn how to act responsibly by being granted responsibility. It needs to be practised like any other skill that he/she acquires, together with the necessary adult guidance. Self-esteem is enhanced when children/learners have responsibilities that they can successfully deal with.

Pringle (1985:56,57) maintains that the family, school, and society may be at fault, by not providing sufficient training and guidance, as to how to act responsibly and independently. Being afforded the opportunity to make their own decisions, serves as confirmation that a child is able to cope with responsibility. If children are not given the opportunity to take responsibility for themselves, they will not realise that making choices, especially choices regarding their sexual and social life, have consequences and they will not be able to act responsibly. In many instances little guidance or meaningful direction is given to children, both in the home and at school. Pringle (1985:104) argues that this stems from the fact "there is now a lack of certainty, of moral imperatives, of ready answers and traditional beliefs". The failure of society and parents to deal constructively with these issues have given rise to a situation where learners experience difficulty in accepting responsibility for their own lives.

Children are growing up without knowing their own feelings and motives. Not many children are granted the opportunity to make their own decisions knowing and weighing up all the pro's and con's and taking responsibility for their deeds and choices afterwards.

Teachers and parents must keep in mind that they must distinguish between disapproving of the behaviour of the child and of the child himself or herself. Pringle (1985:55) admonishes adults to keep in mind that children model their behaviour on that of their adult role models and adults therefore have a responsibility to share their values, concerns and ambitions with these children in a constructive manner. Responsibility must be granted to a child in order to learn how to act responsibly. Adult role players must guide the young learner to practise responsibility under their guidance. Too many learners are growing up without obtaining insight into their own feelings and motives, with the result that they lose out on opportunities to make their own decisions, knowing what is involved and what the responsibilities are. A learner-centred teaching style will provide learners with opportunities for involvement and cooperation, to plan their activities in line with their own interests and ability levels. The curriculum must also relate to real life situations, in order to prepare learners to interact more effectively in their social relationships and to interpret themselves in relation to others. Hemming (Pringle, 1985:58) suggests that "to combine an appropriate

curriculum with an appropriate school community opens up for the adolescent a rich developmental experience with which he can identify because he recognises what it offers as the means to his personal fulfilment”.

D'Evelyn (1957:19-20,29,36) describes the emotional needs of children during the different life phases, namely the young child, the intermediate pre-adolescent child and the adolescent child. These phases are summarised as follows:

TABLE 4.2: EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN DURING THE DIFFERENT LIFE PHASES

	Needs
<p>The young child</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dependency on adults – if not met, will not excel on cognitive and emotional level • partnership in education between different significant role players (teacher and parents) – conflict on this level will impact on the cognitive and emotional development of the child
<p>The intermediate pre-adolescent child</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to feel accepted and supported by significant other role players (teacher and parents) while they are striving for independence and self-control • identification with peers – the teacher’s awareness in the classroom and the strategies that he/she implements to foster this need, is important • to feel good about himself or herself – scholastic performance and challenges are opportunities to gain a feeling of self-confidence. • the need to feel creative, to use his or her abilities and to be productive – the teacher must control and watch over competition.
<p>The adolescent child</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to feel good about himself or herself and to experience success in terms of his/her abilities and interests. • to gain increased confidence in and to understand himself or herself and significant other role players • to be respected and valued by peers • to feel safe and secure • to be granted opportunities to act responsibly • to be understood and be respected, to experience concern of and to be trusted by the significant other role players • to experience a partnership between the school and the home

Although emotional needs are important causative factors of behaviour problems, the meeting of these needs are generally not incorporated in classroom management models.

In the NCSNET document (1997:14), *emotional well-being* is but one of the sub-factors included under the heading *socio-economic barriers*.

Pringle (1985:159) suggests that parents and teachers as substitutes for parents, should pay attention to the following *Child Care Commandments*:

- (1) Give continuous, consistent, loving care – it's as essential for the mind's health as food is for the body.
- (2) Give generously of your time and understanding – playing with and reading to your child matters more than a tidy, smooth-running home (for the purposes of this study, "classroom").
- (3) Provide new experiences and bathe your child in language from birth onwards – they enrich the growing mind.
- (4) Encourage him or her to play in every way both by himself or herself and with other children – exploring, imitating, constructing, pretending and creating.
- (5) Give more praise for effort than for achievement.
- (6) Give him or her ever-lasting responsibility – like all skills, it needs to be practised.
- (7) Remember that every child is unique – so suitable handling for one may not be right for another.
- (8) Make the way you show disapproval fit your child's temperament, age and understanding.
- (9) Never threaten that you will stop loving him or give him away; you may reject his or her behaviour but never suggest that you might reject him.
- (10) Do not expect gratitude; your child did not ask to be born – the choice was yours.

In the following section *Effective schools and behaviour problems in the classroom* will be discussed in order to determine what factors should be included in the proposed for teachers on understanding and dealing with behaviour problems in the classroom. Special attention will be given to factors relating to the emotional well-being of learners.

4.5 EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM

Many international studies are to be found in the literature that relate to "*effective schools*" and school characteristics that can make a positive difference to a learner's behaviour. So for instance Barker (1989:31), Charlton and David (1993:11-12), David (1993:163), Gilham (1981:53), Graham (1986:403), and Jones and Southgate (1989:6-9) cite the following

characteristics of an effective school that have positively identified impact on the behaviour of learners:

- Senior staff members (e.g. the principal, and heads of departments) need to act as effective leaders, constantly consulting staff members and remaining sensitive to the opinions and needs of both parents and learners.
- A shared staff policy defining academic behaviour and expectations relating thereto should be implemented, one which learners agree on and that is consistently enforced.
- A curriculum should be compiled which will suit the present and future needs of both learners and the community. Staff members should promote the successful education of the learner, as a whole person.
- Reasonable academic expectations should be established and teachers should expect all of the learners to have the potential to realise these expectations. Teachers need to be able to identify the potential that exists in learners and find the key to unlock this potential.
- The effective use of rewards for good work and behaviour should be promoted and an atmosphere of confidence created, that will serve as a stimulus for actualising learners' abilities. Learners should be treated, as the person they might become, instead of focussing on the person that they are at present.
- Staff members should not accent the diversities that exist amongst learners, but rather attempt to overcome the problems that learners experience. Self-discipline should be encouraged and a concerted attempt should be made to develop enquiring minds and a sensitivity towards interdependence and community, in contrast to competing for power.
- Professional standards in terms of planning, setting and correcting learners' work should be established. Commencing with and ending lessons on time, should be the norm rather than the exception to the rule.
- Teachers need to use their pedagogical skills to arouse learners' interest in the course material and to motivate them to excel. Learners should also be assisted to realise that education is a lifelong process of learning.
- Teachers should emphasise the importance of academic work, prepare their lessons beforehand, be punctual and mark homework promptly. All learners should be equally valued.
- Teachers need to apply classroom management skills, in order to prevent behaviour problems from occurring and act swiftly in dealing with any disruption that may occur.

- Learners should be effectively managed by teachers within groups, rather than focussing on individuals.
- The relationships that exist between teachers, between teachers and learners, between learners themselves, between the school and parents, and between the school and outside agencies within the community, should be healthy, supportive and respectful.
- A pleasant, comfortable, attractive and warm atmosphere needs to be created for the learner, in which he or she can feel free to approach the staff for assistance. In addition teachers should serve as good role models for learners.
- Opportunities should be created for learners to become involved in and to be accountable for the administration of the school. Responsibility should be shared between different learners and they all need to feel that they are participating in some important aspect of the school system.
- An effective system of pastoral care should be implemented. In particular every learner should know and be known by a particular adult at school. Parents and members of the community should become involved in the school system, in order to assist both learners and teachers.
- An effective communication and record system should be implemented, which will ensure that the required information is made available to all parties concerned.
- The mission, vision, values, rules, codes of conduct and policies should be made known, shared by, and agreed on, by all stakeholders, including the learners.
- A specific person should be available to respond quickly and appropriately to the problems of learners or to prevent an anticipated problem from occurring.
- The effectiveness of the school should be recognizable via the learners, members of staff and within the community, for example parents commenting that their child cannot wait to go to school, or kitchen staff commenting that they are part of the school system, not because of the money, but because they would not like to miss it for the world or employers in the community commenting that they would always employ a learner from a specific school as "they always seem to produce such willing and confident youngsters" (Jones & Southgate 1989:7).
- "Private witnesses" or non-teaching staff members of the school can act as witnesses regarding the effectiveness of the school, not only on public occasions or when examination results are published, but on a continuous basis. They will be able to comment on the depth of the quality of the relationships that exist within the school and will be in a position to evaluate whether the school really celebrates all its constituents.

- The learners of an effective school are not merely happy, they are not afraid of anything or anybody, they are free, self-disciplined and act independently. Learners from experience know that their school celebrates not only the achievements of a few outstanding scholars, but also pays attention to the normal achievements of all learners, who are supported in becoming “*somebody*” of value.
- The effective school fulfills an important role in the lives of the learners and in their commitment to future personal development.
- The effective school has a shared value system (e.g. culture, the importance of the family in society, interdependence, collegiality) and teaching and non-teaching staff agree on a common vision for the school.
- The effectiveness of the school, in terms of all its practices (e.g. systems of marking, appointments, assessing the work of learners, recording, publications, staff development, curriculum, communication system, administrative duties to be fulfilled), must be continuously evaluated against its proclaimed principles (e.g. all learners must be equally evaluated, learners should be dealt with in terms of what they will become instead of what they are at present). In effect practices should be aligned to the principles, in order to ensure the effectivity of the school.
- Staff development policy and practice should be of a high priority, as staff members will not be able to empower the learners, if they themselves are not empowered.

Running like a golden thread through the above list is a *culture or climate of caring* and a need to make a difference in the life-world of the youth who represents the future of any country. Central to this process is the school with its dedicated teaching staff working as a team. The majority of the research findings, as referred to above, seem to suggest that a “whole school” approach is required, with an emphasis on inclusion, as opposed to exclusion. Inherent therein is the “quality and effectiveness of school leadership and management systems” (Charlton & David 1993:12). The research evidence suggests that schools can make a difference to a learner’s life and that behaviour should be managed (Charlton & David 1993:12; Galvin & Costa 1994:148; Holland & Hamerton 1994:242). In researching behaviour management in terms of a “whole” school approach, Colvin *et al.* (1993:361) conclude that instructional programmes to teach appropriate behaviour need to be developed by a “school-wide” building team that implements and sustains the procedures among staff. They further recommend the development, adoption and implementation of an instructional based, building team model for promoting school-wide staff development and discipline, as opposed to traditional reactive punishment-orientated, exclusionary models (Colvin *et al.* 1993:379).

Teaching students exhibiting behaviour problems demands a set of very specific professional attributes. Not least of these is an ability to effectively understand and deal with stress. In this regard Miller (1996:32), in discussing the emotional impact of learners' problem behaviour on teachers, confirms that "for most it was having a significant impact upon their stress level and for some this was also transferring to their out-of-school lives" Notably, David (1993:164) suggests that pastoral care should be organised for both teachers and learners in order to provide them with opportunities to be counselled. The appointment by the school of a staff tutor/counsellor is suggested by David (1993:164). In a similar vein Hamblin (David 1993:164) argues that "schools are not only for pupils; they are for teachers who have the right to satisfaction in an arduous task". Teachers quite often feel alone and solely responsible for correcting the behaviour of a particular learner or for controlling the learner in the classroom – even although they have experienced their colleagues as friendly and supportive.

The following direct quotations, as recorded by Miller (1994:32) during interviews with teachers, reflect the profound emotions they experience, in having to understand and assist learners who display extremely aggressive, disruptive and problem behaviour:

- ▶ "Quite honestly, never having met a child like this in twelve years of teaching, I would go home some days and say "I don't know what to do next."
- ▶ "I really was upset because I felt that I was failing, and I mean I've taught for a long time and I can honestly say I've never felt like that before. I just felt that I couldn't cope."
- ▶ "You sometimes think "Will they (colleagues) think it's me, that I am inadequate?"
- ▶ "I just felt "Well it's not doing the other children any good, and it's not doing me any good and it's not doing my family any good'. I came home at night and I was so wound up."

A central theme to these quotations, is a sense of intense frustration and a degree of desperation in not being able to cope with the situation. Reinert (1980:134) goes so far as to suggest that learners with behaviour problems can drive a teacher to an early retirement. When a teacher cannot cope with a learner's specific behaviour problems exhibited in the classroom, the end result manifest is one of an unhappy situation for both the teacher and the learner, with little real learning taking place in practice. Instead of the desired situation of effective teaching, a sense of despair exists. Teachers are very inclined to eventually end up being "losers" instead of "winners". They quite often do not really try out new techniques

designed to **cope** with the problem – instead they implement techniques to **avoid** the problem, for example to change the learner's seating position in the classroom, instead of attending to his or her unmet emotional needs that might be causing the problem in the first instance. Clearly the climate created is one that is hardly conducive to effective learning.

Osman (David, 1993:158) maintains that the actual aim of education is "to produce well-adjusted, rational people who can relate and feel, not just non-linear calculating computers". The underlying theme is essentially one of learners who are **valued as individuals** and educated with a future environmental situation in mind, one in which learners will need specific competencies and skills. *A more personal and meaningful school career can engender a context where learners are far more motivated, teachers are less stressed out and far more effective support systems are available to teachers, thereby giving rise to more effective control, a humanization of the school system and the stimulation of better cooperation from the disenchanting.*

Schools are expected to act as gatekeepers of values (Lawrence, Steed and Young, 1984:11). They have to produce learners who are well behaved, who can exercise self-control whilst living in accordance with the established norms and values of society. These learners will eventually need to exhibit some personal truthfulness, respect for others and respect for authority. Schools are expected to deliver to society learners who are both minimally knowledgeable and "in possession of certain ways of knowing". Dupont (1975:52) highlights the impact of schools in stating that "the schools play an increasingly prominent role in modifying disturbing behaviour in specific ways both in the classroom and in the child's other social contexts".

David (1993:157-158) cites the following guidelines, as found in a document entitled "The Practical Curriculum", relating to the objectives of education at an effective school, from a learner's perspective:

- Learners need to be equipped with knowledge, skills and practical abilities, as well as the will to make use thereof.
- Learners must be given the opportunity to develop qualities of the mind, body, spirit, feeling and imagination.
- Learners should be taught how to appreciate human achievements in the arts, music, science, technology and literature.

- Learners must be informed about the social, economic and political order and enabled to acquire a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs.
- Learners should be given the opportunity to prepare for their adult lives at home, at work, at leisure and at large, as future consumers, citizens and members of the community.
- Learners need to be supported to develop a good sense of self-respect, the capacity to live as independent, self-motivated adults, as well as the ability to operate as contributing members of cooperative groups.
- Learners must be enabled and guided towards an understanding and sensitivity in regard to the needs of others, in order to develop satisfactory personal relationships.

The common denominator running through this list is an attempt to ensure that learners receive a well-balanced education. The role played by teachers in this regard is, without doubt, vital. Andersen (1995:xiii) highlights the consequences if teachers are not prepared to guide and support learners with behaviour problems. He maintains that human relations are in effect one of our most pressing educational problems. It is argued that learners do not now how to relate to one another, or to themselves, or to significant other persons within their environment, with the result that many learners experience feelings of alienation, insecurity, anger, boredom, confusion, shyness and a sense of being unloved. Learners cannot deal with these feelings and often resort to the taking of drugs, or implementing strategies of avoidance, by dropping out of school, committing suicide or become involved in activities of crime and violence. Andersen (1995:xiii) suggests that “the social, psychological, and economic costs of these unhealthy behaviours are *forcing the country to desperately look for solutions*”. David (1993:157) supports this notion by placing emphasis on the importance of the teacher as a “change agent” in the lives of learners with behaviour problems, *especially seeing that family structures in the society are weakening*. Graham (1986:402) similarly suggests that better academic results can be achieved, and lower rates of delinquency and fewer behaviour problems may be experienced. The type of learner that is taken in at a school, however, has an impact on these findings, “the schools themselves also make a difference” (Graham, 1986:402).

Family life constitutes the point of departure for the development of a learner’s perceptions on life, as well as the shaping of attitudes in regard to personal, family and group relationships. The family unit will also shape the learner’s attitudes towards employment and how they deal with their emotions. This notwithstanding, teachers still exert more than just a marginal influence on the lives of learners. In effect “**some teachers are the sole reliable**

reference point in some children's lives" (David, 1993:157). The picture that emerges is one of partnerships being established between learners, parents and teachers in dealing with the needs of learners. As may be seen from the preceding discussion, the teacher's role in meeting these needs is certainly quite substantive. It is a picture which is reflected in Dowling's (1985:1) contention that the most influential systems in the learner's development are that of the family and the school, **yet not enough is being done to bring these two together as part of a strategy to understand and assist with the needs and problems of learners.**

The main rationale of this study focusses on the assumption that behaviour problems are the result of unmet emotional needs. If this rationale is found to be correct, it should be detected in the previously identified criteria for effective schools, especially seeing that David (1993:157) maintains that the teacher as a substitute parent, is the sole reliable reference point in the lives of learners.

The following criteria (to be found in the above discussion on effective schools) are relevant to the rationale of this study:

- The effective use of rewards for good work and behaviour should be promoted and an atmosphere of confidence created, that will serve as a stimulus for actualising learners' abilities. Learners should be treated as the person they might become, instead of focussing on the person that they are at present.
- *(Relevance to the study: the self-image of the learner is positively reinforced, the learner experiences unconditional acceptance and trust, as someone who is worthwhile.)*
- Staff members should be sensitive to the learner's need to belong to a group, to be part of a bigger "family" and able to make a contribution to the group as an appreciated member. The learner is motivated to excel and to actualise his or her potential. All learners should be equally valued. The relationships (e.g. teacher/learner, peers/learner) should be healthy, supportive and respectful. No competition or power struggles should exist – instead team efforts and collaboration should be the order of the day.
- *(Relevance to the study: The need to belong is met and the learner experiences support, a feeling of being important, being granted a sense of responsibility and appreciated, which in turn reinforces the nurturing of a positive self-image, allowing the learner to feel good about him or herself.)*

- A warm, pleasant and comfortable atmosphere should be experienced within the classroom. The learner needs to feel free to approach staff for assistance. Ideally every learner should have a personal role model and mentor at school, who understands the learner and who is known to the learner. The depth of the quality of the relationship is important and indicative of effectiveness of the teaching staff.
- *(Relevance to the study: The learner feels accepted, wanted, important and supported by his or her role model/mentor.)*
- The learners are not merely happy, but are not afraid of anything or anybody. They are free, self-disciplined and act independently.
- *(Relevance to the study: The learner feels content, secure and experiences a sense of independence.)*
- Learners come to know and experience that it is not only the achievements of a few outstanding learners that are celebrated, but that all learners are valued and important to the school and consequently are supported to be "somebody".
- *(Relevance to the study: The learner feels valued and worthwhile, which positively reinforces his or her self-concept. The learner in effect experiences a sense of belonging, acceptance, acknowledgement, meaningfulness, and a sense of achievement.)*
- The "effective" school fulfills an important role in the lives of learners and in their commitment to future personal development.
- *(Relevance to the study: The learner wants to be associated with the profile of the school. The school ethics shape the learner's value system and he/she experiences a sense of belonging to a special group of people and a special institution. They experience a team spirit, feel valued as a valuable team member, and feel good about him or herself, which is a symptom of a good self-concept.)*
- The effective school has a shared value system, as well as a clearly stated vision and mission, which provides direction and ensures a shared sense of common purpose.
- *(Relevance to the study: Learners experience security as at home and at school they can expect to find the same value system and rules. The parents or other siblings do not run the school down and also abide with the school's mission. Their own families thus become almost like an "extended school family". Their parents do not feel threatened by a teacher with whom they identify at school or with whom they discuss their personal problems. They feel safe, as they know that their parents in partnership with the school are acting in their best interests. They also know that their parents and the teaching staff know one another and in the event of a problem occurring they will not hesitate to consult with one another. They experience*

congruence as they know that the very same characteristics or achievements that their parents appreciate about them, are also appreciated by their teachers.)

- Learners require support to develop a good sense of self-respect and the capacity to live as independent, self-motivated adults. With appropriate support they will acquire the ability to operate as contributing members of cooperative groups.
- *(Relevance to the study: Learners who are respected by their teachers and peers are able to acquire the ability to respect others in particular their teachers and parents. This experience impacts on their value system and is shaped by the significant role players concerned. They enjoy being independent and granted the freedom to act independently, which positively reinforce their self-concept.)*
- Learners must be assisted and guided towards gaining an understanding and sensitivity, as to the needs of others, in order to develop satisfactory personal relationships.
- *(Relevance to the study: Learners have experienced the feeling of being understood by their teachers and other learners. They now are able to be sensitive to the needs of others and want to understand their fellow learners. They experience satisfactory personal relationships, as a consequence of the relationships that they have experienced at school. Satisfactory personal relationships, in particular that with their teacher(s), are of important significance, as it prevents them from exhibiting behaviour problems (Andersen 1995:xiii), e.g getting involved in drug-taking, experiencing a sense of being unloved, and feeling alienated, insecure, angry, bored, confused, shy or insecure.)*
- Too many learners exhibit behaviour problems and do not actualise their true potential, because social relationships are not regarded as constituting an important enough issue to be included in the curriculum. This in turn impacts on learners, as they do not learn how to become responsible citizens. The school as a last resort for helping young people fails to do just that.
- *(Relevance to the study: Behaviour problems could be prevented or minimised, if social relationships were addressed in the curriculum.)*

Apart from the previously referenced criteria for effective schools, effective teaching and quality education, the following criteria as stipulated in the new Education Policy, need be taken into consideration in developing a model for teachers to understand and assist with behaviour problems in South African schools (NCSNET 1997:11-19):

- Equal opportunities for effective learning must be provided to all learners.

- Barriers to learning that exist within the learner, at the centre of learning (school), within the education system and within the broader social, economic and political context, must be dealt with in order to prevent a “breakdown” in learning. The effective monitoring and meeting of the different needs of learners should be attended to, within the system as a whole, in order to prevent barriers from occurring. If these needs are not met, they act as barriers to learning.
- The correlation that exists between educational provision and socio-economic conditions should be recognised. Educational resources are needed to provide in the needs of any society. A case in point being the establishment of adequate facilities and centres of learning. Policies and practices, together with an inadequate provision of educational resources, perpetuate these inadequacies. Typical factors for example being:
 - ▶ a lack of access to basic services,
 - ▶ poverty and underdevelopment,
 - ▶ circumstances which place learners at risk (these include the fact that **effective learning is directly related to and dependent on the social and emotional well-being of the learner**. If a learner’s emotional well-being is negatively affected by factors such as social, economic and political factors (e.g. physically, sexual or **emotionally abused** learners, learners exposed to violence in the community, high levels of mobility because of families having to move, the establishment of informal settlements, eviction of farm workers and families being forced to seek refugee status in safer environments, natural disasters, epidemics in society, HIV/AIDS epidemic and the loss of family members especially breadwinners), the learner will be subjected to the risk of a breakdown in learning. Negative attitudes of teachers and peers at school, as well as negative attitudes in the community and the labelling of a learner experiencing barriers to learning, impacts on the self-image of the learner who as a consequence is in effect marginalised. According to the NCSNET document (1997:15) “this also perpetuates the failure of the system to change or adapt to meet such needs. Such a label fails to consider what is needed from the system in order to meet that learner’s needs of learners or the potential barriers which they may face”. Regarding the inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services, it is maintained that when services applicable to the specific needs of learners are not met, barriers will be created that will negatively impact on the learner’s ability to actualise his or her full potential.

- *Negative attitudes* at school or in the community which are manifest in a tendency to label, can be very harmful in meeting learners' needs and will definitely impact negatively on the learning process, as it affects the self-image of the learner and marginalise the learner. According to the NCSNET document (1997:15) "this also perpetuates the failure of the system to change or adapt to meet such needs. Such a label fails to consider what is needed from the system in order to meet that learner's needs of learners or the potential barriers which they may face".
- Services applicable for meeting the needs of learners, should be provided. If these services are not provided, barriers to learning will be experienced by the learner and will impact negatively on the learner's ability to actualise his or her potential.
- If the curriculum is inflexible in nature, it will prevent the appropriate satisfying of learners' needs, for example inadequately trained teachers will make use of teaching styles that will not meet the needs of some learners or the subject content will not relate to the real-life situations confronting learners.
- Learners who experience language and hence communication difficulties, because of being instructed in a language that is not their first language, will experience linguistic difficulties leading to a consequential breakdown in learning.
- An inaccessible and unsafe building environment, as seen from the perspective of learners who experience physical disabilities. Such centres of learning could well inhibit effective learning from taking place, as would be the case if learners in wheel chairs are unable to gain access to laboratories or a library in the building concerned.
- Inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services ensure that barriers to learning will not be overcome and needs of learners will not be met.
- Lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy will reinforce the discrimination and perpetuation of inequalities which in turn will ensure that the needs of learners are not met adequately.
- *Lack of parental recognition and involvement* will deny the fact that parents are the primary caregivers and that they are a central resource in the education system. According to the NCSNET document (1997:18), they "are a central resource to the education system. More specifically they are critical components for effective governance of centres of learning and for facilitating community ownership of these facilities".
- Barriers in the learning environment or broader society, which prevent effective learning from taking place, will cause a learning breakdown to occur as the needs of these learners, for example autistic learners, learners that are diagnosed

schizophrenic, with severe intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, or intrinsic cognitive or learning difficulties, are not met.

- Lack of human resource development strategies because of the fragmentation and unsustainability of the development of educators, service providers and other human resources. If educators cannot become empowered by attending In-Service Training Workshops, they start to feel insecure, uncertain, and unhappy about themselves and their ability to be creative in terms of classroom practice. Educators or teachers thus exhibit a feeling of hopelessness and resistance in dealing with behaviour or learning difficulties in the classroom.

In terms of the findings that emerge from the preceding discussion (NCSNET and the quoted research findings of various researchers, such as Andersen (1995:xiii); David (1993:163); and Dupont (1975:52), it may be concluded that **the social and emotional well-being of the learner** is an absolute necessity to be able to engage in effective learning or quality education. **All possible factors concerning the learner's emotional well-being and social relationships that act as barriers to learning need to be eliminated.** This implies that all possible strategies within the ecological systems framework, including a community based and whole-school approach, must be implemented to enable the learner to engage in effective learning. **Factors such as the self-image of the learner and conditions impacting on the self-concept of the learner are of vital importance to ensure emotional well-being.** It is reiterated that a key contention of this study is the fact that unmet emotional needs play a significant role in the manifestation of behaviour problems. In rendering assistance to learners, this reality is of substantial significance, as it implies the emotional well-being of learners, if their emotional needs are met. **As more and more learners are experiencing behaviour problems, it is deemed essential that attention be paid to the development of strategies directed at meeting the emotional needs of learners, with specific reference to the involvement of the significant role players within the life-world of the learner.** *The teacher is one of the more important significant role players impacting on the emotional well-being of the learner and in formulating strategy all factors concerning the effective teaching and learning situation (teacher/learner relationship, learner/peer relationship, classroom atmosphere, parents as partners in education) should be explored in an attempt to meet the emotional needs of the learner.*

In the following section models that are used in schools on an international and national level to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems in the classroom, will be discussed.

4.6 MODELS IMPLEMENTED IN THE CLASSROOM TO UNDERSTAND AND ASSIST LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

According to Lane (1994:5) members of the community have been crying out for help in order to support and understand children and adolescents who present behaviour problems in the community and in school "the impact on the public of the visual images of young children defying the authority of the police, racing cars, killing the innocent, have been dramatic. There is an increasing sense of outrage at the thought that there is nothing that anyone can do. **In part the outrage is directed at those in the caring professions who seem to refuse to do anything.**" Lane (1994:6) further suggests that the onslaught on the public conscience that is aggravated every time when a child or adolescent is involved in yet another scandal, is based on a sense of hopelessness, which is in actual fact shared by professionals who seem to have no answers to understand and support children and adolescents more effectively.

Teachers are expected to teach learners, both content and skills, to be a well-adjusted future member of the community, while simultaneously coaching sport teams and being available to assist when a need arises. Teachers, however, do not feel sufficiently empowered to formulate and implement strategies directed at addressing behaviour problems. Teachers are not officially trained in clinical processes or group therapy; nor are their activities integrated with that of the psychotherapist or pastoral worker at school (Tompkins & Tompkins-McGill 1993:10). Teachers experience frustration, are overburdened and frequently are criticised for not being able to respond to the more broadly based issues, such as increasing drop out rates. They need to contend with public pressure for improved academic performance within schools and cope with "difficult-to-teach" learners in their classrooms. In addition to these stress provoking situations that teachers need to cope with, "teachers are frustrated because they perceive environmental odds too great to overcome through traditional educational methods" (Tompkins & Tompkins-McGill 1993:4) These researchers believe that a partial solution to the problem may be "let the teachers teach we say. But first, **children have to be ready to learn**" (Tompkins & Tompkins-McGill 1993:4). During the 1960s, when education was regarded as humankind's oldest and most effective tool for shaping future generations, mental health and education were compelled to combine forces in order to act preventatively. Conflict arose, as many believed that this was not the solution for dealing with behaviour problems on an inter-professional basis.

“Challenging behaviour” is regarded by teachers, as constituting a personal threat to their authority (Gray *et al.* 1994:1) or as expressed by Gillham (1981:130) “the openly defiant student challenges the teacher’s authority and severely dents the image the adult has of himself as a reasonable and sensitive person. He puts a strong doubt in the teacher’s mind about his ability to cope”. The greater the sense of the threat posed, the more readily the teacher will maintain a dispassionate perspective and the more defensive he or she will become in defending his or her own position. The opportunities are also greater for developing a negative attitude towards the learner, the parents or other significant other role players involved. As time goes by and the teacher experiences negative reinforcement of his or her feelings of incapability, the more his or her negative attitude will harden. In addition many of these teachers will be far less willing to consider alternative strategies for dealing with the behaviour problems of learners.

Gray *et al.* (1994:1) suggest that the negative feelings of teachers are neither surprising, nor new. The romantic view of teachers able to teach without disruptive learners in the classroom and learners who are enthusiastic in their search for knowledge, only exists in theory. The real world all too often reveals quite a different story. In contrast to the romantic view of learners and the teaching profession, the Elton Report (1989) highlights declining standards of behaviour in schools, the fact that teachers are not trained to understand and assist with “relatively minor disorders”, the need for parents to take more responsibility for the behaviour of their children, and the demand for schools to cultivate a positive climate within the school (Charlton & David 1993:241,242; Gray *et al.* 1994:1). The rising number of learners who are excluded from schools, serves as evidence of teachers’ concerns, in relation to an increase in behaviour problems encountered in schools.

Reacting to the recommendations of the Elton Report, Charlton and David (1993:242) suggest that a need exists for a “whole-school policy” in dealing with behaviour. (See sec 1.2.7, 1.2.8 and 1.2.9 of Chapter 1 for further information in this regard.) It is further suggested that the initial training of teachers ought to include guidelines for classroom control and management. The views of learners also should be taken into consideration and parents ought to be involved in the formulation of school policies. It is in particular stressed that the government must create opportunities to improve the morale and job satisfaction of teachers in order to reduce “an unsettledness which has undermined confidence” (Charlton & David 1993:242). The comments made by teachers in terms of a recent CNN survey, reported on by Nissen (2000:1-3), accentuates this latter reality, namely “Education needs to be held in higher esteem by the public ... my best students openly admit they don’t

want to be teachers because they see a lack of respect for teachers... there's a real spotlight being put on us politically ... part of that, unfortunately, has been turned into teacher – bashing – an attempt to place all the blame for all that's wrong with our public schools at the feet of teachers". Seen within this context a more inclusive approach in taking responsibility for dealing with behaviour problems within the schools is deemed essential.

The following factors, identified by Gray *et al.* (1994:2,3), act as destructive factors in terms of a non-supportive environment in which the teacher has to function and understand and assist with the behaviour problems of learners in the classroom:

- The loss of flexibility that used to enable the teacher to improvise and develop ways of meeting individual learners' needs. Teachers now must abide by a prescribed Education Policy and curriculum, as well as the expectations of the school's governing body.
- The mind shift of members of the community, namely one from a therapeutic and tolerant approach to behaviour problems, towards a retributive and punitive approach. It has a direct bearing on rather wanting to punish young children as "witting offenders" rather than regarding them as vulnerable persons who might need the support and understanding of members of the community
- The attitude of members of the community impacts on the attitude of the teacher towards learners who are exhibiting behaviour problems. Teachers are not immune against the influence of the community and they feel under threat, hence they are not able to present a professional cure for the behaviour problems exhibited by learners in school and in the community.
- The danger of schools and teachers becoming more and more isolated professionally, is a reality and can result in a potential lack of a full awareness of the bigger picture.

Although numerous studies focussing on the behaviour problems of children and adolescents have been published, it was found that in many instances that psychological interventions were not bringing forth the results expected, hence it was postulated that something was missing. The missing link, according to Lane (Gray *et al.* 1994:6), was the high-quality services provided to children and adolescents by practitioners, the work of whom was not receiving much attention within the literature, yet the former were addressing the needs of these young people. They looked at each other's work and learned from each other, and as stated by Callias (Gray *et al.* 1994:6), "with careful selection of client, problem and technique, it now seemed possible to be a little more optimistic".

Examples of the philosophies, strategies and attitudes that these practitioners implement are the following (Gray *et al.* 1994:81,79):

- Nobody is to be blamed if a learner misbehaves. It is rather a failure in not implementing a supportive whole school approach and the non involvement of the parents who need to support a learner in terms of this approach that is to be blamed.
- Teachers' beliefs, feelings and perceptions that might inhibit possibilities of change, as well as strategies to overcome the problem, are deemed to be of substantial importance.

Paul and Epanchin (1982:37) note that assistance to learners vary in philosophy and approach. Not all kinds of assistance are applicable to all learners. Factors such as the age of the learner, type of behaviour problem exhibited, as well as the degree of severity of the problem should be taken into consideration. Gray *et al.* (1994:7) support this view when they mention that "there are many different answers, each of which has worked in different situations. Making sense of them is not easy".

Burke (1992:vii) claims that a teacher can only be a successful teacher if he or she has had training in a variety of fields, has a lot of patience and a true desire to assist learners to learn and develop, as well as having a great deal of common sense. Without these qualities teaching will become a nightmare. With the qualities in question teaching becomes "a long-lasting, enjoyable and successful career" (Burke 1992:vii). In the past, teachers have found that their textbook theories of classroom management are difficult to apply to the real classroom situation. It is, however, necessary for teachers to understand the basic principles of the theories underlying classroom management techniques, in order to be able to implement them. Burke (1992:4) maintains that "effective teaching involves effective classroom management".

A key requirement for applying the theories in the classroom, is the need for teachers to be trained so that they will be able to identify and apply appropriate interventions to understand and assist with different kinds of situations and behaviour problems. "A cookbook approach" (Millman *et al.* 1980:1-508; Reinert 1980:133-170) is not believed to be acceptable. So for instance Burke (1992:168) argues that "students are individuals and the manner in which teachers approach their behaviour problems also needs to be individualized". Behaviour management techniques should focus on the "factors associated with each student" and that "one protocol fits all" is not an ideal approach to behaviour

management (Burke 1992:168; Paul & Epanchin 1982:305-306). The researchers accentuate that proactive behaviour management programmes, rather than reactive behaviour management programmes, should be implemented. Learners should therefore be taught social skills programmes instead of teachers having to react to behaviour problems in the classroom. If learners are taught social skills to deal with situations that are emotionally charged, behaviour problems in the classroom could be prevented or limited. Burke (1992:168) maintains that at certain schools, social skills training have become as important a subject, as the teaching of mathematics or science. The researcher maintains that in many cases teachers mostly wait until the learner has exhibited behaviour problems and then a punishment-based intervention programme is implemented.

When teachers are asked to name the most outstanding disconcerting problem that they have to deal with in the classroom, usually identify the problem of *behaviour management*. Teachers are concerned with a variety of behaviour problems, ranging from physical violence to motivating learners to complete their home work, but the most common concern appears to be disruptive behaviour. Research findings seem to associate *behaviour management* or dealing with behaviour problems, with unilateral control, mechanistic procedures, and abusive interactions. Frequently parents are also considered, as being at fault for not disciplining their children properly. According to Neel, McDowell, Whelan and Wagonseller (McDowell, Adamson & Wood 1982:101) "behaviour management need not involve such characteristics". The researchers contend that when learners have lost control of themselves and their behaviour, positive rather than negative teacher/learner relationships can assist the learners to gain self-control again. Positive values should be modelled by the teachers for the learners to emulate.

McManus (1989:13) claims, that available books and courses that are presented, all aim at assisting teachers to manage disruptive behaviour in the classroom, as disruptive behaviour is regarded as one of the most serious behaviour problems that teachers need to contend with. Teacher skills and classroom management techniques have traditionally been considered as a key consideration in more effectively dealing with disruptive behaviour. Behaviour modification techniques were also suggested as being of significance to control disruptive behaviour in the classroom; Yet others blend both these approaches in an effort to try and attend to behaviour problems in the classroom. Many sources regard behaviour modification techniques as the ultimate answer to control all behaviour problems manifest by learners (Bourke 1992:51; Gearheart, Weishahn & Gearheart 1988:350; Miller 1994:33; Kerr & Nelson 1989:152-155; McDowell *et al.* 1982:104-129; Reinert 1980:133-170; Stone

1990:85-107). It is also suggested by certain of these researchers that teachers freely make use of positive reinforcement and punishment in order to control behaviour problems in the classroom. The popular Time-Out technique which is freely used by teachers in South African classrooms, is an example of this approach. Rules are accentuated in order to control or manage the behaviour of learners in the classroom and to assist the learner to behave according to desired behaviour patterns that have been identified by the teacher. Kerr and Nelson (1989:139) confirm that "the goals of classroom behaviour management are to develop stimulus control over pupil behaviour and to prevent crises situations from occurring. These must be accomplished in group settings where the teacher is responsible for delivering instruction".

Miller (Gray *et al.* 1994:34) claims that teachers implementing behaviour modification techniques responded as follows:

- ▶ "Quite honestly I can say I was knocked for six because it had worked and it has worked ever since".
- ▶ "I can honestly say he's not like the same child".
- ▶ "It was one of those wonderful "Aah, this is great" – one of the wonderful success stories".

Teachers appeared to focus on the following issues:

- ▶ the rules in order to control the behaviour should be explicitly explained to the learner,
- ▶ target behaviour should be identified in conjunction with the learner,
- ▶ target behaviour should be broken down into smaller achievements,
- ▶ praise awarded for accomplishments, to be done freely and continuously,
- ▶ ignoring behaviour of the learner that is not in line with the targeted behaviour, and
- ▶ the definite involvement of parents, as a condition for successful intervention in the life of the learner manifesting behaviour problems.

Affective Education programmes, as emphasized in psychoeducational programming are according to Paul and Epanchin (1982:424) not new to educators. Affective education is however "a critical component of educational programming, especially with emotionally disturbed children" (Paul & Epanchin 1982:424). Affective education aims at helping learners to become aware of their own and other people's feelings, to feel good about themselves, to acquire social skills, to become aware of their values and their attitudes, via

constructive educational activities, to learn how to appropriately express their feelings in the presence of other people, and how to respond to the feelings of others. When the actual aims of affective education have been met, it is expected that the overall aim, namely the enhancement of academic performance will have been met as well.

Although certain aims have been established, it remains a difficult task to evaluate the actual impact of affective education, as when a learner performs according to his or her ability. Affective education focuses on the fact that overt behaviour can be regarded as a reflection of the internal cognitive-affective views of the learner of himself or herself and the views of others towards him or herself. Although social skills curricula seem to be overlapping with affective education curricula, they differ in the sense that affective education programmes aim at the awareness, experiencing of feelings of others and the learners' own feelings, the thoughts of others and their own, and the effectiveness of their interpersonal relationships in comparison to the skills that are acquired to experience healthy social relationships, as has been attended to in social skills curricula.

Affective education curricula include experiences for the learner, guided by the teacher, that will appeal to the learner's cognitive and emotional development, specifically in terms of the enhancement of the self-concept and social skills of the learner. The outcome of working on the self-concept and social skills of the learner include "healthy, age-appropriate cognitive-affective development" (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:228). The ultimate goal of affective education is personal growth.

Morse (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:228) regard the teaching of values in the classroom, as the "hidden curricula". The effective outcome of affective education programmes is not easy to determine, as learners may occasionally exhibit affective skills – however they are not easy to measure or to evaluate. According to Rizzo and Zabel (1988:232) "the determination of the efficacy of affective education remains elusive. This does not mean that these programmes do not have any value, but that questions of their efficacy have not been and perhaps cannot be, completely answered". Factors that have been identified as success factors are the appropriateness and relevance of the activities, the skills of the teacher in organising the activities, and the eventual application of these skills by the learners to problem-solving situations.

The teacher/learner relationship is very important in affective education, in that it portrays empathy and understanding. Stress engendering situations, as well as the learner's coping

strategies need to be understood by the teacher and attention should be focussed on the self-concept of the learner. In addition environmental influences impacting on the self-concept of the learner should be taken into consideration by the teacher. Stress is believed to be a personal, subjective reaction of the learner to specific life events that occur, whether real life situations or anticipated or imagined. The impact of stress on the learner can give rise to a suppression of disconcerting feelings and the acting out thereof. These stressors manifest in behaviour problems in the classroom and are actually ways of seeking help for dealing with disruptive behaviour. If the teacher does not understand the causative factors of the behaviour problem, he or she will become involved in a no-win power struggle with the learner. In many instances teachers have not acquired an understanding of the real reasons for the learner's disturbing behaviour. Strategies that the teacher could implement to gain an understanding of the learner's behaviour include verbal and nonverbal communication with learners, as regards their feelings, labelling, and acceptance of feelings. Further strategies relate to a reduction of stress engendering circumstances within the school, a redirection of the feelings of learners so as not to trigger undesired behaviour, encouraging learners to help one another, and to complete one task at a time. Rational Emotive Education can also be used in order to understand and cope with the feelings of the learner.

Affective education was influenced by prominent researchers such as Maslow, Combs, Fromm, May and Rogers, all of whom placed emphasis on the control people have over their destinies. It is contended that they are not controlled by forces within their environments and that they in actual fact can control the forces within the environment and in the process become self-actualised. Affective education includes different approaches, namely the cognitive-affective approach (feelings are dealt with whilst discussing the basic facts of the academic subject), the affective approaches (activities would deal with self-perceptions, feelings or relationships with significant other role players), and cognitive approaches (cognitive role taking, problem solving in order to teach learners how to deal with their feelings).

In the past, although it was not deliberately planned and implemented according to a specific curriculum, teachers did understand and assist with the fears, feelings, attitudes and behaviour of learners. Today, according to Morse (Paul & Epanchin 1982:407), the systemic approach is linked to affective education, which implies that teachers are responsible for the emotional growth of their learners and that psychologically relevant curricula should be implemented. McGuffey Readers and Morse (Paul & Epanchin 1982:408) cite the following social conditions as reasons for implementing affective educational programmes:

- Personal and social values that are in conflict – the impact of society in terms of the occurrence of aggression, delinquency, unhappiness and self-defeating behaviour in society, creating the idea that society is not able to maintain itself. Schools then have to teach learners values, self-control, and moral education. The school becomes a substitute for the home and the parents, in having to address matters that should be addressed within the home by the parents.
- The increasing number of learners who are prone to becoming “at-risk” learners because of the conditions they are subjected to. The school has to replace the necessary “essential ingredients that are missing in a poor home life... teachers are child upbringers, the professional agents of society” (Paul & Epanchin 1982:408). The teacher becomes the stabilising force in the learner’s life.
- A cultural revolution in society, with an ensuing conflict of values and introspection on a personal and social level, should be reflected in curricula such as the values clarification curricula.

Morse (Paul & Epanchin 1982:419) maintains that “affective education is the birthright of these youngsters”. Effective affective education can be achieved by paying attention to the following: teachers must know how to intervene in the lives of learners, they must understand and be able to establish positive relationships with the learners. However, teachers are not specifically trained “to deal with feelings – either their own or their students’ feelings” (Paul & Epanchin 1982:419).

Apter and Conoley (1984:268), in discussing ecological systems theory and its implementation in rendering services to learners exhibiting behaviour problems, conclude that “our failure to think ecologically also burdens us for the future. Without the critical systems perspective, it seems impossible to see hope for success in our continuing effort to reduce the ever-escalating numbers of troubled children in our society”. The actual value of implementing an ecological systems approach is situated in the fact that it “can give us hope for the future while providing a substantive base from which to initiate and implement our plans. The task for those of us concerned with the lives of children, then, is to fight the forces that work against youngsters and their families and try to find ways to increase the strengths of the systems that surround each child” (Apter & Conoley 1984:268,265). Blaming is not part of the ecological systems model, it forms part of the medical model. Apart from a specific method to be implemented in the classroom to understand and assist learners in the most effective way, Apter and Conoley (1984:283) argue that sensitive, dedicated and skilled teachers are needed. The suggested techniques or models are just beginnings, as the

teachers must develop their own personal teaching styles. The ecological systems model focusses on the whole learner – his or her strengths as well as his or her weaknesses as exhibited at home and in the classroom. Educational planning in terms of the ecological systems model entails an understanding of the impact of troubled systems in order to change undesired behaviour to more desired behaviour. The indirect character of the ecological systems model fosters consultation, in-service training, parent education programmes, prevention of behaviour problems, and coordination with significant other role players in the learner's environment intervening in every facet of the lives of children, their environments and their ecosystems. Apter and Conoley (1984:277,265) contend that ***"unless we can act quickly to bring an ecological systems orientation to the work of resource personnel, we may well run the risk of re-creating the same kind of narrow, segregated, direct-service-only model that has failed so many troubled children and shortened the professional careers of so many special educators in the past.*** The notion of the 'whole' child to be treated or trained by diverse specialists, each aiming at a very specific aspect of the problem, is old-fashioned. It assumes the locus of the problem is in the child, when, in truth, the locus of the problems with which disturbed children must deal is in the ecosystem - the complex interplay of all of their relationships and experiences, past and present".

The following guidelines for implementing the Ecological Systems Model are presented by Apter and Conoley (1984:269,270):

- The teacher must think comprehensively/systematically by focussing not only on the learner, but on his or her environment as well.
- Teachers must link and coordinate with one another in regard to services rendered to learners exhibiting behaviour problems. A lack of coordination can in effect create more problems for the school, than the actual behaviour problems exhibited by the learner.
- A prevention orientation of teachers can prevent learners from having to be fished out of the river, when teachers could have stopped them from being thrown into the river in the first place.
- Indirect service activities must be valued, as they focus on the whole learner instead of only on rendering a service to the learner himself or herself.
- Parents must be viewed as partners instead of the guilty party who is responsible for the behaviour problems of learners.

- The teacher must focus on the learner's involvement in relationships as relationships are essential to learning.
- Instead of only responding to an ongoing series of crises or problems, teachers should be practice, but flexible in their approach to dealing with learners exhibiting behaviour problems.

The Life Space Interview (Apter & Conoley 1984:197; Tompkins & Tompkins-McGill 1993:12) is a generic technique that can be used by the teacher with any learner in a school setting. The technique focuses on day-to-day life events without becoming too deeply involved in therapeutic interviews and is suitable for teachers. It is regarded as a prototype of adult/child interaction aiming at generating control and working through social and personal conflicting situations. This technique motivates and assists learners to gain insight into their daily problems and to develop more satisfactory ways to respond to problem situations. The Life Space Interview, as a preventative measure, offers the teacher an opportunity to understand and to enter the immediate here and now life-world of the learner, via a caring, genuine and accepting teacher. Apter and Conoley (1984:197) contend that "the most powerful approaches to the dysfunctional behaviours of troubled children are those that prevent problems from occurring".

Milieu Therapy, like the Life Space Interview, focusses on interactions within the environment of the learner. It is of an eclectic nature and incorporates useful practices of other approaches or models. A case in point being the acknowledgement of the unconscious, as stressed by ego psychology and psychodynamic theorists and the structure and consistency as accentuated by behaviorists. Milieu Therapy offers immediate intervention techniques which can be immediately implemented, but which are based on long term outcomes. Milieu Therapy offers the teacher an expansion of the combination of methods and techniques already used by theorists, "it adds to the tools already being used in our efforts to work successfully with children who are not "labelled" but who will flourish in a nurturing climate as well as with those who are disturbed and disturbing. With a wider range of tools from which to choose, one can better match the program and the strategies to the child and create a truly "special" education" (Tompkins and Tompkins-McGill 1993:42,43).

Rational-Emotive Therapy takes into consideration the cognitive, behaviour and emotive aspects of the learner's personality. It guides the teacher on how to deal with their personal feelings and beliefs that impact negatively on their own mental health, as well attending to

the emotional problems of learners. Teachers can utilise the approach on an one-to-one basis with an individual learner or within a group situation with more than one learner. It can be used as either part of therapy or counselling sessions or structured affective lessons. The components of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy are integral to Rational Emotive Therapy, which has an educational foundation rather than a medical foundation (Zionts 1985:190). Rational Emotive Therapy has a preventative as well as a therapeutic focus, although it cannot be regarded as a "cure". It acknowledges the fact that learners could transgress into old ways and that they will not be cured in some magical way. The therapy teaches learners how to help themselves. Rational Emotive Therapy stimulates self-interest, acceptance of the self and other persons, commitment, acceptance of uncertainties, tolerance, risk-taking, self-direction and nonutopianism, without accentuating the discarding of all emotions by assisting the individual to eliminate highly disturbing and/or long-term unacceptable behaviour (Zionts 1985:193). (See sec. 4.3.3.1 of this chapter, in this regard).

Gray *et al.* (1994:33) highlight four aspects of teacher interventions that could cause barriers in rendering assistance to learners:

- The teacher needs a proper knowledge base, based on experience, and dealing with time constraints.
- The teacher needs to have acquired skills of listening, questioning, and problem solving.
- Personal qualities, in terms of the attitude of the teacher are determining factors (e.g. an encouraging approach, empathic response to learners facilitating social interactions).
- The different aspects of the role of the teacher have to be explored and spelled out.

Burke (1992:168,169) and Paul and Epanchin (1982:324) stipulate that an intervention programme for teachers, in order to control the behaviour problems of a learner, need to include the following important aspects:

- The learner's individual needs should be met.
- The programme must be individualised for the teacher, as not all teachers teach in the same manner and therefore each teacher will implement a programme in a different way.
- The programme should be individualised for the specific classroom keeping the teacher/learner relationship in mind,

- Learners should feel that they can trust their teacher, meet the teacher's expectations, cooperate and accept the teacher's strategies for dealing with a situation. "Children's positive regard for school and their teacher is the necessary foundation for effective behaviour management" (Paul & Epanchin, 1982:324).
- *Behaviour management* includes preventing the behaviour from occurring and, redirecting and neutralising emerging behaviour problems. Teachers will thus have to anticipate possible behaviour problems and implement strategies to avoid the occurrence thereof or to neutralise emerging behaviour problems in the classroom.
- The teacher must draw up a floor plan of a class for learners, who are exhibiting behaviour problems. The floor plan must be designed to match certain curriculum tasks. Predictable schedules to aid the teacher on carrying out activities must be drawn up – aspects of this schedule would be, for example learners must be provided with time reminders, positive feedback must be given to learners when performing well, leeway time must be planned, learners must first complete one task before commencing another task, each learner must be provided with a daily schedule, rules must be set up and enforced on a regular basis.

Zionts (1985:xi) warns that "no single technique is going to work with all of the children in the classroom. Currently, if theory "A" is not working, then the educator tries theory "B" and so forth, with the result that some disturbed and disturbing students encounter more theories of intervention during their public school career than some special educators receive in all of their undergraduate training". He further contends that teachers have been trained to teach according to the premises of the biophysical, ecological, and psychodynamic theories, but lack practical expertise therein and do not know how to implement the theoretical knowledge. It is stressed that they need to be able to be eclectic and use the more appropriate aspects of all theories. They therefore ought to be able to distinguish between the different theories and able to analyse the reasons for the theory going wrong. To be able to evaluate the relevance of a theory and to understand the intervention, the teacher needs to know the theory thoroughly.

Zionts (1985:xi) maintains that although most learners with behaviour problems react positively to classroom management techniques, "there are those who are in need of specific therapeutic intervention". He suggests that rational-emotive therapy, as a mental health curriculum, be used in classrooms to attend to the behaviour problems of learners. Rational-emotive therapy incorporates educational principles and techniques that focus on the cognitive, behaviour and emotive components in training teachers and learners, so that they

can be in control of their own disturbed feelings. It has proved to be effective and relatively easy to implement in practice (Zionts 1985:xi). It is specifically suitable for use with smaller groups, such as found within a classroom situation.

Disruptive behaviour has been identified as one of the major behaviour problem teachers need to understand and assist with in the classroom. It prevents them from teaching learners in a context conducive to learning and it is quite easy for the teachers concerned to lose control of the situation in the classroom. Strategies for disciplining learners and maintaining control of the classroom situation focus on establishing classroom rules, adopting a whole-school code of behaviour, and sanctions and punishments (Dearden 1994:47).

Research findings, as reflected within the literature seem to suggest that various factors may impact on the teacher's ability to manage the classroom situation effectively (Burke 1992:37).

Typical factors being the number of learners in the class and the need for a teacher to constantly supervise them while simultaneously having to render individualised assistance to a learner exhibiting behaviour problems. Paul and Epanchin (1982:313-317) maintain that curricula providing for the emotional, social and academic needs of learners, without focussing other learners' attention on children exhibiting behaviour problems, is critical in therapeutic programming for learners with behaviour problems. The following factors need to be taken into consideration when designing a curriculum for learners that exhibit behaviour problems:

- The nature of the learner's social, behaviour and affective problems need to be specified.
- Hypotheses as to the reasons why these problems exist, should be established.
- A learner's current level of academic functioning must be determined.
- The extent and the way in which the learner's emotional problems are affecting the learner's academic performance should be identified. A case in point being the depressed learner who is not able, due to a lack of physical and psychological energy, to study learning content and is not motivated, whilst the psychotic learner's thoughts are so disorganised that he or she cannot learn.
- The rate at which the learner has been able to learn must be analysed.
- The curriculum content that the learner needs to study to eventually fit into the mainstream, needs to be analysed.

- Academic, social, behaviour and affective goals should be formulated so that the learner is able to fit into mainstream education eventually.
- Short-term instructional objectives should be formulated for each long-term goal,
- Activities and assignments that match each instructional objective should be planned,
- Specific lesson plans should be developed and the learner's progress must be continuously evaluated by means of observation and teacher-created criterion-referenced tests, as well as formal assessment tools.
- Lessons must be planned so that they are appealing and exciting for the learner.
- Reminders of the past must be avoided.
- The teacher must be sensitive to the appearance of materials so that the learner might not feel that he or she will not manage the tasks prescribed – learners might feel it is safer to “dumb” the task by giving up before even trying, rather than run the risk of feeling that they are “dumb”.
- Lose attention must be paid to the content of learning materials and specifically the impact thereof on the learner. Emotionally charged stories can stimulate and expose a learner's fears and expose him or her to the other learners when reacting to the learning content.
- Provision should be made for repetition and the making of mistakes – if a learner is allowed repeated successes he or she can gain confidence in himself/herself.
- Learners must be allowed to experience some control over their schoolwork by giving them choices and channelling their energy and abilities into productive and rewarding behaviour.
- A learner must be actively involved with the learning content, so that he or she does not become bored.
- Simple, straightforward and neutral language used by the teacher can assist the learner who is lacking communication skills in order to follow what the teacher has been saying.

From the above discussion relating to the different models, it appears that certain factors will always be determining factors, whatever kind of approach the teacher utilises to understand and assist the learner exhibiting behaviour problems, namely:

- No clear-cut “cookbook recipe” is available that will be tailor made to match each and every learner, as learners are unique and different from one another.
- Teachers will have to adjust the crux of an eclectic model to apply to a variety of situations and in such a way that it will suit their teaching styles.

- The ecological systems model seems to be the best theoretical model for the purposes of this study, as it is in line with the latest theoretical developments introduced in terms of research findings and focuses on relationships within the environment of the learner exhibiting problem behaviour. It also focuses on the nucleus of the learner's relationships together the reality of vice versa interactions taking place within the relationships. The rationale of this study fits in well within the frame of reference of the ecological systems model, as it maintains that the unmet needs of the learner must be fulfilled within his or her relationships with significant other role players.
- The whole school approach (holistic approach) and the involvement of the community, as part of the ecological systems model's principles is similar to the principles incorporated within the new Education Policy, as outlined in the NCSNET document (1997:54,64,65,70).
- Although many different models are suggested in the literature, with the main focus on the medical, psychodynamic, and behaviouristic model, none of these models focus on the unmet emotional needs of learners and the impact thereof on the behaviour of learners. Many other causative factors of behaviour problems are listed touching on the relationships of the learner, like his or her relationship with peers, parents or teachers.
- Three factors seem to emerge from the models that need to be taken into consideration in developing a new model for teachers to understand and assist learners, namely the classroom atmosphere (which includes the teacher/learner relationship, the learner's relationship with peers, and his or her mastering of social skills).

A good, solid relationship between the teacher and the learner will result in the creation of an atmosphere conducive to learning, as the teacher will be the significant role player that will help organise the environment in such a way that the learner's emotional needs can be fulfilled.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In the literature study, models illustrating classroom behaviour management used during the twentieth century and more recently during the past ten years, were identified and reflected on in this chapter. Concerns regarding these models and the strategies originating from these models were noted, as to their ineffectiveness in dealing with behaviour problems in the classroom. The fact that these models focussed on the teacher's management of the classroom and the learners, instead of attempting to gain an understanding of learners and their behaviour, can be considered to be a pertinent factor in

determining why more and more learners are exhibiting behaviour problems. The urgent and desperate need for a new model to understand and assist with behaviour problems, in a more effective and constructive manner can be inferred from deteriorating statistics on a national and international level, in regard to the occurrence of behaviour problems. In this study an attempt is made to meet this need.

Apart from the historical development of models for dealing with behaviour problems that has been discussed, with reference to links to present day models and strategies implemented in dealing with behaviour problems, the applications of different theories in terms of counselling techniques were discussed. The rationale of this study is reflected in the discussion on emotional needs, namely that behaviour problems occur because the emotional needs of learners remain unmet. However, although these models and philosophies on behaviour problems are related to the rationale of the study and aim at understanding and supporting learners with behaviour problems, the core causative factors of behaviour problems, namely unmet emotional needs, were still not addressed by any of the models, not even the model of affective education.

Researchers focus on needs in the models on behaviour management, however, these needs seem to relate to special educational needs, because learners who present behaviour problems can be categorised as experiencing emotional behaviour disorders (EBD). The emotional needs discussed in this chapter and that determine the rationale of the study, are not associated with a label and do not have to necessarily be linked to special educational needs. However, in terms of the new Education Policy, learners presenting behaviour problems are regarded as learners with special educational needs or in terms of the new terminology, learners who experience barriers to learning.

The discussion on effective schools and how they assist learners in the classrooms contains elements of the teacher/learner relationship, the classroom atmosphere and the impact of relationships on the learner's behaviour. **None of the guidelines that can be implemented from this model, however, include the realisation of the impact of unmet emotional needs on the behaviour of learners.**

In Chapter 5 an eclectic model embedded within the framework of the ecological systems model will be discussed in significant detail, with reference to the findings emanating from this and the preceding chapters of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS TO UNDERSTAND AND ASSIST LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove ... but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child

Unknown author (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:iv)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The introductory quotation emphasises one of the most important challenge confronting teachers, namely to *make a difference to a learner's life* by attempting to *understand* and *assist* (in contrast to managing the behaviour of the learner) learners in such a way that they are able to in actualise their full potential. Professional persons working in the community, for example social workers, in many instances tend to complain that teachers frequently do not want to walk the extra mile, so as to make a difference in the life of a learner. It is in particular contended by these people that many teachers ***do not want to assist and understand learners*** exhibiting behaviour problems. However, such contentions are often based on subjective feelings and not on research findings per se.

Andersen (1995:xiii) stresses the importance of understanding and assistance of learners, when he says "We can do better. Democracy is at stake because our educational system is failing. It is time to rethink and remake social relations to be an important part of educational reform. Too many students are falling through the cracks because they are not learning to become responsible citizens. ***The school is our last resort for helping many of these young people. Educators hold a key position for addressing societal problems.***"

During focus group discussions, conducted as part of the University of South Africa (UNISA) Certificate Course in dealing with problem behaviour of children (1999-2000), the following concerns regarding the emotional well-being of children were expressed by the participants concerned (see the letter from one of the social workers present, attached as Annexure C):

- Teachers and principals do not want to deal with learners with behaviour problems. They are referring these children to social workers who are expected to place these children in schools of industry or reform schools.
- Teachers and principals do not want to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems. They rather choose to “get rid” of these learners as soon as possible and do not regard the well-being of these learners as their responsibility.
- As soon as they misbehave or exhibit behaviour problems, learners are unofficially “expelled” from the school for long periods of time and are told that they are not welcome at the school.
- Some children have been wandering the streets for many years as they have been “expelled” from school due to their behaviour problems.
- A lack of community-based support systems and resources is complicating the problem of assisting learners in need. The community is generally either disinterested or does not want to become involved in assisting social workers, by providing support systems for these children. The Support Service unit of the Department of Education has also, in certain instances, when called upon, shown a reluctance to become involved. When a medical examination needed to be undertaken, even the District Surgeon, has in some cases apparently displayed a reluctance in assisting the social workers concerned.
- Learners exhibiting problem behaviour are passed from one system to the other, for example the Welfare Department to the Education Department, with the result that the children are on the streets and are not being educated. Not enough clinic schools are being built in the different provinces. Existing clinic schools are overcrowded with learners exhibiting behaviour problems and there are long waiting lists of learners that need to be transferred to these schools.
- Conflicting policies of the Department of Welfare (Project Go) and schools result in chaos. In terms of Project Go children must be kept out of schools of industry, places of safety, and reform schools at all costs, whilst schools send these learners onto the streets by unofficially “expelling” them and demand that social workers place these children in these very schools they are to be kept out of.
- Financial problems result in parents who are unable to afford school fees. Quite often these at-risk learners exhibit behaviour problems at school, with the result that other parents lodge complaints about the presence of these learners and threaten to remove their children from the specific school concerned, demanding that the learners with problem behaviour are expelled from the school.

- The parents of at-risk learners, exhibiting behaviour problems, are unenlightened as to the well-being of their children and would prefer to transfer their parental responsibilities on to the school, which in turn refers the problem to the social workers. In the meantime, the basic and emotional needs of these children are not met.
- In certain instances schools seem to welcome events where learners are taken by social workers to the Child and Adolescent Units of local psychiatric hospitals, as this “label” can then be used as a reason to refer the learners concerned for assistance to some other institutional system – Mental Health or Social Welfare.
- The large numbers of learners in classrooms prevent teachers from getting involved on a more personal level with a specific learner and his or her behaviour problems, as there are many more learners with problems that require similar attention.
- Places of safety financed by the Department of Welfare are overcrowded with children who were removed from their parental homes because of the circumstances of the parents who could no longer care for the children themselves or because of the serious behaviour problems of children, who are awaiting Children’s Court proceedings to be committed to schools of industry.
- Children’s homes are, in most instances, overcrowded with children who have been removed from their parental homes and cared for elsewhere. These children’s homes do not want to assume the added responsibility of children with behaviour problems, as this merely aggravates their current difficult situation.
- Schools of industry also cannot cope with learners exhibiting behaviour problems and refer the learners back to social workers as soon as serious behaviour problems manifest.

Apart from the concerns expressed by social and community workers, the headlines of the daily newspapers (1998, 1999, 2000, see Annexure D) are a reflection of a cry for understanding and assistance of the problems that children have to contend with. The following extracts are cited as examples of these headlines:

- ▶ *Stepfather sentenced two years after sexual abuse of his 11-year-old daughter.*
- ▶ *Boy, 15-years-old in court after killing four people.*
- ▶ *Man sentenced 30 years after raping a 17-year-old girl.*
- ▶ *Couple sentenced after having oral sex at a children’s party.*
- ▶ *Boys 7/8 years old murder 11-year-old for her bicycle.*
- ▶ *Court informed about five people raping a 14-year-old girl.*
- ▶ *Father out on bail, after he had locked boys up.*

- ▶ *Young couple in court after their baby has been seriously injured.*
- ▶ *Matric girl from Potchefstroom hangs herself by using her school tie.*
- ▶ *An accused schoolboy led by demons.*
- ▶ *Teacher jailed for rape of a pupil*
- ▶ *Six learners temporarily expelled after fight at secondary school.*
- ▶ *I can't live with myself, says boy in letter after killing himself.*
- ▶ *Girl (15) reports father who sexually misuses her.*
- ▶ *School principal lay on bed with two learners.*
- ▶ *Shocking facts on drugs in Pretoria schools.*
- ▶ *Mother in court after killing children with boiling water.*

The following conclusions, relevant to this study, can be drawn from the concerns expressed by social workers and the newspaper headlines referred to:

- Confusion appears to exist between different Government Departments, for example Welfare and Education, as to who should take responsibility for learners exhibiting behaviour problems, in instances where this responsibility is to be transferred to the department concerned and how it is to be dealt with. The different roles and responsibilities of departments should need to be clarified.
- Teachers and principals in some instances feel neither empowered nor knowledgeable as to how to understand and assist learners exhibiting behaviour problems and thus pass their responsibility either on to other professional persons in the community or unofficially “expel” these learners from the school – thus creating a “street child” culture.
- Large numbers of learners in the classroom seem to prevent teachers from paying individual attention to a learner with behaviour problems.
- Apparently neither a Whole School Approach nor a community-based school model has been adopted, as, according to the concerns expressed by social workers, they have become the “litter box” where children with behaviour problems are being dumped.
- The transfer of learners with behaviour problems from one system to another, for example schools unofficially “expelling” learners, making them feel unwelcome and not taking responsibility for learners with behaviour problems by referring them to social workers, reflects apart from an inaptitude to deal with these learners, a sense of apathy and indifference towards these learners. *Labelling* learners as problems that teachers and principals need to get rid of at all costs is clearly a consequence of such

a practice. According to the NCSNET Document (1998:15) “such a label fails to consider what is needed from the system in order to meet that learner’s needs, whatever their capabilities and capacity. Sometimes negative attitudes and labelling results from fear and a lack of awareness about the particular needs of learners or the potential barriers which they may face”.

- Referring learners with behaviour problems to clinic schools, schools of industry, places of safety, or clinic schools cannot be regarded as an effective measure taken to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.
- An apparent lack of appropriate support systems to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems appears to exist within communities. Instead these learners are “dumped” at the door of the social worker who, as reflected in their emotional statement of frustration, “must do miracles to resolve the problem”. Social workers complain that they have to take sole responsibility for these children and are crying out for support and assistance from the community.
- Existing schools of industry, places of safety, clinic schools are overcrowded with children exhibiting behaviour problems. When a learner has been labelled as being a “difficult” child, in terms of his or her behaviour, children’s homes, schools of industry, and mainstream schools attempt to close their doors to this child.

In the light of the above, it is important to note that teachers and principals in many instances experience themselves as disempowered to deal with learners with behaviour problems and they consequently regard places of safety, schools of industry and reform schools as a means for dealing with the situation. These alternative institutions can, however, not be regarded as the answer, as seen from the NCSNET Document (1998:38,39), in that:

- ▶ 89% of the 1700 child and youth care workers in schools of industry and reform schools hold no qualifications in child and youth care work,
- ▶ 46% of senior and 50% of junior child and youth care workers in places of safety have no formal qualification in child and youth care work,
- ▶ most probation officers have received little or no training in early intervention strategies,
- ▶ staff development takes place on an ad hoc basis, with no recognition through certification or career planning,
- ▶ no formal course curriculum exists that can be regarded as consistent across the different institutions and organisations and no focus on “special needs” is available,
- ▶ the dearth of adequately trained staff has given rise to the use of cleaners and housekeepers as teacher aids.

According to the NCSNET Document (1998:39) child and youth care workers are not being adequately trained, as the training to some large extent remains fragmented. Limited training opportunities are presently available, with the training largely being undertaken by NGO's, which are inadequately supported by the Government. The picture presented is hardly encouraging. It is further compounded by parents who are unemployed and cannot provide the basic needs of their children. Their own basic needs and emotional needs were not fulfilled when they were cared for by their parents. They also did not experience their parents as involved with their education when they were at school. As a consequence they do not have proper role models to imitate, nor have they received any appropriate training in the raising of a child. According to the NCSNET Document (1998:38), new legislation like the S.A. Schools Act (1996) and the National Plan of Action for Children (1996) still need to be translated into structured parent development and empowerment programmes.

Financial problems on the behalf of the parents, who are unable to pay the school fees of their child, creates a situation where the child may be rejected by the school and asked to leave or unofficially "expelled" when the child exhibits behaviour problems. The situation is aggravated when other parents complain because the teacher has to pay too much attention to the disruptive learner, whilst their children, who have paid their school fees, are neglected educationally. Schools, because of their problematic financial position, are caught up in a *catch 22* situation where they are forced to discriminate between learners on the grounds of disruptive behaviour, financial interests and securing the goodwill of stakeholders.

The case studies (letters of learners) relating to learners with behaviour problems (see Annexure B) underline the sense of urgency that exists, in attending to behaviour problems exhibited by learners. Unmet emotional needs, as causative factors of behaviour problems, can clearly be identified.

The only conclusion derived from these findings is the realisation that **NO** system in the community wants to assist, understand and care for learners with behaviour problems. Yet, these learners will be the parents of tomorrow and the future adult members of the community who are supposed to make a worthwhile contribution to its activities. The newspaper clippings reflect an agonising cry for help, depicting problems of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, teaching staff maltreating children, learners losing hope by committing suicide, learners imitating behaviour patterns of violent role models, observed

either on television or in real life, through acts of aggression towards other learners or children.

The following questions therefore arise:

- When and how is the present situation of ineffective assistance and misunderstanding of learners with behaviour problems going to cease and be transformed to give rise to a context of effective assistance rendering, derived from a better understanding of these learners?
- What are the reasons that underlie:
 - ▶ the daily increase in the number of learners who are experiencing behaviour problems?
 - ▶ the fact that no successful universal strategies are available to effectively combat the growing numbers of learners with behaviour problems – especially since many management strategies have been researched by various researchers on a national and international basis?

During a focus group workshop, social workers completing a certificate course in dealing with problem behaviour of children at the University of South Africa, recommended that all systems involved should co-operate in order to formulate policy documents defining the different roles and responsibilities of the various role players involved, as well as to explore and define a process to be followed when a learner exhibits behaviour problems at school. These policies should, as a point of departure, focus on the joint responsibilities of the different systems and role players in the community, to prevent placing the responsibility for the care of these learners on a single system, for example the welfare system.

Pringle (1980:148) provides an answer to the second question when she contends that *“by strengthening their emotional resilience and increasing their capacity for learning, they would be better prepared to adapt to a rapidly changing world”*. Furthermore, discussed in the new Education Policy, as a result of quality education, learners will be *“reaching their full potential and will be able to meaningfully contribute to and participate in that society throughout their lives”* (NCSNET document 1997:11). Raths (1972:62) in a slightly different vein argues that according to current educational theory, learners are unable to learn when their emotional needs are frustrated. Neethling (1999:13) supports the view by the above researchers when he stipulates that emotions impact on scholastic achievement. Maslow (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:438) concurs with Raths (1972:62) in asserting that the

satisfaction of emotional needs is “the basis for growth and the realisation of an individual’s full potential through self-actualisation”. Clearly the golden tread running through these alternative perspectives is one of having to meet the emotional needs of learners, as a condition for optimal actualisation of their potential.

The new Education Policy (NCSNET Document 1998:19) offers an answer to the “when” and “how” learners with behaviour problems can be assisted and understood in the most effective way, by proposing that an integrated, system of education as well as the following mechanisms, relevant to this study, be implemented:

- “Activities that advocate against discrimination and challenge attitudes;
- processes towards the involvement of learners, parents, educators and community members in the governance of centres of learning;
- training programmes which equip educators to deal with diverse needs;
- organisation and development of teaching and learning environments”.

Pringle (1980:161) poses the question: “*Why have we for so long neglected one of the most important tools of prevention, namely listening to the voices of children themselves?*” Warning signs can be detected by observing the behaviour of learners; others express their anxieties verbally “provided that there is someone who is perceptive enough and has time enough to listen” (Pringle 1980:161). Milner and Carolin (1999:xi) indirectly provide an answer to this question by drawing attention to adults’ “*instinctive fear of children*”. Those that challenge this fear, “have confronted the established order of things, which has its roots in the collective fear of generations past, whose reflex response is to reject and deny those who seek to create change in a society that is often more comfortable with the status quo of not knowing that which concerns children”.

Raths (1972:118,119) also provides an answer to Pringle’s question. Some students of child behaviour maintained that the uniqueness of the child and the fact that no two human beings are the same, as accentuated by Allport (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:404), overrules the theory of unmet emotional needs. Raths (1972:118) reacts to this critique and justifies the uniqueness of individuals. This is not overlooked by the needs theory, but in effect is included by taking into consideration that the mentioned emotional needs are to be found across different cultures and are universally experienced by all human beings. Raths (1972:118), however, warns theorists against *categorisation* as this can be harmful in the study of children.

Human emotional or psychological needs are regarded by Maslow (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:438) as being part of "human nature", the ultimate goal is the self-actualisation of the individual's true potential. Maslow (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:438) essentially adopts a holistic view with an underlying assumption that all "people have certain basic needs" (e.g. physiological needs, safety needs, affiliation and love needs, self-esteem needs, self-actualisation needs – see sec 4.4 in this regard). Raths (1972:118) mentions that the acknowledgement of the *universality* of human emotional or psychological needs, enables him to make more accurate predictions identified in certain trends of behaviour patterns.

O'Hagan (1993:14,15) suggests that the failure to accentuate the importance of emotional abuse may largely be attributed to the nature of the distinct categories of child abuse that have come into being. Physical and sexual abuse are regarded as serious and are therefore accentuated in newspaper headlines, while emotional neglect or abuse (see Chapter 1 in this regard) is seldom mentioned. Social workers, police officers and health officers will as a rule attend to cases of neglect or abuse, sexual or physical abuse with a sense of urgency, especially if the children are relatively young. They cannot, however, as easily as in other cases of abuse define, articulate and prove emotional abuse and often they only have a fair idea that a child is being harmed emotionally, as a consequence cases of emotional abuse receives less attention. O'Hagan (1993:17) believes that "definition is the basis of any progress in understanding and combatting" abuse. Defining *emotional abuse* becomes problematic as research findings relating thereto are limited in extent. Countless research projects and findings are available on *emotional development* but "there is virtually no research at all on 'emotional and psychological abuse'" (O'Hagan 1993:155).

According to O'Hagan (1993:17), even during discussions at conferences the topic of *emotional abuse* tends to be avoided. A lack of awareness and intentionality, as well as a reluctance by professionals to acknowledge the impact of emotional abuse, because the latter, unlike physical or sexual abuse, does not create an immediate crisis, should be taken seriously. As the negative impact of emotional abuse is slow and protracted, no sensational, obvious signs will cause a stir in the community by capturing the headlines in the news media. However emotional abuse continues to "not only cause acute pain but also generate massive crises, for victim and professional alike" (O'Hagan 1993:15). O'Hagan (1993:17) stresses that trainers and managers will have to pay attention to the preparation and support of front-line officers, for example police officers, social workers and teachers, in coping with the incidence of emotional abuse which is taking place daily in many homes and classrooms. He further argues that *emotional abuse* is a matter that needs to be attended to

by psychiatrist and paediatricians, “the reality is that they lie as much within the domain of *classroom teachers*, educational psychologists, residential and field social workers” (O’Hagan 1993:153).

The following issues regarding guidelines for teachers to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems, are highlighted:

- The outcomes of unmet emotional needs.
- An evaluation of existing models dealing with behaviour problems in the South African situation.
- Guidelines for teachers that may be implemented in the classroom in order to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.
- A model for teachers to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.
- Possible therapeutic techniques to be implemented by teachers in the classroom.

In the following section the outcomes of unmet emotional needs is discussed.

5.2 THE BEHAVIOUR OUTCOMES OF UNMET EMOTIONAL NEEDS

While acknowledging that it is a controversial issue, Pringle (1986:16-17) contends that the environment is responsible for nurturing the *human characteristics* of people. These human characteristics point to personality factors such as emotional needs that need to be satisfied by others within the environment of the child, namely the significant other role players. If significant other role players, do not provide the “necessary nurturance, stimulation, encouragement, and protection to the child at various stages of development” and withhold attention or make very little emotional or physical contact with the child – almost a state of being unaware that the child exists, prevail (Gil 1991:10). The child is, as a consequence, emotionally neglected. This can be done unintentionally or intentionally together with a high level of awareness. Whatever the nature of the emotional neglect, intentional or unintentional, it finally results in *emotional abuse* when significant other role players, sustain and repeat inappropriate emotional responses to the child’s demonstrative behaviour of expressing his or her emotions (O’Hagan 1993:19,28). The children have in effect been psychosocially harmed (Garbarino, Guttman & Seeley in Gil 1991:10). For the purposes of this study, this reality implies that significant other role players when abusing a child emotionally, do not meet the emotional needs of that specific child. Consequently, the self-concept of the learner will be negatively impacted on. This contention is supported by

Rogers (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:475) who contends that “individuals function ideally when their *self-concepts are congruent with their needs and feelings*. Their behaviour then reveals and corresponds to the self concept, and also *reflects their needs and feelings*”.

Various other researchers also support this assertion, namely:

- Train (1993:193) contends that a learner’s reaction to his or her environment or to the impact of significant other role players, will be in line with how he or she sees himself or herself.
- Thompson and Poppen (1979:7) contend that it is a reflection of the way that a person *thinks* and *feels* about him or herself by means of performance and via the learner’s relationships. Thompson and Poppen (1979:7) further argue that “students trapped in failure cycles may seek feelings of self-worth through antisocial behaviour or through rather extreme forms of withdrawal”. Another dimension of the self-concept is the feeling that someone *cares about you* (Thompson & Poppen 1979:7). Learners who exhibit behaviour problems, can thus be regarded as *crying out for care*.
- According to Andersen (1995:6), *caring* implies encouragement, admiration, being deeply understood and appreciated, defensiveness that is fading to make room for self-disclosure, to be encouraged to be oneself, having faith in oneself and in others. If the learner has a poor self-image, he or she will not be able to cope with fluctuating circumstances in his or her unique way, as he or she has lost self-control. The learner will be looking for his or her identity and will react in a defensive manner as he or she feels threatened.
- Wolfe (1991:35) maintains that the way that learners respond to the impact of significant other role players, relates to the level of stimulation of and sensitivity to the needs of the child, provided by the caregiver. Levels of social competence, self-esteem and problem solving abilities are lowered because of poor opportunities to acquire adaptive skills. Developmental problems are a manifestation of poor nurturance (Wolfe 1991:35). The effects of poor nurturance will depend on the different stages of the child’s development, as well as the absence or presence of factors like family stability.

Kent and Polansky (Gil 1991:10) found that unmet emotional needs, due to *neglect*, are manifest by:

- “Deprivation-detachment”.
- Massive repression of feelings (affect inhibition).
- Impaired ability to empathize with others.

- Violence.
- Delinquency.
- Decrease in general intellectual ability (due to a lack of intellectual stimulation by the parent).
- Developmental delays.

Garbarino, Guttman and Seeley (Gil 1991:10,11) list the following manifestations of emotional abuse in the behaviour of children:

- Behaviour problems (anxiety, aggression, hostility).
- Emotional disturbance (feelings of being unloved, unwanted and unworthy).
- Inappropriate social disturbance (negative view of the world).
- In infants, irritability and, in some cases, nonorganic failure to thrive.
- Anxious attachment to parents.
- Fear of distrust.
- Low self-esteem.
- Feelings of inferiority; withdrawal; lack of communication.
- Self-destructive behaviour (self-mutilation, depression, suicidal tendencies).
- Tendency to act as caretaker to parents.
- Delinquency or truancy.

Gil (1991:12,13) similarly contends that children who are emotionally abused and whose emotional needs have not been met due to various factors, for example dysfunctional families, divorce, death of a parent, exhibit the following behaviour patterns:

- ***Internalized behaviour***
 - ▶ Appear withdrawn, isolated and unmotivated to seek interactions.
 - ▶ Exhibit clinical signs of depression.
 - ▶ Lack spontaneity and playfulness.
 - ▶ Are over compliant.
 - ▶ Develop phobias with unspecified precipitants.
 - ▶ Appear hypervigilant and anxious.
 - ▶ Experience sleep disorders or night terrors.
 - ▶ Demonstrate regressed behaviour.
 - ▶ Have somatic complaints (headaches, stomachaches).
 - ▶ Develop eating disorders.

- ▶ Engage in substance and drug abuse.
- ▶ Make suicide gestures.
- ▶ Engage in self-mutilation.
- ▶ Dissociated behaviour.

■ ***Externalized behaviour***

These children exhibit externalised manifestations of the unmet emotional needs. The external manifestations are more easily identified than the internalized behaviour, as they are more readily identifiable and this creates problems for other people. Examples of externalized behaviour are as follows (Gil 1991:13, 14):

- ▶ Aggression, hostility and destructiveness.
- ▶ Provocative behaviour (eliciting abuse).
- ▶ Violent behaviour – sometimes even killing or torturing animals.
- ▶ Proclivity to destructive behaviours including fire-setting.
- ▶ Sexualized behaviour.

Externalized and internalized behaviours can overlap in the sense that a child can show an outward expression of emotions as well as experience an inward expression of emotions (Gil 1991:14).

The golden thread running through manifestations of behaviour as listed above is one of learners who are acting out as they do not feel good about themselves or their context, as a consequence of emotional abuse. Physical and emotional abuse may cause a child to be developmentally delayed in terms of the psychological dimensions that are affected by the impact of significant other role models within the life-world of the child (Wolfe 1991:31,32). As may be seen from the previously listed behaviour manifestations, higher rates of externalizing disorders can be identified, for example aggression, acting out behaviour, hyperactivity. The language development of learners is also affected, as well as their social competence in relationships with peers because of negative and dysfunctional interactions. Maladaptive beliefs about social interaction add to the child's chaos within his or her relationships. Greater feelings of hopelessness, depression and low self-worth are also experienced. Aber and Cicchetti (Wolfe 1991:33) maintain that "the disruption is so pronounced and significant that behavioural, emotional, and social-cognitive dimensions of the child's development are impaired to varying degrees".

Ellison (1993:16) adopts a challenging perspective in asserting that "it's time for educators to follow the rules of the human brain. Teachers must address safety issues, body comfort issues, and emotional issues. When these issues are dealt with appropriately, the brain will have enough focussed attention left over for school thinking". Ellison (1993:15,16) stresses that the classroom must be relaxed and constitute "a calm emotional environment" as physiological needs are on Maslow's first level and need to be satisfied before the emotional needs can be addressed as "when needs at these levels are thwarted, it is more difficult for the brain to focus on learning academic skills".

In discussing children's emotional and social development, Pringle (1986:21;23) mentions that growing evidence suggests that the outcomes of early disadvantage and deprivation of the emotional needs are of a multiple and cumulative nature. She further concludes that *aggression* and *dependence on others for support and direction* are two aspects of the personality that is especially manifested within interpersonal relationships. Pringle (1986:24,30) advises that the loss of good, human potential can only be prevented by "***undoing and, if possible, reversing the effects of early neglect or damage***". The cost of refusing or neglecting to tackle directly the fostering of social and emotional maturity and resilience has been and continues to be very high in terms of human fulfilment and effectiveness.

Later on in life the consequences of unmet needs can be quite devastating for the child, and society in general. A clash between the environment and the child's unmet needs is reflected in maladjusted behaviour, which in essence is nothing less than a cry for help manifested in problem behaviour, for example juvenile delinquency, disruptive behaviour. Possible symptoms of the unmet emotional needs, resulting in tension between the personality and the environment, can vary from either *fighting/attacking* (e.g. the aggressive learner) or *flighting/ withdrawing* (e.g. the shy and withdrawn learner) patterns. Both these behaviour patterns of aggression and withdrawal indicate that the learner's emotional, social or intellectual needs are not being adequately fulfilled.

Similarly, Rath (1972:19) concludes that unmet emotional needs are manifest in behaviour patterns such as aggression, acting shy and withdrawn, submission, and psychosomatic symptoms of illness and regression. The learner through such behaviour is sending out distress signals to significant other role players for assistance, thereby indicating that his or her emotional, social or intellectual needs are not being fulfilled (Rath 1972:19).

Ellison (1993:58) offers a solution for the problem of unmet emotional needs by focussing on the different temperament types of learners in the classroom, “understanding personality type has given me the magic glasses to see through the fog of students’ behaviours and plan for greater student success”. Carey and McDevitt (1995:114) concur, stating that “to attempt to prevent behavioural problems or to intervene successfully, he or she must be acquainted with the available information on how temperament may contribute to such problems and how this understanding modifies their management”. Taking note of the different types of temperament is of substantial importance, as Carey and McDevitt (1995:28) explain “virtually every aspect of a child’s being is in one way or another touched or moulded by temperamental features, including physical health, growth, development, social adjustment and school performance”. If a *poorness of fit* situation occurs in the classroom between the teacher’s teaching style and temperament and those of the learners, certain personality characteristics of certain temperament types can become “more congenial or disruptive” (Carey & McDevitt 1995:15).

Chess and Thomas (Carey & McDevitt 1995:14) claim that “distorted development and maladaptive functioning” occur when a *goodness of fit* between the learner and the significant other role players within the environment does not exist. If a “poorness of fit” situation occurs, the possibility of the emotional needs being met by the significant other role players diminishes, as the emotional needs are embedded within each specific temperament type and exhibited accordingly in the behaviour patterns of learners. D’Evelyn (1957:57) similarly supports the importance of the need for a “good fit” between the learner’s emotional needs and the impact of significant other role players (especially in relation to the teacher) within the environment, by mentioning that “by being aware of each pupil as an individual and by helping each one grow in emotional maturity, the emotional needs of growing youngsters can be met” (see Chapter 3, sec. 3.5.1.3 in this regard).

It needs to be kept in mind that these unmet emotional needs are interrelated and tend to interact with each another. If one need is therefore unmet, it will impact on the manifestation of other needs. The behavioural outcomes of the unmet emotional needs of the learner act as warning signs or a distress call for assistance.

In Table 5.1 the emotional neglect or abuse internalized model is presented. This model offers a description to teachers of how a learner internalizes his or her emotional neglect or abuse. By knowing which internalized messages shaped the cognitive map of the learner, the teacher will be able to understand the learner’s behaviour patterns better, which will in

turn secure more effective assistance rendered to the learner. ***Without the internalized model, the teacher will thus not be able to render accurate assistance.***

In the proceeding table, it may appear to the reader that there is an element of repetition, however, it needs to be noted that each of these components of the internalised model appear under different headings and should be understood in relation to one another.

TABLE 5.1: EMOTIONAL ABUSE INTERNALISED MODEL

UNMET EMOTIONAL NEED	INTERNALISED EXPERIENCE	INTERNALISATION BASED ON COGNITION AND FEELINGS	BEHAVIOUR DETERMINANTS
<p>(1) The need for love and security</p> <p>(2) The need for praise and recognition</p> <p>(3) The need for responsibility</p> <p>(4) The need for new experiences</p>	<p>Intrusion of self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am bad • I am guilty of the emotional abuse because of my behaviour • I am not a trustworthy person • I am stupid • I am a mental case • I am not good enough as I disappoint people • I am not accepted by anybody • Nobody wants me • I am lazy, uncooperative and disruptive • Nobody likes to touch me • I am not important to anybody • I am on my own • I feel ashamed of myself • I don't fit in • I am disobedient as I talk too much and ask too many questions • I am not as clever as the peers in my classroom (motivation) • Life/school is boring to me • Life/school irritates me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am powerless • I am weak • I am helpless • I must be punished • People must hurt me • I am nobody • I am useless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative self-talk • Experiences self as inferior • Experiences an inner badness

UNMET EMOTIONAL NEED	INTERNALISED EXPERIENCE	INTERNALISATION BASED ON COGNITION AND FEELINGS	BEHAVIOUR DETERMINANTS
	<p>Acts of abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deprivation of love and security • Accusations and negative comments • No praise and recognition given • No new experiences provided • No opportunities for experiencing responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have memories of how bad and useless I am • What grief and misery I have caused others • Memories of how I have not deserve to be loved, to be cared for, to be praised, to be recognised, to be granted new experiences or to be given responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of inferiority • Depression • Feelings of worthlessness • Feelings of insecurity • Dissociative thoughts and feelings • Intrusive thoughts • Aggressive feelings • Feelings of hopelessness • Feelings of guilt
	<p>Confused feelings and thoughts of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hate/love/fear • fear/feelings of security • inferiority/self-confidence • irresponsibility/responsibility • intellectual stagnation/ intellectual stimulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel chaotic and confused • I am stupid • I don't know who I can trust • I am a failure • I don't know what it is like to be loved and to feel cared for • I don't know if I am a responsible person • I am scared to take charge • I cannot trust myself • I cannot depend on myself • I don't think I am an "OK" person • I don't like new things/ people/situations as it scares me • I can't make my own decisions • I don't know how others see me • People want to get back at me • I am too stupid to be creative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme mood swings • Experiencing a variety of emotions • Feelings of frustration, insecurity and not being wanted or loved

UNMET EMOTIONAL NEED	INTERNALISED EXPERIENCE	INTERNALISATION BASED ON COGNITION AND FEELINGS	BEHAVIOUR DETERMINANTS
	<p>Juxtaposition of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • closeness and betrayal/rejection/ abuse • responsibility/ignorance towards the child • inferiority/intelligence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am betrayed by people close to me • I don't know who I can love and who I cannot love • I don't know who genuinely loves me • I don't know who is genuine • I don't know if I am just a bad person who does not deserve to be loved • I don't know if I behave differently from my friends, whose significant other role players love them • I don't know who is really interested in me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expects betrayal and cannot trust people in general • Feels insecure, unwanted and not loved • Experiences himself or herself as intellectually impaired • Experiences himself or herself as an irresponsible person
	<p>Distorted relationships with significant other role players</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nobody loves nobody • We don't belong to a family • I don't fit in - I am the black sheep in the family • People think I am stupid • I can't depend on my family members as they do not care about me • I am the black sheep in the classroom • Nobody recognises me • Nobody can get on with me • I am troublemaker • Nobody can depend on me 	<p>Expects rejection in all kinds of relationships</p>

UNMET EMOTIONAL NEED	INTERNALISED EXPERIENCE	INTERNALISATION BASED ON COGNITION AND FEELINGS	BEHAVIOUR DETERMINANTS
	Distorted messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What I am told is not what is meant • People don't care about me • People are not interested in me • People cannot be trusted • People are not genuine - they let you down at some stage or other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distorts future expectations of people in their relationships
	Distortions of reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I experience no emotions • I have no idea of how it feels to experience oneself as a person whom others care for and love • I cannot understand why other people enjoy it to be loved and to be cared for • Responsibility is a risky business and only special people are given responsibility • New experiences are dangerous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding closeness in relationships • Avoiding self-disclosure within relationships • Negative self-talk is reinforced by negative thoughts and feelings

Unmet emotional needs manifest in the following ways:

- Disrupted functioning
 - ▶ intrusive thoughts
 - ▶ triggered responses
 - ▶ dissociation
- Bullying
- Violent behaviour
- Vandalism
- Eating disorders
- Unwanted pregnancies
- Rebellious behaviour
- Disruptive behaviour
- Suicide
- Anxiety
- Poor school performance
- Poor social skills
- Relationship problems
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Sexual abuse
- Prostitution
- Emotionally cut off or extreme mood swings
- Disruptive function
 - ▶ intrusive thoughts
 - ▶ triggered responses
 - ▶ dissociations

In the following section, *an evaluation of existing models dealing with behaviour problems within the South African situation* will be discussed.

5.3 AN EVALUATION OF EXISTING MODELS DEALING WITH BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

The Minister of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCSS) to look into and make recommendations on all aspects of *special needs* and

support services in relation to education and training in South Africa. The findings of these two bodies shaped the new National Education Policy, which is presently in the process of being implemented in South African schools. These findings are in line with the **ecological systems model**.

5.3.1 *A framework for the future*

■ *Future vision*

An education and training system that will promote education for all and that will provide inclusive and supportive schools (learning centres) that will enable all learners to take part and contribute to the education process in order to develop and stimulate their hidden potential and to eventually contribute to society as equal members of society.

■ *Principles of the new Education Policy (contained in the Constitution and the White Paper on Education and Training)*

The right to equality, to be treated with dignity, to participate in the community, to be prepared for work and life, to enjoy involvement of the community in the education of all learners at different levels, to be ensured of the community's contribution in terms of addressing needs of all learners and appropriate support provided, protection from discrimination, respect for human diversity, the right to equal benefit and protection from the law, the redress of past inequalities faced by previously disadvantaged groups in order to create equal opportunities for all learners, an education system and curriculum, that is accessible and responsive to all learners and that could be regarded as appropriate, effective, affordable, implementable and sustainable are included in the new Education Policy as principles of the new Education Policy.

■ *Strategies and approaches to be implemented in terms of the new Education Policy*

Strategies and programmes that traditionally aimed at the meeting of "special needs" of learners and focussing on the deficits of the learner, must be replaced by strategies in terms of the "systems-change" approach, whereby the focus is on how the environment could assist and support the learner with "special needs". This approach

would provide the system with opportunities to accommodate individual differences amongst learners and for the purposes of this study, the learner with behaviour problems would be allowed to stay on in his or her community, and attend residential centres, which will provide a range of programmes, instead of being sent to, for example schools of industry. The Education Department will collaborate with other relevant government departments, for example Department of Justice, Department of Correctional Services, the Department of Police, the Department of Health and Welfare in order to provide a holistic service to learners with behaviour problems. Appropriate support will also be provided through the centre-of-learning-based teams. Public awareness must be stimulated as well as that discriminatory attitudes within and outside the education system must be challenged and changed, by making use of, for example ongoing campaigns. Programmes presented to members of communities will stimulate the empowerment of communities to want to become involved with the learning community and to provide support to learners, their parents and teachers in order to equip learners to become valuable members of the community eventually.

Resources in communities should be utilised and developed in order to support the provision of education through a structured approach whereby the community is an acknowledged stakeholder. A centre-of-learning based team (CLBT) would be established to create a link between the community and the needs of the centre of learning (school).

The members of the CLBT would be educators with specialised competencies in life skills and counselling, as well as experts from within the community on a local and district level. The primary function would be to identify and to address barriers to learning and development by identifying local resources in the community, the establishment of community homes, community based transportation. The ideal is for a *“growing symbiotic relationship between centres of learning and local communities in South Africa”* to develop (NCSNET Document 1997:65).

The National Department of Education and the nine Provincial Departments of Education, must develop the following competencies to attend to barriers to learning, relevant to all learners, in order to provide effective learning for all (NCSNET Document 1997:58,59):

- ▶ “Knowledge of the full range of needs likely to be found in any learning context, This would include understanding what barriers to learning and development involve, and broadly speaking, how they should be addressed.
- ▶ Knowledge of teaching and learning relating to particular needs of learners with disabilities. This could be a generic competency, but would require knowledge of how to acquire specific advice and direction relating to specific disabilities.
- ▶ Knowledge of how to develop the capacity of the system at all levels (national, provincial, district and centre of learning) to address diversity and barriers to learning and development to ensure effective learning of all.
- ▶ Knowledge of the full range of support services that could be accessed to provide support to learners and the system.
- ▶ The ability to work with a range of sectors (intersectoral collaboration) in the process of planning and executing a holistic and integrated process of support.
- ▶ Vigilance to ensure that learners are not marginalised or neglected because of disability, sexual preference, race, gender, religion, difference in learning pace or style, or particular social circumstances”.

Regarding the parents of learners, it is envisaged that parents will be involved in the assessment procedures, whereby particular needs of their child will be identified and assessed and programmes to address barriers to learning that the learner is experiencing, be developed. Parents can act as teacher aides, assisting the teacher to cope with large numbers of learners in the classroom and especially whereas some of these learners are disabled. Parents must be empowered by taking part in capacity building programmes to allow them to assert their rights and responsibilities.

All educators must, in order to respond to the diversity of needs of learners and to address barriers to learning in a specific context, be equipped and accredited by means of taking part in pre-and in-service programmes. Some specialised educators, must be trained to equip them with the necessary competencies (e.g. life skills) on a local, district and provincial/national level.

The preventative and developmental approach to supporting the learner overcome or to deal with barriers to learning and development, must be developed “in such a way as to prevent social and learning problems from arising. This includes reducing environmental risks, developing resilience of learners and others and promoting the development of a supportive and safe environment for learners and other members of the learning community”. An

example of these preventative programmes is the programme presented by the education support personnel on priority at risk areas like violence, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS. The preventative nature of the new Education Policy is reflected in the fact that the focus is on "health promotion" instead of only being directed at solving problems. This approach will manifest in the following ways (NCSNET Document 1997: 66): health policies to be developed, a safe and supportive learning environment to be provided for learners, community action and support must be promoted, life skills to be made available to educators, learners and parents, as well as enabling mechanisms to be provided for learners, educators and parents and the institution as such.

Specialist and other support services would be available to schools (centres of learning) at the district support centre. These services would include the training and support of educators within the teams at schools and if the teams' intervention possibilities are exhausted, specialists at the support centres, can provide individual support to a learner. Intersectoral collaboration on a national, district and school (centre of learning) level, would be ensured via appropriate structures, procedures and processes.¹

In the past, *special needs* as a component of training programmes for teachers/educators has not been regarded as part of teacher education curriculum and has thus been dealt with separately and often out of context (NCSNET Document 1997:99). Existing courses as outlined in the COTEP document should be utilised as *plug points* to integrate courses on "special needs" as educators in the mainstream education system have in the past not been trained to respond to "special needs", such as disabilities. Neither have most of them been equipped to understand and respond to other aspects of diversity within the learner population, for example those with exceptional ability, with HIV/AIDS, who abuse substances, who have been traumatised by violence, who are living on the streets or who demonstrate challenging behaviour. The lack of training to equip teachers to deal with diversity has not only disadvantaged many learners but has often also left educators feeling inadequate". Teachers should thus be trained in general life skills education and learning support to attend to barriers to learning and development in order to become a teacher equipped with specialised competencies in order to deal with matters like using braille as a medium of reading and writing or to accommodate learners with severe behaviour problems within an inclusive learning environment (NCSNET Document 1997:100).

¹The concept "teacher" is for the purpose of the study regarded as a synonym for the concept "educator"; the concept "school" is regarded as synonym for the concept "learning centre".

5.4 GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE CLASSROOM IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND AND ASSIST THE LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

Guidelines that need to be taken into consideration when a model is developed for teachers to more effectively assist and understand learners with behaviour problems, are taken from the literature study and empirical findings, as reflected in chapters two to four. At the end of each guideline, the applicability of the guideline to the proposed model will be indicated in brackets.

- The reciprocal impact that the learner and significant other role players have on one another is frequently not kept in mind (*Chapter 2*).
- *The behaviour of the significant other role players within the environment impact on the behaviour of the learner and vice versa. This fact is usually not included in people's understanding of behaviour problems.*
- Teachers and the schools in which they work can have a dramatic effect on the behaviour of learners (*Chapter 2*).
- *Teachers must be made conscious of the fact that they have a major impact on a learner's behaviour – thus: to change the behaviour of the learner, the impact of the teacher also needs to be changed.*
- Meeting the needs of learners with behaviour and learning problems can only be successful if the needs of teachers are also met and understood (*Chapter 2*).
- *Teachers, as in loco parentis, cannot meet the emotional needs of learners if their own emotional needs within the school system are unmet.*
- No blame for behaviour problems is attributed in terms of the ecological systems model – instead all the significant other role players, including the learner, need to contribute towards a cure or the prevention of the behaviour problems of the learner. It is thus not a matter of pure “cause effect problem behaviour” but rather a matter of “problem behaviour-interaction within the environment to cure or to prevent the problem behaviour” that is of significance (*Chapter 2*).
- *Teachers should not blame learners for exhibiting behaviour problems and create guilt feelings within the learner – instead the system must be directed at meeting the unmet emotional needs of the learner and the significant other role players need to collaborate in order to meet the unmet emotional needs of learners.*
- Temperament predicts the type of behaviour expected from the learner (*Chapter 2*).

- ***Teachers should become conscious of the impact of temperament types on the behaviour of the learner. A better understanding of the behaviour of the learner can cancel out the labelling of learners, as learners with problem behaviour. Teaching strategies based on a more effective understanding of the learner can include strategies that will complement the temperament type of the learner and thus combat behaviour problems in the classroom.***
- Teachers should take cognisance of the fact that food a learner consumes or fails to consume has a direct impact on his or her behaviour (*Chapter 2*).
- ***If basic needs (food, clothing, accommodation) of the learner have not been met, it could give cause to behaviour problems, for example stealing of money or the lunch of other learners in the classroom.***
- A neurological dysfunction or impairment, for example brain dysfunction, can influence a learner's behaviour (*Chapter 2*).
- ***The physical component related to behaviour problems must be kept in mind, as it can trigger or act as a catalyst for behaviour problems.***
- In order to assist learners effectively it is important for teachers to understand the learner and be sensitive to a learner's normal patterns of development. The general age and level of development will provide the teacher with the necessary guidelines, as to drawing up a programme of assistance when intervening in the learner's life (*Chapter 2*).
- ***Developmental milestones and developmental crises, especially emotional milestones and emotional needs, should be kept in mind when evaluating whether a learner is exhibiting behaviour problems and in developing a programme of understanding and assistance.***
- A learner has established a set of conditioned responses to certain stimuli within the environment, which triggers a certain behaviour pattern. Statements made by teachers can for instance initiate a variety of responses, such as withdrawal, hyperactivity, aggression or uncontrollable behaviour (*Chapter 2*).
- ***Stimuli within the environment of the learner impact on the learner's behaviour. Stimuli that trigger behaviour problems must be identified and changed, so that they do not trigger behaviour problems.***
- Most learning is based on associations that link two perceptions with one another. Human beings receive a response from the environment and then tend to react in an appropriate manner. Behaviours are learned and unlearned within the environment. This response can be either a reward or punishment. Reinforcing responses from the environment can either, depending on the type of response, reinforce the same

reaction from a human being or eliminate a certain reaction. As the environment changes, so behaviour will tend to change accordingly. A change in the environment can therefore act as an antecedent or a consequent event. Observation, mimicking and imitation can stimulate certain behaviour within the learner, for example copying the hair style of a popular hero or idol (*Chapter 2*).

Teachers and all other significant role players in the environment of the learner act as reinforcers, who can either punish or reward certain behaviour patterns. Behaviour is learned on the strength of stimuli impacting on the person from the outside (*Chapter 2*).

- ***Teachers can use stimuli within the environment of the learner, for example within the classroom or the whole school as a system, to positively impact on the behaviour of the learner and to unlearn negative, unacceptable behaviour.***
- Teachers underestimate, overly simplify and inappropriately apply the principles of behaviour modification. Behaviour modification programmes need to be precision crafted and developed in accordance with the principles of operant conditioning. Behaviour modification programmes need to be modified, as well as maintained, in order to have an impact on the learner's behaviour. Teachers very easily blame the behaviour modification theory, when they are not following the principles (*Chapter 2*).
- ***Teachers should apply and keep the principles of behaviour modification in mind in order to implement the technique successfully in the classroom.***
- The experiences we have during our early childhood years have a decisive and lasting effect on our behaviour. Psychological difficulties experienced by learners, as well as in adults, are the result of problems that the learner or adult has experienced during the first few years of his or her life (*Chapter 2*).
- ***Previous traumatic experiences can influence the present behaviour of a learner and should be addressed in order to assist and understand the learner more effectively.***
- Everyone is unique and different. This implies that each of us is able to attribute personal meanings to specific circumstances and events in our lives, and meanings that affect our lives in ways that are different from the ways they may have affected others (*Chapter 2*).
- ***Teachers should always keep in mind when assisting and understanding a learner that every learner is unique and should be dealt with accordingly. Not labelling, but only understanding is necessary.***

- The inner life and conflicts relating to the inner life, can cause emotional disturbance or behaviour problems. Bad experiences from the past and unsolved conflicts in the unconscious mind act as determining factors, with regard to the behaviour of the learner. The learner must gain insight into past experiences, as “unfinished business” which is carried forward from a previous life phase into the following stage (*Chapter 2*).
- ***Unfinished business from the learner’s past can act as a causative factor of present behaviour problems.***
- The teacher can establish a positive interpersonal relationship with the learner, whereby the learner will be assisted to do reality testing and undo fixations or avoid developing unsuitable defences to deal with drives or anxiety. In the classroom the teacher will be able to support learners to enable them to verbalize and clarify unexpressed thoughts and to provide a corrective emotional experience based on the learner’s relationship with the teacher, as an understanding adult. The teacher can also assist the learner to cultivate alternative and more acceptable behaviour patterns (*Chapter 2*).
- ***An understanding teacher/learner relationship is very important, as it can be utilised to inspire a learner to change his or her behaviour.***
- Feelings, attitudes, memories, impulses and drives must be understood on the conscious and unconscious levels (*Chapter 2*).
- ***The teacher should keep in mind that feelings, attitudes, memories, impulses and drives of the learner on the conscious and unconscious level, can determine behaviour patterns.***
- Schools have in the past, labelled and categorised learners. Labels are coupled to the learner’s actual or expected academic performance or the way that the learner behaves, for example delinquent behaviour. Labels are associated with teachers’ expectations of their learners. Learners who are labelled, usually subconsciously perform according to the expectations of the labellers. Living out the negative expectations of role players within his or her life-world is the result of the labelling process (*Chapter 2*).
- ***Teachers should refrain from labelling a learner, as labelling is a negative reinforcer of unacceptable behaviour. Learners behave according to the expectations of teachers. If teachers want to genuinely assist and understand a learner, no labelling should take place.***
- The ecological systems model emphasizes the fact that all behaviour is determined by a learner’s interaction with other role players within his or her environment. All

interventions in the relationship between a learner and his or her environment take place in order to assist the learner maintain a harmonious balance or equilibrium between him or her and the significant other role players within the environment. Any disturbance in the equilibrium is therefore a result of a misfit between the individual learner and the environment. The environment is located outside (extrinsic factors) and inside (intrinsic) the individual learner (*Chapter 2*).

- ***The learner's interaction with significant other role players in his or her environment, will either be regarded, as harmonious, in a state of equilibrium or constituting a misfit between the learner and his or her environment, consequently a state of disequilibrium exists.***
- Three systems or levels are incorporated within the "ecological network": the *behaviour setting* (e.g. the classroom, the program of activities taking place in the classroom, the learners, the daily roster, seating arrangements, work space, crowdedness, teaching styles, the principal and his or her impact), *patterns of behaviour setting* (e.g. the behaviour of significant other role players like the peers, the teacher triggers certain behaviour patterns within the learner) and the *community and cultural influence* (e.g. a set of expected norms, values, beliefs, customs, traditions that streamline behaviour) (*Chapter 2*).
- ***Teachers need to keep in mind that the classroom, as a subsystem of the ecological network, and the impact of the teacher, as a role model for the learner, as well as values, norms, beliefs and traditions streamline behaviour.***
- Behaviour problems stem from a failure to establish a match between the system and the learner (*Chapter 2*).
- ***Teachers' should realise how important the impact of the environment is in relation to the learner's behaviour, causing the learner to be a misfit or failure within his or her environment. Teachers should assist and understand learners in terms of their relationships within the environment.***
- Countertheorists regard the school curriculum as being irrelevant, the atmosphere in the classroom is deemed to be dehumanizing, and school policies are viewed to be destructive. They are also in favour of adopting a holistic approach in dealing with behaviour problems and reject fragmentation of behaviour problems. They reject the concepts of "deviance" and "normality" – instead the *goodness* of a learner must be accentuated. Labelling of learners by the society is not acceptable. They despise comparing and categorizing learners instead of providing individualised education. The uniqueness of learners is emphasized. Countertheorists maintain that ***education is both intellectual and emotional*** (*Chapter 2*).

- ***Dehumanizing, labelling or categorizing of learners should be avoided at all costs. Instead a sense of caring needs to be nurtured in the classroom and in the attitude of the teacher towards the learner. The focus should be on the goodness and uniqueness of the learner.***
- In each life phase learners have specific emotional milestones or *crises* (Erikson) that have to be solved in order to become a well adjusted and emotionally stable adult (see *guidelines taken from Chapter 4*). Emotional and cognitive development is interrelated in many intricate ways. The self-concept and the establishment of a personal identity, as facets of the developing personality, are being shaped within the child's relationships with significant other role players and have a direct bearing on the learner's behaviour (*Chapter 2*).
- ***If the learner's emotional milestones have not been achieved and the emotional needs remain unmet, a learner will not be able to actualise his or her scholastic potential.***
- The baby's secure attachment with the mother sets the stage for normal psychological development later in life (*Chapter 2*).
- ***The learner can replace the attachment with the mother, with an attachment to the teacher as a substitute parent. If trust is missing, the emotional needs of the learner will not be met via his or her relationships, as the learner will not be able to establish any meaningful relationship.***
- The most significant other role players in the life of the learner are the parents, the teacher and the peers (*Chapter 2*).
- ***Teachers as one of the significant other role players must realise that they can cause or prevent behaviour problems from occurring.***
- "All children are both victims of and participants in the dysfunctional lives they lead. No child can be held responsible for the abuse that he or she experiences as a child" (Apter & Conoley 1984:53) (*Chapter 3*)
- ***The reciprocal interaction between the learner and the environment is relevant in determining behaviour. Blaming a child for behaving in a certain manner is deemed unacceptable.***
- Although several strategies for effective classroom management have been developed, few of these focus on learners' unmet emotional needs, as a catalyst for behaviour problems. Teachers were in the past inclined to think in terms of "what is wrong with the child" (*Chapter 3*).
- ***A mindset change in terms of the ecological systems model, as opposed to the traditional medical model must take place. The change is one of not managing***

learners with behaviour problems, but assisting and understanding learners with behaviour problems.

- Teachers in the past were not generally afforded the opportunity to acquire the required skills to recognise and deal with their own feelings, in relation to the feelings of the learner with behaviour problems. These typically include feelings of not being in control of the situation or of frustration. Teachers need to deal with their own feelings, in context with those of the learner with behaviour problems to ensure a positive outcome (*Chapter 3*).
- ***Teachers' emotional needs in the workplace must be met. A support system for teachers needs to be created. This should ideally include a psychologist on standby to attend to the emotional needs of teachers.***
- Teachers do not know how to assist and fail to understand a learner displaying behaviour problems in the classroom. The traditional strategies they implement to retain control within the classroom situation are no longer effective, when it comes to dealing with the learner with behaviour problems. A combination of feelings of frustration and concern for the learners, cause teachers to become disillusioned and exasperated with the prevailing situation within the classroom (*Chapter 3*).
- ***Teachers should be empowered to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems. The emotional needs of teachers in the workplace need to be taken into consideration.***
- Learners themselves are also angry, because of the deep-seated pain they are experiencing and it would be futile for the teacher to act in anger, as it will not relieve the learner's pain situation. In all likelihood it will only aggravate the pain the learner experiences, as the learner is requiring "groceries of the soul" as they grow up in poverty of love and nurture, which brings them to the teacher, who experiences a feeling of helplessness and powerlessness (*Chapter 3*).
- ***Teachers should be skilled, as part of their first level assistance to learners, to address the emotional pain of learners, in order to prevent it from escalating into aggressive behaviour.***
- The single most important influence on the lives of learners, apart from the impact of the parents, is that of the teacher. Research findings indicate that the impact of a teacher on the behaviour and scholastic performance of a learner is therefore substantial as a key figure for a child to have a successful school year. The way that teachers interact with the learner, may thus be part of the causative factors of behaviour problems (*Chapter 3*).
- ***The teacher/learner relationship has a major impact on the behaviour of learners.***

- Emotional abuse will cripple the learner's emotional development, the end result being an emergence of behaviour problems (*Chapter 3*).
- ***Behaviour problems can only be dealt with, if the emotional abuse of learners has been attended to. Attending to unmet emotional needs of learners will address emotional abuse.***
- The assistance rendered to learners who are experiencing barriers to learning and thus behaviour problems, is inadequate. Teachers experience problems completing the school curriculum and have neither the time nor the energy to pay additional attention to the specific needs of these learners. Thus these learners become marginalised (*Chapter 3*).
- ***In order to prevent marginalising of learners, strategies addressing time constrictions and a multiplicity of tasks and roles allotted to teachers, will have to be implemented.***
- The need for intervention and therapy is great, but the resources are limited and are being further eroded as government funds are redirected away from catering for the special needs of learners (*Chapter 3*).
- ***Special needs of learners and especially unmet emotional needs, must be brought to the attention of the authorities so that more funds will be made available to empower teachers to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems more effectively. A supportive networking system should be established, whereby professional persons from the community, for example psychologists, social workers can be contracted in to assist teachers.***
- The support available to a learner when in difficulties, illness or a family crisis, has an effect on his or her emotional well-being and can be detected in the behaviour of the learner (*Chapter 3*).
- ***More effective support in terms of the teacher, peers, the whole-school, members of the community, professionals within the community must be available to a learner when in trouble.***
- Trauma and the unmet emotional needs are crucial in the occurrence of behaviour problems. If learners want to cope with traumatic experiences, they need a "close, loving relationship with a supportive available caregiver" (*Chapter 3*).
- ***Teachers must realise that they can no longer pass a learner with behaviour problems on to somebody else – they themselves, are responsible for each learner in their classrooms. Fears, emotional needs and feelings of disempowerment must thus be addressed to enable teachers to become a "close, loving and supporting caregiver".***

- The following *intrinsic factors* may give rise to behaviour problems: genetic deviations, brain damage and brain dysfunctions, differences in temperament, physical characteristics, health and the satisfying of basic needs. The following *extrinsic factors* could give rise to behaviour problems: the *family* (essentially the family provides the learner with love, emotional support, security, guidelines as to how to behave in a socially accepted manner in line with society norms and values, a feeling of being needed, the freedom to develop a unique identity, protection, a sense of trust, belonging, independence, dignity and respect), the *school* (the curriculum, the school organisation, the atmosphere within the school and in the classroom, the teacher), *peers and friends*, and the *environment*. These extrinsic factors are diagrammatically depicted in terms of an eco map in figure 5.8 (Chapter 3).
- ***Important intrinsic factors to be taken into consideration are: differences in temperament, basic needs, and physical problems. Significant extrinsic factors to be noted are: the atmosphere that exists within the home and the classroom, the quality and nature of relationships at home and in the classroom, the way that emotional needs are met, and the impact thereof on the self-image of the learner. The whole school, including the school ethos, is also deemed to have a substantial impact on the learner and therefore needs to be afforded consideration as an important extrinsic factor.***
- Research findings seem to indicate that teacher training courses are often not in line with reality and consequently do not prepare the student teacher for the real world of teaching practice, especially in rural areas. Courses are aiming at preparing student teachers for teaching at suburban schools (Bainer 1993:1) – (Chapter 3).
- ***Training courses for teachers should be reviewed, in order to equip teachers to assist learners with behaviour problems by paying attention to their unmet emotional needs and developing strategies to understand and assist these learners more effectively.***
- Teachers are inclined to identify learners as experiencing behaviour disorders, when in fact they are experiencing emotional turmoil. Teachers experience a sense of incompetency in assisting learners who are confronted with emotional handicaps and they consequently feel that by referring these learners exhibiting more serious behaviour to specialists or special educators, they would be admitting their incompetence (Chapter 3).

Soodak and Podell (1994:50) discovered that teachers are frustrated by the presence of different psychological and emotional needs of learners, which they have to deal with in the classroom, especially those of children from troubled homes. Teachers are in many instances overwhelmed by the problems of learners that they have to deal with. Learners who pose a threat to the teacher, because of their challenging behaviour, generate fear, anger, avoidance or an overreaction within the teacher. "Teachers therefore, must be prepared to recognize and address their own attitudes and emotions, as well as those of their students. Teachers must be skilled in using the setting, the curriculum and most especially their relationship with the child to provide an atmosphere that promotes both academic and social development – "teachers must work smarter not harder" (Van Acker 1993:31) – (Chapter 3).

- ***The unmet emotional needs of teachers should be addressed, in order to enable them to address the unmet emotional needs of learners. Teachers need to be trained to identify, and understand the unmet emotional needs of learners, so as to be able to assist them.***
- According to Cullinan (Mullen & Wood 1986:169) teachers regard learners with behaviour problems as "behaviour misfits at school, likely to cause the consternation of teachers and almost certain to be avoided or rejected by their peers" (Chapter 3). If teachers and peers persist in negatively labelling learners with behaviour problems, this process can actually exacerbate early difficulties and increase the probability of later, more serious psychiatric problems. Teacher perceptions can in particular bias peer group perceptions (Wood & Mullen 1986:175), with significant consequence to the learners concerned – (Chapter 3).
- ***Labelling the learner with behaviour problems will have to be actively countered, be it by teachers, peers or the whole school. If labelling does not stop, emotional needs will not be met and the occurrence of behaviour problems will increase. The teacher is an important role model for other learners, colleagues, and members of the community. They can play a vital role by not labelling a learner with behaviour problems, and by assisting, understanding and caring for these learners. The symbolic message they will thereby convey is one of hope, understanding and caring.***
- Unsuccessful teachers are characterised as follows: they fail to act pro-actively to prevent the occurrence of behaviour problems, wait until the behaviour problem manifests itself and then react thereto in an emotional and ineffective manner, take negative remarks as personally, feel threatened thereby and their egos are easily hurt by these remarks. Consequently they are aggressive and confrontational in their

- reaction to these learners. They tend to ignore learners with problems, which provokes further negative behaviour and spoils the possibility of establishing a constructive mutual relationship between teacher and learner (*Chapter 3*).
- ***The unmet emotional needs of the teacher have the potential of spilling over to teacher/learner relationships. The negative consequences can be extremely damaging to an already vulnerable learner. Teachers need to be emotionally empowered to deal with the consequential outcomes in assisting learners with behaviour problems.***
 - Teachers in South African schools tend to be confused, in that they do not understand the difference between behaviour problems, misconduct and emotional difficulties. This could result in either the teacher being inclined to label learners, who are not exhibiting behaviour problems, as learners who are exhibiting behaviour problems and/or being unenlightened as to when a learner is in fact experiencing behaviour problems and consequently being unable to identify these learners in time (*Chapter 3*).
 - ***Criteria for evaluating the behaviour of learners ought to be included in training manuals, specifically dealt with at workshops, and certainly addressed when teachers are trained to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems.***
 - Traditionally teachers at South African schools tended to give up on the learner and either referred the problem and the learner back to the parents to take responsibility for the problem behaviour of the learner or they referred the matter to the psychologist at the Support Centre. Very few teachers and researchers have thought of looking at learners' unmet emotional needs and the impact thereof on their behaviour, in an attempt to address the problem. This reality is confirmed, by the research undertaken as part of this study. No real significant changes therefore seem to have taken place, as few practitioners or researchers were addressing learners' unmet emotional needs in developing strategies and interventions to assist learners with behaviour problems (*Chapter 3*).
 - ***Traditional methods and ideas in relation to behaviour problems should be reviewed and more attention should be attributed to unmet emotional needs, as a causative factor of behaviour problems. The models developed as part of this study, are a modest attempt to address the situation.***
 - The following *barriers* that teachers in South African schools experience need to be addressed as a prerequisite, in order to be able to attend to the unmet emotional needs of learners and consequently combat behaviour problems in schools:

- ▶ problems stemming from the involvement of the Education Department and their policies,
 - ▶ the fact that in reality teachers are not given the authority to bring the problems experienced by learners out in the open for discussion with peers,
 - ▶ the nonexistence of appropriate support systems for teachers, for example from within the community, directed at preventing teachers from becoming desensitised to problems of learners,
 - ▶ a lack of understanding as regards the feelings and fears of teachers, in particular their feeling of not being empowered to deal with the behaviour problems of learners,
 - ▶ problems experienced in getting parents involved, as partners in the education of their children and teachers to accept parents as equal partners without feeling threatened. This is of particular pertinence in order to prevent the learner and his or her behaviour problems from being passed back and forth between the parent and the teacher, as nobody wants to take responsibility for the learner and his or her behaviour problems, and
 - ▶ teachers should become conversant with the behaviour modification approach and the Ecological Systems Model, without reverting to excuses such as not having enough time to implement these models or that learners need to fend for themselves (*Chapter 3*).
- ***All barriers, in the environment of the learner or within the school system, need to be eliminated so that the emotional needs of learners can be met, thereby allowing them to actualise their full potential.***
- Causative factors relating to behaviour problems that need to be addressed to by teachers in the classroom or in terms of parent guidance are summarised as follows: the *parents* (the behaviour of parents, their personal problems, not spending enough time with their children, the financial and social problems parents need to contend with, parenting styles, and parents who refuse to take responsibility for their children), *peer group pressure, the negative impact of the media, conflicting value systems of the school and the home, cultural differences, communication problems* (i.e. between learners and parents, and the school and parents), *the frequent refrain for corporal punishment to be reinstated, the lack of a constructive partnership between the school and parents, and issues pertaining to subject matter* (the learner not being able to deal with subject matter and the lack of a culture of learning within home) – (*Chapter 3*).

- ***Causative factors of behaviour problems need to be addressed in teacher training courses in order to equip them with knowledge and skills to deal with the issues.***
- The more common behaviour problems encountered at primary schools are deemed to be: a lack of motivation and interest, negativism, attention-seeking behaviour, disobedience, a lack of discipline, and the telling of lies. Other behaviour problems that tend to occur less frequently are: temper tantrums, knife attacks, vandalism, truancy, storming out of the classroom without permission, aggression, bullying of other learners, disobedience, lack of discipline, sexual harassment of other learners, stealing, the throwing stones, and uncontrolled behaviour, such as screaming, gossiping about teachers, telling lies, smoking on school grounds, assaulting of teachers, rape of other learners and the use of addictive substances. (Chapter 3).
The more common behaviour problems encountered at secondary schools seem to be: assault or threats of assault, attention-seeking behaviour, attention deficit problems, being under the influence of alcohol or a dependency on drugs, displays of uncontrolled behaviour, disobedience and a lack discipline, acts of fraud, a lack of motivation and a sense of negativism, smoking on school premises, theft, storming out of the classroom and the telling of lies (Chapter 3).
- ***During workshops, in-service training sessions and as part of their formal studies, teachers need to be made aware that whatever manifestation of behaviour problems they may encounter within the classroom, unmet emotional needs remain a major causative factor of these behaviour problems. The theory on unmet emotional needs is not culturally bound, nor is it tied to a specific manifestation of a behaviour problem. The actual manifestation of the unmet emotional needs in a behaviour problem will be unique, according to the specific learner's "cognitive map".***
- Merrit and Wheldall (1988:15) warn that *catch-all* phrases, without explicit definitions of behaviour, lend themselves to variations in incidence (Chapter 3).
- ***The concept "behaviour problems" must be clarified in the training of teachers.***
- Corsini (1984:6) while supporting the previously referenced views of Thompson and Rudolph (1996:28,29), however, maintain that "we cannot really work directly with the emotions and must teach indirectly through the intellect and the body" (Chapter 3).
- ***Emotions should be dealt with without eliminating the intellect and the body.***
- The development of a positive self-concept as the goal of therapy, is only possible when congruence exists between what the child values within him or herself and how he/she perceives what is valued by significant other role players (Chapter 3).

- ***Self-concept is a reflection of congruence between how the child values him or herself and how he or she thinks others perceive them.***
- Research findings (Millar 1994:33) indicate that teachers are subjected to emotional turmoil, as a result of learners' problem behaviour. The challenge for the teacher is one of having to effectively manage his or her own feelings, in order to be of assistance to a learner exhibiting behaviour problems. A sense of being alone, being worried and concerned about their learners and of being solely responsible for having to deal with learners' problem behaviour prevails. A further factor that could influence the effectiveness of the decisions taken by teachers is that in many instances they have no readily available measure, as to the effectiveness of a particular response within a specific context. It therefore remains difficult for teachers to change their responses to learners' behaviour, as it is not easy to determine immediately whether or not a particular intervention will be successful or not "there is no substitute for getting a *feel* of what it is like to be an emotionally disturbed child or to be in a *state of conflict*" (Redl in Gallagher 1988:18). Teachers must be in control of their own feelings and emotions, so as to be able to assist and understand the learner's emotional needs in the most effective way (*Chapter 4*).
- ***Teachers urgently require extensive training, so as to be able to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems.***
- Although there is no one, particular counselling theory that is generally accepted and preferred, the ecological systems theory, with its eclectic nature, is still regarded as the most applicable approach in order to understand and assist with a learner's behaviour problems (Charlton & David 1993:10). No single system has in fact proved to be consistently the most effective (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:26, 27). Rather, various counselling approaches, based on different theories, while keeping in mind the variety of individual needs of children, appear to be more effective in dealing with the diverse behaviour problems of learners (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:26,27). A multimodal, comprehensive, eclectic framework, inherent within ecological systems theory, can be of practical significance in assisting learners with a multiplicity of varying needs. The new South African Education Policy is based on the ecological systems approach, as it incorporates *whole school* and *community-based* approaches (NCSNET Document 1997:101) – (*Chapter 4*).
- ***The Ecological Systems model, because of its eclectic nature and focus on alternative interacting systems within the environment, is deemed to be more suitable for assisting learners with a multiplicity of divergent needs. It is also in line***

with the new education policy, whole school model and community-based education programmes.

- Eight theories for intervening in the lives of learners exhibiting behaviour problems are ordered in terms of three fundamental components, namely: the *affective* component (person-centred counselling, Gestalt therapy), the *behaviour* component (behaviour counselling, reality therapy, individual psychology), the *cognitive* component (rational-emotive behaviour therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, psychoanalytical counselling, transactional analysis) – *feeling, thinking and behaviour* cannot be isolated because of the integrative relationship that exists among the components. An overlap exists between the different counselling theories and consequently a change in one of these areas, will impact on the others (*Chapter 4*).
- *The proposed model for teachers, to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems, has to include feelings, thoughts and the forthcoming behaviour as components within the model.*
- *Rogers's client-centred therapy* is regarded as especially applicable to children who are *emotionally deprived*. This therapy is effective in many settings, for example the educational setting. The self-concept of the learner can improve as a result of the therapy and the learner gains an insight into his or her problems and hence experiences a sense of relief. With the assistance of the therapist, self exploration is made possible, by reflecting on the feelings expressed by the client. Successful adjustments to the environment and fewer feelings of anxiety are positive outcomes of the therapy. The person-centred therapy can easily be combined with other theoretical approaches. Person-centred counselling can be used in different cultures and is accepted across many cultures. This theory's contribution within the school system for instance focusses on the development of communication systems and positive self-concepts, via encouragement of accomplishments and personal abilities, assisting learners to clarify values and beliefs and portraying a trust and faith in the learner's ability to make their own choices and take responsibility for their actions (*Chapter 4*).
- *The proposed model for teachers to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems, must include the guidelines of the client-centred approach or for the purposes of the study, the emotionally abused learner -centred theory, as it is directed at changing the negative self-concept the learner has acquired to a more positive self-concept.*
- According to the *Gestalt theory*, present thoughts and feelings are important. The human being reacts as a whole being. An awareness of feelings is considered to be

essential for a person to take control. People who are self-regulating, mentally healthy and in control of themselves and their lives, can experience their own needs and find alternatives within their environments to meet these needs. Neurotic people cannot take responsibility for their own lives – they manipulate others to do so on their behalf. Feelings must be acted out. “I” language instead of the generalized “you” must be used when the child is talking about his or her experiences or feelings, which in turn will stimulate a taking of responsibility for their own lives. “Why” questions must be substituted with “what”, and “how”, and “won’t” for “can’t”. Questions must be changed into statements so as to allow children to be more direct in the expression of their feelings. The following activities can be used: musical instruments which stimulate an awareness of repressed emotions, awareness enhancing activities where the senses are used, “taste time” where different foods are tasted, “mirror” where the child must tell the therapist and other children what he or she sees in the mirror, “now” where the child must tell the group what he or she is aware of now, art activities, activities to build self-confidence, confidence courses and storytelling as a projective technique (*Chapter 4*).

- ***The guidelines from Gestalt theory should be incorporated within the proposed model developed for teachers to more effectively understand and assist learners with behaviour problems, as it links thoughts, feelings and behaviour components to the guidelines of client-centred theory.***
- The ***Behaviouristic model*** focuses on the study of observable behaviour and the influence of the environment, as a determinant. Behaviour therapy is especially effective in dealing with eating disorders, weight loss, study habits, assertiveness training, communication skills, addictions like drugs, alcohol and smoking, stuttering, anxiety concerning school subjects or exams, changing classroom behaviour of hyperactive children, in reducing anxiety, mild peer rejections, school-refusal, teaching safety skills to prevent sexual abuse and sleep disorders. Behaviour therapy includes techniques, such as role modelling and role-play (role reversal). The theme underpinning the behaviouristic model is the contention that behaviour, either good or bad, is learned through interactions and within relationships with significant other role players in the environment. Behaviour problems or undesired behaviour is the outcome of a learning process that can be changed or unlearned by making use of appropriate techniques. New, changed and desired behaviour patterns can be taught to a child. Behaviour modification techniques, which are based on the principles of conditioning, shaping and systematic reinforcement, aim at:
 - ▶ strengthening existing patterns of the desired behaviour or creating new ones, and

- ▶ reducing or eliminating undesired behaviour.

Behaviourists regard human beings as neither good nor bad, but as mere products of their environments. They believe that a child is born neutral, as a blank slate or *tabula rasa* with the same amount of potential for good or evil, rationality or irrationality. People respond to their environments when appropriate conditions appear, relating to ways that they have learned to respond (*Chapter 4*).

- ***The behaviourist viewpoints in relation to behaviour and especially behaviour modification theory needs to be taken into consideration in developing a model for teachers. Cognizance is taken of the fact that the teacher is a significant role model for learners. They need to live out behaviour patterns, which can be imitated by learners. Notably, through their actions they are able to have a positive impact on the behaviour of a specific learner in the classroom.***
- ***Reality theory*** aims at teaching learners basic social skills to enable them to interact more effectively with their peers and with adults in the school setting. Reality theory focusses on the significant other role players within the environment of the learner, as possibilities for building up a support network. Glasser, an architect of reality therapy, attempted to teach people to love and to be loved, to feel valued by oneself and others. Paradoxical intention and dereflection are used, as brief counselling methods, when either the client or the problem resists change. Reality therapy enables the client to develop logic, in order to meet needs of love and self-worth without keeping others from satisfying their needs. Children need to be empowered, instead of overpowered. Statements instead of questions are used. All psychological problems are deemed to stem from a person's denial of the reality of the world around them. Reality theory is based on the three R's, namely: *responsibility* (the potential to meet one's own needs, without infringing on the rights of others to satisfy their needs); *right and wrong* (looking at the child's feelings will be an indicator of responsible and correct behaviour) and *reality* (a willingness to accept the logical, natural consequences of one's own behaviour). Many behaviour disorders are a result of disorders of responsibility. Neurotic people are inclined to be too responsible, whilst other people could not care less and do not act responsibly at all (*Chapter 4*).
- ***Reality therapy focusses on empowerment instead of overpowerment, and satisfying needs of love and self-worth. The underlying rationale of the theory is, where relevant, incorporated within the proposed model developed for teachers.***
- ***Individual Psychology Theory*** maintains that the causes of behaviour are not all that important. It is more considered more important to focus on what children hope to achieve, whether in their real world or their imagination. Children who misbehave

are believed to be discouraged children. Immediate behaviour goals are more important than long-term goals, when dealing with children as clients. Every person experiences a need to belong to a group. The child's most basic needs relate to the establishment of positive relationships with significant others and one ought to look beyond the goals of children's misbehaviour to the special reasons for misbehaviour. Establishing a sound relationship with the child is a very important step in the assistance rendering process. From within the counselling relationship, it is assumed that the child and the therapist are equal partners and that the child can act responsibly in satisfying his or her own needs. Faith in human beings is restored by the therapist's caring attitude toward the child and the therapist's hope and faith in the child. Misbehaviour is a way a child attempts to draw attention to him or herself, when feeling discouraged (*Chapter 4*).

→ ***The Individual Psychology's strong focus on the therapist/child relationship, as an example of other relationships, focuses on caring, hope and faith in the child, and a need to understand the child and not label the child if he or she misbehaves. It is contended that trigger factors within the environment need to be identified and where considered appropriate be incorporated within the proposed new models.***

- According to the ***cognitive approaches***, learners need to be taught to analyse their own behaviour and within the context of the classroom self-monitoring remains but one aspect of multi-faceted efforts to teach learners social skills. ***Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory***, as one of the cognitive approaches, maintains that many individuals become disturbed because of their inaccurate and distorted perceptions of events. Cognitive distortions result from dysfunctional thinking. Behaviour can be changed and thoughts restructured to produce behaviour changes within clients. Cognitive behaviour theory provides the client with a means of gaining control of his or her life and of being able to improve on those areas where he or she has control. Irrational beliefs are as a rule associated with intense emotions, as expressed in individuals' negative exclamations. A typical one being "I have failed the examination so I'm stupid and a failure". The focus is on the present and how to react thereto, instead of focussing on the past. People are seen as having control over their ideas, feelings, attitudes and actions. These responses are, however, influenced by an element of "irrationality" which leads to a circular process of self-hate, which in turn leads to self-destructive behaviour and eventually hatred of others. This in turn causes others to react irrationally towards the individual and the cycle is repeated. Cognitive behaviour theory is a combination of behaviour-change and thought-restructuring methods with outcomes of changed behaviour. These two approaches have been

amalgamated to complement each other. Cognitive behaviour theory lends itself to combination with problem-solving skills training and can be of use in dealing with aggression, anxiety, depression, obesity, panic disorders, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorders, as well as preventing children from exaggerating negative events (*Chapter 4*).

Stress inoculation together with role-play, metaphors, self-evaluation, self-management, social skills training, assertiveness training, reframing, deep breathing exercising, reinforcement, shaping, acting out aggression techniques, hypnosis, redirecting strategies, problem-solving skills training, systematic desensitization, art therapy using cartoons with captions, relaxation training and relaxation imagery are examples of the techniques implemented in terms of cognitive theory (*Chapter 4*).

- ***The logic, cognitive frame of reference of the cognitive theories, focussing on feelings/emotions and cognitive thinking patterns, provides learners and teachers with problem-solving skills, which in turn can lead to changed behaviour, for example a learner can be taught how to satisfy his or her unmet emotional needs, if he or she has no support systems available within his or her environment.***
- The accent in ***Transactional Analysis***, is on what people say and do to one another. The messages can either be verbal, physical or within a transaction that has taken place between two people's ego states. People play games because they are longing for homeostasis in terms of the following areas: biological, existential, internal psychological, external psychological, internal social and external social. Game playing is inclined to undermine the stability of the relationships. The motivation to play games is derived from the need to be stroked. Strokes are used to get attention – either positive or negative attention. People portray different life positions as projections of how they feel about themselves and how they see the worth of others: I am OK – you're OK; I'm not OK – you're OK; I'm not OK – you are not OK; I am OK – you're not OK. People attract not what they want, but what they are. People also do not raise the children they want, but children who are a reflection of themselves. Children must be taught to analyse their own transactions and see how their behaviour affects others and vice versa. Transactional analysis views the counselling process as one of teaching and providing the necessary nurturing or supportive environment, which enables clients to get rid of restrictive measures (*Chapter 4*).
- ***Transactional analysis, with its focus on the reciprocal impact of relationships within the environment, as well as its focus on nurturing and a supportive environment, links with thoughts, feelings and behaviour components to be***

incorporated within the proposed model. The guidelines of the transactional analysis must therefore also be considered for incorporation within the proposed model where relevant.

- The **psychoanalysts** believed that counselling should activate the unconscious mind and make it conscious and this consequently forms a primary goal in counselling from a psychoanalytic perspective. Methods that are used in counselling to strengthen the ego are analyses of resistance, transference, dreams, catharsis, free association, interpretation (dreams), humour, parapraxis or Freudian slips, play therapy, analysis of resistance, incomplete sentences, bibliocounselling and storytelling. The aim of storytelling is to assist the child to understand his or her own thoughts and feelings. Specific and meaningful information, values and standards of behaviour are communicated to the child and the child is assisted to cope with feelings, thoughts and behaviours which they are not ready to discuss in a more direct way with the therapist. Play therapy offers opportunities to work through emotional problems, to release cropped up feelings, and provides a medium in which they can act out the roles that they will live or hope to live as adults (see Chapter 5 in this regard). Children use play, as a natural means of communication. It also allows a child to learn about his or her world. Play activities within the frame of reference of psychoanalysis (the unconscious mind determines the behaviour) allow thoughts and feelings from the unconscious mind to return to the conscious mind, so that they can be owned, recognised, confronted and treated. When unconscious, repressed material is brought to the conscious level, the patient can be assisted to deal with resistance that inhibits their recovery. Psychoanalysts maintain that the degree to which a person is capable of managing his or her relationships and his or her career, determines the level of his or her mental health. Children who are nurtured properly during their childhood years, will not seek parent figures in their adult relationships. Children model their parenting styles in accordance with the parenting styles of their parents, as they carry the internalized views of parents over to their peer group and eventually the adult world. The following factors, impacting on the self-image, need to be taken into consideration: the need to belong, a “child advocate” who can defend the rights of the child, who can be trusted when a crisis occurs; “risk management” – the child feels confident enough to tackle new situations on his or her own; empowerment, uniqueness and productivity (*Chapter 4*).
- ***The psychoanalyst’s ideas in relation to the conscious/unconscious mind and the impact thereof on the behaviour of the learner, as well as their views in relation to role modelling, nurturing (satisfying the emotional needs), and the uniqueness of***

every learner is of relevance in the development of the model for teachers. The guidelines provided by psychoanalytic theories are thus taken into consideration within the proposed model.

- The *teacher/learner* relationship is characterised by the following characteristics: it constitutes a person-to-person relationship, has a human nature, entails a relationship of reciprocity, commitment and honesty, embodies an emphatic understanding of the learner's feelings and needs, incorporates unconditional acceptance by the teacher of the learner, implies confidentiality, and is based on a working alliance of respect, genuineness and caring. The focus is on getting the learner feel good about himself. Teachers need to guide learners how to become responsible persons and how to fulfill their needs without infringing on the needs and rights of others. Although the teacher knows what the problem of the learner is, it is not discussed in the open. Learners listen to their own experience via the teacher's reflections thereof. Teachers are expected to look through the eyes of the learner, so as to be able to understand and assist the learner. An older learner must be guided by the teacher in order to understand his or her own needs deficiency and to realise that they themselves play a determining role in the satisfaction of their own needs. Teachers should not assume the role of "fixer", but should rather focus on creating conditions for learners, to enable them to learn or to relearn the attitudes and behaviour that eventually nurture a positive identity. Teachers should work through the expected outcomes that may be derived from specific intervention programmes with learners. The interventions should assist learners' in their attempts towards self-direction and to rectify problems in this regard, by providing them with honest feedback, without being judgmental or threatening. Teachers can assist learners, who see their problems as being caused by others, to take responsibility for themselves and to become self-directed (*Chapter 4*).

Teachers should acquire the following skills in order to assist and understand learners effectively: acceptance, reflection, summarization, confrontation, immediacy, disclosure, open-ended questions, silence and reflection of deeper feelings. In addition teachers need to acquire skills in order to make use of group work techniques within a school setting. They need to refrain from giving advice to learners, especially adolescent learners. They ought to curb their curiosity, and a need to verify the facts relating to a situation involving the learner. It is essentially important that they should avoid ordering, warning, admonishing, threatening, exhorting, moralizing, or preaching at learners. Related behaviour patterns that should be avoided are lecturing, judging, criticizing, blaming, praising, and labelling

learners. Teachers need to be able to “talk together” with the learner and to “experience together” with the learner. A feeling of “*you and me are in this together*” should be nurtured. The teacher should be skilled in eliminating and replacing “why” questions with “what” questions. Teachers should remember that they should *lead* and not *boss* learners they are attempting to assist (*Chapter 4*).

The *emotional climate in the classroom* should be supportive, nonthreatening, warm, conducive to personal growth and fulfill the needs of a learner for security, love and self-respect, and for expressing their feelings without fear. Learners need to feel free to express their innermost fears, anxieties and concerns. The teacher thereby becomes involved in satisfying the emotional needs of learners. The atmosphere in the home and in the classroom go a long way in determining the emotional development of learners (*Chapter 4*).

Feelings of inferiority relate directly to the self-concept of the learner. A healthy self-esteem (satisfied emotional needs) and a network of supportive significant other role players, are all key elements that spell success. Telling learners that they have got to improve implies that they are not good enough as they are. Successful task completion combined with positive self-statements and reinforcement for the self-statements give rise to a more positive self-concept. Everything that significant other role players do and say to learners tells them that they are O.K. or not O.K. Satisfied higher order psychological needs yields feelings of “O.K.-ness” and release energy. In contrast anger turned inward gives rise to depression. Schoolwork and relationships determine the degree of a learner’s mental health. Self-concept is a byproduct of schoolwork and relationships. Factors impinging on the self-concept are: a need to belong, the availability of someone whom the learner can trust and who will support him or her, empowerment of the learner, becoming independent and taking responsibility for own actions, experiencing a uniqueness, whereby the learner feels special and able to conquer the world. Self-concept is shaped by the learner’s inner experiences and environmental perceptions. Teachers need to assist learners to experience congruence in terms of their internalised self-concept and the messages that they receive from the environment. If a state of incongruence is maintained, the learner will either implement the use of defence mechanisms or distort the reality of experiences, which eventually results in cognitive rigidity or personality disorganisation, together with overwhelming feelings of anxiety. Learners need to be positively regarded by others, their need to be prized, accepted and loved is so

addictive, that they become the most potent of all needs. Positive reinforcement of the self-concept remains a significant need among children. Teachers need to find ways to encourage and assist learners to feel good about themselves and to feel accepted. Ideally they should be able to view themselves as someone special with a purpose in life. (Chapter 4).

- ***As teachers and their actions have a major impact on learners, the following keywords need to be kept in mind in developing the proposed model for teachers: commitment, honesty, caring, emphatic understanding of learners' feelings and needs, unconditional acceptance of the learner, respect, trust, confidentiality, and genuineness. The teacher/learner relationship has as a key focus the improvement of the self-image of the learner. The teacher must be able to literally "look through the eyes of the learner" and "to get the feel" and understand the learner from an empathetic, caring perspective. Teachers are not "fixers" – they are facilitators – a significant other role player who organises the environment of the learner in such a way that the unmet emotional needs of the learner can be met and the learner is put in control of his or her life.***
- The result of the focus on overt behaviour, is that "teachers and students have struggled merely to survive in schools, understanding of environmental influences and emotions has often been lost" (Tompkins & Tompkins-Mc Gill 1993:15). In a very similar vein Osher and Hanley (Illback & Nelson 1996:11) contend that: "schools are sorting station(s), wherein children and youth first ... come to think of themselves as consistently inadequate or dumb, and especially as bad or troublesome. Schools label students, parcel out credentials and access to academic and vocational training and sustain an environment in which students define themselves". It is within this context that Rizzo and Zabel's (1988:227) proposal of administering *emotional first aid* to learners should be seen. It offers learners emotional support and reassurance to get them back on track. It will only be possible for a learner to experience an inward sense of emotional well-being, if their emotional needs (the need for love and security, belonging, new experiences, praise and recognition, and responsibility) are met. The emotional bank account is used metaphorically to describe the trust built up in relationships. Nowhere is this more relevant than in the case of the teacher/learner relationships that come into being within the classroom. When the balance in the account is high, it will be possible for the learner to experience a sense of emotional well-being. It is argued that teachers can make a difference in a learner's life – especially if the teacher, allows the learner to experience a feeling of "my teacher cares about me – my teacher likes me – my teacher thinks I am a worthy individual

and my teacher wants to help me" (Tompkins & Tompkins-McGill 1993:69). Within such a context the balance within the metaphorical bank account will be high. If a learner's emotional needs remain unmet, apart from exhibiting behaviour problems, the learner will not be able to actualise his or her full potential. South African schools and specifically teachers will need to pay serious attention to the quality of teacher/learner relationships, in terms of satisfying the unmet emotional needs of learners. If unmet emotional needs are not satisfied in the classroom and at school, the objectives of the NCSNET document, namely that learners must reach their full potential and be able to more meaningfully contribute to and participate in society throughout their lives, will not be realised. Statistics in relation to learners exhibiting behaviour problems, the crime rate, violence, and corruption within communities and the country at large, can be expected to increase even further, as has been the case thus far. As stated by Pringle (1980:81) "the consequences can be disastrous both for the individual and the society". Specific guidelines that may be implemented in the classroom by teachers, in order to address the unmet emotional needs of learners, as suggested by teachers during interviews conducted as part of this study, are to be found in Chapter 3, section 3.6. Guidelines presented in the literature, as to the best means that may be used in satisfying the unmet emotional needs of learners in the classroom, are reflected in Chapter 4, section 4.4.

- ***Traditionally too much attention has been focussed on overt behaviour, which directed attention away from the inward causative factors, for example unmet emotional needs, giving rise the behaviour problems. It is argued that when an inward sense of emotional well-being has been attained, only then will the emotional needs of learners have been met and will behaviour problems within the classroom cease to be a factor of concern. In the interim, "Emotional first aid" is required if learners are to actualise their full potential as specified in the new Education Policy.***
- In order for a school to be regarded as an "effective school" the following criteria should be kept in mind:
 - ▶ a system of symbolic rewards for good work and appropriate behaviour should ideally have been instituted and promoted,
 - ▶ an atmosphere of confidence should be nurtured within the classroom that will serve as a stimulus for actualising learners' abilities,
 - ▶ learners are treated as the person they might become, instead of focussing on the person that they are at present,

- ▶ staff members should be sensitive to the learner's need to belong to a group, to be part of a "bigger family" and able to make a contribution to the group as a valued and respected member,
- ▶ learners are motivated to excel and actualise their true potential,
- ▶ all learners are equally valued,
- ▶ teacher/learner relationships are deemed to be healthy, supportive and respectful,
- ▶ no competition or power struggles exist and instead team efforts and collaboration are the order of the day,
- ▶ a warm, pleasant and comfortable atmosphere is experienced within the classroom,
- ▶ learners feel free to approach staff for assistance,
- ▶ ideally every learner should have a personal role model and mentor at school, who understands the learner and who is known to the learner,
- ▶ the learners are not merely happy, but are also not afraid of anything or anybody,
- ▶ learners are free, self-disciplined and act independently,
- ▶ all learners come to know and experience that it is not only the achievements of a few outstanding learners that are celebrated, but that the achievements of all learners are valued and deemed to be important to the school. As a consequence they are all supported to be "somebody",
- ▶ the school fulfills an important role in the lives of learners and in their commitment to future personal development,
- ▶ a shared value system exists within the school and a clearly stated vision and mission provides direction and ensures a shared sense of common purpose exists,
- ▶ learners are assisted in developing a good sense of self-respect and the capacity to live as independent, self-motivated adults. With appropriate support they will acquire the ability to operate as contributing members of society, and
- ▶ learners are assisted and guided towards gaining an understanding and sensitivity, as to the needs of others, in order to develop satisfactory personal relationships (*Chapter 4*).

→ ***The following key concepts are relevant to this study, as they relate to the satisfying of learners' emotional needs: the creation of an atmosphere of confidence, treating each learner as an individual and as the person he or she might become, teacher sensitivity to the emotional needs of learners, learners and the whole school, as part***

of a larger family where each learner's contribution to the family, is valued, each learner having a personal role model, learners who are self-disciplined and teachers experiencing few problems with discipline and in implementing codes of conduct, all learners being valued and their attempts to complete an assignment appreciated, so that they develop a sense of self-respect.

- The following factors need to be taken into consideration in developing the proposed model to assist teachers in dealing with behaviour problems:
 - ▶ Teachers are frustrated, overburdened and frequently criticised for not responding to more broadly based issues, such as increasing drop-out rates.
 - ▶ They need to contend with public pressure for improved academic performance within schools and simultaneously cope with “difficult-to-teach” learners in their classrooms.
 - ▶ Teachers feel personally threatened if learners act disruptively and openly challenge their authority. Their self-image is dented and he or she experiences a sense of doubt, as regards their ability to cope with the situation.
 - ▶ The teacher's feelings of inadequacy, triggers a dispassionate perspective and defence mechanisms, which are instrumental in stimulating a negative attitude towards learners in general. As time goes by and the teacher experiences negative reinforcement of his or her feelings of inadequacy, the more his or her negative attitudes will harden and the less likely he or she will be to consider alternative strategies for dealing with learners' behaviour problems.
 - ▶ A whole-school policy that takes the views of learners into consideration and involves parents in policy formulation, is required.
 - ▶ The government needs to create opportunities to improve the morale and job satisfaction of teachers, in order to reduce “an unsettledness which has undermined confidence” (Charlton & David 1993:242).
 - ▶ Teachers should be granted greater flexibility, to enable them to improvise and develop creative ways of meeting individual learner's emotional needs.
 - ▶ Members of the community expect teachers to punish learners exhibiting behaviour problems, instead of attempting to assist and understand the learners concerned. This has a direct bearing on the teacher wanting to punish young children as “witting offenders”, rather than regarding them as vulnerable persons whom might need the support and understanding of members of the community.
 - ▶ Teachers have found in the past that textbook theories of classroom management are difficult to apply within the actual classroom situation. It is,

however, necessary for teachers to understand the basic principles of the theories that underlie contemporary classroom management techniques, in order to be able to implement them in practice.

- ▶ A “cookbook” approach in assisting and understanding learners with behaviour problems is deemed to be unacceptable.
- ▶ Behaviour management techniques should focus on the “situation associated with each student” and a “one protocol fits all” approach is hardly considered appropriate, from a behaviour management perspective. Proactive rather than reactive behaviour management programmes should be implemented.
- ▶ Social skills training has become as important a subject, as the teaching of mathematics or science.
- ▶ If the aims of affective education, which focusses on feelings and social skills, have been reached, learners will perform according to their abilities. Affective education focuses on the fact that overt behaviour can be regarded as a reflection of the internal cognitive-affective views of the learner of himself or herself and the views of others towards him or herself. The outcome of working on the social skills and self-concept of the learner include “healthy, age-appropriate cognitive-affective development” (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:228).
- ▶ The teacher/learner relationship is very important in affective education, in that it portrays empathy and understanding. Stress engendering situations, as well as the learner’s coping strategies need to be understood by the teacher and attention should be focussed on the self-concept of the learner. In addition environmental influences impacting on the self-concept of the learner should be taken into consideration by the teacher. Stressors manifest in behaviour problems in the classroom and are actually ways of seeking help for dealing with disruptive behaviour.
- ▶ In many instances teachers have not acquired an understanding of the real reasons for the learner’s disturbing behaviour. Strategies that the teacher could implement to gain an understanding of the learner’s behaviour include verbal and nonverbal communication with learners, as regards their feelings, labelling, and acceptance of feelings. Further strategies relate to a reduction of stress engendering circumstances within the school, a redirection of the feelings of learners so as not to trigger undesired behaviour, encouraging learners to help one another and to complete one task at a time. Rational Emotive Education can also be used in order to understand and cope with the feelings of the learner.

- ▶ According to Morse (Paul & Epanchin 1982:407), the systemic approach is linked to affective education, which implies that teachers are responsible for the emotional growth of their learners and that psychologically relevant curricula should be implemented.
- ▶ Teachers are not specifically trained “to deal with feelings – either their own or their students’ feelings” (Paul & Epanchin 1982:419).
- ▶ The individual needs of the learner as well as the teaching style of the teacher, must be kept in mind. Learners need to feel that they can trust their teacher, meet the teacher’s expectations, cooperate with and rely on the teacher’s strategies for dealing with the situation.
- ▶ Teachers must be able to distinguish between the different theories and be able to analyse the reasons for a specific theory as inappropriate for dealing with a particular situation (Chapter 4).

→ *The emotional needs, frustrations, stresses, feelings, worries and concerns of teachers need to be taken into consideration if they are to be expected to “walk the extra mile” with a learner or to see the world “through the eyes of the learner”. If these emotional needs are not addressed by educational authorities, principals, governing bodies, parents and members of the community, it will be difficult to develop any appropriate model, that will be able to be implemented in practice, to address the behaviour problems of learners. Teachers play a key role in understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems. They therefore need to understand and be able to practically implement appropriate theoretical constructs or models on a day-to-day basis within the classroom. One integrated, eclectic theoretical model, which integrates all the relevant theories, is ideally required to combat the theoretical confusion that exists. It will also go a long way in ending the search for an ideal “cookbook recipe” for assisting learners with behaviour problems. Concern is expressed within the contemporary literature, in relation to the concept of “one protocol fits all”. Teachers ought to realise that overt behaviour, is deemed to be a true reflection of the internal cognitive affective views that the learner has of himself or herself and the views expressed by other towards them. The cognitive/component repeatedly surfaces as an aspect of consideration in research findings and the ultimate focus seems to be on the self-image of the learner as a determinant. Teachers will need to be trained to implement the proposed model and direct their focus on the unmet emotional needs of learners, as a major determinant of the internal cognitive/affective internalisations of relationships, resulting in a variety of behaviour manifestations. The teacher/learner*

relationship is the vehicle used to transport empathy and understanding, which will allow the teacher to enter the mind and the heart of a learner.

- Prohaska (Moore 1989:174) draws attention to the importance attributed to a positive self-concept, by stating that “the needs of children for the positive regard of others, their needs to be prized, to be accepted, to be loved, are so addictive that they become the most potent of all needs” (Chapter 4).
- ***The importance of the self-concept of the learner is vitally important if teachers want to assist and understand learners who manifest behaviour problems.***
- Skills the therapist/teacher should acquire are identified as: simple acceptance, reflection, summarization, confrontation, immediacy, self-disclosure, silence, open-ended questions, and reflection of deeper feelings (Chapter 4).
- ***Teachers need to be trained in the above skills, in order to influence the inner “cognitive map” learners develop.***
- Group work is highly effective and therapeutic, especially within a school setting (Chapter 4).
- ***Group work should, whenever possible, be utilised to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems, as it is in line with the new education policy.***

In the preceding discussion the following themes were repeatedly accentuated as requiring serious consideration:

- The impact of the environment and specifically the behaviour patterns of significant other role players, can no longer be disregarded in analysing learners’ behaviour problems.
- The reciprocal relationship between the learner and his or her environment is deemed to constitute a key determinant in behaviour problems.
- Learners should never be labelled by teachers, parents, peers or members of the community.
- The teacher/learner relationship will play an important role in developing appropriate strategies to assist learners with behaviour problems.
- The reciprocal nature of the teacher/learner relationship is manifest as follows:
 - ▶ if the teacher’s unmet emotional needs in the workplace are not met, he or she will not be able to effectively deal with the unmet emotional needs of the learner,
 - ▶ if the behaviour of the teacher towards the learner and his or her parents do not change, the behaviour of the learner and his or her parents will also not change.

- Unmet emotional needs are a causative factor in the triggering of behaviour problems.
- The training of teachers – whether initial or in-service training, is considered to be of vital significance in that it empowers teachers to more effectively understand and assist learners with behaviour problems. Much attention is, however, needed in this regard to ensure that the learning content is updated and applicable to the daily classroom situation.
- A “whole school” and a “community-based” approach ought to be adopted in assisting and understanding learners with behaviour problems.
- Greater attention needs to be attributed to intrinsic causes of behaviour problems (e.g. unmet emotional needs) than was the case in the past, when overt behaviour was the yardstick for behaviour management strategies.
- The nature of the self-image of the learner, whether it is inclined to be positive or negative, eventually influences the outcome of a teacher’s involvement with a learner. It will also impact on the eventual actualisation or non-actualisation of the learner’s potential.
- A model based on an eclectic theoretical model incorporating alternative theories, for example the Ecological Systems Model, is required by teachers in order to more effectively understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.
- The concepts “feelings” and “thoughts” emerge as a regular element encountered in most theories, where a constructive attempt is made to identify the most appropriate means for attending to the behaviour problems of learners.
- Central negative themes are generally encountered in research findings where “one protocol fits all” or “cookbook recipes” are evaluated, as a means to be adopted in addressing behaviour problems.
- The person-centred approach offers an important contribution, when assisting and understanding learners with behaviour problems.
- The teacher must be able to see “what’s inside the learner” in order to meet unmet emotional needs, via the intellect and the body.

In the following section of this chapter, problems to be taken into consideration, when developing a new model for understanding and assisting learners with behaviour problems in the classroom, will be discussed.

5.5 A MODEL FOR TEACHERS TO UNDERSTAND AND ASSIST LEARNERS WITH BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS MORE EFFECTIVELY

As Zarkowska and Clements (1984:ix) put it, learners with behaviour problems present their significant others and the teacher(s) "with a range of behavioural challenges. Teachers (and parents), however, do not always know how to react or what strategy would be the most effective strategy would be the most effective strategy to be used. A model has been developed, to enable teachers (and indirectly parents as well) to understand and assist learners more effectively.

A model like this is needed in order to prevent the situation in which too many young people are transferred to schools of industry or reform school for example, because the professionals working with them do not have the ability to effectively manage their behaviour. A child can be labelled as "out of control" or "aggressive", etcetera, because this is easier for the school or children's home to admit to than "we are unable to manage this young person and would like additional training or support" (Basic Course in Developmental Assessment of children, youths and families, Author unknown, Department of Health and Welfare, date unknown:5).

5.5.1 Aims of the model

The main aims of the model are to:

- provide a structured framework within which unmet emotional needs as major causative factor of behaviour problems can be understood.
- describe criteria to provide a yardstick to enable the teacher to assess behaviour that appears to be problematic.
- provide the teacher with a step-by-step guide on how to plan and implement high-quality therapeutic interventions.
- introduce new strategies to implement high-quality programmes in order to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems, as well as to reduce the possibility of more behaviour problems occurring.
- develop a model which will provide educational planners and policy makers with (i) guidelines to be used for the effective understanding and assisting of behaviour problems in South African schools, (ii) a different theoretical perspective on behaviour problems, (iii) an appreciation of the advantages of the ecological systems model, (iv) an intention not to view the behaviour of learners as *abnormal* or *wrong* but as

normal and according to emotional developmental milestones, and (v) a sensitivity towards causative factors of behaviour problems, for example the impact of the teacher and school system as well as unmet emotional needs.

- discuss and identify methods of creating a support network for teachers, to aid them in their endeavours to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems, by implementing and sustaining therapeutic intervention programmes.
- focus on and accentuate the importance and the impact of the unmet emotional needs of the teacher in the workplace.
- indirectly assist learners, via their teachers, to understand and deal with their unmet emotional needs and to simultaneously enable them to understand children, thereby breaking an unending spiral of emotionally deprived future generations of learners.
- empower teachers with knowledge to be able to organise and devise strategies that will enable significant other role players to understand and assist learners with unmet emotional needs.
- highlight the importance of collaboration between every subsystem that exists within the school system, by adopting a whole school approach, among every subsystem of the school system in order to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems. An attempt is thereby made to combat the rising numbers of learners with behaviour problems within the school system.
- accentuate the importance of collaboration among the different significant other role players, in order to successfully meet the unmet emotional needs of learners so that they do not develop behaviour problems.
- accentuate an urgent need for *all* professional persons in the community who deal with children, to use the same theoretical frame of reference (as proposed in this study) in order to eliminate unsuccessful strategies to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.
- stimulate a paradigm shift among staff members of Higher Education institutions, regarding the content of teacher education programmes, in order to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems more effectively as well as to link theory with actual classroom practice.
- provide a model which will take into account the problems, cultural diversity and current situation that exists within rural and urban areas within South Africa, as opposed to conditions that exist within more privileged countries, such as the United Kingdom or the United States of America.

- enable principals, special needs coordinators and teachers who are already teaching, to more effectively understand and assist learners with behaviour problems in the classroom, by providing in-service training along the lines of the model presented.
- accentuate the difference between this model, as a new proposed strategy to control rising statistics of behaviour problems and the former medical model.
- provide a knowledge base to activate further research on behaviour problems of learners, and on the importance of the unmet needs of teachers in the workplace.

In order to propose a new model for teachers on how to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems more effectively, the rationale of this study must be kept in mind, namely the fact that *the occurrence of behaviour problems can be related back to the presence of unmet emotional needs within the learner.*

Because it is difficult to focus on only one or two factors as causative together with recognition of the learner's uniqueness, all these factors (e.g. biological, social, emotional and cognitive factors) should be considered. They all impact on the learner's emotional adjustment and consequent behaviour, irrespective of his or her level of intelligence (Zarkowska & Clements 1984:4). For the purposes of this study it is important to note that Maslow (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:438) claims that the realisation of the learner's potential is his or her ultimate goal. This argument may be linked to the new Education Policy which demands that all barriers to learning must to be eliminated, by meeting the needs of learners and the system, so that learners will be able to actualise their full potential (NCSNET Document 1997:11). The actualisation of potential clearly implies that the needs and specifically the unmet emotional needs must be met before a learner can actualise his or her true potential. Raths (1972:141) ostensibly maintains that the meeting of the unmet emotional needs of learners is not solely the task of the teacher, but "if unmet needs are getting in the way of a child's growth and development, his learning and his maturing, I insist that it is your obligation to try to meet his needs. Until we try to meet some of their needs, we shall probably be unsuccessful in our teaching efforts. *And if we are able to satisfy some of these needs, just think of what a difference it will make in the life of the child. For him the whole world will probably become a different place, a happier, more secure, more trusting and trustworthy place*" (Raths 1972:141).

The theory on *unmet emotion needs* is thus eclectic and universal as it is connected to a *human being* which implies that it is cross-cultural. This advantage makes this theory unique in comparison with other models and theories on behaviour of children and it cannot be

degraded by calling it a *cookbook* theory. Maslow (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:438) stresses that the realisation of the learner's potential is his or her ultimate goal. This argument links with the requirements of the new Education Policy that barriers to learning must be eliminated by meeting the needs of learners and the system, so that learners will be able to reach their full potential (NCSNET Document 1997:11). The actualisation of potential thus implies that the needs and specifically the unmet emotional needs must be met before a learner can actualise his or her potential. Rath (1972:141) maintains that the meeting of the unmet emotional needs of learners is not solely the task of only the teacher, but "if unmet needs are getting in the way of a child's growth and development, his learning and his maturing, I insist that it is your obligation to try to meet his needs. Until we try to meet some of their needs, just think of what a difference it will make in the life of the child. ***For him the whole world will probably become a different place, a happier, more secure, more trusting and trustworthy place***" (Rath 1972:141).

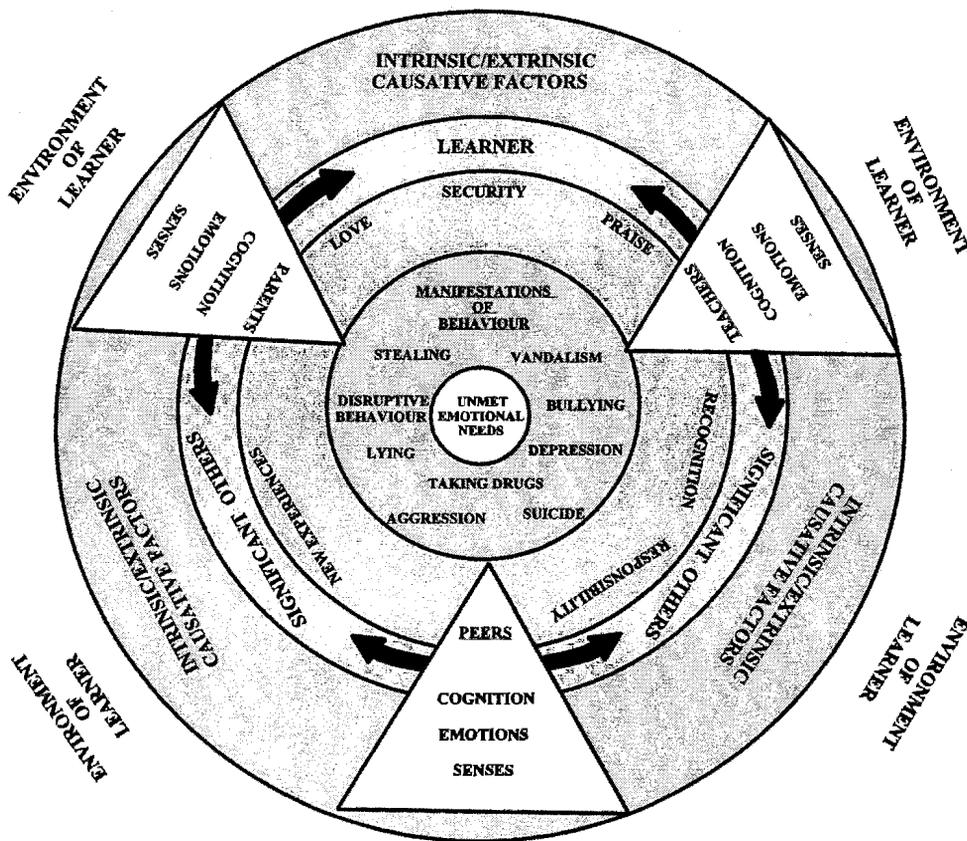
For the purposes of this study, the ecological systems model has been utilised as the unmet emotional needs must be met by the significant other role players within the learner's environment or life-world. The teacher, as one of the major significant other role players, must create opportunities to satisfy the unmet emotional needs of learners in the classroom and/or on the playground, in order to prevent behaviour problems. The teacher (and the school system) will as a facilitator coordinate, stimulate and organise other significant role players, the whole school, and the community in particular, in an attempt to satisfy the unmet emotional needs of learners. In stimulating and organising significant other role players, the teacher must establish, via situation analysis, what emotional needs of the learner remain unmet within specific relationships and determine what strategies can be implemented to attend to the unmet emotional needs concerned.

The proposed model is based on a "problem-solving approach" by activating and utilising the significant other role players within the environment of the learner, to satisfy his or her unmet emotional needs, giving rise to problem behaviour. It accentuates the impact of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* factors relating to the behaviour of learners, with the main focus being on unmet emotional needs (love and security, responsibility, new experiences, praise and recognition) as a cause of *behaviour problems*. A diagrammatic representation of intrinsic and extrinsic causative factors are depicted within the model presented in figure 5.1. Intrinsic factors, triggered by the response of the significant other role players, for example parent(s), teacher(s) and peers, within the environment or life-world of the learner are reflected in the diagram. Unmet emotional needs form the very core of the model and

manifestations of behaviour patterns associated therewith are represented by the circle encompassing these unmet needs. The impact of parents, teachers and peers (as significant other role players) on the behaviour of the learner is reflected in terms of meeting learners' emotional needs. They appeal to the emotions or *feelings*, the intellectualization of these feelings (*cognition*), via the *senses* of the learner and thereby influence the emotional well-being of the learner. The model stresses the reciprocal impact of the learner/significant other role players within the environment resulting in certain behaviour patterns in the classroom. Other eminent concepts are *networking* and *collaboration* among the significant other role players in order to satisfy the emotional needs of the learner, as well as concepts such as the *whole-school approach* and *community based* assistance. The model thus offers a multi-component approach, which allows several factors to be taken into consideration, when analysing the behaviour of the learner, with the main focus remaining on unmet emotional needs.

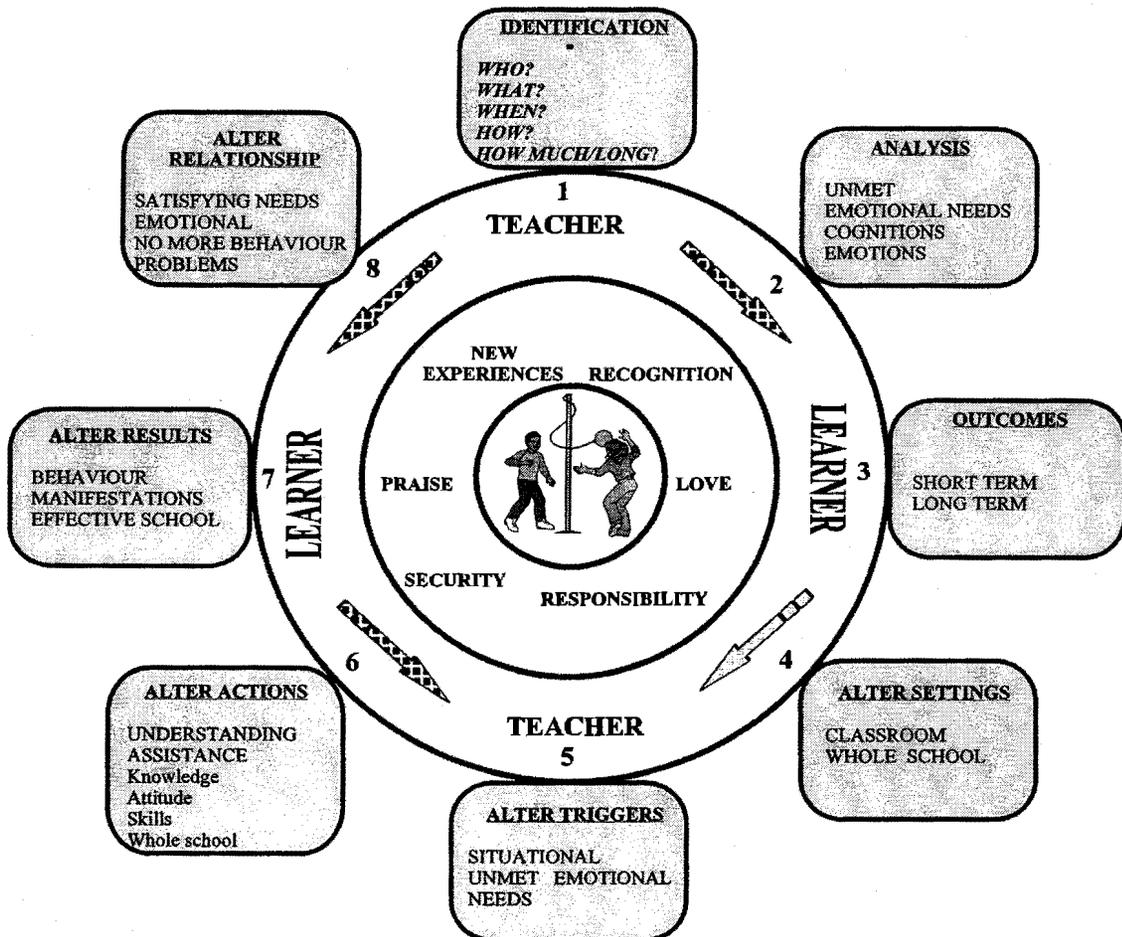
Traditionally in training teachers the focus has been on environmental factors impacting on the behaviour of the learner, for example the home, neighbourhood, and peers, and little or no focussed was attributed to unmet emotional needs. In terms of the findings of this study, it is argued that they need to be trained to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems by taking cognizance of learners unmet emotional needs and the role played by the significant role players involved in meeting these needs.

Figure 5.1: A model for understanding behaviour problems within the environment of the learner



The model presented in figure 5.2 offers a step-by-step (without becoming a cookbook recipe), process for assisting and understanding a learner with behaviour problems. The different components of the process of understanding and assistance are diagrammatically illustrated in Figure 5.2 and consist of the following key components: the **identification** of the learner with behaviour problems, the **analysis** of the behaviour of the learner in order to determine which emotional needs are unmet and within which relationships, the **outcomes** of the process of understanding and assistance the **setting** or situations in which the behaviour is occurring, namely the classroom or the whole school, the **triggers** activating or stimulating certain behaviour patterns, the **actions** that follow on the behaviour triggered, the **results** aiming at changed behaviour patterns and being an effective school, and the **teacher/learner relationship** that need to be altered in order to satisfy the unmet emotional needs. Each of these components will be discussed in the following section, incorporating the “guidelines” discussed in section 5.3 of this Chapter.

Figure 5.2 A model for teachers to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems



5.4.2 Components of the understanding and assistance process

The components of the model presented in figure 5.2 and the discussion that follows should be seen within the context of the insights and understanding gained within the previous chapters of this study. A central tenant of the model is its focus on the learner and the emotional needs of the learner. This is implied by placing the learner at the very centre of the model in figure 5.3. A fact of the model is the teacher-learner relationship and interaction that comes into being.

5.4.2.1 Identification of the learner with behaviour problems

In the literature the confusion regarding the concept *behaviour problems* becomes evident as different concepts are used to describe behaviour problems, for example emotional problems, behaviour disorders, disturbed behaviour, emotionally disturbed, maladjusted learners, mentally healthy or the unhealthy child (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.1 in this regard). The confusion of researchers as regarding the concept *behaviour problems*, has been carried over to teachers causing them to be uncertain as to when the behaviour of a learner ought to be regarded as constituting *problem behaviour*. This became evident in the discussions with teachers at in-service training sessions and workshops, as well as during the visits to schools (see Chapter 3, section 3.6.2). It is therefore deemed essential that this study provide guidelines for teachers to identify the learner with behaviour problems, without reverting to the medical model by definite categories, profiles, symptoms or characteristics of abnormal behaviour, as found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSMIV) used by psychologists. Borg and Falzon (1989:251) maintain that the teacher first needs to identify learners with behaviour problems before the teacher can plan and implement strategies “to control/manage the troublesome behaviour”.

The identification of the learner with behaviour problems starts with a precise and objective description of the behaviour that the teacher is concerned about. Once the behaviour pattern has been described and pinpointed, the guidelines to assess the behaviour of the learner, as being problematic or not, should be applied. In the description of the behaviour of the learner, the following needs to be taken into consideration:

- Causative background factors that could have triggered the specific behaviour pattern, for example relevant circumstances within the home or in the personal life of the learner, that might have taken place the day before the emotional outburst, or a few weeks/months/years before (*environmental trigger factor = behaviour problem*).
- Causative factors that could have triggered the specific behaviour pattern, for example relevant circumstances at school or in the peer group that might have taken place the day before the emotional outburst, or a few weeks/months/years, a specific period in the classroom, in the presence of a specific teacher, or peer group, some incident that took place on the playground (*environmental trigger factor = behaviour problem*).
- The functionality of the learner’s behaviour, for example, disruptive behaviour in the classroom – is the learner attempting to attract the attention of the teacher, although in a negative and unacceptable way? (*results = behaviour problem*).

- The physical and/or the emotional well-being of the learner impact on the behaviour of the learner – are the emotional needs of the learner met or not? (*environmental, extrinsic and intrinsic trigger factor = behaviour problem*).
- Specific and fixed times that the behaviour occurs, for example every Monday following the weekend that the learner went to visit his or her divorced father or at the end of the month when there is no money to meet basic needs such as food (*environmental, extrinsic and/or intrinsic causative factors trigger factor = behaviour problem*).
- The frequency, extensiveness, duration and severity of the problem behaviour pattern – has it been the same for the past week, the past three months, occurring during the same period or when the same teacher or peers are present, how intensive was the emotional outburst, who all were affected by the learner's behaviour, the length or the duration of the outburst, how serious was the emotional outburst, how did it affect the learner? (*settings and triggers = behaviour problems*).
- The impact of the learner's problem behaviour on the other learners in the classroom, learner(s) sitting close to him or her and the teacher? (*analysis, relationship = behaviour problems*).
- The atmosphere in the classroom after the behavioural outburst of the learner (*settings, actions, results, relationship, analysis = behaviour problems*).
- The teacher/learner relationship and the meeting of the unmet emotional needs of the learner (*analysis of the causative factors and behavioural outcomes, actions, results, relationship*).
- The feelings experienced by the learner after the teacher has exercised control over the problem behaviour of the learner (*analysis, outcomes, settings, triggers, actions, results, relationship*).
- The internalized messages of the learner about him or herself after the outburst or unaccepted behaviour in the classroom or on the playground (*analysis, outcomes, triggers, actions, results relationship*).

The above information can be described and recorded in a confidential *portfolio* or personal file on the learner which is locked away. The observed behaviour in the classroom or on the playground can be recorded as illustrated in figure 5.3 and the factual conclusions the teacher has come to, in figure 5.4.

Figure 5.3 Example of a basic chart for recording observations of a behaviour in the natural environment

BEHAVIOUR OBSERVATION CHART			NAME: <i>Larry</i>	Behaviour to be observed: <i>SCREAMING</i>	
Date	Time	Setting	Trigger	Action	Results
<i>Jan 2nd</i>	<i>10.35 am</i>	<i>Group activity room. Working 1-to-with Larry.</i>	<i>Nothing specific. Sitting next to him, trying to get him to draw a picture.</i>	<i>Screamed about 15 times during 10 minute session.</i>	<i>Sometimes ignored him. Sometimes told him to calm down. Gave up session after 10 minutes.</i>
<i>Jan 2nd</i>	<i>11.20 am</i>	<i>Group activity room. Larry sitting alone. Went over to him and sat next to him.</i>	<i>Started to talk to Larry.</i>	<i>Screamed twice.</i>	<i>I told him he shouldn't scream then left him sitting alone.</i>
<i>Jan 2nd</i>	<i>2.00 pm</i>	<i>Mini bus. Sitting next to Larry.</i>	<i>Me being there. Larry couldn't get out of the seat. I tried to get him to look at things we were driving past.</i>	<i>Screamed several times.</i>	<i>Ignored some screams. Told him off occasionally. Would stop for a while, then start again until I moved from the seat.</i>
	<i>2.20 pm</i>	<i>Mini bus. Had come back to sit next to Larry.</i>	<i>I was talking to Bill, trying to ignore Larry's screaming.</i>	<i>Screamed several times.</i>	<i>I managed to ignore him for a time. Then shouted at him. He stopped for a while, then started again. Kept it up till we got home.</i>
<i>Jan 2nd</i>	<i>6.25 pm</i>	<i>Kitchen. Came over to help Larry with the pastry.</i>	<i>Standing next to him, talking to him.</i>	<i>Started screaming.</i>	<i>I moved away and continued to talk with him. He stopped.</i>

Source: Zarkowska & Clements (1994:37)

Figure 5.4 An example of a S.T.A.R. (Settings, Triggers, Action and Results Model) formulation of a problematic behaviour

Name: <i>Larry</i>	
Definition of behaviour <i>SCREAMING RUSHING ABOUT PULLING THINGS OFF WALLS AND SHELVES PUSHING ANYONE IN HIS WAY</i>	
Appears to achieve the following results <i>RELEASE FROM HIGH LEVEL OF AGITATION EXPRESSION OF HIGH LEVEL OF ANXIETY</i>	
Appears to be set off by the following triggers <i>AN OVERLOAD OF AGITATION/EMOTION (TRIGGERS WHICH INCREASE AGITATION – WAITING, NOISE, A COMMOTION, BEING TOLD NOT TO TOUCH THINGS) PEOPLE SITTING NEXT TO HIM BEING REFUSED MORE FOOD</i>	
Seems to occur in the context of the following environmental setting conditions	
<i>Physical NOISY, CROWDED PLACES (ESPECIALLY MINIBUS, DINING ROOM) LARGE GROUP ACTIVITIES</i>	<i>Occupational UNSTRUCTURED TIMES OF DAY (ESPECIALLY ON RETURN FROM DAY CENTRE) MAJOR CHANGES IN HIS ROUTINE (HOLIDAYS, STAFF CHANGES) BIRTH DAY PARTIES</i>
Appears to be related to the following personal setting conditions	
<i>Physical HIGH LEVELS OF AGITATION WHICH CAN LAST SEVERAL MONTHS</i>	<i>Occupational CONSTANT STATE OF ANXIETY</i>
Appear to be associated with a deficit in the following skills/skill areas <i>INABILITY TO WAIT FOR MORE THAN 4 SECONDS INABILITY TO CONTROL HIS OWN HIGH AROUSAL DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO ASK PEOPLE TO MOVE AWAY</i>	

Source: Zarkowska & Clements (1994:50)

Defining the behaviour of the learner in order to identify whether the learner is exhibiting behaviour problems is not as straightforward as it may as a tendency exists whereby the internalisations and cognitive maps of others are described even though they are not known or visible to the outside observer, for example if a person makes a nasty comment, there is an inclination to describe the learner in accordance therewith. Observing and evaluating a

person's personality traits is another way of describing behaviour, for example a person who frequently slams the door, will be regarded as an aggressive or bad-tempered person. Zarkowska and Clements (1994:23) maintain that "these ways of talking about people are problematic when it comes to trying to help an individual to change". People and therefore teachers, many times judge others' inner states or intentions by their own feelings and inner states, for example if the teacher feels sad, he or she might only notice negative factors regarding the behaviour of the learner and might even see things in the learner's behaviour that seem to be negatively directed towards him or herself. The teacher's own interpretations of the behaviour of the learner are based on personal feelings, personal cognitive maps, unfinished business from his or her past, knowledge on emotional milestones, life experiences, personal memories or associations, and expectations. They all form part of the teacher's frame of reference and therefore influence his or her description of the learner's behaviour (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.1 for further information in this regard). Different teachers will make different judgements on the basis of interpreting the same behaviour of a learner.

A set of objective criteria is thus needed whereby the learner with behaviour problems can be identified and descriptions of behaviour are "free from fuzzy descriptive terms or emotionally charged interpretations" (Zarkowska & Clements 1994:32). For the purposes of the study, the following criteria can be implemented when identifying a learner with behaviour problems, The behaviour is:

- ▶ not appropriate in terms of the learner's age and level of development,
- ▶ not a reasonable response to the situation,
- ▶ a barrier inhibiting the learner from actualising his or her potential,
- ▶ disrupting the learning activities of other learners,
- ▶ impairing the quality of life of significant others, as well as his or her own quality of life,
- ▶ setting an example of unacceptable behaviour to other learners,
- ▶ dangerous to the learner or to significant other persons within the environment,
- ▶ causing stress to the learner and significant other persons in the learner's life-word as well as impairing the quality of their lives,
- ▶ is not according to accepted social norms and values of the community,
- ▶ is a result of unmet emotional needs resulting in a bad self-image,
- ▶ causing the learner to experience minor emotional disturbances, and
- ▶ a sign that the learner has not yet acquired the necessary social skills to function effectively in his or her relationships with others.

If the behaviour of a learner fits the above description of problem behaviour, the teacher must realise that he or she will have to pay attention to, apart from any other factors, the unmet emotional needs of the learner and determine which emotional developmental milestones have not been met. After applying the above criteria in order to identify the learner with behaviour problems, the teacher must refrain from labelling or categorising the learner as belonging to a certain *difficult behaviour* category. The criteria should rather be seen as an indicator of an urgent cry to the teacher for understanding and assistance by the learner with behaviour problems.

5.4.2.2 The analysis phase

The analysis phase constitutes a very important phase in the process of rendering assistance to a learner. If insufficient information is obtained, no thorough, proper analysis can be undertaken and this will impact on the effectivity of the planned assistance programme and consequently eventual dealing with the behaviour problems of the learner in the classroom. It must, however, be kept in mind that in order to satisfy the unmet emotional needs of the learner, the *basic needs* of the learner need be satisfied. If the learner is hungry, has no place to stay, or lacks proper clothing to wear, it is of little use to try and meet his emotional needs. The teacher must remain objective at all times, whilst assessing and evaluating the results of the analysis. Personal unmet needs should not subjectively influence the interpretations derived from the analysis that has been undertaken. If the teacher does not remain professional and objective, no real understanding will be achieved and it will not be possible to render any constructive assistance to the learner.

During this phase the focus is on the **UNMET EMOTIONAL NEEDS** and the **EMOTIONAL MILESTONES** that the learner has not achieved and the impact of these on his or her behaviour. A key concept that must be kept in mind from the very beginning, is that the teacher is intervening in the life of the learner, in an attempt to understand and assist the learner and not to *manage* the behaviour of the learner. To be able to understand the *cognitive map* consisting of feelings and internalized cognitive messages, the teacher must, whilst obtaining the information, *understand* the information in terms of feelings and cognition as experienced and processed by the learner. The teacher must not disregard the importance of the *senses* as conveyers of feelings and cognitive messages, as the senses can be utilised to change the internalized messages during the assistance programme.

In order to identify which unmet emotional needs and which emotional milestones have not been achieved and which are triggering the behaviour of the learner, as much information as possible relating to the quality and nature of the learner's *relationships* and *emotional development* as possible, must be obtained – especially in relation to the more important significant other role players, for example the parents, teacher and peers.

The aims of the analysis phase are to:

- enable the teacher to obtain information to **UNDERSTAND** the learner's internalized cognitive and emotional map.
- enable the teacher to **UNDERSTAND** how to link unmet emotional needs to unrealised emotional milestones of learners manifesting behaviour problems.
- provide the teacher with information to **UNDERSTAND** which unmet emotional needs embedded within specific relationships, are acting as triggers of certain behaviour patterns.
- provide the teacher with information in order to **UNDERSTAND** in what way the behaviour of the learner impacts on the environment and the responses of significant other role players towards the learner.
- enable the teacher, after collecting the required information, to **UNDERSTAND** how to compile a "spot on" assistance programme, as the interpretations of the findings, as well as the actual planning of activities are based on the situational analysis conducted.

The following techniques are but a few of the many examples that can be implemented by the teacher, to obtain information:

- Drawings of the learner's family, him or herself, an "anything" drawing, and drawings of significant other role players.
The teacher for instance looks at for example the size, proportions and positioning of the people, for example family drawing, quality of lines, colours or anything peculiar and asks the learner to tell him or her more about the drawing. Guiding questions can be formulated, for example what is the person in the drawing thinking, feeling, doing?
- Incomplete sentences which are sentences that the learner has to complete, for example my teacher or my teacher hates

The teacher explores each completed sentence, after completion by the learner, with the learner to obtain more information on the reasons for his or her specific answer.

- Essays or paragraphs that the learner has written at the request of the teacher, on selected topics, for example “What worries me most of all is ...”, “Life is frustrating because...”, “I hate my teacher because...”, “I hate myself because...”.

The teacher discusses the essay of the learner with him or her and tries to discover the reasons for the arguments or statements made on paper.

- Role play for instance using puppets. The teacher can act with the one puppet representing a significant other role player that the learner experiencing problems with, for example a peer, and act out a simulated classroom situation. The teacher can specifically echo the exact words of the peer and after a while reverse roles and let the learner be the peer while the teacher acts out the learner’s role.

The teacher can explore the cognitive and emotional maps, in terms of the internalized messages, by focussing during the role play on feelings and the cognitive content of what has been said and done, via questions, statements, and arguments.

- Interviewing the learner – in the classroom when everyone else has left, during break, in an office, or by take the learner for a walk or to get an ice-cream. During the “interview” or discussion the teacher can focus on certain topics related to the learner’s behaviour, which will provide the teacher with information on the internalized map of the learner, for example “I am bad because...”; “I am not O.K. because...”; “Others don’t like me...”; “Things that will make me feel happy again are...” Care should be taken to separate facts from assumptions and responses based on what the learner believes the teacher wants to hear. Open ended questions and not “why” questions which will end the conversation because of its threatening nature, should be asked, for example “what happens when ...?”. In order to ensure that the information is accurate, the teacher must confer with colleagues, who also know the learner and who have had the opportunity to observe the learner in different environments in which he or she spends his or her time. Questions should be based on what the teacher has observed and not what he or she has heard from others or the subjective impressions. Interviews with the parents and other significant other role players ought to be explored to verify “themes” and the observations and interpretations of the teacher, as well as to assess other setting factors, for example recent life events and past history.

The interview serves as a powerful means to try and understand the learner more effectively – however, the teacher/learner relationship must be characterised by trust, honesty, respect, and genuineness. The atmosphere of the physical situation, for example the classroom, is important and should be warm and provide a sense of caring.

- Written records, for example reports of professional persons that previously may have tried to assist the learner or who are assisting the learner at present, as well as the outcomes of the assistance (e.g. significant life events, early life) have relevance as sources of information.

Written records can be a useful source to verify the teacher's interpretations, but care should be taken that the teacher does not accept alternative viewpoints without weighing up the actual validity of findings recorded in the records. Labelling can be a typical factor that can affect the teacher's interpretations.

- Personality questionnaires which will provide the teacher with information on the specific temperament type of the learner.

The teacher must know and understand his or her own temperament type, as well as the temperament type of the learner. The teacher's teaching style, assistance and understanding of the learner's behaviour could be influenced thereby. The teacher may need to complement the temperament type of the learner to assist him or her in the most effective way, for example if the learner is inclined to appear to be lazy and unmotivated, the teacher must refrain from labelling the learner and harming his or her self-concept by blaming the learner for his or her conduct – instead the teacher will, if he or she has an understanding of temperament types, know that this kind of behaviour is characteristic of the phlegmatic type of personality.

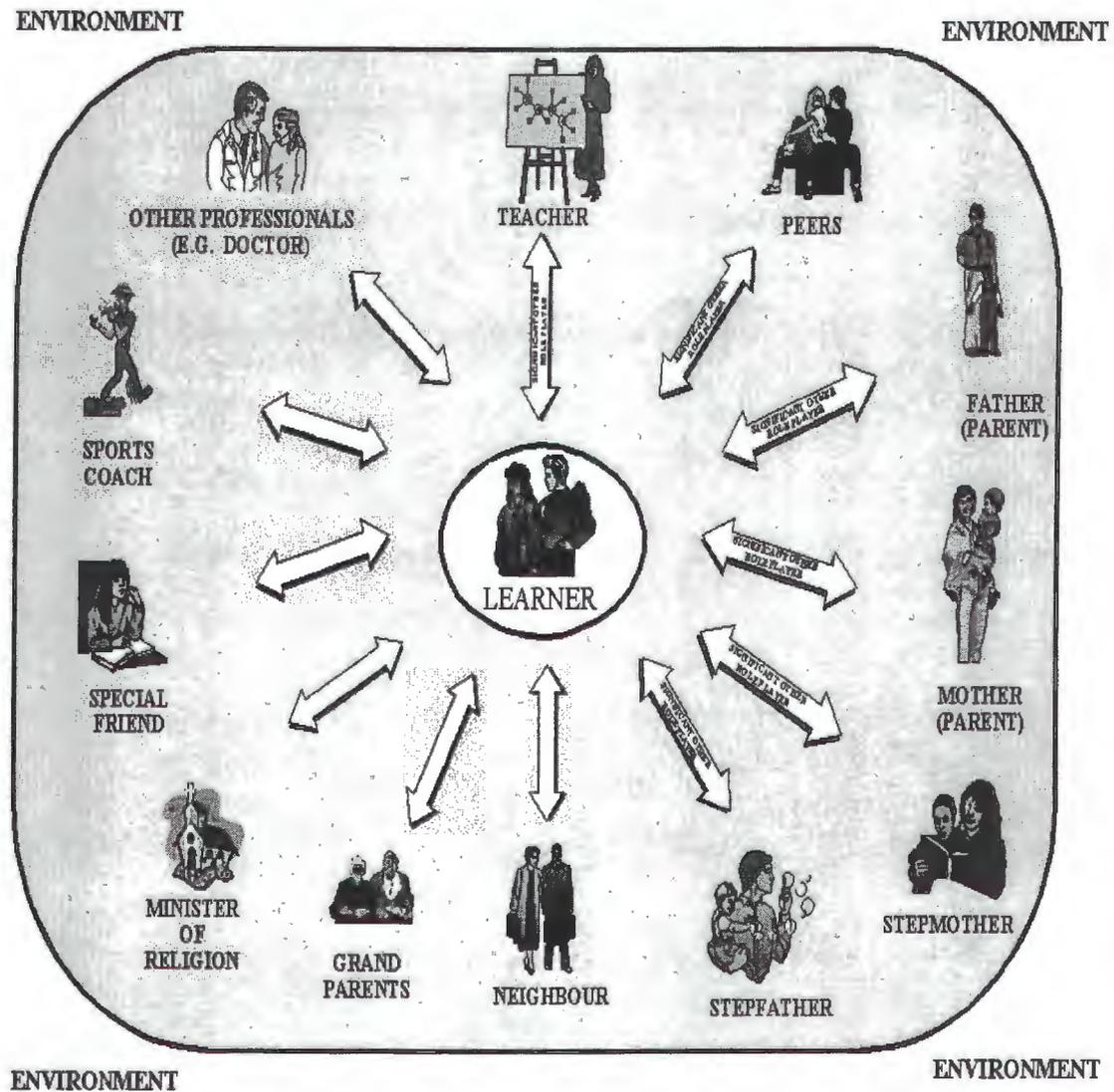
It is important for the teacher to keep in mind that he or she must not interpret the above information in a fragmented manner, but rather on a holistic basis. Repetitive themes encountered must be noted and taken cognizance of, while incidental comments or statements should be regarded with caution in drawing conclusions therefrom. It may also be worthwhile for the teacher to check after a period of time to see whether the reasons a learner provided for having made certain remarks, statements or arguments remain the same, as many factors could have triggered a learner's response to specific questions, whereas on another day and at another time, the response may be totally different or deemed to be irrelevant. The teacher must also realise that the information obtained should be regarded as **CONFIDENTIAL** and should not be informally discussed with colleagues over a cup of

tea or regarded as a sensational piece of news to be debated during a break in the staffroom. Learners instinctively know when teachers are not treating their personal information as confidential and will never confide in such a teacher – in such a situation, **NO ASSISTANCE OR UNDERSTANDING** of the learner's internalized map, will be possible.

After the teacher has collected as much information as possible on the quality and nature of the learner's relationships, the teacher can construct an "*eco map*" depicting the learner's relationships within his or her life-world/environment. Within each relationship, by making use of descriptive key words, the unmet emotional needs of the learner embedded within the emotional milestones, are described – see figure 5.5 in this regard. The teacher must also keep in mind that if one emotional need remains unmet, all the other emotional needs will be affected thereby, as "all human needs are interrelated and interdependent in a subtle, complex and continuous way"(Pringle 1986:33).

The researcher would like to visually present the reciprocal interaction between the learner and the significant other role players in his or her environment in figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5 An Eco map of a learner exhibiting behaviour problems



After the teacher has obtained all the relevant information, he or she files the important documents in the portfolio file of the learner and drafts a report on the learner. (This report can at a later stage be submitted to a meeting of the Educational Support Team, when the teacher is no longer in a position to assist the learner for various reasons and needs to hand over the learner's behaviour problem to the team or professional members of the team, e.g. a psychologist, or social worker.)

The following format is suggested for compiling the report on the learner:

- *Personal details* of the learner (This typically should include name, exact age in months and years, grade, address, contact telephone numbers, occupation of parents, schools attended since grade one, as well as when the learner changed schools, names and dates of birth of other siblings in the family, name of present teacher(s), any grades repeated, problem presented, any assistance rendered thus far – by whom, what kind of assistance, what was the outcome of the assistance any possible traumatic experiences.)
- *Background information.* (Details to be recorded relate to developmental milestones, especially emotional developmental milestones, as described by Erikson – see Chapter 2 in this regard. Family history, details on the marital relationship/divorce – if the parents got divorced, when did it happen, how old was the learner at the time of the divorce, was he or she informed beforehand of the pending divorce, how did the learner react thereto and whether any fantasies on the parents getting back together exist. Stepparents and reconstituted families. What is the learner's role within the family, has the learner been assigned any responsibilities in the family or home, for example care for pets, **what are the characteristics of the parenting styles of the parents**, what atmosphere exists in the family and home, is a fixed routine being followed in the home, any possible physical condition that might be relevant, for example endogenic depression, temperament types of the parents, detailed information on possible traumatic experiences that the learner might have had.) Pringle's theory in relation to what is needed by a child to experience that his or her emotional needs are met, (Chapter 4) as well as the negative outcomes of unmet emotional needs, as discussed by Pringle (Chapter 5) can be utilized as topics to be explored in this section of the report.
- *Detailed information on the relationships of the learner.* (These include the child/mother, child/father, child/stepmother, child/step father, the learner's relationships with each of the siblings, the grandparents, and learner/peer or learner/specific friend relationships. The learner may be involved in many other relationships within his or her unique life-world. Within each relationship the quality and nature of the specific relationship are evaluated with specific reference to the way in which the relationship satisfies the emotional needs of the learner and how the learner's behaviour in terms of his or her unmet emotional needs and his or her unacquired emotional milestones impact on his or her behaviour towards the significant other role player, for example if the learner has not acquired the milestone trust versus mistrust during early childhood, he or she will be inclined to mistrust teachers, peers or parents and this in turn will negatively reinforce his need to be

loved and experience security, be accepted, praised and recognized (see figure 5.1 in this regard). The problem areas resulting in unmet emotional needs, or factors giving rise to emotional milestones not being realised, must also be identified. These factors can be attended to when deciding on specific long and short term outcomes and in developing strategies to achieve these goals. These factors will also assume relevance in the evaluation and interpretation of the findings.) Pringle's theory on the unmet emotional needs (Chapter 4) and what is required to meet these needs together with the discussion on the negative outcomes of unmet needs (Chapter 5) should be kept in mind, when exploring the learner's relationships, in order to determine which of the factors described by Pringle are present within the relationships of the learner.

- *Temperament type and Personality factors.* (The learner can complete a personality questionnaire – see Annexure C in this regard. The teacher can verify the results of the completed questionnaire by discussing the results with the learner, as well as by integrating the findings with the other associated information acquired, for example in what way does the temperament type of the learner affect the cognitive map of the learner in terms of the unmet emotional needs. A melancholy learner might feel more easily that he or she is less acceptable than is the case with a choleric type of learner and extra care should thus be taken to meet the emotional need of praise and recognition – see figure 5.1 in this regard.)
- *Evaluation and Interpretation.* (An evaluation in terms of which emotional needs are met and not met, what the causative factors are of the unmet needs within the learner's relationships, in what way the learner's behaviour impacts on the relationships, how unacquired emotional milestones impact on the behaviour of the learner, who are the major significant other role players that can be included in the assistance process, what factors or circumstances will need to change before the learner's needs can be met and what specific strategies can be implemented to meet the emotional needs of the learner. After the interpretation of the above information has been completed, the outcomes should be assessed, in terms of the internalization model, by focussing on internalized feelings and cognition that impact on the behaviour of the learner – see figure 5.1 in this regard.) Zarkowska and Clements (1994:83) maintain that, although the interpretation by the learner of his or her life-world or environment does not necessary take place at a conscious level, it depends very much on how the learner interprets (cognition and feelings) his or her life-world.

The following section of the report will reflect on the **UNDERSTANDING** by the teacher of the learner's behaviour.

- *Envisaged outcomes.* (Long term and short term outcomes need to be factored into the planning process and attention needs to be attributed to when and how the outcomes thereof will be assessed.)
- *Strategies to be implemented to assist the learner.* (Of relevance here is which significant other role players will be involved, what needs they will be required to meet and in which way will the needs must be met. Any expectations significant other role players may have of the learner need to be noted. Teachers are expected to keep in mind that networking and collaboration with the other significant role players remains an important determinant in providing the learner with assistance, for example the assistance rendered by social worker's, psychologist/doctors, the peers and parents. The teacher can act as a facilitator in ensuring the smooth running of the assistance programme. All the significant other role players must abide by the same rules, for example not labelling or assigning blame to the learner. The accent should be on focussing on internalized messages, via feelings and cognition, and methods utilizing the senses to convey positive messages that may be internalized by the learner. All role players must strive towards one common outcome, namely the meeting of the learner's unmet emotional needs and the acquiring of emotional milestones in order to thereby combat behaviour problems.) According to Pringle (1986:34) emotional needs have to be met from birth, to adulthood and on to old age. If they are not met, the person whether still at school or having already left, will within all his or her relationships, always be craving for the realisation of these needs and unmet emotional needs will distort the development of the person concerned, Pringle 1986:81.)

5.4.2.3 Outcomes

The importance of planned outcomes assumes significant relevance in Covey's (1989:98) assertion that "to begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction". No *effective understanding and assistance* is possible without planned outcomes as "we may be very busy, we may be very *efficient*, but we will also be *truly effective* only when we begin with the end in mind" (Covey 1989:98).

According to Zarkowska and Clements (1994:54), *goals* or *outcomes* need to be clearly stated, as clarity in terms of what specific outcomes need to be achieved, as well as how they can be achieved (who will do what, under what conditions) is central to the motivation and efficiency of the realisation of these goals or outcomes. In order for outcomes to be clear, they must be formulated in terms of specific actions that may be observed, contain no abstract generalizations or reference to unobservable inner states. If outcomes are not clearly stated, it will be difficult for the teacher to know when the outcomes have been achieved. Moreover, confusion can be created if significant other role players have a totally different understanding of the envisaged outcomes. A lack of clarity will also decrease the excitement experienced by all the significant other role players involved in achieving the outcomes and in contrast could stimulate disagreements. A generalized outcome "to be more sociable" can be made specific by stating that the learner must at least talk to one other learner on the playground during the lunch break.

During the outcomes phase, the teacher envisages and defines the long and short term outcomes. Long term outcomes can be expected to typically include behaviour outcomes that the teacher envisages at the end of the year or at the end of the school career to have actualised his or her full potential or satisfy certain specific dominant emotional needs. Long term outcomes are important, as they provide an overall purpose to the day-to-day activities of the assistance programme. Realistic planning in terms of the time span is believed to be necessary, as significant other role players can lose interest and enthusiasm and thus the outcomes are no longer effective in guiding and motivating the assistance rendering process. An assessment of what outcomes could reasonably be expected depends on the characteristics of the learner and the devotedness of the significant other role players in meeting the emotional needs of the learner. When formulating outcomes, it is necessary that statements of needs ought to be translated into actionable objectives or outcomes which can be achieved within a period of 6 to 12 months. A further analysis to determine day-to-day outcomes is required. A change in behaviour patterns can be achieved by altering the frequency of the occurrence of a specific behaviour pattern, for example getting out of the seat and disrupting the class by allowing the learner only to get out of his or her seat three times during the day, instead of the usual twenty. In the next paragraph, research therapeutic techniques that can be implemented to control the frequency of occurrence of the behaviour problem, for example behaviour modification techniques, will be discussed. A breakdown of the situation can also change the pattern of occurrence of the problem behaviour, for example the learner can only get out of his or her seat during the first and last period of the day, instead of during each period.

Short term goals or outcomes offer the opportunity the learner and all significant other role players to effectively experience success before progressing to a subsequent short term outcome. A series of short term outcomes provide a continuous sense of achievement and seem to encourage persistence, which is essential in combatting behaviour problems. The accent is on building morale by means of short term win/win situations. Short term outcomes are helpful in the sense that they refine the approaches used for teaching and behaviour change, in addition to guiding the teacher on how to eventually achieve well defined long term outcomes. Intervention programmes can be modified according to the effectivity of previous short term outcomes and progress made. Short term outcomes (who must do what, under what conditions and to what degree of success) must just like long term outcomes be clearly defined.

Short term outcomes will be envisaged for the following week, the next two weeks, the coming month, the next three months and similar periods of time with specific outcomes listed. Ideally short term outcomes should be achieved in a period of six to eight weeks. Some of the short term outcomes will overlap with long term outcomes, for example to boost the self-image of the learner and make him or her feel good about him or herself (long term), to praise and give recognition to the learner for the successful completion of a certain assignment in class (short term). It is, however, also important that progress made be assessed after a programme of understanding and assistance has been implemented for a certain period of time, for example 3 months, by making use of the same techniques that have been implemented when the original assessment was done and by comparing the "before" and "after" conclusions and interpretations in terms of which emotional needs are yet to be met and which have been met fairly well by the significant other role players involved.

5.4.2.4 The "Alter settings" phase

If the setting or environment in which the problem behaviour occurs, the behaviour of the significant other role players, as well as the behaviour of the learner can be changed, it is likely that the need to exhibit problem behaviour to satisfy unmet emotional needs in an unacceptable way, will be reduced. *Setting conditions* refers to a variety of factors that impact on the behaviour of the learner. Interventions at the settings level can occur in a variety of ways, ranging from practical interventions to more specialized interventions undertaken by a psychologist or social worker. Settings can be changed to either trigger

acceptable behaviour by eliminating or alleviating environmental factors. This may be achieved by focussing on:

- ▶ the responses of the significant other role players while not satisfying the emotional needs of the learner,
- ▶ by changing a situation or set of circumstances as such, for example changing the seating arrangements in the classroom if a specific learner is always instigating a fight amongst learners,
- ▶ transferring the learner to another teacher's class if he or she cannot get on with a specific teacher and the teacher constantly blames or labels him or her all the time, and
- ▶ changing the atmosphere in the classroom from a competitive, aggressive, non-caring environment to one of caring, empathy, warmth and understanding.

According to Zarkowska and Clements (1994:76), if the responses of significant other role players towards the learner are characterized by hostility, criticism, bossiness or inconsistency, these feelings will be reflected in the behaviour of the learner. Zarkowska and Clements (1994:77) argue that it is very important that the different significant other role players communicate well and agree on the different issues relating to the assistance process. Possible feelings of mistrust, conflict, tension and dislike must be dealt with, as they impact on the quality of their relationships with the learner and affects the quality of their work and their motivation to achieve envisaged outcomes. A common vision, shared by all the significant other role players, can be achieved by (Zarkowska & Clements 1994:77):

- ▶ developing a shared awareness of the problem,
- ▶ defining the outcomes to be achieved,
- ▶ brainstorming the options for change,
- ▶ evaluating the options identified,
- ▶ selecting the most appropriate course of action, and
- ▶ implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the vision that has been co-created.

A shared awareness and common understanding of the learner's behaviour can be achieved by (Zarkowska & Clements, 1994:78):

- ▶ group discussion,
- ▶ individual discussions with significant other role players,
- ▶ anonymous questionnaires, and
- ▶ collecting observational data. The observations that have been made can be referred back to the group/significant other role player, as a way of alerting

them to and gaining an awareness of the problem and their impact on the behaviour of the learner, or by his or her emotional needs not yet being met.

If the learner exhibiting behaviour problems, appears to be suffering from emotional distress, anxiety or depression, he or she should as a matter of urgency be referred to a psychologist for specialised assistance. The teacher can also introduce relaxation techniques to meditate and relax. Learners who have been subjected to traumatic experiences ought to also be referred to a psychologist. Teachers themselves, as well as the significant other role players can in the meantime, whilst collaborating with professionals (e.g. a medical doctor), attempt to meet the unmet emotional needs of the learner and organise and facilitate the significant other role players to take part in the assistance process.

According to the *“whole school approach”* as articulated in the new Education Policy, the whole school must collaborate in meeting the emotional needs of learners, so for instance recognition and praise should be given to all learners who have exhibited admirable personality traits. These could inter alia include a prize or certificate awarded to the learner who has walked the *“extra mile”* with another learner enduring hardship; a certificate of recognition awarded to a learner for assisting a teacher; an endurance prize or certificate awarded to a learner who has attempted to achieve success, but eventually failed due to no fault of his or her own. The ethos of the school has an impact on the culture and atmosphere that prevails within the school. If the culture is one of caring, empathy, comradeship, and support, and these values are reflected in the day-to-day actions of the principal, teaching faculty, administrative staff and members of the governing body, the learners will eventually come to the point where they will conform to the same behaviour patterns, thereby satisfying one another’s emotional needs. The learners will tend to imitate within the classroom setting, the cohesiveness and supportive interaction role modelled by the principal, teaching and administrative staff, and parents as a team, in assisting learners to overcome the barriers preventing them from actualising their full potential

A ***supportive*** and ***caring atmosphere*** experienced within the school situation and especially within the classroom, will act as a substitute for *“the natural family”* of the learner who is being abused emotionally. Should the so-called substitute or new *“family”* setting provide him or her with the required emotional nurturing, this could well result in a diminution of his or her behaviour problems. Andersen (1995:15-17) contends that *“I observed many positive changes in the young people with whom I worked. Students who had previously been unsuccessful in school began to “bloom”.* **In a caring atmosphere they are less**

guarded and more spontaneous in their behaviour. Few things are more encouraging to young people than when someone openly demonstrates spontaneous delight and joy over their accomplishment, growth, or understanding.

The values embodied with the school's mission or vision statement should be identified and prominently displayed. This is, however, but a first step in the right direction. If these values are not lived out on a day-to-day basis, they will not be worth the paper they are printed on. If an active attempt is made to live out these values, greater cohesion can be achieved in assisting learners to actualise their full potential. The desired culture should ideally be one where teachers focus on accentuating the positive behaviour of learners and refrain from the labelling of students. **The "setting" will thus be altered, by satisfying the emotional needs of learners and the nurturing of positive self-images which will in turn ensure that learners actualise their true potential.** If a school is aiming at being and regarded as *an effective school, an active attempt should be made to meet the emotional needs of learners and develop strategies to satisfy these needs.*

5.4.2.5 "Alter triggers" phase

Assisting and understanding Learners with behaviour problems is a multi-dimensional endeavour. It requires a problem-solving approach in that the teacher as the facilitator identifies unmet emotional needs within specific relationships and thereafter coordinates the interventions initiated by appropriate significant other role players who are able to meet the unmet emotional needs of the learner.

Extrinsic *trigger* factors are stimuli within the learner's external environment (e.g. rejection by the peer group), visual observations, a specific sound or smell, certain people or places, or things that people may say, that act as a catalyst in triggering particular behaviour patterns. Intrinsic triggers emanate from within the learner, for example emotional pain experienced as a result of emotional needs that are unmet or a learner feeling like giving up on him or herself, as a result of a poor self-image.

Behaviour is triggered by a stimulus because (Zarkowska & Clements 1994:92,93):

- ▶ it acts as a reminder to the learner that something that he or she wants is available,
- ▶ it serves as a warning sign to the learner that something that he or she fears or dislikes, is about to happen,

- ▶ an intolerable amount of negative emotion or physiological arousal has been activated,
- ▶ of a habit, it can trigger a response, and
- ▶ a reflex reaction is elicited.

Zarkowska and Clements (1994:25) identify the following triggers:

- Reward/punishment signal (signals to the learner that something that he or she wants is potentially available or that something that he does not want or like or wishes to eliminate, is imminent).
- Triggers for gains (a trigger associated with feelings of happiness, e.g. stroking or cuddling, which will put an end to screaming and yelling in the classroom).
- Triggers for escape (the trigger signals to the learner that something that he or she fears, is about to transpire and this signal triggers a reaction, e.g. head banging).
- Physiological arousal/stimulus overload (existing strong emotions, for example tension, can be overloaded by the occurrence of a minor, insignificant event and the learner reacts with an emotional outburst as the physiological system is overloaded).
- Habit (the behaviour of the learner can trigger a second behaviour in a sequence which can become automatic without the learner even being aware thereof, e.g. biting of nails and eventual getting up from the seat to go to the toilet).
- Involuntary reaction (the experience of emotional pain can elicit an automatic reaction, for example throttling another learner who is degrading the learner with behaviour problems).

A specific behaviour pattern is triggered by a stimulus in a certain situation. The behaviour is, however, regarded as problematic – not because the behaviour pattern in itself is inappropriate, but because the circumstances or situation in which the behaviour is performed, is regarded as inappropriate. This takes place as a result of the behaviour being controlled by the wrong triggers (e.g. undressing in the classroom whilst the teacher is teaching) or because the behaviour is controlled by too many triggers (e.g. undressing in the classroom, in the shop and in the principal's office) or because the behaviour is controlled by too few triggers (e.g. the learner is calm and well behaved in the presence of his or her favourite teachers, but misbehaves in the presence of all other staff members). The learner thus behaves inappropriately in specific situations and does not know when and in what situations or environment his or her behaviour will be regarded as appropriate. When no triggers exist, it is difficult for the learner to quit unacceptable behaviour, even though the

longer the behaviour is maintained the level of anxiety increases (e.g. obsessional or ritualistic behaviour like damaging his or her desk by writing on it instead of on paper). Although the learner feels uncomfortable whilst experiencing negative emotions, he or she finds it difficult to end the build-up of negative emotions and physiological arousal, once it has commenced. In order to control the triggers triggering certain behaviour patterns in the classroom, the teacher needs to have a clear understanding of the nature and quality of the triggers, and of how triggers can be changed in order to alter the behaviour concerned (Zarkowska & Clements 1994:94). Various methods may be utilised to alter inappropriate trigger actions, namely: eliminating triggers by graded exposure, desensitization, training the learner know when and in what situations his or her behaviour will be regarded by others as acceptable or appropriate, generalization of the appropriate behaviour to other situations or environments, or terminating ritualistic or obsessional behaviour by diffusing high arousal.

If the teacher can eliminate triggers giving rise to undesirable behaviour patterns in the classroom, many emotional outbursts or problematic situations could be prevented. To be able to exercise this level of control, the teacher will have to know each of his or her learners personally, knowing which unmet emotional needs are stimulate, what behaviour patterns and which trigger stimulates the need and creates and emotional pain (e.g. if a learner has a poor self-image and peers in the classroom, during a specific situation, tell the learner what a failure he or she is, the learner might act out with aggression and an emotional outburst might occur which disrupts the whole class). Instead of controlling the learner and labelling the learner as being a "problem", the accent should be on eliminating the trigger circumstance, namely the negative reinforcement of hurtful feelings about him or herself. The teacher needs to know why the specific behaviour pattern has been triggered in order to address the causative factor, namely a need to be praised and recognized as a unique worthwhile person. Analysing trigger factors can be a useful tool in dealing with the manifestations of behaviour, as reactions to unmet emotional needs. A double trigger factor exists in the sense that the unmet emotional need as such can be regarded as a trigger factor in general, stimulated and triggered off by another more specific trigger during a distinct situation or within a specific environment, for example in the classroom. By dealing with the triggers in the environment of the learner, the level at which problem behaviour occurs can be controlled and the learner can be empowered with new coping skills so that he or she in cooperation with the teacher, may explore far more acceptable ways to meet his or her unmet emotional needs.

Zarkowska and Clements (1994:25) maintain that the teacher can by identifying triggers triggering certain behaviour patterns, understand the functionality of behaviour patterns for the learner, they will be able to predict the likelihood of the occurrence of a certain behaviour pattern occurring and be able to assess the most appropriate method of intervention.

5.4.2.6 The “alter actions” phase

This phase deals with the actions of the teacher and significant other role players that have to be altered in order to meet the unmet emotional needs of the learner, so that the occurring behaviour problems or potential behaviour problems can be prevented, attended to or eliminated – see section 5.2 of this Chapter regarding the behavioural outcomes of learners whose emotional needs have not been met.

In table 5.2 the emotional needs as described by Pringle (1985:35-58), D’Evelyn (1957:6-41), and Raths (1972:40-60) are discussed in terms of providing guidelines for teachers in order to alter their actions if they are committed to assisting learners by dealing with their emotional needs.

The teacher can only implement the guidelines to alter his or her actions towards the learner with behaviour problems, if the teacher is empowered with *knowledge* of behaviour problems and especially emotional needs, emotional milestones and the internalization model. They also need to know how to change the cognitive map of the learner, by making use of the learner’s *senses*. The teacher must, however, also have the correct *attitude* towards learners with behaviour problems, for example not to label and reject learners with behaviour problems, but want to care, understand and assist these learners. It is also important that the teacher as the facilitator of the process of altered actions, inspires and controls the change process by empowering significant other role players in terms of knowledge, correct attitudes and appropriate skills in dealing with unmet emotional needs as a trigger factor giving rise to behaviour problems.

TABLE 5.2 Guidelines for teachers on fulfilling emotional needs of learners

1. THE NEED FOR LOVE
<p>The teacher needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ accept the learner unconditionally and for his or her own sake by for instance hugging the learner and responding in a warm, friendly and supportive manner,▶ observe and encourage each attempt the learner may make,▶ exhibit a sense of caring for each learner in a unique way,▶ acknowledge that each learner has different unmet emotional needs,▶ role modelling loving, caring relationships for learners, and▶ letting the learner experience a feeling that the teacher will walk the extra mile with him or her.
2. THE NEED FOR SECURITY
<p>The teacher should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ discipline the learners in a consistent manner,▶ display consistency in the expectations they have of learners,▶ display familiar objects in the classroom – posters, charts, pictures,▶ establish stable “familial relationships” amongst learners in the classroom,▶ behave in a consistent, dependable way towards learners,▶ not change the daily routine of learners,▶ assist learners in experiencing the classroom as a place they are familiar with, constant changes in the classroom should be avoided,▶ avoid giving rise to insecurity by eliminating any form of unpredictability, e.g. an unexpected test or one minute rewarding the learner and the next scolding the learner,▶ stimulate individuality by allowing learners to enjoy their uniqueness,▶ acknowledge and stimulate self-determination,▶ involve parents in the education of their children, so that standards/rules/norms and values are the same at home as at school,▶ explain the rationale for standards/norms/values/rules to learners,▶ explain and demonstrate to learners what limits are permissible in terms of discipline and allow them to experience a sense of fairness,▶ keep in mind that learners will transgress rules and be disobedient at times,▶ not link behaviour problems to the learner as a person, but be able to separate the behaviour from the person,▶ be warm and enthusiastic so that a caring climate can be established in the classroom,▶ model acceptance and caring towards each learner – not being accepted causes feelings of anxiety within the learner and impacts negatively on the learner’s motivation and self-image,▶ keep in mind that learners want to please the teachers that they like and do not want to disappoint them,▶ keep in mind that punishment must realistically relate to the offence, and▶ encourage a democratic familial, caring and warm climate in the classroom by explaining to learners their expectations in terms of acceptable behaviour in order to allow learners to develop internal controls.

3. THE NEED FOR NEW EXPERIENCES

The teacher needs to:

- ▶ stimulate learners by continuously providing them with opportunities to learn and to experience a sense of joy, achievement and competence,
- ▶ reward and praise learners for successfully completing an assignment,
- ▶ realise that the learner's responsiveness to growth tasks are dependent on environmental opportunities and encouragement,
- ▶ keep in mind that the emotional and cultural climate within the school/classroom, as well as the teacher's involvement with learners and the aspirations of each learner, will limit the intellectual growth of the learner,
- ▶ create opportunities to meet the need for new experiences by including "play" activities,
- ▶ talk to learners and teach them to learn to reason, think through and understand their life-worlds, and
- ▶ serve as a "bridge-builder" by: (i) marrying emotion and learning by: role modelling an optimistic, curious and inquisitive attitude to learners and adopting teaching methods that cater for both the strengths and weaknesses of learners, curriculum which links to the interests and developmental level of learners (ii) linking the school, home and community into a synergistic entity, eg. recognising parents as partners in education (iii) bridging education and other professions dealing with the development and well-being of learners by converting the school into a neighbourhood resource centre (iv) fulfill the role of an innovator by preparing learners for the new world/ the future and not only for today's or yesterday's world. The teacher needs to adopt new techniques, teaching methods, teaching aids or technology, thereby discarding old, ineffective methods, while retaining traditional teaching methods found to be effective. The teacher must rekindle the interest, joy and curiosity of learners in learning, in order to combat boredom, especially amongst older learners.

4. THE NEED FOR PRAISE AND RECOGNITION

The teacher should:

- ▶ be able to evaluate a learner's abilities, so as not to expect too little from a learner and thereby causing him or her to adopt too low a standard of effort and achievement, nor too high a level which will cause the learner to experience a feeling of not being able to live up to what is required of him or her, thereby discouraging and diminishing efforts,
- ▶ demonstrate to learners that mistakes and failures are an integral part of learning and that learners will not be rejected or punished for their failures or mistakes,
- ▶ not cause learners to experience anxiety because of failures, as this will become the key issue instead of their benefiting by learning from the failures per se,
- ▶ portray an image of believing in each learner's ability to realise their full potential, and
- ▶ create opportunities for learners to feel adequate, acknowledged and worthwhile whilst experiencing success.

5. THE NEED FOR RESPONSIBILITY

The teacher should

- ▶ be learner centred by creating opportunities for learners to experience “absolute ownership” in terms of responsibilities concerning daily activities in the classroom, planning activities that they are interested in, and draw up rules defining acceptable behaviour,
- ▶ provide learners with a framework of guidance and limits in terms of knowing what exactly *is allowed in the classroom, the rules and reasons for the rules*. The reasons for keeping these rules and why they are in the best interests of the learners need to be explained to them,
- ▶ guide learners in understanding their own feelings and motives, especially when making decisions, and
- ▶ encourage cooperation instead of competition within the classroom.

5.4.2.7 The “alter results” phase

Zarkowska and Clements (1994:225) believe that “an appropriate response to a problematic behaviour, based on the assessment of the function of the behaviour, is an important final consideration in the planning of the therapeutic package which is designed to help an individual overcome or cope with his behavioural difficulties. Failing to plan how to respond may leave carers floundering or reacting emotively and inconsistently”. This statement implies by implication that according to Pringle (1986:106) if the teacher and the significant other role players attend to the unmet emotional needs of the learner, behaviour problems can be “overcome” or the learner will have learned how to “cope” with behaviour problems. The reason for behaviour problem statistics that seem to be continuously rising, may be that *no appropriate response* has been given to the learner, by either the teacher or the significant other role players (Zarkowka & Clements 1994:225). The appropriate response should therefore be formulated and implemented with a sense of urgency, so that fewer learners in future will be exhibiting behaviour problems and not actualising their true potential.

The importance of the *correct response* is stressed by Zarkowska and Clements (1994:206), when they maintain that “behaviour which appears to others as problematic or inappropriate is meaningful and important for the individual concerned: it may be a way of expressing the person’s needs and wants; it may be a source of stimulation or occupation; it may be an expression of the person’s emotional state; it may be a means of exerting control over the world in which the person lives. The person may have no other way of achieving these very important outcomes. Thus, *simply trying to discourage the use of such behaviour, without*

providing help in a number of other areas of personal functioning, may not only be unhelpful but it may also be unethical”.

Learners may exhibit behaviour problems because of the different outcomes the behaviour might have for them. These outcomes could include both positive or negative, or even no responses at all from being elicited within the environment by the significant other role players. Positive responses will negatively reinforce the continuation of the problem behaviour, as the learner will experience that he or she can achieve certain results under specific circumstances. He or she will experience that a certain intensity and amount of behaviour needs to be exhibited before the desired outcome has been reached, or that a range of different behaviours are needed before the need is met and the outcome has been reached.

The outcome of the behaviour stimulates learning, as the learner gets to know which behaviour patterns are acceptable and which unacceptable. He or she can then come to realise that screaming, although it may appear to release the stress experienced, is not appreciated in the classroom and that the teacher and other learners might become irritated by this behaviour. They will also come to the realisation that they may be punished for behaving in an unacceptable, disruptive manner. If the teacher and the learner's peers had all flocked together around him or her and tried to comfort him or her, paying a lot of attention to the learner without worrying about the disruptive effect of his or her behaviour, his or her need for attention, love and recognition would have been met.

However, if the teacher had identified the learner according to the criteria set out in the *identification phase* of this model, as a learner who is exhibiting behaviour problems, and thereafter made a *situational analysis* of the learner's circumstances with the focus on the unmet emotional needs, the teacher could have, by implementing the *correct response*, prevent the behaviour from reoccurring. With the correct response, the intensity and level of severity of the behaviour could be controlled and the impact of the disruptive behaviour on other learners curtailed. The correct response should imply that the teacher would have attended to the learner's unmet emotional needs, by analysing and identifying the needs, and organising the significant other role players within the environment of the learner, to satisfy his or her unmet emotional needs.

Zarkowska and Clements (1994:209,210) warns that carers (for the purposes of this study, the concept “carers” includes teachers), must be consistent in their response towards a

learners who exhibits behaviour problems, as an inconsistent response provides the learner, who is already in a vulnerable position, with inconsistent results. This in turn creates a prolonged and more intense behaviour pattern and thus acts as a negative reinforcer of unacceptable behaviour. The behaviour of learners can elicit a strong emotions within a teacher, especially if the teacher gets the impression that the behaviour is directed at him or her personally. These strong emotional responses of a teacher, can cause him or her to respond in a negative and uncooperative manner towards the learner – especially if the teacher is of the impression that the learner “must be taught a lesson”. Zarkowska and Clements (1994:211) maintain that it is necessary that “the atmosphere remains at all times *warm* and *non-critical* and it will also minimize the risk of the person getting a reaction to his behaviour which he might find socially reinforcing and which may start to shape his behaviour in inappropriate ways” – see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.4 regarding “the emotional climate in the classroom”.

A *warm* and *non-critical* atmosphere in the classroom, creates a sense of “caring”. When learners experience caring (being deeply understood and appreciated), their defensiveness will start to fade away and a willingness to self-disclosure will emerge. This will allow the teacher to identify unmet emotional needs and to develop an appropriate programme of assistance, which is unique and tailor made for the specific individual learner (Andersen 1995:6). If teachers genuinely want to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems, they must create ***a caring atmosphere in the classroom***. It could well be argued that a caring context constitutes a *precondition* for rendering effective understanding and assistance learners concerned. In order for a school to qualify as an *effective school*, a culture or climate of caring and a need to make a difference in the life-world of the learner is required (see Chapter 4, section. 4.5 in this regard).

Morgan (1979:447) maintains that “***it is essential that teachers create a climate of warmth, trust and understanding in keeping open the channels of communication between the children and themselves***”. Mendler (1994:24) similarly contends that “Caring has always been important, but contemporary realities make it a requirement. Without it, there are growing numbers of students who do not learn and worse, who disrupt others”.

In order to *change the results*, the teacher needs to change the behaviour manifestations from unacceptable behaviour to more acceptable behaviour by focussing on the unmet emotional needs. The teacher should also focus on strategies that could be implemented so that all the significant other role players meet the unmet emotional needs of the learner,

whilst changing the cognitive map of the learner by changing the internalized messages which have been reinforced by negative cognition and feelings via the senses. If the teacher and the significant other role players meet the unmet emotional needs of the learner, the learner will develop a good self-concept and actualise his or her full potential.

5.4.2.8 The “alter relationships” phase

Pringle (1986:101,102) maintains that “self-confidence and motivation are fostered or extinguished by the way teachers think about and treat their charges” – see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.4 with regard to “self-concept and emotional needs”. Lund’s research findings (1987:30) indicated that a definite correlation may be found between learners with behavioural and emotional problems and a low self-concept. The self-concepts of these learners seem to be lower than those of learners without emotional and behavioural problems. Morgan (1979:447) found that the more the empathy of the teacher, the lower the truancy rate, and fewer behaviour problems encountered, the less the confusion that existed, the higher the academic grades were, and the greater the motivation of the learners. Morgan (1979:450) contends that “for emotionally disturbed children, the relationship with teachers embodies more than a business affiliation. The cluster of the disturbed child’s needs creates and shapes a necessarily different type of teacher. This teacher absolutely must design a therapeutic environment as a place of recovery and relearning; For many emotionally disturbed children, *the teacher embodies the “therapy”; The teacher is the surrogate parent, the adult model, as well as the “real life teacher”*. Van Acker (1993:28) quotes research findings that have suggested that teachers determine the school climate, which is largely a product of the quality of the teacher / learner relationships that have been established. The common strand winding its way through these findings is the vital role played by the teachers in the emotional well-being of the learner.

Andersen (1995:xiii) underlines the importance of the teacher’s impact when he maintains that “Educators hold a key position for addressing societal problems. They can help young people become morally and ethically responsible as well as academically proficient. The social, psychological and economic costs of these unhealthy behaviours (drug taking, dropping out of school, committing suicide, violent and criminal behaviour) are forcing this country to desperately look for solutions”. Martin, Walford-Kraemer and Light (1984:105) and Short and Short (1989:28) similarly stress the importance of the teacher, when they maintain that “teachers play a pivotal role in the socialization of children. They are responsible for teaching not only academic content, but also appropriate social behaviours

in their classrooms” and “the way teachers handle students’ behaviour problems determines the level of order in the classroom and therefore, can indicate the general health of the school”.

Covey (1998:133,134) makes use of the concept of “a *relationship bank account*”. When describing the impact of relationships on the emotional well-being of teenagers. When listing the most powerful deposits (as provided by a group of teenagers) that could be made into a teenager’s relationship bank account, he sites the deposits made by a teacher, namely “When a friend, teacher, loved one, or employer takes the time to say ‘You look nice’ or ‘Great job’. A few words go a long way”. Other relevant *bank deposits* that are relevant to the teacher/learner relationship are (Covey 1998:133,134):

- ▶ “Bragging about myself to others
- ▶ When I have made mistakes, they forgive, forget and help and love
- ▶ Little things
- ▶ My friend told me, after I read some of my poems that I was brilliant and I should write a book. It was hard to share some of those in the first place.
- ▶ I had a friend who told me he believed I was very sincere and always myself. It meant a lot that someone would recognize that.”

Morgan (1979:447) maintains that teachers must be able to neutralize via interactions with others, for example colleagues, any operative negative forces that might exist within themselves and within learners. Self-knowledge can assist the teacher who is empathic towards learners, in order to prevent him or her from being drawn into stressful situations. They in effect need to act according to their own emotional needs.

In Chapter 3, section 3.6.2 the responses of teachers are reflected, describing the *profile* of the teacher who effectively assists and understands learners with behaviour problems. Andersen (1995:21,22) lists the following characteristics of the teacher that will enhance facilitator effectiveness:

- **Authenticity:** Teachers must be honest, genuine, transparent, congruent and work in the present tense, be aware of and express their own feelings, not putting up a facade of an attitude whilst is it not genuine. Teachers must not act in a disrespectful manner when learners misbehave within the group and should rather make use of “I-messages” instead of “You-messages”, by criticising the learner’s behaviour and not the learner him or herself. The teacher must be honest with the learners whilst not personally attack them so that they need to defend themselves. Learners are more able

to deal with direct confrontations about their behaviour, than having to deal with personal attacks.

- *Nonjudgmental attitude:* Teachers must accept all learners as social equals, which implies a sense of acceptance, affirmation, compassion and unconditional positive regard. Although learners are encouraged to speak their minds, the teacher must role model and teach learners that although they do not like what is being expressed, they still unconditionally accept the worth of the person with whom they disagree).
- *Attentiveness:* The teacher must be very observant – every detail communicated must be observed and noted – especially intonation and body language. Being attentive makes the teacher more able to see and hear what is being conveyed and consequently able to understand the message conveyed, even by what has been omitted to have been said. Together with acceptance and understanding, the teacher must be able to put him or her in the shoes of the learner and experience the learner's feelings, emotions and thoughts. Andersen (1995:22) maintains that "when students feel profoundly understood, they become willing to explore the unknown, the confusing and the frightening. *This quality of understanding brings freedom to the relationship, which is essential for learning and personal growth*".
- *Caring:* The teacher must focus on caring, as the most important component of the whole facilitating process. "Profound caring can permeate an entire group. It becomes an extension of yourself that transcends and becomes something even greater than you. In caring for people, you experience them as having the potentialities and the need to grow" (Andersen 1995:22).
- *Honesty:* The teacher's approachability increases as he or she exhibits characteristics of openness and honesty. Being honest allows the teacher to be a real live and kicking human being, somebody who also does not always know the right answers nor does the right things, somebody who is also still growing mentally speaking, somebody who is not theoretical and intellectual.
- *Courage:* The teacher must, in order to demonstrate courage and humility to learners, be open to learn from other people as well as from his or her mistakes and must be able to just be him or herself.
- *Patience:* The teacher must be patient with him or herself as well as with others. The learners will imitate the patience that the teacher demonstrates, if he or she is prepared to allow learners the freedom to learn in their own way, although this might include manifestations of mischievousness, confusion and playful behaviour, as well as freedom in regard to time and space.

- *Tolerance*: The teacher ought to display tolerance, as tolerance allows the learners “to present themselves without display, concealment, and indirection” (Andersen 1995:23). When the teacher does not exhibit tolerance towards learners, the teacher can be blamed for being arrogant and not allowing learners to change in their own time and way.
- *Faith*: The teacher must encourage learners to actualise their potential by feeling good about themselves. Praise and recognition plays a key role in this regard. If the teacher has faith in a learner, it affirms for the learner a sense of “a present alive with possibilities” (Andersen 1995:22). The teacher, however, has to have faith in him or herself and in the learners.
- *Trust*: The teacher must, in order to let the learner experience feelings of security, trust the learner. Trust demands from the teacher “to let go” by demonstrating confidence in the learner’s ability to make sensible and responsible decisions and to learn from mistakes when wrong decisions have been made.

In Chapter 3, section 3.6.2 the overall opinion of teachers as to whether personal barriers can hinder a teacher to assist and understand a learner with behaviour problems effectively, was affirmed. The research findings of various researchers seem to indicate that teaching learners with behaviour problems remains a very stressful situation (Borg & Riding 1991:355; Mendler 1994:23; Van Acker 1993:31). In the literature the impact of the teacher on the learner is accentuated, whilst the impact of the learners on teachers is less emphasized. It is, however, important that the emotional needs of the teacher are met in the workplace and that the teacher’s feelings and cognition, resulting in his or her cognitive map, be taken into consideration.

A definite factor which impacts negatively on teachers and which includes some of the above aspects, is identified as *professional recognition needs* (not enough recognition given for their efforts, inadequate salary and poor promotion prospects). The professional recognition needs link to the emotional needs, as described by Pringle (1986:33-58), especially *the need to be praised and recognized*. It is a necessity that the emotional needs of the teacher are met, as “the role of the educator, especially in the public schools of our nation’s urban centers, has never been as demanding as it is today” (Van Acker 1993:24). Teachers must be emotionally assisted to “...refuse to give up on the child despite the child’s best efforts to get you to throw in the towel” (Mendler 1994:24). A challenge that the teacher is forced to either take up or to back off from, is the challenge to “stay personal with the student without becoming personally offended at the student’s behaviour” (Mendler

1994:24). The impact of teachers' beliefs about the effectiveness of their decision making ability, in terms of how to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems, demands serious attention. If the teacher is expected to be able to implement any intervention strategy, he or she needs to feel confident about his or her abilities (Mendler 1994:24). A good self-concept implies by implication that the emotional needs of teachers within the workplace are met. This serves as a precondition for a teacher to be able to implement strategies to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems.

In terms of the preceding discussion it is clear that the teacher/learner relationship, which fosters characteristics like *empathy, warmth, caring, congruence, genuineness, unconditional positive regard, and respect*, provides an ideal "vehicle" and opportunity for assisting learners to realise unmet emotional needs. The teacher, as one of the major significant other role players in the environment of the learner, certainly plays a key role in any learner-centred understanding and assistance initiative.

5.5 POSSIBLE THERAPEUTIC TECHNIQUES TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM

Although according to Thompson & Rudolph (1996:26) "no one system has emerged as consistently most effective" and that they propose the implementation of a variety of different methods, approaches and techniques, the following points of departure must be kept in mind when a decision regarding the most suitable technique is made:

- The meeting of emotional needs of children, as described by Pringle (1986:33-58).
- The emotional milestones, as described by Erikson (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:15,16).
- The cognitive milestones, as described by Piaget (Thompson & Rudolph 1996:11-14).
- The existence of a cognitive map in the mind of the learner, as described by Wieland (1997:2-9).
- The reality of internalized messages based on feelings and cognition, as described by Wieland (1997:2-9).
- The importance of the senses as messengers of feelings and cognition shaping the cognitive map and impacting on the behaviour of the learner, as described by Thompson and Rudolph (1996:29) and Wieland (1997:2-9).
- The technique or therapy must be based on and concur with the frame of reference of the theoretical approaches, as discussed in Chapter 4, namely the psychoanalytical approach (cognitive component), reality therapeutic approach (behavioural

component), person-centred counselling approach (affective component), gestalt therapeutic approach (affective component), rational-emotive-behaviour therapeutic and cognitive-behaviour therapeutic approaches (cognitive component), behavioural counselling approach (behaviour component), transactional analytical approach (cognitive component) and the individual psychological approach (behaviour component).

- The technique or therapy must be embedded within the frame of reference of the ecological systems model with the focus on the teacher, as the facilitator and organiser of the significant other role players in meeting the unmet emotional needs of the learner.
- Although the different subsystems (e.g. school ethos, atmosphere in the classroom, the attitude and involvement of the whole school and the community, parents) of the school system must be utilised when the assistance programme is rendered, the primary focus is on the teacher/learner relationship and the outcome of the learner experiencing a positive self-concept which will enable him or her to actualise his or her full potential.

No detailed discussion on different therapeutic techniques will be included as the main focus of the study is on the development of a model(s) and the components of the model. Therapeutic techniques are linked with the “alter relationship” subsystem of the proposed model for teachers, as they are *tools* to be used by teachers in order to assist and understand the learner with behaviour problems.

Therapeutic techniques as suggested by researchers to attend to the cognitive, affective and behavioural components, related to the internalization model, rationale of the study and the model developed for teachers to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems more effectively, are listed in table 5.2.

The techniques of the person-centred approach, as introduced by Rogers (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:467-478; Thompson & Rudolph 1996:119) in his client-centred therapy, namely *unconditional positive regard and empathy*, as depicted in the counselling relationship and counselling situation, links with the proposed *caring* atmosphere in the classroom and the nature and quality of the teacher/learner relationship, whilst the teacher is assisting and understanding a learner with unmet emotional needs with the end result of a positive self-concept. Judging from the outcomes of the above therapeutic techniques, as listed in table 5.3, the importance of the teacher/learner relationship and the specific outcome of a positive self-concept cannot be overlooked.

Table 5.3 Suggested therapeutic techniques to be utilised by the teacher in the classroom in order to attend to unmet emotional needs by appealing to the affective, cognitive and behavioural components

<i>Theoretical approaches</i>	<i>Focus areas of theoretical approaches</i>	<i>Therapeutic techniques</i>	<i>Envisaged outcomes of therapeutic interventions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Psychoanalytical approach * Rational-Emotive Behaviour Therapeutic Approach and Cognitive-Behaviour Approach * Transactional analytical approach 	<i>Cognitive component</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Art therapy ✓ Incomplete sentences ✓ Bibliotherapy ✓ Storytelling ✓ Metaphors ✓ Psychodrama ✓ Play therapy ✓ Correcting negative self-talk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The teacher/learner relationship becomes the main "treatment component" * Attending to the unmet emotional needs of learners which result in a positive self-concept * Effective in dealing with parent guidance, relationship problems, aggression, anxiety, depression and ADHD

<i>Theoretical approaches</i>	<i>Focus Areas of theoretical approaches</i>	<i>Therapeutic techniques</i>	<i>Envisaged outcomes of therapeutic interventions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Person-centred counselling approach * Gestalt Therapeutic approach 	<p>Affective component</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Writing about/drawing feelings ✓ Playing of confidence games ✓ Storytelling ✓ Art activities ✓ Music therapy ✓ Incomplete sentences ✓ Empty chair ✓ Fantasy games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Positive self-concept * Improved communication in relationships * More spontaneous and confident behaviour * An awareness of and constructive use of aggression * Improved teacher/learner relationship * Meeting of unmet emotional needs whilst the self-concept is positively reinforced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Behaviour counselling approach * Reality therapeutic approach * Individual Psychological approach 	<p>Behaviour component</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reframing of thoughts ✓ Paradoxal intention ✓ Dereflection ✓ Reframing of self-talk ✓ Visualisation ✓ Role-playing and role-reversal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To control behaviour by rewarding and punishing the learner * Systematic desensitization * Changing the learner's overt and covert responses * To streamline behaviour according to reality and to give direction to behaviour, cognitions and feelings * To strengthen and accentuate the importance of the teacher/learner relationship * To accentuate the classroom atmosphere which is similar to the atmosphere in the family home.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

The following important conclusions emerge from this chapter:

- Learners with behaviour problems are labelled and passed on from the one person/department to the other until the learners are unofficially expelled from school.
- Institutions, schools, parents of other learners, and members of the community are essentially ignorant as regards the problems of learners who manifest behaviour problems. They consequently do not want to take ownership of the behaviour problems of the learners concerned nor do they want to become involved in any way.
- Staff members of institutions and schools are not empowered to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems.
- No formal course curriculum on assisting and understanding a learner with behaviour problems exists.
- No formal training opportunities for staff members of institutions are readily available.
- The basic and emotional needs of the significant other persons need to be satisfied in order to deal with the emotional needs of learners.
- Financial problems experienced within the home places the learner at risk. If the learner exhibits behaviour problems at school, he or she gets "expelled", especially if other parents complain that the learner in question is disruptive when their children want to learn. They tend to place pressure on the school to remove the learner from the school.
- The need of children to be heard, when they are crying out for understanding and assistance, is illustrated by the previously alluded to clippings from newspapers.
- The occurrence of behaviour problems increased have shown a tendency to increase, largely as a result of researchers in the past focussing on overt behaviour and ignoring the importance of unmet emotional needs as a behaviour determinant.
- The satisfaction of emotional needs is "the basis for growth and the realisation of an individual's full potential through self-actualisation" (Raths 1972:62).
- The theory relating to *unmet emotional needs*, as elucidated by Pringle (1985), is applicable to a variety of different cultures, as it is universal in nature.
- Physical and sexual abuse are regarded as constituting a serious incident and is therefore accentuated in newspaper headlines and at conferences, while emotional abuse is seldom mentioned, as it is difficult to define, articulate and prove.

- The self-concepts of learners exhibiting behaviour problems are incongruent with their needs and feelings. "Self-confidence is basic to sound mental health" (D'Evelyn 1957:29).
- Internalised behaviour is more difficult to identify and the cognitive map based on internalisations of the learner in terms of his or her cognitions and feelings, is difficult to understand. The "internal working model" based on internalisation determines the behaviour, thoughts and feelings of a learner and should be addressed when attempting to assist and understand a learner with behaviour problems.
- The loss of good, human potential can be prevented by "undoing and if possible, reversing the effects of early neglect or damage".
- A clash between the environment and the learner's unmet emotional needs is reflected in behaviour problems which are a cry for help and understanding. A "goodness of fit" between the learner and the significant other role players within his environment does not exist.
- An understanding of temperament types creates a better understanding of behaviour problems.
- The behaviour problems of learners are reflections of how learners feel about themselves, with the ultimate negative feeling resulting in a bad self-image. They have given up the race with their ideal physical self-image which manifests in their relationships. They are regarded as emotionally fragile and vulnerable, and exposed to anxiety. They cannot actualise their intellectual potential.
- Important guidelines for teachers to more effectively assist learners and understand behaviour problems of learners include the following:
 - ▶ the behaviour of significant other role players of which the teacher for the purposes of this study is regarded as being a major significant other role player, impact on the behaviour of learners;
 - ▶ teachers cannot meet the unmet emotional needs of learners if their own emotional needs in the workplace have not been met;
 - ▶ basic needs of learners must be met before emotional needs can be met;
 - ▶ to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems, the emotional milestones and to what extent the learner has acquired the milestones, as well as the satisfying of emotional needs, must be kept in mind;
 - ▶ stimuli from within the environment of the learner can either be left to negatively impact on the learner's behaviour or be utilised by the teacher to change the behaviour of the learner;

- ▶ previous traumatic experiences can influence the present behaviour of the learner and should be addressed in order to assist and understand the learner more effectively;
- ▶ no labelling or blaming of a learner should take place;
- ▶ the teacher/learner relationship is very important as it can positively or negatively reinforce the unacceptable behaviour of the learner;
- ▶ attitudes, feelings and memories from the conscious and unconscious mind impact on behaviour;
- ▶ teachers must assist and understand learners in terms of unmet emotional needs which are embedded within the learner's relationship in his or her environment.
- ▶ the focus must be on the uniqueness and goodness of the learner;
- ▶ unmet emotional needs act as a barrier to learning;
- ▶ learners must not be managed but assisted and understood;
- ▶ teachers need to be empowered to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems;
- ▶ teachers need to enjoy the support of the Education Department, the school system, and the community and parents to enable them to render effective assistance to learners with behaviour problems;
- ▶ teachers must no longer pass learners with behaviour problems on to others to deal with – they themselves must take responsibility for learners with behaviour problems themselves;
- ▶ the impact of the unmet emotional needs of the learner on the self-concept of the learner is crucial in shaping his or her behaviour;
- ▶ the teacher is an important role model to learners as well as parents and members of the community;
- ▶ criteria for evaluating the behaviour of learners should be included in training manuals;
- ▶ teachers and other professionals must be trained to regard unmet emotional needs as an important causative factor of behaviour problems;
- ▶ the ecological systems model addresses the needs and problems of a diversity of learners and is regarded by researchers as the most suitable model to implement;
- ▶ Rogers's client centred therapy aims at positively reinforcing the self-concept of the learner;
- ▶ the Gestalt theory's and the cognitive theories' focus on thoughts, feelings and behaviour components must be implemented when analysing the impact of the

unmet emotional needs on behaviour of the learner and when strategies are considered to empower the learner to satisfy his or her own emotional needs in acceptable ways;

- ▶ the Behaviour Modification theory can be used in the classroom to control the behaviour of a learner;
 - ▶ the teacher/learner relationship as described by individual psychologists consisting of caring, hope and faith in the learner must be acknowledged and implemented;
 - ▶ the plea of the Transactional Analysts for a nurturing and supportive environment together with the reciprocal impact of the environment on the learner's behaviour must be kept in mind;
 - ▶ the psycho-analysts ideas on the impact of the conscious and subconscious mind, their views on the impact of role modelling, nurturing and the uniqueness of every learner are important and must be kept in mind when emotional barriers to learning are eliminated;
- The emotional climate in the classroom is very important as it sets the stage for the teacher when assisting and understanding the learner with behaviour problems. If the learner's self-concept is evaluated as being negative, it will be characterised by feelings of inferiority and a "not O.K.-ness".
 - Teachers need to assist learners to experience congruence in terms of their internalised self-concept and the messages they receive from the environment – thus fulfilling the need for praise and recognition. Teachers as facilitators need to provide "emotional first aid" by organising the significant other role players in the learner's environment to meet unmet emotional needs in order to eliminate behaviour problems from occurring. The teacher/learner relationship is the vehicle used to transport empathy and understanding, which will allow the teacher to enter the mind and the heart of a learner.
 - The following key concepts must be kept in mind when rendering effective assistance to learners and understanding learners with behaviour problems effectively: the creation of an atmosphere of confidence, treating each learner as an individual and as the person he or she might become, teacher sensitivity to the emotional needs of learners, learners and the whole school, as part of a larger family where each learner's contribution to the family is valued, each learner having a personal role model, learners who are self-disciplined and teachers experiencing few problems with discipline and in implementing codes of conduct, all learners being valued and their

attempts to complete an assignment appreciated, so that they develop a sense of self-respect.

- One integrated, eclectic theoretical model, which integrates all the relevant theories, is ideally required to combat the theoretical confusion that exists. It will also go a long way in ending the search for an ideal “cookbook recipe” for assisting learners with behaviour problems. Teachers should realise that overt behaviour, is deemed to be a true reflection of the internal cognitive affective views that the learner has of himself or herself and the views expressed by others towards him or her.
- Teachers need to be trained to acquire the following skills: unconditional acceptance, reflection of the thoughts and feelings of the learner, summarization, confrontation, immediacy, self-disclosure, using silence during an interview and using open-ended questions when talking to the learner and reflection of deeper feelings.
- The aim of the model is to empower teachers (parents, other significant other role players and members of the community) to assist and understand the learner with behaviour problems in terms of his or her unmet emotional needs resulting in behaviour problems based on a negative self-concept. The model is embedded within the ecological systems theory with a strong focus on the reciprocal impact of interactions via relationships on the behaviour of the learner. The learner is not blamed for behaving like he or she does, rather the impact of the behaviour patterns of significant other role players from within the environment and the learner’s behaviour is analysed in terms of unmet emotional needs. The model also focusses on cognitions, feelings and the cognitive map representing internalised feelings and thoughts which mirrors the learner’s unmet emotional needs. The importance of the senses as “apparatus” for receiving and sending out internalised messages and answers to these messages are an important component of the model. Networking, whole-school approach, collaboration among significant others as well as community-based support are central themes. The model consists of eight components which interact and link with one another namely: identification, analysis, outcomes, alter settings, alter triggers, alter actions, alter results and alter relationship.

In Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, the *summary, conclusions and recommendations* will be reflected.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Treat people as if they were what they ought to be
and you help them become what they're capable of
being*

Goethe (Ellison 1993:10)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The teacher as a role model to learners and as one of the major significant other role players within the environment or life-world of a learner, is in the privileged position not only to be involved with learners for many hours during the day, but to be able to utilise the opportunity. This presents to assist and understand *all* learners – including learners with behaviour problems. The opportunity is essentially one of assisting learners “to become what they're capable of being” as suggested in the introductory quotation by Goethe (Ellison 1993:10). ***A key facet of the findings emanating from this study is that the teacher can in fact make a real difference in the life of a learner, so that he or she can actualise his or her full potential.*** The teacher in a sense *shapes or moulds a child's* future and this without doubt remains an awesome responsibility.

The teacher can contribute to communities by attending to the emotional well-being of learners, as future valued members of the community. Moreover, the teacher can be of assistance in establishing *effective schools*. Teachers can guide educational planners, significant other role players, communities, whole schools, principals and policy makers to *assist* and **UNDERSTAND** the learner with behaviour problems. By creating an understanding of the role of unmet emotional needs in the manifestation of behaviour problems, the teacher can make an indirect contribution in combatting the horrific statistics relating to violence, crime and abuse of children. Learners of today will become the adult members and parents of the community of tomorrow and the seeds of future generations are thus sown and nurtured by the teachers of today. The envisaged outcomes can, however, only be actualised if the following factors regarding *the teacher*, as a subsystem of the school system; *the learner*, as a subsystem of the school system; *the parents* and *the peers* as subsystems of the school system; and *the school*, as a system, are taken into consideration:

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- **The teacher**, as a subsystem of the school system and as one of the major significant other role players: empowerment of the teacher on a cognitive level in terms of knowledge and skills relating to behaviour problems and the assisting and understanding of learners' with behaviour problems; empowerment of the teacher on an emotional level in terms of feelings impacting on the attitude of the teacher towards the learner with behaviour problems, as well as ensuring that the teacher's unmet emotional needs in the workplace are met; the establishment of supportive networks in order to support the teacher emotionally and to take co-ownership in assisting and understanding the learner with behaviour problems; understanding of the teacher's frustrations, fears and inability to deal with stumbling blocks, for example too many learners in a classroom, not having enough time available to attend to a learner with behaviour problems, not being able to cope with new responsibilities that were previously taken care of by the psychologists from the Support Centre and which are now, in terms of the new Education Policy, regarded as part of the first phase level assistance rendered by the teacher, for example to assist and understand a learner with behaviour problems; the organising and facilitating of the significant other role players in meeting the unmet emotional needs of the learner. (See chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5. Also see figure 5.2 in this regard.)
 - **The learner** as a subsystem of the school system: the unmet emotional needs of the learner and emotional milestones not actualised give rise to behaviour problems (e.g. stealing, vandalism, disruptive behaviour, bullying, depression, lying, taking of drugs, aggression, suicide) and need to be attended to in terms of his or her internalized feelings and cognition, as communicated to the learner via his or her senses. (See Chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5 and figure 5.2 in this regard.)
 - **The parents** as a subsystem of the school system and as one of the major significant other role players: guidance of the parents by the teacher on how to understand and satisfy the unmet emotional needs of the learner, by impacting – via the senses of the learner on his or her cognition, feelings and behaviour; the involvement of the parents as partners with the assistance programme of the learner, as well as the education of the learner. (See chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5 – see figure 5.2 as well in this regard.)
 - **The peers** as a subsystem of the school system and as one of the major significant other role players: guidance of the peers by the teacher on how to understand and satisfy the unmet emotional needs of the learner by impacting, via the senses of the learner on his or her cognition, feelings and behaviour. (See chapter 2, 3 and 5 – see figure 5.2 as well in this regard.)

- **The school** as a system: the importance of the school ethos determining the mission, vision, atmosphere at school, the attitudes of staff members, learners, parents and members of the community; the impact of the principal and colleagues of the teacher on the learner's behaviour; the availability of colleagues who are willing to collaborate instead of competing with one another; a whole-school approach being implemented; the involvement of the community in meeting the needs of the school and the learner with behaviour problems. (See chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5 in this regard.)

The factors mentioned in the preceding discussion reflect existing problems in the South African school system, which stimulate and negatively reinforce the continuous occurrence of behaviour problems in schools. Attending to these factors, can however, be regarded by teachers, principals, educational planners, policy makers, special needs coordinators and governing bodies as a challenge. Zarkowska and Clements (1994:269, 270) contend that "it tests professional knowledge and understanding to its limits; it stretches and stresses resources and increasingly highlights weaknesses in service systems. Yet so much can be achieved. There is no doubt that if people can increase their understanding of the factors that lead to the behavioural problems of people and develop their skills in the management of these, then significant headway can be made with the behavioural challenges of the individuals concerned. There is every reason to be optimistic."

The factors giving rise to the study:

- The fact that the future of the country is at stake and that urgent attention should be given to the high incidence of behaviour problems experienced; the fact that South African conditions are not a carbon copy of the international situation and that alternative ways of managing behaviour problems are needed.
- The fact that the medical approach is outdated as a way to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems and that a paradigm shift needs to be made from the medical model to the ecological systems model.
- The fact that teachers have to cope with more learners in the classroom and that a bigger percentage of these learners exhibit behaviour problems, which makes it more difficult for teachers to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems.
- The fact that more teachers will be leaving the teaching profession because they either are unable to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems or do not feel empowered to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems effectively.

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- The fact that policy makers, educational planners, teachers and school principals are in need of a model to be implemented to more assist and understand learners with behaviour problems effectively in South African schools.
 - The fact that teachers in mainstream schools will have to assist and understand the barriers to learning of all learners, which include social, emotional and behaviour problems.
 - The fact that teachers need to be suitably trained to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems.
 - The fact that the stress experienced by teachers must be dealt with.

The above issues underline the importance and the reality that serious attention needs to be paid to the phenomenon of behaviour problems occurring in South African schools. It further highlights the importance of this study in developing a model for teachers to deal with the unmet emotional needs of learners resulting in behaviour problems.

The envisaged general *outcomes* of this study, which underpin the *specific outcomes* of the study, have been actualised in the sense that a model to be implemented by teachers to assist and understand the behaviour problems of learners more effectively has been developed (*see chapter 5 in this regard*), the familiarising of policy makers and educational planners, teachers and significant other role players and members of the community with the occurrence and manifestations of behaviour problems in South African schools (*see chapter 3 in this regard*), guidelines for policy makers and educational planners on how to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems more effectively (e.g. to interpret behaviour in terms of the theoretical models and specifically in terms of the ecological systems model in opposition to the medical model, to view problem behaviour in terms of “normal” behaviour by looking at normal emotional milestones, the impact of unmet emotional needs on behaviour) via the school system (*see chapter 5 in this regard*), have been incorporated in the model, the fact that the model can be utilised during in-service training sessions or workshops to train teachers, principals, special needs coordinators (*see chapter 5 in this regard*), the enhancement of the quality of teacher training at teacher training institutions will be possible by making use of the model as well as the incorporation of the guidelines for teachers into the model for teachers to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems more effectively (*see chapter 5*).

In this chapter the following aspects of the research question will be addressed:

- (1) A summarized overview of the investigation.
- (2) Forthcoming recommendations.
- (3) Conclusion of the chapter.

A summarized overview of the investigation leading up to an answer to the research question namely: *Which model can be used to effectively assist and understand learners with behaviour problems in South African schools?* will be provided in the ensuing section.

6.2 A SUMMARIZED OVERVIEW OF THE INVESTIGATION

The research question, namely *Which model can be used by teachers to effectively assist and understand learners with unmet emotional needs resulting in behaviour problems in the classroom?*, is answered by the development of a model for teachers to enable them to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems in South African schools.

Chapter 1 served as an orientation to the study by introducing and clarifying the relevant concepts referred to in the description of the model, with emphasis on the ecological systems approach. By focussing on the following aspects of the research problem, the referenced *research question* could be answered:

- Increasing numbers of learners are identified by teachers as exhibiting behaviour problems in the classroom.
- Teachers do not experience themselves as empowered to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems.
- A paradigm shift is required from *blaming* the learner and/or his or her parents for the learner's behaviour problems to organising the environment and specifically the significant other role players to meet the unmet emotional needs of learners.
- A change in traditional thinking, wherein the accent in researching behaviour problems was largely on identifying causative factors based on overt observations only, is deemed essential. It is argued that the new focus ought to be on the unmet emotional needs of learners.
- The unmet emotional needs of the learner must be met within his or her relationships especially the relationships with his or her parents, teacher and peers.
- The unmet emotional needs of a diversity of learners must be catered for.

The focus of the model was determined by the demarcation of the *field of study* namely *behaviour problems* (Special Needs) acting as a barrier to learning and development. The extensive literature study conducted, provided insights which could be verified with the research findings reflected in *chapter 3* in order to develop a tailor-made model for South African teachers to more effectively assist and understand behaviour problems in the classroom. The literature study also provided a theoretical frame of reference (*chapter 2*) within which the proposed, new model could be integrated with the outcome of the *Ecological Systems Model*, an eclectic model, regarded as the most effective theoretical frame of reference that could be utilised, as it is directed at relationships within the environment. Needs theories, especially theory relating to unmet emotional needs (*chapter 4,5*) as presented by Pringle and Raths, together with the needs theory developed by Maslow, provided new insights regarding the reasons underpinning learner's behaviour problems. The theoretical *models*, apart from providing a conceptual framework for the new proposed model, provided theoretical *approaches* which acted as points of departure for investigating possible therapeutic techniques that could be utilised by teachers in the classroom in assisting learners with behaviour problems (*chapter 5*).

Flowing like a golden thread throughout the study are key themes which need to be incorporated into the model developed for teachers to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems. These themes are deemed to be the following:

- Unmet emotional needs give rise to behaviour problems.
- Learners with behaviour problems cannot be effectively assisted and understood if unmet emotional needs are not met.
- Unmet emotional needs are met within the learner's relationships with especially significant other role players of whom the teacher is one of the major significant other role players.
- If the unmet emotional needs of the learner are not met, the learner will not actualise his or her full potential as it is envisaged in the new education policy.
- In order to be able to actualise his or her potential the learner must feel good about him or herself – satisfying the emotional needs of learners will enhance a positive self-concept.
- The teacher/learner relationship and especially the nature and quality of this relationship is of the utmost importance in satisfying the unmet emotional needs of the learner.

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- Classroom atmosphere (and a school ethos) which portrays the message of caring, warmth, genuineness, empathy and understanding stimulate feelings of belonging and meaningfulness within learners and “sets the stage” for emotional needs of learners to be met.
 - Focussing on the overt behaviour patterns of learners and searching for causative factors without taking the impact of the environment via the relationships of the learner into consideration have proved to be ineffective in addressing behaviour problems.
 - The learner’s behaviour patterns are evaluated in terms of the normal emotional developmental milestones as described by Erikson.
 - Internalized messages (as described by Wieland) result in cognitive maps based on internalized cognition and feelings as experienced via the senses, giving rise to specific behaviour patterns which can be identified as *problem behaviour*.
 - Teachers need to *assist* and *understand* learners with behaviour problems and to utilise *therapeutic techniques* instead of *managing* behaviour problems by implementing *management strategies*.

The study is analytic-descriptive in nature and the *research findings*, as presented in *chapter 3*, provided valuable insights regarding behaviour problems encountered in South African schools and how they relate to the international situation. The application of the corresponding international findings and insights into causative factors, namely the unmet emotional needs, are taken into consideration in developing an appropriate model for the South African context.

The ensuing recommendations focus on the practical realities encapsulated within the model developed in the course of this study to assist teachers. Little constructive value will emanate from this study if it merely constitutes a theoretical exercise and the accent in the recommendation is therefore on the practical issues and aspects that can add value if applied within the real life classroom situation.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations pursuing *further research* in fields related to this study as well as recommendations regarding the *practical application* of the model by teachers in the classroom can be listed as follows:

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- Unmet emotional needs are met within the learner's relationships with especially significant other role players of whom the teacher is one of the major significant other role players.
 - If the unmet emotional needs of the learner are not met, the learner will not actualise his or her full potential as it is envisaged in the new education policy.
 - In order to be able to actualise his or her potential the learner must feel good about him or herself – satisfying the emotional needs of learners will enhance a positive self-concept.
 - The teacher/learner relationship and especially the nature and quality of this relationship is of the utmost importance in satisfying the unmet emotional needs of the learner.
 - Classroom atmosphere (and a school ethos) which portrays the message of caring, warmth, genuineness, empathy and understanding stimulate feelings of belonging and meaningfulness within learners and "sets the stage" for emotional needs of learners to be met.
 - Focussing on the overt behaviour patterns of learners and searching for causative factors without taking the impact of the environment via the relationships of the learner into consideration have proved to be ineffective in addressing behaviour problems.
 - The learner's behaviour patterns are evaluated in terms of the normal emotional developmental milestones as described by Erikson.
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6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations pursuing *further research* in fields related to this study as well as recommendations regarding the *practical application* of the model by teachers in the classroom can be listed as follows:

6.3.1 Further research

- The newly developed model's validity should be tested and if found to be effective in practice implemented on a national basis. In order to test the model it is proposed that a pilot study be initiated at selected schools. Any difficulties encountered during the pilot project would need be addressed before implementing the model on a national basis.
- Teachers' emotional needs should be identified as part of a research project, as well as the effectivity of the current support systems that have been put in place by the education department to meet these needs. Such research is deemed essential as the findings from this study suggest that if these needs are not met it will be difficult if not impossible to implement the newly developed model.
- Therapeutic techniques that are currently used by teachers, in the classroom, in addressing behaviour problems should to be identified and the success thereof validated. Where deemed appropriate new techniques ought to be developed, taking the research findings of this study into account.
- Specific elements of the new model could be researched in far greater depth in order to provide new guidelines for teachers, cases in point are:
 - ▶ The "after relationship" component and the impact that the teacher has in dealing with behaviour problems.

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- ▶ Suggestions that may be utilised by teachers to conduct a situational analysis as regards the nature and extent of the behaviour problems that exist.
 - ▶ The “after settings” component as it relates to the creation of a caring atmosphere requires that criteria be established to determine the existing climate that exists within the classroom and the school as an entity. Research would also need to determine how the atmosphere/climate may be best be changed in practice, if it is not conducive for dealing with learners’ behaviour problems. The impact of a caring environment in assisting learners with behaviour problems should be determined by means of appropriate research studies. Collectively the insights acquired could be used in developing guidelines for teachers.
 - ▶ As part of the “after actions” component use may be made of questionnaires and interviews with learners to determine what they view as constituting a caring culture within the classroom. In addition an attempt could be made to determine from the learners what should change in order to engender a culture of caring. This would serve as a valuable source of information for teachers attempting to engender a sense of caring and concern for learners and their needs within the classroom situation.
 - ▶ The concept of an “effective school” featured prominently in the development of the model. Research as to what teachers, principals, parents, learners, and members of the community view as being an effective school would need to be determined. Their perceptions could well differ in terms of their specific mindset or paradigms which are based on previous experiential learning. The focus in the research would be on the commonalities embodied within the diversity of perceptions, in order to achieve some form of common understanding as to what needs to be achieved.
- The internalization model needs to be tested and adapted where relevant, so as to assist teachers in dealing with emotionally deprived learners. This could be done by means of interviews with learners and teachers.
 - Specific research is required in regard to the various emotional needs of learners and the best means of meeting these needs. In so doing the accent should be on the various key role players involved in meeting learners needs. The needs further need to be correlated to behaviour manifestations. Such research would

be invaluable in formulating an integrated strategy to deal with the problem behaviour of learners.

- Research on how teachers in the classroom can use the “senses” to change internalised messages to positive effective cognitive messages, that would give rise to a positive self-concept. Such research could be particularly valuable in providing teachers with guidelines in this regard.
- Further research in terms of collaboration among the various government departments, service organisations and schools, among schools per se, and among the key role players involved, in order to ensure that learners emotional needs are met, is required.. Greater clarity is still required as to how these interactions influence the meeting of learners’ emotional needs.
- It will be important to determine which educational institutions provide any form of guidelines for dealing with the behaviour problems of learners. A correlation between these guidelines in relation to the findings of this study would provide useful insights as to possible reasons for the increasing incidence of behaviour problems within South African schools.
- The involvement of the broader community in the activities of specific schools needs to be researched in relation to required community involvement in meeting the emotional needs of learners. The insights generated could be used to create community awareness as to the issues involved.
- Specific research in relation to the implementation of the NCSNET document is required, with specific reference to its objectives that are of relevance in dealing with learners with behaviour problems. These objectives need to be correlated to the findings emanating from this study to determine what can be learnt therefrom.

6.3.2 Practical application of the model by teachers in the classroom

The following practical applications of the model for teachers in assisting and understanding learners with behaviour problems, are identified:

- In-service training of teachers to assist them in understanding learners with behaviour problems and where relevant, engendering a paradigm shift in order to implement the model.

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- Workshops presented during the training of educational planners and principals directed at providing them with an insight as to the application of the model with specific reference to the new Education Policy.
 - Workshops and information sessions ought to be conducted for parents to enable them to gain an understanding of the impact of unmet emotional needs in relation to learner's behaviour problems. The key aspects of the model could be explained to the parents concerned in order to create an awareness of their role in meeting these emotional needs. The accent in these workshops should be on moving from the traditional medical model to the new model which specifically avoids placing blame for the learner's behaviour problem and focuses on gaining an understanding of the behaviour determinants involved and their role therein.
 - Workshops ought to be held for members of the community and service organisations in the community, for example Lions International, to obtain their commitment to and assistance in meeting the unmet emotional needs of learners.
 - Life skills programmes within schools ought to be developed to provide learners with an understanding as to how unmet emotional needs influence their behaviour patterns and how the emotional needs concerned, can best be met within the current environmental context.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Understanding behaviour problems, by focussing on the unmet emotional needs of learners, constitutes a totally new way of dealing with behaviour problems. This study can change the lives of many learners and the future of the country, if teachers and all role players involved in assisting children with behaviour problems can come to understand them better and assist them in a more effective manner. This study is not only applicable to learners who are experiencing barriers to learning – every teacher, in every classroom and every person – be it a member of the community or a parent or a professional person could use the model and research findings to combat behaviour problems or to prevent behaviour problems from occurring. The children of South Africa are in desperate need of people who are prepared to try and understand their unmet emotional needs and the relationship between their misbehaviour and the unmet emotional needs. Teachers have reached the stage where *there is no more time left to overlook the impact of unmet emotional needs on the*

behaviour of learners. Educational planners, policy makers, principals and governing bodies need to stop and think through the consequences of unmet emotional needs of teachers in the workplace. As a matter of urgency strategies directed at empowering teachers to assist and understand learners with behaviour problems should be formulated and implemented. The “learning” or cognitive aspect of education in schools should not override the importance of the affective component of learning – if learners are not emotionally well, they cannot perform scholastically according to their abilities. This statement can be substantiated by the Minister of Education’s concern with regard to the high failure rate of grade 12 learners during 1999. Unmet emotional needs remain a major contributing, causative factor of poor school performance and yet few researchers and practitioners have really paid specific attention thereto. Until the educational planners and policy makers acknowledge the impact of unmet emotional needs on behaviour and specifically school performance, the occurrence of behaviour problems in the classroom and in the community will only become worse and uncontrollable.

The following poem illustrates the emotional “potholes” that learners may experience when their emotional needs have not been met within the environment. These learners need to be empowered to eventually find ways in the environment and within themselves to meet their emotional needs:

I

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I'm lost..... I am helpless
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

II

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

III

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in.. It's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It's my fault. I get out immediately.

IV

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

V

I walk down another street.

Source: Covey (1998:62)

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Dept. of Primary School Teacher Education
UNISA.
June 1998.

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I am a lecturer in Education at UNISA and have enrolled for a doctorate at UNISA. I am at present completing the empirical part of my thesis entitled: ***“Behaviour problems in the classroom: a model for teachers to assist learners with unmet emotional needs”***. I need to interview teachers, principals and guidance teachers to ascertain what behaviour problems learners exhibit in the classroom and to determine how they deal with these behaviour problems, as my thesis focusses on teachers and the way that they deal with behaviour problems in the classroom on a day-to-day basis. I will endeavour to develop a model which may serve as a guideline for teachers on how to understand and assist learners with behaviour problems.

Your kind assistance in granting me an interview or allowing me to interview members of your staff to obtain the required information will be appreciated. As stated the information will assist me to develop a model that can assist teachers, to enable learners with special educational needs (behaviour problems specifically) to actualise their full potential - a model that is applicable to South African schools and that will have an impact in the classroom.

Once again thank you for your assistance.

With best regards

.....
FRANSA WEEKS

DEPT. OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER EDUCATION, UNISA.

(Telephone number if needed: 012: 807-4790 or cellular phone: 0834683390).

QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE USED DURING STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

1 IDENTIFICATION DETAIL

Number of questionnaire: _____

Please indicate your answer to the following questions by marking a tick next to the applicable answer.

1.1 How long have you been in teaching as a profession?

01-04 years	
05-06 years	
07-08 years	
09-10 years	
more than 10 years	

1.2 How long have you been a teacher/principle at this school?

01-04 years	
05-06 years	
07-08 years	
09-10 years	
more than 10 years	

1.3 What age group of learners did you teach/does your school cater for?

Grade 1-3	
Grade 4-6	
Grade 7-9	
Grade 10-12	

1.4 Is your school a Gauteng Education Department mainstream school?

Yes	
No	

1.5 If "no" what makes your school different?

1.6 Did you or your teachers have to deal with learners with behaviour problems in the past?

Yes	
No	

1.7 What type of behaviour problems did you encounter?

1.8 Do you or your teachers feel empowered enough to deal with behaviour problems in the classroom?

Yes	
No	

1.9 If "no" why not?

1.10 What does the concept "behaviour problems" imply to you or your teaching staff?

1.11 What does the concept "emotional problems" imply to you or your teaching staff?

The questions in the following section are based on the manifestation of behaviour problems in the classroom, as well as the strategies being implemented by the teacher in order to successfully deal with behaviour problems in the classroom. Please indicate your answer by making a tick next to the correct answer or at the open-ended questions, to answer as complete as possible. This will enable me to assist teachers to deal with behaviour problems in the classroom more effectively.

2.1 Which of the following behaviour problems did you or your staff have to deal with during the past five years? What was the percentage of these problems that manifest in the classroom? What age group were the learners that exhibited these behaviour problems?

BEHAVIOUR	ESTIMATED %	AGE GROUP
Accused of raping other learners		
Aggressiveness		
Assaulting teachers		
Assaults or threats to assault others		
Attempted murder of any person		
Attempts to bribe anyone in respect of any test or exam to enable him/her or another person to gain an unfair advantage thereby		
Attention deficit		
Attention-seeking behaviour		
Bullying other learners		
Disobedience and lack of discipline		
Display of uncontrolled behaviour such as screaming		
Engaged in fraud		
Engages in any act of public indecency		
Forges any document or signature		
Found in possession of a dangerous weapon		
Gossiping about teachers		
Held any person hostage		
Insults the dignity of or defames a staff member		

BEHAVIOUR	ESTIMATED %	AGE GROUP
Is found in possession of or distributes pornographic material		
Is found to be under the influence of alcohol		
Knife attacks		
Lack of motivation and interest		
Maliciously damages another person's property		
Member of a gang responsible for violent acts		
Negativity (refusal to work or to cooperate)		
Sexual harassment of other learners		
Smoking on school grounds		
Stealing		
Storming out of the classroom without permission		
Telling lies		
Temper tantrums		
Throwing stones		
Traded in any test or examination paper or in any test exam material		
Truancy		
Use of addictive substances		

2.2 In what way did these behaviour problems manifest in the classroom and at school in general, eg on the playground?

2.3 What is according to your opinion the difference between the concepts "misconduct" and "behaviour problems"?

2.4 In what way have you/your teaching staff dealt with misconduct in the past?

2.5 In what way have you/your teaching staff dealt with behaviour problem in the past?

2.6 Were you/your teaching staff effective in dealing with behaviour problems of learners?

Yes	
No	

2.7 What factors would you like to highlight as contributing factors to the effective dealing with behaviour problems of learners?

2.8 What factors would you like to highlight as negative contributing factors to the ineffective dealing with behaviour problems of learners?

2.9 Are there certain changes that need to take place in order to enable teachers to more effectively deal with the behaviour problems of learners? Please list/discuss them.

2.10 What guidelines would you like to give to teachers to be more effective in dealing with learners with behaviour problems?

2.11 Please describe the profile of the teacher dealing in an effective way with learners who are exhibiting behaviour problems.

2.12 Please name the factors that can act as “barriers to the teacher” dealing with learners with behaviour problems.

2.13 In what way can these so called “barriers to the teacher” be removed in order to enable the teacher to deal with the behaviour problems of learners in an effective way?

2.14 In what way could the community become involved in assisting you as a teacher/principal to remove the barriers that keep the learner from actualising his or her potential?

2.15 In what way could the parents of your learners become involved in assisting you as a teacher/principal to remove the barriers that keep the learner from actualising his or her potential?

2.1 Do you make use of "behaviour modification" as a technique to control behaviour and to get a learner to change his or her behaviour?

Yes	
No	

2.15 If "no" why do you not make use of behaviour modification?

2.16 According to the "ecological systems theory model", every role player or significant other person in the life-world of the learner must contribute towards the removal of barriers (e.g. behaviour problems) in order to allow the learner to actualise his or her potential. The learner is thus no longer being regarded as the "baddy" that did everything wrong - in fact, now the role players each have to give an input.

Do you think that this model, focussing on the interactive impact of the learner and the significant other role players within his or her environment, is a possible workable model that could be utilised in teachers' dealings with learners with problem behaviour?

Yes	
No	

2.17 If your answer to question 2.15 was "yes", please substantiate your answer.

2.18 If your answer to question 2.15 was "no", please substantiate your answer

2.19

If the "ecological systems theory model" is not acceptable to you what other guidelines would you like to suggest in order to develop a model for teachers for dealing with behaviour problems of learners in South African classrooms?

2.20 Do you think that if teachers, parents and significant other persons in the learner's environment collaborate in the assistance rendered to the learner, that an concerted effort could have a bigger impact than when a single role player interacts with the learner?

2.21 If your answer to question was "yes" , please substantiate your answer.

2.22 If your answer to question was "no", please substantiate your answer

2.23 What would you regard as possible causative factors in the development of behaviour problems? Please assign them an order of priority.

2.24 What would you regard as the emotional needs of a primary school learner?

2.25 In what way can a teacher and the whole school and the community satisfy these needs?

2.26 What would you regard as the emotional need of a secondary school learner?

2.27 In what way can a teacher and the whole school and the community satisfy these needs?

Thank you very much for your very kind assistance. Without your assistance it would not be possible to develop a model for teachers to deal with the behaviour problems of learners in classrooms. You have assured with your contribution to the research that it is focussed on South African classrooms and that is based on reality and not just on theoretical assumptions.

Fransa Weeks

Letters from learners

During 2000 the researcher was part of *Project Awareness* run by the Gauteng Education Department and specifically District N3. Small groups for learners, who indicated on the forms supplied by officials of district N3, that they are experiencing emotional and/or behaviour problems, were organised. The two letters included in this annexure, were given to the researcher when schools were visited in District N3 in Pretoria.

These two letters from grade 11 boys illustrate the urgent cry for understanding and assistance on the part of teachers to attend to the impact of the significant other role players within the learner's environment on their behaviour which act as barriers to learning. If the unmet emotional needs of these two learners are not met within the environment, it may lead to behaviour problems e.g. aggressive outbursts, suicide

* *Letter no. 1.*

Dearest Mrs. Weeks,

I have a friend who has or is suffering with domestic problems. Her father drinks a lot and they have no family unity at home. She doesn't speak at all to her father because he is always drunk and swears her mother. She has a smaller brother aged 10, and the father is always swearing and picking on him. She feels very upset and doesn't enjoy being at home especially when it is the weekend, she just feels like going away. Her mother was going to divorce her father but due to some circumstances she didn't. I want to know how I can help her or give her some advice, so she can be happy and still enjoy her life and not feel depressed about the situation.

* *Letter no. 2.*

I come from a very disturbing and depressing home and the cause of it is my father. He makes my life a living hell and he is upsetting not only me but my mother, sister and brother as well. He goes around telling my teachers, friends and family that I don't speak to him but he is the one who doesn't speak to me. Since my sister passed away I tried to make peace with my father but he just doesn't understand me and my mother. He becomes very abusive towards us. The thing that makes my heart really sore is that my mother works really hard for us to live comfortably and all he does is sit and relax. If my father doesn't come right I feel that I am going to do something really stupid to him because I am building up a lot of hate and anger towards him.

Please try and help before it's too late.

Letter from a social worker

24 Januarie 2000

Fransa Weeks
UNISA
Pretoria.

Insake: Gedragsprobleme kinder en samewerking skole en andere in gemeenskap.

Ons gesprek by u op 2.12.99 verwys. In die praktyk ervaar ons erge probleme om werklik met die kinders wie probleemgedrag lewer te werk en hulle van hulp te wees.

Die bronne soos skole, onderwys hulpsentrums, sielkundige dienste, selfs distriksgeneeshere bestaan byna nie of is baie moeilik bekombaar. **Skole sien nie kans om met moeilike kinders te sit nie. Hulle verkies om van die kinders ontslae te raak so gou as moontlik eerder as om met die probleem te werk.**

Hier is kinders wat jare nie in die skool is nie. Die skool neem die houding in dat dit nie hulle probleem is nie. Onderwys hulpsentrum sê dat alles gedoen is en dat die saak na die regsafdeling verwys is. Kinders steeds nie op skool nie - maar blyk nou niemand se probleem te wees nie. Ouers ignoreer alle dreigemente. Hul sê dat klasse oorvol is. Kinders kry in elke geval nie die nodige aandag nie en hulle het nie geld om skoolfonds te betaal nie.

Ander kinders word eenvoudig met 'n brief na die maatskaplike werker gestuur. Skool kan nie meer probleemgedrag akkommodeer nie. Kinders word nie amptelik geskors nie maar duidelik gesê dat hul nie meer in die skool welkom is nie. Kliniekskole, slegs twee in Gauteng, is oorvol met lang waglyste. Die Departement van Onderwys blyk te aanvaar dat kinders wie gedragsprobleme lewer na Departement Welsyn verwys word om die kinders na Nywerheidskole te verwys.

Die Departement Welsyn het "Project Go" wat bepaal dat kinders nie in die sisteem mag ingaan nie. Verwysing van kinders moet tot uiterste minimum beperk word. Die probleem gemeenskap verstaan nie die dilemma nie. Daar word verwag dat maatskaplike werkers die moeilike kinders moet verwyder. Ons kry nie samewerking van skole of andere in gemeenskap nie. Skole se finansies ook ingekort. Kinders in pleegsorg of plek van Veiligheid betaal nie skoolgelde nie. Dit veroorsaak probleme. Skoolhoofde wil nie die kinders aanvaar nie want wie gaan hul skoolgelde betaal.

Die kinders waarmee ons werk se ouers is gewoonlik werkloos of het 'n beperkte inkomste. Kan dus nie skoolgelde betaal nie. Hierdie kinders is dus die wie probleemgedrag lewer,

klasse ontwrig en wie se ouers nie bydrae tot skoolfonds maak nie, met die gevolg dat ander ouers in opstand kom oor die kinders wie klasse ontwrig en eis dat hulle verwyder sal word want kinders vir wie betaal word ly onder hulle gedrag.

Ek het die ondervinding dat wanneer ek bv. kinders na Weskoppies Hospitaal verwys vir evaluering, die skoolhoofde die inligting benodig omdat hulle dan genoeg rede sal hê om kinders te skors. Maatskaplike werker se kontak met skole word dus teen die kinders gebruik. Daar is nêrens meer sielkundiges wie kinders kan evalueer en help om hulpprogramme op te stel nie. Dit is selfs byna onmoontlik om die dienste van 'n distriksgeneesheer te bekom.

Niemand is bereid om betrokke te raak nie. Die kinders met probleemgedrag moet so gou moontlik na iemand anders verskuif word. Daar is 'n voortdurende geveg oor finansies.

Onderwysers het oorvol klasse en eenvoudig nie die tyd of energie om nog aan moeilike kinders te spandeer nie. Daar is nie staatsveiligheidsplekke of kinderhuise wat plek het vir die kinders nie. Kinderhuise neem in elk geval nie kinders met erge gedragsprobleme nie. Nywerheidskole is beslis ook nie die antwoord altyd nie. Hulle kan ook nie altyd die kinders hanteer nie. Ek het selfs gevalle waar die Nywerheidskool vra dat die kind wie by hulle geplaas is verwyder moet word aangesien hy nie beheer kan word nie.

Waar lê die antwoord? Ek glo dat al die betrokke partye Departement Onderwys, Nasionale Opvoeding, Departement Welsyn en ander organisasies soos Kindersorg, Christelike Maatskaplike Raad, Ondersteuningsraad ens... saam moet kom en die probleme bespreek. Almal moet uit dieselfde mond begin praat. Dit help nie een Departement maak 'n beleid teenstrydig met die volgende Departement nie. Almal is mede verantwoordelik en moet bereid wees om saam oplossings te soek en deur te voer. Indien skole bv. nie bereid is om 'n verdere myl met moeilike kinders te loop nie is daar byna niks wat vir die kinders gedoen kan word nie en word hulle geforseer om straatkinders te word, sonder enige hulpbronne in plek om in hulle behoeftes te voorsien nie.

Dit help niks om alles te weet oor kinders se ontwikkelingsfases of redes vir probleemgedrag of selfs hoe om dit te hanteer indien daar geen ondersteuningstelsels is nie of nie samewerking is tussen onderskeie rolspelers nie.

Ek weet nie of u nog meer inligting wil hê nie. Ek kan nog baie skryf. Dit lyk werklik of niemand omgee wat gebeur met kinders wie gedragsprobleme lewer nie. Die beleid t.o.v. die hantering van kinders in inrigtings met probleemgedrag beperk ook byna alle moontlike wyses van dissipline wat ook deur kinders uitgebuit word. Soms lyk dit asof die wie reëls en voorskrifte maak nie werklik weet wat dit is om dit uit te voer nie.

Geteken: H.van Staden.
Kindersorgvereniging.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS ON CHILDREN

Pa van Brakpan sluit seuns glo week lank in kamer toe

Sarie van Niekerk

Brakpan. – 'n Geskeide man is gisteroggend hier in hegtenis geneem nadat hy sy twee tienerseuns na bewering 'n week lank agter slot en grendel in 'n kamer in sy huis toegesluit het.

Die twee seuns is reeds eergisteraand deur die polisie van Brakpan uit die pa se sorg verwyder en onder pleegsorg geplaas.

Luidens inligting is die broers, onderskeidelik vyftien en sewentien jaar, verlede Donderdag in 'n kamer in die gesin se netjiese drieslaapkamerhuis in Tienie Krugerstraat, Minnebron, toegesluit nadat hulle na bewering

sonder die pa (41) se toestemming hul ma in Delmas besoek het.

Die seuns se ouers is twaalf jaar gelede geskei.

Beeld het gister verneem dat die man 'n veiligheidsdeur voor die kamer aangebring het en die seuns as straf in die kamer toegesluit het.

Die kinders het soggens elkeen 'n bord pap gekry vir ontbyt en gedurende die dag 'n paar toebroodjies. Die kos is deur die veiligheidsdeur se tralies aan hulle gegee.

'n Emmer is vir hul toiletbehoefte verskaf. Dié emmer is deur die polisie in 'n hangkas in die kamer gekry nadat die kinders uit die kamer bevry en uit

hul pa en stiefma se sorg verwyder is.

Die kinders was vir byna nege jaar in 'n kindershuis geplaas nadat hulle kort ná die egskeiding ook uit die pa se sorg verwyder is. Hulle is verlede jaar weer onder sy sorg teruggeplaas.

Kinderhof-verrigtings was reeds voor dié voorval aan die gang om die twee seuns weer uit hul pa se sorg te verwyder.

Volgens 'n woordvoerder van die polisie was daar ook duidelike slaanmerke aan die twee seuns.

Hulle is na bewering met 'n gordel geslaan as deel van hul straf voordat hulle in die kamer toegesluit is.

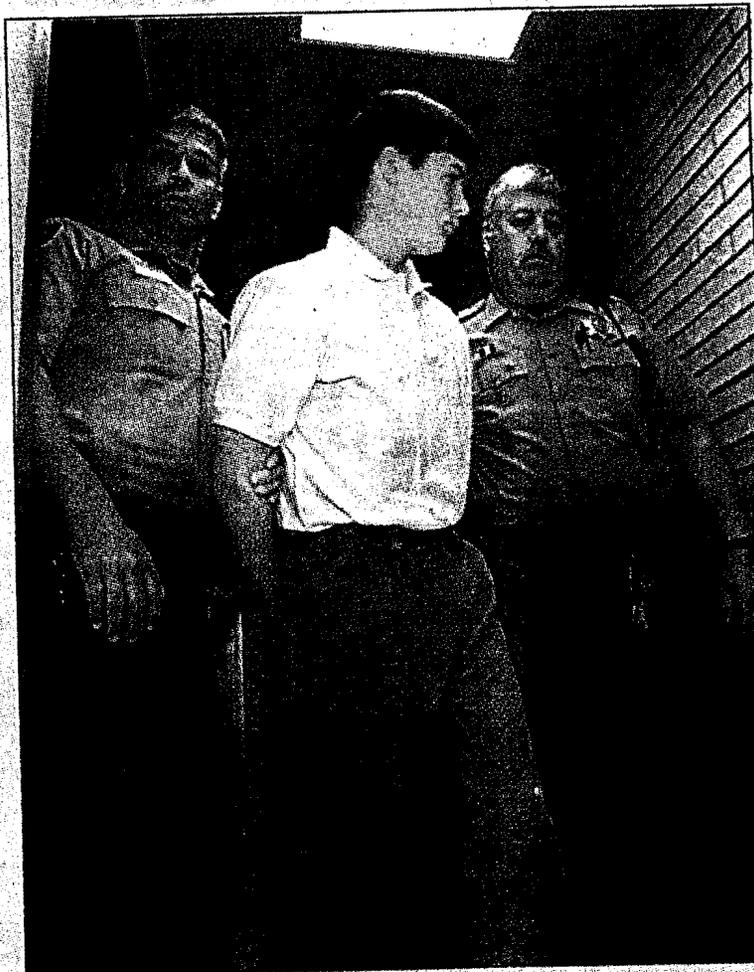
Seun (14) in hof ná 'verkragting'

Sonja Deysel

'n Veertienjarige skoolseun wat daarvan verdink word dat hy 'n twaalfjarige skoolmeisie verkrag het, het gister vlugtig in die Pretoria se streekhof verskyn op aanklagte van huisbraak, diefstal en verkragting.

Landdros R. de Vos het die saak teen die seun van Elandspoort, Pretoria, tot 17 September uitgestel sodat sy aansoek om regshulp van die Regshulpraad oorweeg kan word. Die seun is vroeër onder die toesig van sy ma vrygelaat.

Luidens die klagstaatsaak het hy glo by 'n huis ingebreek en verskeie artikels gesteel. Hy het na bewering later die twaalfjarige meisie oorval.



Seun (15) weer in hof ná vier moorde

Kipland Kinkel (15) verlaat die streekhof in Eugene, Oregon, saam met twee polisiemano. Hy het eergister weer in die hof verskyn in verband met die onlangse skietery in die kafeteria van Thurston High School in Springfield. Kinkel staan tereg op 4 aanklagte van moord met verswarende omstandighede en 26 aanklagte van poging tot moord. Hy het na bewering sy ouers tuis vermoor voordat hy by die skool op leerlinge losgebrand het.

Teacher jailed for rape of pupil

A 26-year-old Soshanguve student teacher who raped a 13-year-old drama student was sentenced yesterday in the Pretoria Regional Court to an effective seven year imprisonment.

Jabu Mahlangu, of Block A, had pleaded not guilty.

On October 19 1996, Mahlangu raped a 13-year-old pupil who had been attending his drama classes. The court heard that at the time of the incident, Mahlangu was a pupil at a Soshanguve high school.

He also gave drama classes to fellow pupils.

Mahlangu told the court that he befriended the 13-year-old schoolgirl and later they started dating.

Magistrate MC de Wit said Mahlangu did not show remorse and pleaded not guilty, despite knowing that he had had sex with the young girl against her will.

"The public is complaining about the high number of rape and men need to know... such crime will result in a jail sentence," he said. – Staff Reporter

Kan nie met myself saamleef, sê hy in brief

Sandra Coetsee,
Misdadverslaggewer

'n Bogenmiddelde, "perfeksonistiese" leerling van Standerfontein het hom in sy ouerhuis geskiet 'n dag voordat hy in die hof moes verskyn oor die beweerde diefstal van 'n botteltjie naskoermiddel.

Die vyftienjarige Pieter Pruis, 'n gr. 9-leerling aan die Hoërskool Standerfontein, is 'n paar ure nadat hy met die naskoermiddel betrap is in die A.G. Visser-hospitaal in Heidelberg dood.

In 'n selmoordbrief aan sy ouers, mnr. Fanus en mev. Dierdra Pruis, skryf hy: "Ek is jammer dat ek julle al die emosionele skade aangedoen het. Daar maal so baie goed nou in my kop, maar dankie vir 'n goeie opvoeding, dankie vir al die opofferings. Dankie vir net mooi alles.

"Ek kan nie meer met myself saamleef nie, want ek is siek! Ek weet nie waartoe ek in staat is nie, maar dit is beter so dat ek my eie le-



Pieter Pruis (15)

we neem, Jammer, Pieter."

Pieter was nie net 'n akademiese uitblinker nie, maar het ook in sport, kultuur, koorsang en klavier spel uitgeblyk. Hy was in gr. 7 een van twee duisende aan die Laer-

skool Greylingstad met 'n gemiddeld van 81%.

Die aahloop tot die skietvoerval het vermoedelik Maandagmiddag vyftien begin toe 'n apteker glo Pieter betrap het waar hy naskoermiddel van R70 gesteel het. Die polisie is ontbied en Pieter is na die polisie-kantoor gedring. Die hoof van die koshuis waar Pieter gebly het, het sy pa in Greylingstad gebel waar die gesin woon. Pruis het 'n prokureur gekry en Pieter is in sy ouers se sorg geplaas. Hy moes die volgende dag in die hof verskyn.

"Ek kon sien Pieter het berou oor die voorval. Hy het gesê hy weet nie hoe kom hy dit gedoen het nie," het sy pa gesê.

Die egpaar en Pieter het omstreeks tienuur die aand gaan slaap nadat Pruis in vrykamer toegesluit het waarin sy kluis is. Die sleutels het hy op sy bedkas gelaat. Kort voor middernag het Pruis opgestaan om hooflympie te drink. Hy was skaars 'n halfuur terug in die bed toe hy 'n "oordonderende slag" hoor.

"Ek het gedog die gesser het ontplou. Toe ek deur die venster na die gesser kyk, het ek lig uit Pieter se kamer sien skyn." Pruis het histories gemaak toe hy Pieter in sy kamer aantref. "Ek het sy bebloede gesig gesien. Toe ek hom omrol om hom te probeer help, het ek die koelgat bo sy oor gesien. Toe hoor ek Dierdra vra oor die pistool wat daar lê."

Dit is eers toe dat hy besef wat gebeur het. "Hy moes die pistool uitgehaal het nog voordat ek die vrykamer gesluit het."

Sy ouers hoop ander teneers leer uit dié voorval. As hulle 'n fout begaan het, is dit nie die einde van die wêreld nie. Hulle moet nie tot die uiterste stap oorgaan nie.

Volgens sy ouers het 'n aanlegtoets aangedui Pieter was afhanklik van aandag. Pruis meen hy het moontlik aandag probeer kry deur die diefstal.

Pieter word vandag om twee-uur uit die NG gemeente Greylingstad begrawe. Hy word ook deur 'n sustert, Lizel (14), oorleef.

Meisie (15) kla pa aan van 'onsedelike aanranding'

Sonja Deyssel
sdeyssel@beeld.com

'n Vyftienjarige meisie wat na bewering deur haar karate-afrigter verkrag is, het nog drie mans, onder wie haar pa, daarvan beskuldig dat hulle haar onsedelik aangerand het, is gister in die Pretoriase streekhof getuig.

Mnr. Andries Jacobus Kok van Valhalla, Pretoria, staan tereg op 'n aanklag van verkragting.

Luidens die klagstaat het hy die meisie na bewering in September 1995 verkrag. Sy was gister in die hof tydens sy getuienis.

Kok het getuig die meisie se pa het hom vertel dat sy dogter ook 'n klag van verkragting teen hom aanhangig gemaak het. Die meisie het glo weer haar pa is die pa van haar baba.

Kok het voorts getuig die meisie het nog klagte ingediën teen twee mans oor beweerde onsedelike dade met haar. Sy het ook 'n klag teen sy vrou ingediën nadat sy glo beweer het sy vrou wou haar "regsien".

"Ek dink dit is irrasionele stories. Dit kan wees dat sy gemeenskap gehad het, maar ek het dit nie gedoen nie. Ek het 'n verhouding van 'n student teenoor 'n instrukteur met haar gehad. Sy het my vertrou. Ek kan nie die vraag antwoord waarom sy sê ek het haar verkrag nie. Ek was verbaas toe ek dit hoor," het Kok getuig.

Volgens Kok het die meisie hom op 'n keer gevra of sy saam met hom kan ry na 'n oefening vroegogend in Johannesburg. Ná die oefening is die meisie saam met hom na 'n vriend se huis. Sy het gevra of sy daar kan regmaak om skool toe te gaan en na die badkamer gegaan. Sy vriend het ná sowat tien minute gery. Kok het in die sitkamer gewag dat die meisie klaar maak.

"Ons het na geen video's gekyk nie, ons het nie wyn gedrink nie en ek het haar nie verkrag nie," het Kok getuig.

Kok het voorts getuig dat die meisie ná die beweerde voorval haar gradering bygewoon het.

Sy is verkies tot 'n nasionale span wat in Boedapest sou gaan deelneem. Die meisie kon nie die toer meemaak nie weens 'n borgskap wat deur die mat geval het.

Landdros P.J. Johnson het die saak tot 28 Oktober uitgestel vir verdere verhoor.

2 meisies (14) in hof ná grafskendings

Tia Blygnaut

Middelburg. - Twee hoërskoolleerlinge het hier in die hof verskyn in verband met aanklagte van grafskending nadat meer as sewentig grafte in die dorp in Mei geplunder is.

Die twee veertienjarige meisies van Steelcrest High School is nie gevra om te pleit nie en die saak is uitgestel tot 27 Januarie vir ver-

hoor.

Die grafskending waarvan hulle verdink word, het tussen 15 en 25 Mei in die Gholfsig-begraafplaas voorgekom. Dit is bestempel as die ergste vorm van grafskending so ver bekend in dié begraafplaas.

Ysterkettings rondom die grafte is uitgepluk om 'n "Satanistiese gees vry te laat".

Altesame 74 grafte het glo deur-geloop, waarvan 34 historiese oorslogsgrafe is. Die skade het uitein-

delik sowat R80 000 beloop.

Vroeër is grafstene omgestamp, uitgetrek en sommige is op ander grafte stukkend gegooi.

Soveel grafte is verrinnweer dat daar vermoed is dat dit nie net een mens se handewerk kon wees nie. Die graspenne wat gebruik word om veral die ou grafte te nommer, is uitgepluk en in 'n sirkel op 'n ander graf ingestek.

Die meeste kruise en engelbeelde het deurgeloop.

Matrikulant van Potch hang haar met skooldas

Adrian Lackay,
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'n Matriekleerling van Potchefstroom het haar gister op die voor-aand van die nuwe skoolkwartaal met haar skooldas in 'n hangkas gehang.

Lezelle le Roux (18) se lyk is gisteroggend om halfelf deur haar

ma, mev. Inna Johanna Nel, gekry.

Sy het aan die das in die hangkas in haar slaapkamer gehang, het kapt. Louis Jacobs, polisie-woordvoerder in Noordwes, gister gesê.

Lezelle was 'n leerling aan die Hoër Volksskool in Potchefstroom.

Volgens Jacobs is twee selfmoordbriewe – een aan haar ma en een aan 'n vriend – gekry.

Die inhoud van die briewe is onbekend.

Mev. Nel het haar man, mnr. Barend Frederick Nel, geroep. Hulle het die lyk losgemaak en paramedici na die huis in Smitstraat ontbied.

Mnr. Johan Swart, hoof van die Hoër Volksskool, was geskok oor die treurspel. "In dié stadium kan ek net sê Lezelle was 'n pragtige kind, rustig en op haar haar plek.

Vir ons was dit 'n skok. Ons kon dit nie glo toe ons daarvan te hore gekom het nie."

Swart het haar akademiese prestasie as "gemiddeld" bestempel en gesê daar is vir hom en die personeellede "geen ooglopende rede" vir haar optrede nie.

Lezelle se ma en stiefpa was gisteraand nie vir kommentaar beskikbaar nie.

Die wyse waarop sy selfmoord

gepleeg het, stem ooreen met dié van Liezel Erasmus, onderhoofmeisie van die Hoërskool Ferdinand Postma in Potchefstroom, wat haar einde Oktober verlede jaar in haar koshuiskamer se kas met 'n skooldas gehang het.

In November verlede jaar – in die tyd van die jaarlikse eindeksamen – het sewe tieners, van wie drie in matriek, selfmoord gepleeg.

Seun (15) weer in hof ná vier moorde

Kipland Kinkel (15) verlaat die streekhof in Eugene, Oregon, saam met twee polisie-manne. Hy het eergister weer in die hof verskyn in verband met die onlangse skietery in die kafeteria van Thurston High School in Springfield. Kinkel staan tereg op 4 aanklagte van moord met verswarende omstandighede en 26 aanklagte van poging tot moord. Hy het na bewering sy ouers tuis vermoor voordat hy by die skool op leerlinge losgebrand het.

Hof hoor vyf verkrag 14-jarige

Jong beskuldiges lag terwyl sy getuig oor gebeure in geslote kamer

Sonja Deysel

'n Sestienjarige meisie het gister hulend in die Pretoriase streekhof getuig hoe vyf jong mans haar beurtelings verkrag het nadat hulle haar onder dwang by haar skool weggeneem het.

Die beskuldiges, onder wie 'n veertienjarige seun, het in die beskuldigde-bank gesit en lag terwyl die meisie getuig het oor die beweerde voorval toe sy veertien was.

Mnr. Eric Themba Mtshweni (18),

William Fana Fana Sibanyani (19), Tshwello Sello Mukwenhs (19) en Thani Raymond Mbatho (18), van Soshanguve word saam met die veertienjarige seun daarvan verdink dat hulle die meisie verkrag het. Hulle het skuld ontken.

Die meisie het getuig Mukwenhs en Mbatho het haar by die skool weggedwing. Luidens getuigenis is sy in die gesig geslaan en in die maag geskop toe sy nie saam met hulle wou loop nie.

Die twee jong mans het haar na 'n huis gebring waar nog drie mans hulle

by hulle aangesluit het. Sy is in 'n kamer saam met Mbatho toegesluit waarna hy haar verkrag het, het die meisie getuig. Luidens haar getuigenis het sy geweldig pyn verduur ná die eerste verkragting en het sy herhaaldelik gesmeek dat hulle haar vrylaat.

Die vier ander het haar ná Mbatho beurtelings in die kamer verkrag, het die hof gehoor.

Die beskuldiges het haar herhaaldelik gedreig dat hulle haar sou aanrand indien sy nie sou toestem nie, het sy getuig.

Op 'n vraag van die veertienjarige seun, wat sy eie verdediging behartig het, of die meisie nie liefdesverhoudings met die vyf beskuldiges gehad het nie, het die meisie ontkenend geantwoord.

Volgens die meisie het sy vier van die vyf beskuldiges vantevore gesien omdat hulle gereed in die omgewing van haar skool was.

Die saak is tot 29 Junie uitgestel vir verdere getuigenis.

Me. E. Smit kla aan. Die beskuldiges behartig hul eie verdediging.

Paartjie vas ná 'orale seks' op kinderparty

Adrian Lackay
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Die Randburgse paartjie wat vroeër vandeemaand glo orale seks voor 'n aantal jeugdige op 'n kinderparty gehad het, is gisteroggend deur die polisie se kinderbeskermingsseenheid (KBE) in Johannesburg in hegtenis geneem.

Die 46-jarige man en sy 37-jarige vriendin het later in die hof in Randburg verskyn, waarna die twee op borgtog van R1 000 elk vrygelaat is. Volgens kapt. Andy Pieke, polisie-woordvoerder in Johannesburg, word 'n klag van onsedelike aanranding teen die man ondersoek asook 'n klag ingevolge art. 14 van die Wet op Seksuele Misdrywe.

Sy vriendin staan ook tereg ingevolge art. 14 van dié wet.

Die twaalfjarige klaer - een van tus-

sen 26 en 36 kinders wat hul skoolvriend se partytjie op 1 Augustus in sy pa se huis in Windsor West bygewoon het - het ná die voorval beweer hulle is gedwing om drank en dwelms te gebruik.

Volgens die klaer het die paartjie orale seks in van die kinders se teenwoordigheid gehad, waarna die vrou hom na bewering uitgelok het. Pieke het gesê geen dwelmverwante klagtes word teen die twee volwassenes ondersoek nie. Hy wou nie die name van die twee verdagtes bekend maak nie omdat die verdagte pa se seun saam met die ander partytjiegangers skoolgaan.

"Die inhegtenisnemings het gevolg op die besluit van die staatsaanklaer. Die KBE sal voortgaan om verklarings te kry by kinders wat die partytjie bygewoon het," het Pieke gesê. Volgens hom is sewe verklarings by die polisie afgeleë.

Seuns (7, 8) vermoor elfjarige meisie vir fiets

Chicago. - Twee seuns van onderskeidelik sewe en agt jaar oud het 'n elfjarige meisie met 'n klip teen die kop geslaan, haar gemolesteer en haar met takke en haar onderklere versmoor net om haar blou Road Warrior-fiets te kan steel.

Die seuns is Sondag aangekla weens die moord op Ryan Harris, wat op 27 Julie verdwyn het terwyl sy saam met een van die seuns in die South Side-buurt fietsgery het.

Harris se lyk is 'n dag later tussen hoë onkruidplante naby die seuns se

huise gevind. Sy is gemolesteer met 'n voorwerp waaroor die polisie niks wou sê nie nadat die seuns haar klaarblyklik oor die kop geslaan en haar skedel gekraak het, waarna sy bewusteloos geraak het.

Toe die polisie die seuns vir die eerste keer ondervra het, het hulle gesê hulle het gesien hoe 'n vreemdeling haar na 'n motor lok. Die polisie het egter agterdochtig geraak toe die seuns hul stories begin verander.

Hulle het Sondag beken hulle het haar vermoor. - (Sapa-AP).

4 leerlinge in Pta-hof oor besit van dagga

Sonja Deyzel

Vier minderjarige leerlinge van die Hillview High School het gister vlugtig in die Pretoriase landdroshof verskyn op aanklagte van die besit van dagga.

Die leerlinge, wat tussen veertien en sestien jaar oud is, is eer-

gister by dié skool deur die Suid-Afrikaanse narkotikaburo (Sanab) in hegtenis geneem.

Kapt. Tim Naser, die eenheidsbevelvoerder van Sanab se dwelmafdeling, wou nie meer sê oor die omstandighede om die vier se inhegtenisneming nie.

Volgens hom het hulle inligting opgevolg nadat 'n naamlose op-

roep ontvang is.

Luidens die klagstaat is die leerlinge by die skool in hegtenis geneem.

Die leerlinge, wat woonagtig is in Capital Park, Roseville en Pretoria-Noord, is deur landdros Peet van Vuuren op waarskuwing vrygelaat.

Die saak is tot 14 Mei uitgestel.

Vrou gevonnissen wat dogter met tuinslang slaan

Elkanten Foutie

'n Pretoriase vrou wat haar negejarige dogter met 'n tuinslang aangevand het omdat sy onder meer gewelers het om haar kamer op te ruim en skool toe te gaan, is gister in dié stad se landdroshof 'n keuse van 'n opgeskorte vonnis of 'n boete gegee.

Die 31-jarige vrou is aangekla weens aanranding met die opset om ernstig te beseer.

Daar is getuig dat sy die kind met 'n tuinslang oor haar hele liggaam geslaan het. Die skoolowerheid het die saak by die departement aanhangig gemaak.

Aan die vrou is 'n boete van R4 000 of vier maande tronkstraf, opgeskort vir vyf jaar, opgeleë weens kinder mishandeling.

Die proefbeampte, mev. Hesther van Rooyen, het in haar verslag gesê die vrou kom uit 'n huis waar daar gedurig huweliksomhinn was.

Die klaagster in die saak is 'n buitengewoon moeilike kind, wat by geleentheid deur die polisie tot bedaring gebring moes word.

Sy is by 'n plek van veilige bewaring en 'n hospitaal, waar sy vir waarneming was, weggevoer omdat sy onhanteerbaar was.

Die ma het in haar getuennis erken dat

sy die grense van ouerlike tug oorskry het en in die toekoms eerder 'n welsyn-beampte se hulp sal inroep wannear sy dissiplinêre probleme ondervind. Sy wou nie haar ongelukkige kinders die skuld vir haar vergrype gee nie.

Van Rooyen het getuig dat die vrou tydelik toegig oor haar kind verbeur het tot tyd en wyl albei die verhouding beter kan hanteer.

Daar was ook sprake van drankmisbruik in naweke.

Landdros K. Bosch het in sy vonnisoplegging gesê hy neem in ag dat professionele mense nie eens die kind kan hanteer nie en dat die vrou se opleiding as ma onvoldoende was.

Opgeskorte vonnis ná moord op ma

Ingrid Jonker

'n Seun wat in 'n woedebui per ongeluk sy ma doodgeskiet het toe hy sy stiefpa met sy rewolwer wou vermoor, het gister in die Pretoriase hoë hof 'n opgeskorte vonnis gekry.

Gerrit van Tonder (18), oorspronklik van Cullinan, wou op 10 Mei verlede jaar selfmoord pleeg toe mnr. Lourans François Haasbroek, sy stiefpa en viserektor van die Pretoriase Tegniese Kollege, sy kamer inge-

Mnr. Lourans François Haasbroek, viserektor van die Pretoriase Tegniese Kollege, gister buite die Pretoriase hoë hof.

Foto: HEO CALDECOTT

kom het.

Hy het skuld beken. Volgens Gerrit wou hy selfmoord pleeg omdat hy "geen hoop meer" vir die toekomst gehad het nie.

"Ek het ou klers aangetrek en 'n klapmus oor my kop getrek. Die klapmus moes voorkom dat ek 'n grusame prentjie skep vir die mense wat my lyk ontdek," het hy in 'n verklaring gesê.

Gerrit het gesê vandat hy kan onthou, het hy sy stiefpa, wat hom nooit aangeneem het nie, as streng en onverbiddelik ervaar.

"Net voordat ek selfmoord kon pleeg, het my stiefpa die kamer ingekom.

"Ek het 'n ontsettende haat en woede in my voel opwel toe ek besef dat hy die mens is wat my lewe verwoes en my tot self-

moord gedryf het."

Gerrit het skote op sy stiefpa geskiet en hom tot in die sitkamer gejaag, waar sy ma en ouma gesit het. Een van die skote het mev. Elsie Haasbroek (38), sy ma, getref. Sy is daarna dood.

Volgens Gerrit het hy daarna die rewolwer op hom gerig om selfmoord te pleeg, maar besef hy het die wapen leeggeskiet. Hy het weggehardloop en is die volgende dag in hegtenis geneem.

"My stiefpa het my gedomineer en my vryheid ingeperk. Ek kon slegs by uitsondering by vriende gaan kuier. My ma was ook bang vir hom."

Gerrit het ernstige berou oor die voorval. "Ek het my ma in-nig lief gehad en mis haar geweldig."

Haasbroek het getuig hy het

gedink sy stiefseun se woede-uitbarstings is normaal en dat hulle 'n normale verhouding gehad het. "Ek aanvaar wraak sal dit nie vir my makliker maak nie."

Me. A.C. van Dyk, 'n maatskaplike werker, het gesê Gerrit het van kleins af soos 'n buitestaander in sy gesin gevoel.

"Hy het ná die eerste skoot beheer verloor en soos 'n robot begin skiet."

Gerrit, wat nou by sy oom in Klerksdorp woon, is tot agt jaar tronkstraf gevonnis. Dit is vir vyf jaar opgeskort. Hy moet onder meer psigoterapie ondergaan.

Regter S.J. Mynhardt het gesê daar moet geprobeer word om Gerrit, wat van goeie mensmateriale gemaak is, weer aanmekeer te sit.

Vrou getuig moord 'was enigste uitweg'

Ingrid Jonker

'n Vrou wat beken het dat sy haar man laat vermoor het nadat hy haar en haar kinders jare lank erg aangevand het, het gister in die Pretoriase hoë hof getuig dat sy "geen ander keuse" gehad het nie.

Johanna Wilhelmina (Popple) Smook (50) van Wespark in Pretoria het gesê die 64-jarige mnr. Gerald James Smook, haar man, het kort voor die moord 'n vuurwapen op die Swartmark probeer koop. "Ek het toe geweet hy sal sy jare lange dreigement uitvoer dat hy my en die kinders sou doodmaak. Hy het vrese by my ingeboesem wat onmenslik was. Hy was deur en deur 'n psigopaat."

Smook het getuig sy het na mense begin soek wat haar man sou vermoor nadat die polisie haar nie kon

help nie.

Mrs. Petrus Stephanus (Wimpie) Bezuiden-hout (24) en Francois Jacques (26) na Bezuiden-hout (26), vriende van haar ters, het mnr. Smook glo op 10 Mei verlede jaar in sy agterplaas vermoor. Die twee mans, wat skuld ontken, hoor word.

Smook het getuig sy wou hulle R15 000 vir motorfietse gee. Hulle het ná die moord by haar ingetrek.

Hoewel voorgestel is dat lug in mnr. Smook se are gespuil word sodat hy 'n hartaanval moet kry, is hy

verskeie kere met 'n mes gestoek.

"My man het dié aand televisie gekyk. Ek het gevra dat hy in die agterplaas gaan kyk, want ek hoor iets raas. Hy het sy bosbalkolf, waarmee hy ons gereeld aangevand het, gaan haal en is by die agterdeur uit."

Smook wou hom terugroep, maar sy was bang hy sou dan agtergekom het iets is verkeerd.

"Ek was yskoud en het gevoelens beleef wat ek nooit wantevors beleef het nie. Dit was sowat drie minute, toe hoor ek hom skree. Ek kon nie uitgaan nie. Dit het gevoel of ek geen bloed meer in my are het nie. Ek kon nie glo ons het dit gedoen nie."

Smook het gesê hoewel daardie aand in haar gedagtes bly maal, het sy soos 'n voël gevoel wat vir die eerste keer kon vlieg.

Voor die moord het sy 'n bruin stof by 'n moettewinkel gekry wat

die twee mans voor die moord aan hulle moes smeer. "Die man by die winkel het gesê as hulle dié stof aan hul lywe smeer en blare in hul monde sit, sal niemand weet dat hulle die moord beplan het nie. Dit het nie gewerk nie."

Smook het voorts gesê sy het oor die jare soos "in dier in 'n hok" gevoel. Sy wou twee keer van hom skiel, maar hy wou dit nie toelaat nie.

"My man het al die gevoel wat ek gehad het doodgeslaan en doodgemaak. Hy het telkens gedreig om petrol oor ons huus te gooi en dit aan die brand te steek."

Volgens Smook het hy haar só geslaan dat sy 'n miskraam gehad het. Hy het hul kinders en die hond geslaan en geskop. Op 'n keer het hy sy dogter met 'n sweep in die sraaf agterna gesit.



Smook

ver-

Kind pos smeking aan God

Korrespondent

Kaapstad. – "To God, Golden Street, Heaven 777" lees die adres van 'n brief met 'n kind se smartkreet wat gister onder die aandag van Die Burger, susterkoerant van Beeld, gebring is.

Die spelling en sinsverband van die onderstaande brief, in Afrikaans geskryf, is verander om dit makliker te laat lees. Name is uitgelaat.

"Liewe God, Hemelse Vader, ek moet met U praat oor 'n dringende saak. Ek het baie probleme by die huis en ek het niemand om mee te praat nie, so ek gaan met U praat oor my probleme.

"My pa het besluit om weg te

gaan, want hy kan dit nie meer vat nie. Hy het besluit hy gaan my saamneem! Ek wil nie eintlik gaan nie, want dan is my ma alleen. Ons het gisteraand gepraat oordat ek saam met hom gaan, want ek het hom ook lief en ek wil nie eintlik hê hy moet gaan nie. Ons het gepraat. Hy sê as ek hier bly, gaan my groot broer my afknou en die baas oor die huis speel.

"Here, as my pa nou vir die welsynswerker gaan sien en praat, gaan hulle my weer wegvat van my ma en pa en XXXX en XXXXXX. Ek wil ook vra dat U vir XXXX sal help as ek weggaan.

"Liewe Here, dit is nie maklik om met iemand te praat nie. Ek gaan XXXX baie mis, en my

ma en XXXXXX, want hulle het vir my baie gedoen.

"Here, ek praat met u om die mense in hospitale te help.

"Here, my Vader, ek moet nou my brief sluit. Ek hoop Here sal my brief kry en U sal my klasmaats help as ek weggaan. My pa het nog nie gesê waarheen ons gaan nie. As alles goed gaan, sal XXXXX ook miskien saam met ons kan gaan. Ek hoop U hoor my gebed wat ek vir U geskryf het.

"Baie liefde, XXXXXXXXXXXX."

Onderaan die brief is hartjies en pyltjies geteken met die woorde: "I love You my God" en "Sawer".

Dié brief, wat 22 April 1998 gedateer is, het by 'n Kaapstadse poskantoor opgeduik.

Jong paartjie in hof weens erg beseerde baba

Mense het dalk op kind gesit – ouers

Michelle Pieters

'n Negentienjarige vrou van Centurion en haar vriend verskyn vanoggend in die Pretoriase landdroshof omdat hulle hul babadogtertjie van skaars drie maande glo so erg mishandel het dat die kind vyf skedelbreuke, armfrakture en gebreekte ribbe opgedoen het.

Die redes wat die ouers glo vir die kind se beserings aangevoer het, is dat "mense dalk op die kind gesit het".

Insp. Kobus Vlok, ondersoekbeampte van die polisie se kinderbeskermingseenheid in Pretoria, het gister bevestig dat die meisie en haar 25-jarige vriend van 'n hoewe in The Reeds, vanoggend in die hof sal verskyn op aanklagte van poging tot moord en moontlik ook kindermishandeling.

Die kind se beserings het verlede week toevallig aan die lig gekom toe hospitaalpersoneelle die polisie ontbied het nadat toetse die kind se

beserings getoon het.

Die kind is glo deur haar ouers vir die soveelste keer sedert haar geboorte na 'n dokter geneem. Die dokter het besluit dat die kind vir verdere toetse opgeneem moet word. Dit is toe dat die beserings opgemerk is.

Die kind was sedert haar geboorte reeds by vyf spesialiste, onder wie neurochirurge.

'n Verslag wat gister deur 'n dokter saamgestel is, toon dat die kind drie ribfrakture en vyf skedelbreuke het. Van die frakture het al aangegroei.

Die dokter sal waarskynlik vanoggend in 'n verslag meer lig kan werp op hoe die beserings moontlik opgedoen is.

Volgens Vlok vermoed die polisie dat die kind die beserings oor 'n lang tyd opgedoen het. Die bloeding op die kind se brein is egter weens nuwe beserings.

Die baba het Donderdag 'n operasie in die Muelmed-hospitaal in Pretoria ondergaan. Sy is in 'n ernstige, maar bestendige toestand.

Sy is die paartjie se enigste kind.