

**REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS: A GESTALT
THERAPEUTIC PROCESS MODEL FOR TEACHERS
SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS**

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF DIACONIOLOGY
(DIRECTION: PLAY THERAPY)**

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MARCH 2009

DECLARATION

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I hereby declare the theses titled REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS: A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS MODEL FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS as my own work. I also declare that all references used or quoted are acknowledged in full.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TO GOD THE GLORY

My thanks go to the following people:

- Dr C.H.M. Bloem my promoter and sounding-board
- Tilana Erasmus for literature searches at the University of South Africa
- Marinda Ponelis for being an excellent independent observer, motivator and sounding-board
- Marinda Ponelis and John William Bothma, my deputy principals, for acting during my study leave, support and trust
- The staff of Wordsworth High School for their support and motivation
- The research participants for their co-operation and enthusiasm for the Gestalt model
- Jill Wilson for hours of editing
- Heleen Horn for technical, administrative and moral assistance
- Marileen and Anria Horn for moral support

ABSTRACT

REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS: A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS MODEL FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS

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Teachers in South Africa experience strain and tension, unique to their specific work description, which is evident in the career-related stress symptoms experienced by the individual teachers, the high rate of absenteeism amongst teachers, as well as the high attrition rate. Although factors causing teacher-stress, and the consequences thereof, have been extensively researched, a limited number of empirical evaluations of the effectiveness and accessibility of stress-management programmes have been conducted.

Due to the holistic nature of Gestalt therapy, its emphasis on the here-and-now and the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process, a Gestalt therapeutic process model was developed to empower teachers to regain homeostasis.

The aim and objectives of the research were the design, development, presentation and evaluation of a Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, in their quest to regain homeostasis. The model was developed to be implemented within the school environment by a trained member of the school management team. The process of intervention research was used for the research study. A functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic model, was developed and presented to ten teachers, selected through purposive sampling, and again to five different teachers, selected through theoretical sampling. The teachers identified were representative regarding age, gender, race and years in education. Triangulation was used and qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously.

The hypothesis stated for the research was that if teachers, suffering from career-related stress, were exposed to a Gestalt therapeutic model, they would regain homeostasis. Both the qualitative and quantitative data supported the hypothesis. The effect of the variables on each other was compared to confirm the reliability, applicability and neutrality of the research data. At the end of the three month research period the teachers who were exposed to the said model experienced less stress-related symptoms, as well as growth towards maturity and self-support, which would ultimately result in the regaining of homeostasis.

A further objective of the research was to determine the feasibility of a trained school management team member implementing the Gestalt therapeutic process model at school. The qualitative data collected, indicated the feasibility thereof on condition that the school management team member did receive the necessary Gestalt therapeutic training.

KEY TERMS

Gestalt therapy

Awareness

Dialogue

Process

Organismic self-regulation

Self-support

Homeostasis

Teacher

Career-related teacher-stress

Intervention research

EXPLANATION OF SELECTED TERMS USED IN THE RESEARCH REPORT

Gestalt

The German word 'gestalt' means a whole or a complete pattern, form or configuration, which cannot be broken without destroying its nature. People make patterns or wholes of their experience, they thus have a spontaneous urge to complete or make meaning out of perceptual stimuli. Gestalt further indicates that the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Gestalt therapy

Gestalt therapy is a means of increasing human potential through psychotherapy. It is non-manipulative observation of the here-and-now and stresses the importance of the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process. Gestalt therapy regards individuals holistically as part of their environment. The ultimate aim of Gestalt therapy is to assist the individual to become mature and self-supportive

Awareness

Awareness includes being aware of your inner zone of experience which is your feelings, thoughts and also bodily sensations, your outer zone of experience indicating awareness of everything in your environmental field using the senses, and awareness of the middle zone which includes all the ways in which you make sense of both internal and external stimuli. This awareness is constituted in the present.

Dialogue

Dialogue refers to a relationship based on engagement, thus being fully present in the moment of contact. It is an honest meeting between people where they hear more than the spoken word, but also understand what is not spoken, but can be observed. True dialogue between two people is called an I-Thou relationship, where both meet each other with their resources at the contact boundary, so that a co-creation takes place.

Process

The word process implies a change in the individual and/or the environmental field. Any change will effect the total environment. This change or growth in the individual, towards maturity and self-support, is the result of organismic self-regulation, based on the dominant need of the individual and the paradoxical theory of change indicating that people can only grow once they have accepted themselves as they are.

Holism

Holism indicates the inter-connectedness of all things. Individuals are holistic beings with internal physiological, psychological, cognitive, social, historical, spiritual and cultural aspects and they exist in the context of their total environment.

Here-and-now

Gestalt therapy is present-centred. The past is past and the future is still to come. All energy must be centred in the present. Thoughts about the past and future must be experienced in the present, based on the individuals' present field of thoughts.

I-Thou relationship

An I-Thou relationship, which is a dialogic relationship, occurs when two or more people truly engages in the present, with honesty and acknowledging the uniqueness and authenticity of each other.

Contact-boundary

The ego-, or contact boundary, is the differentiation between the self, and the otherness (living or non-living) where the self is defined by the otherness and. Co-creation occurs at the contact boundary when a true I-Thou relationship is achieved.

Environmental field

The environmental field includes everything - living and non-living. Individuals experience their environmental field through cognitive, sensory and affective awareness.

Organismic self-regulation

Organismic self-regulation is the natural tendency of humans to maintain homeostasis. Organismic self-regulation indicates that the individual becomes aware of a need. The need becomes figure (moves to the foreground), is acknowledged and satisfied by the individual and becomes ground (moves to the background). Once a dominant need has been satisfied the next dominant need emerges.

Polarisation versus dichotomy

Gestalt therapy sees the counterparts of the personality or emotions as balanced poles, although both may not be in conscious awareness. Both polarities, negative and positive, exist and are valid. Homeostasis in the personality is only achieved by affirming and owning both polarities.

Impasse

The impasse is the point in therapy where self-support is not yet forthcoming and environmental support is withdrawn or absent. This is the point from where growth occurs.

Experiment in Gestalt therapy

An experiment, in Gestalt therapy, is modifying an individual's behaviour in the situation itself. If this systematic behaviour modification grows out of the experience of the individual, it is called an experiment.

Ex-Model C schools

Ex- Model C schools are South African public schools which, before 1992, only admitted white learners. These schools are located in the so called "suburbs" and not in the so called "townships".

Section 21 Schools

Section 21 schools are public schools where the governing body of the school has an added financial responsibility. They thus also have the functions of drawing up and presenting an annual budget to the parent body for approval and of, for example, employing educators and non-educators and remunerate them out of the school fees paid by the learners. Section 21 schools are further responsible for the maintenance, administrative and academic costs involved in the day-to day governance and management of a school. (South Africa, 1996:16)

Inclusive education

Inclusive education is the inclusion of all learners, regardless of their physical, emotional or cognitive abilities or disabilities, in mainstream education.

School management team

A school management team, in South African public schools, consists of the principal, deputy principal/s and subject department heads, called heads of department, of a specific school.

EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

RSA	Republic of South Africa
USA	United States of America
SASA	South African Schools Act
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
GET	General Education and Training Phase
FET	Further Education and Training Phase
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa
SADTU	South African Democratic Teacher Union
SAOU	Suid Afrikaanse Onderwys Unie
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
GEMS	Government Employees Medical Aids Scheme
ICAS	The Behavioural Risk Management Company (South Africa)
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
RET	Rational Emotive Therapy
ARC-approach	Avoid Reframe Cope
SAPA	South African Press Association
SABC 2	South African Broadcasting Corporation TV-channel 2
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

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CHAPTER 1

PHASE ONE: PROBLEM ANALYSIS AND PROJECT PLANNING

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND:

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to assist teachers suffering from career-related stress, through the development of a Gestalt therapeutic process model in order to regain homeostasis. Homeostasis is a prerequisite for optimal individual functioning. The process model focuses on applicable coping strategies, which could be implemented, through a continuous process within the school environment, to reduce or eradicate the experienced stress and the consequences thereof. The result of this study is a process model specifically for teachers in the South African educational environment.

Teachers (also known as educators) in South African schools experience strain and tension, unique to their specific work description. Although many career-related stressors are universal across all careers, and are addressed as such, specific strategies addressing the unique character of the stress experienced in education are inadequate or borrowed from other helping professions (Brown & Uehara, 1999:10). Due to these inadequate support strategies, stress manifests itself in the behaviour (Phillips, 1993:194; Everaert & Van der Wolf, 2003:122), emotions (Adamson, 2002:25; Davidson, 2003:17; Ho & Au, 2006:175), cognitions (Basson, 1994:58; Schlichte, Yssel & Merbler, 2005:10) and physical conditions (Dunham, 1992:97; Klos, 2003:191) of teachers. Teacher stress has a negative impact on the learners (Jaye, 2002:117; Holt, 2005:97), on education in general (Kizeltepe, 2003:148; Day, Elliot & Kington, 2005:3) and the country at large.

Teacher stress is caused by factors directly related to the day-to-day activities in the classroom and school, referred to as primary factors; factors brought on by forces in the

society about which the teacher can do little, referred to as secondary factors, as well as factors related to the personality of the individual teacher. *Primary factors* include, for example, poor working conditions with ill equipped classrooms (Lieberman & Miller, 2005:151; Grant & Hill, 2006:21), violence (Botha, 2006:x; Mithileni, 2006:x1) and poor discipline in the school (Motseke, 1998:91; Berkson, 2006:10), workload (Berkson, 2006:6; Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006:12), departmental policies (Basson, 1999:64), and school organisation. Examples of *secondary factors* are socio-economic factors (Day et al, 2005:3; Motsheka, 2006:1), the multicultural diversity of schools (Basson, 1999:64), and inadequate teacher remuneration (Motseka, 1998:47; Berkson, 2006:6). The inadequate remuneration of teachers resulted in the national industrial action of government employees in June 2007. Although all teachers are exposed to stress, not all teachers experience the same degree of stress, and the susceptibility to stress thus lies within the *personality* of the individual teachers (Otto, 1986:129; Basson, 1999:59). For the purpose of this research *personality* refers to the resilience, individual coping skills and the process of each individual teacher.

An important stress factor, which distinguishes education from any other career, is the teacher's role of *in loco parentis* (in the place of the parent). The teacher's role as *in loco parentis* has been exacerbated by the lack of involvement of a large number of parents in their children's education and social integration. Children go through many physical and emotional changes and thus need the support from their parents, which is not always forthcoming. This lack of involvement is due to factors such as one parent families, dual income families, children raised by family members or siblings, (Webb, 2006:10) and uneducated or semi-educated parents, who cannot assist their children in research for school assignments or in passing exams. The responsibility of the holistic education of the majority of South African children, therefore, rests to a large extent with the teachers, who take their role of *in loco parentis* to heart. This extended role of the teacher as *in loco parentis*, has, in the experience of the researcher, a detrimental effect on the relationship between parents and their children on the one hand, and on the stress experienced by teachers on the other. It is therefore the teacher's dedication to this role that justifies, and calls for, a different and holistic approach to stress management.

According to Balt (The News, 2006) teachers are leaving the profession at an increasing rate. In research done by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE, 2006:30) it has been found that young teachers, who leave the field of education during the first five years of their teaching career, do so due to career-related stress. At the other end of the scale more experienced teachers are retiring earlier even though an extended career would result in a substantial increase in retirement income. Teacher absenteeism, as a result of stress-related illnesses, further leads to disruptions in the academic year and compromised competence (Esteve, 1989:21; Adamson, 2002:9).

With this research the researcher argues that there are many reasons why the providing of stress-awareness and management information to teachers at every level of the educational system, could benefit the system in the long run. There is an even greater need for providing accessible stress therapy to teachers, which could result in an empowered approach to work and life. An approach focusing on empowerment needs to be holistic and inclusive, addressing personal, interpersonal and environmental factors, because, as stated by Tobin (1992:41), no individual can function without a holistic support system.

Gestalt therapy is a holistic therapeutic process with awareness, dialogue and field theory at the heart of the approach (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951; Beisser, 1970; Yontef, 1976; Yontef, 1978; O'Leary, 1992; Clarkson & McKewn, 1993; Yontef, 1993; Sills, Fish & Lapworth, 1995; Hamilton, 1997; Crocker, 2001; Feldhause, 2001; Joyce & Sills, 2003). Gestalt therapeutic intervention becomes an approach to life thus resulting in long term results, and may therefore be a strong empowerment tool in the process of dealing with stress and stress-related issues.

1.2 RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

As part of previous research done, although not the focus of the said research, the researcher had become aware of the high and deleterious stress levels experienced by teachers in education. These undesirable stress levels experienced by teachers, as a result

of career-related stressors, have also been researched and confirmed by other researchers since the 1980's. Researchers in the international arena have addressed the issue of the career-related stress experienced by teachers, thus emphasising its universal character. Examples of the said researchers are: Otto (Australia 1986); Esteve (USA 1989); Kyriaccou (USA 1989); Dunham (England 1992); Phillips (USA 1993); Brown and Uehara (Hawaii 1999); Everaert and Van der Wolf (The Netherlands 2003), Kiziltepe (USA 2003); Klos (RSA 2003); Segumpan and Bahari (Malaysia 2003); Arkewuyo (Nigeria 2004) McCann and Johannessen (USA 2004); Day, Elliot and Kington (England 2005); Holt (RSA 2005); Lieberman and Miller (USA 2005); Berkson (USA 2006); Fitzpatrick (RSA 2006); Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli (Finland 2006); Ho and Au (China 2006) and Webb (USA 2006). Although these researchers have researched the factors and consequences of teacher stress in depth and gave a sound foundation for statistics, profiles and characteristics, research on successful coping strategies, addressing these consequences holistically, is limited.

The researcher herself has been involved in education for the past thirty years and has been aware of the growing need for intervention. At the school where the researcher was employed at the time of this research an informal survey has exposed that a number of teachers applied strategies to cope with stress which were not necessarily conducive to their general well-being: six out of the forty teachers used anti-depressants, thirteen smoked heavily and two abused alcohol. Three of the forty teachers had further threatened to leave the profession due to the disruptive behavioural tendencies of the learners and the total staff compliment indicated an inability to cope with the administrative pressures of the new National Curriculum Statement. The industrial action of June 2007 left some teachers scared, while others feared the loss of income due to the strike on the basis of 'no work- no pay'. During the 2006/2007 school year one teacher was physically abused by a learner and was sent for trauma counselling. In 2004 a head of department was aggravated by a learner, which caused the teacher to suffer a pending third stroke at school. This head of department has since been boarded because of ill health. As a result of these pressures the researcher, who was also the principal of the school in question at the time, established various in-service-training opportunities, as

well as a skills-based disciplinary approach to empower the teachers. The researcher is also the school counsellor and deals, at least three times per week, with teachers showing signs of stress usually due to the behaviour of learners or the workload.

The researcher has endeavoured to provide an alternative approach to address the negative effects of teacher stress, and to empower not only the teachers, but education in general. Although there are existing coping strategies and programmes addressing teacher stress, as discussed in Chapter 4, these strategies and programmes are either eclectic or not addressing the teacher as a holistic being within the teaching environment. These programmes also lack sustainability and therefore the researcher's decision to develop a Gestalt therapeutic process model indicating the process addressing the stress experienced by teachers.

It is of importance though, to accept the fact that teaching will always be inherently stressful. It is therefore unavoidable although at the same time undesirable (Esteve, 1989:3). Stress amongst teachers is not about a few teachers suffering failure to cope. All teachers experience stress to some degree and it should not be seen as an essential inadequacy of the teacher. To appreciate the detrimental consequences of teacher stress, and the need to develop an accessible therapeutic approach, the factors causing teachers to experience career-related stress, the consequences of the career-related stress and the existing coping strategies were discussed and assessed where applicable.

Many sources of stress have been identified, although the main sources of stress for each individual teacher may vary greatly. In isolation some of the factors causing stress may be relatively unimportant, but *en masse* they have a negative effect on teachers' self-image and the view they will have of the profession. As indicated earlier teacher stress is caused by primary and secondary factors. Primary factors are those with a direct effect on the teacher in the classroom while secondary factors are environmental and brought on by forces in society. Some teachers are more susceptible to stress than other (Kyriacou, 1989:28) and therefore personality factors should be added as a cause.

Primary factors impact directly on teaching, limit it or cause tension in day-to-day practice (Esteve, 1989:6). Learner misbehaviour and indiscipline is the most common predictor of career-related stress experienced by teachers (Otto, 1986:115; Cox, Boot & Cox, 1989:107; Kyriacou, 1989:31; Dunham, 1992:44-51; Phillips, 1993:187; Everaert & Van der Wolf, 2003:122; Kiziltepe, 2003:147; Day et al, 2005:4; Schlichte et al, 2005:36; Berkson, 2006:10). In addition, there is further a world-wide increase in violence in teaching institutions (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1986:13; Esteve, 1989:17), which does not exclude South African schools (Botha, 2006:x; Fitzpatrick, 2006(a):208; Mithileni, 2006:xi). The workload of teachers can be seen as the second largest stress factor (Cox et al, 1989: 106; Bindhu & Sudheeskumar, 2006:2; Berkson, 2006:6). This is further exacerbated by the role ambiguity of teachers because of the various basically conflicting roles they have to fulfil (Esteve, 1989:10; Dunham, 1992:62; Day et al, 2005:6; Lieberman & Miller, 2005:152).

It is important to remember that stress-producing problems encountered in schools, derive in part from the schools' dependence on the wider education system and state departmental policies. Policy changes and the extra work associated with the changes are contributory factors to teacher stress (Cole & Walker, 1989:x; Kyriacou, 1989:32; Dunham, 1992:62). In South Africa teachers' work has become increasingly performance- orientated and audit driven because of the benchmarking of standards. The introduction of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) under the auspices of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), and the introduction of outcomes based education (OBE), also known as Curriculum 2005 (De Vos & Schulze, 2002:14-15) has resulted in a renewed focus on increased workloads and stress.

Secondary factors contributing to teacher stress are more disconcerting and give rise to more feelings of helplessness than primary factors, because they are brought about by forces in the society about which teachers can do little. Secondary factors which bear an impact on teacher-stress are: socio-economic factors, a perception that the status of teachers is declining, pedagogical factors, as well as the influence of the mass media.

The cultural diversity of the South African teaching corps, as well as the cultural (Nassar-McMillan, Karvonen & Young, 2003:99) and socio-economic diversity of the learners (South Africa, 1996(b):3; Davidson, 2003:7) are a stress factors to be reckoned with. Included in this diversity are the diverse physical, emotional and academic abilities of learners in the same class, as the result of the new South African policy on inclusive education (Otto, 1986:115; Firth, Frydenberg & Greaves, 2003:66). In spite of teachers' diverse and important role in the society, there has been a change in the society's attitude towards teachers. As far as their work is concerned, teachers feel themselves to be under constant attack and are dominated by feelings of persecution (Esteve, 1989:11) and disrespect (Phillips, 1993:188).

All teachers are exposed to a large number of primary and secondary stressors, yet not all teachers experience the same high levels of stress. The answer to this lies in the individual personality or process of each individual teacher. Teachers' experience of stress is determined by personality factors, thus their perception of situations and their ability to cope with various situations. Kyriacou (1989:28) mentions research which indicates that the degree of control teachers feel they have over the demands made upon them, is of crucial importance. Teachers, who continually feel that their work situation places constraints on their chances for self-growth and self-expression, are at risk (Otto, 1986:130).

From this it is evident that stress in teaching has deleterious consequences on teacher performance and it is reasonable to believe that this in turn, will affect learner performance and learning. Coinciding with this is the effect of career-related stress on the teachers' physical, emotional, behavioural and cognitive well-being, resulting in teacher absenteeism and attrition. These consequences are detrimental to education at large.

Dunham (1992:95-96) goes further, referring to Livingston-Booth who indicated that the sequence of reactions when stress-coping strategies are not effective, and personal resources are becoming depleted, has three stages. Stage one can be recognised through

the speeding up of all activity, as well as the feeling of being driven. Stage two can be recognised through altered sleep patterns, over-reacting, irritability, forgetfulness, physical symptoms such as headaches and emotional symptoms such as anxiety and depression. Stage three can be recognised by heart palpitations, dizziness, a deteriorating immune system, indecisiveness, concentration problems, tearfulness and general unhappiness.

Behavioural consequences include, for example, atypical behaviour, such as short temperedness, over-reacting, complaining and a lack of imagination or enthusiasm (Dunham, 1992:92). Negative emotional consequences, although these cannot be measured, include, for example, loss of interest, joy and motivation in life, an escalating sense of loss of control, constant negative thinking, detachment from personal or work relationships, and a loss of focus and life purpose (Adamson, 2002:25) and low self-concepts (De Kock, 1988:36; McCann & Johannessen, 2004:3; Ho & Au, 2006:175). Mental illnesses experienced by teachers suffering from career-related stress, are anxiety and irritability (Ho & Au, 2006:176) and depression (Esteve, 1989:21; Klos 2003:191; Ho & Au, 2006:183). Poor physical health and psychological burnout can lead to cognitive consequences such as poor teaching performance, bad judgement and poor decision-making (Dunham, 1992:95). Physical consequences, because of prolonged stress, are, for example, tiredness, physical pain such as headaches, insomnia (Adamson, 2002:13), the excessive use of carbohydrates and eating and somatoform disorders (Adamson, 2002:13; Klos, 2003:214-219).

Learners are the ultimate sufferers because of teacher stress. Stressed teachers contribute little to the learners' academic growth and many learners may suffer a lower self-esteem and feelings of anger or anxiety as a result of the teacher's disinterested, hypercritical and uncaring behaviour (Everaert & Van der Wolf, 2003:122).

Stress has been recognised as an 'occupational disease' amongst teachers in Europe and the USA (Chakrovoty, 1989:68). It has been identified as one of the reasons for teacher attrition (Adamson, 2002:12; Kiziltepe, 2003:147; Day et al, 2005:3; Berkson, 2006:9),

the high turnover of teachers and high absenteeism (Capel, 1989:42; Esteve, 1989:21; Brown & Uehara, 1999:8; Ho & Au, 2006:176). The researcher has experienced this at the school where she is employed, where one specific teacher is annually absent during the third term because of stress. Teachers suffering from, for example, prolonged psychiatric illnesses, can be absent for up to three years and this usually results in resignation or early retirement (Chakrovoty, 1989:69). The result is thus the premature loss of able, experienced teachers on grounds of ill-health (Day et al, 2005:3).

The National Department of Education's growing awareness of the stress factors and the consequences thereof for teachers, learners and education at large, is evident in their attempt to address these issues. Through outsourcing support to an international institution named ICAS, a behavioural risk management company, where 424 tele-counsellors were trained during the period 2005/2006 (GDE, 2006:86), the Department of Education accepted the fact that teachers need help. The problem though, is that not many teachers make use of this as a solution. The Gauteng Department of Education have gone a step further and developed a wellness plan for employees with the emphasis on management issues.

Teachers use both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies (Phillips, 1993:195), based on their appraisal of a stressful situation. People use more problem-focused strategies in encounters they appraise as changeable, such as classroom discipline, and more emotion-focused forms of coping in situations they consider as unchangeable, such as socio-economic factors. It is important to be aware, though, that this distinction is theoretical, because in practice the strategies are often combined. There is also a growing awareness within the National Department of Education, Universities, Teacher Unions and School Governing Bodies of the teachers' need for therapeutic assistance or counselling programmes.

Problem-focused coping strategies are active cognitive strategies including, problem appraisal, stress awareness strategies, behaviour modification strategies, induction programmes for novice teachers and improved collegial relationships (Phillips, 1993:195;

Department of Education, 2000; Arikewuyo, 2003: 198). The aim of problem-focused strategies are the learning of more effective coping skills, through a combination of organisational and person-centred approaches, which may increase self-efficacy and which includes a feedback loop allowing for monitoring, evaluation, and modification of the intervention if necessary.

When teachers, on the other hand, perceive a situation as unchangeable they implement emotion-focused coping strategies (Phillips, *ibid*). Acceptance, avoidance, hobbies and out-of-school activities, meditation, breathing and relaxation, religious activities, physical exercise and relationships with friends and families are emotion-focused coping strategies. Kloss (2003: 226) states that women with traditional roots seek stress release in music, singing and dancing.

It is thus clear that, although there has been a growing awareness of the stress experienced by teachers, its negative impact on society, as well as an attempt to alleviate the problem, it has not proved to be sufficient or effective. The stress-management programmes and the coping strategies implemented by teachers have been ineffective, because of either the lack of a theoretical base, the disregarding of the teacher as a holistic being or their short term and eclectic nature. Teachers would respond better to stress interventions suited to their own unique needs. Coping strategies should therefore be dynamic and unique to the nature of individual teachers and should address teachers as holistic beings within their environmental field. The researcher is thus of the opinion that teachers suffering from career-related stress can regain homeostasis through a process model addressing the aware aspects. The researcher has therefore developed a Gestalt therapeutic process model, which could be implemented by a suitable and trained member of a schools' management team. To ensure that the model is meaningful it must not be underspecified and indiscriminately applied.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A combined dominant less dominant qualitative and quantitative research approach was implemented during this intervention research, where a Gestalt therapeutic process model, for teachers suffering from career-related, stress was designed and developed. In this research study the qualitative research approach was the dominant and the quantitative research approach the less dominant approach. This combined process ensured a well balanced deductive/inductive reasoning to emerge throughout the research process.

1.3.1 COMBINED QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Through the combining of the qualitative and quantitative research approaches multiple methods and techniques were used to ensure the trustworthiness, validity and reliability of the outcome of the research. According to Mouton (2002: 39-40) the use of multiple methods and techniques is one of the best ways to improve the quality of research. In this research study the main approach was the qualitative approach. Quantitative data was collected and reported in support of selected qualitative data. The researcher thus used triangulation where multiple methods of data collection were used with a view to increase the reliability of observation, and not specifically to the combination of the quantitative and qualitative approaches Mouton and Marais (De Vos 2002 (c): 365).

According to Zaaiman (2003:49-50) **qualitative research** is an in-depth description of the actions of the participants and their perspectives on the issue being researched. The research took place in the natural environment of the research participants. Qualitative research is the study of the development of processes over a period of time, with the focus on the progression of the process. Qualitative research is thus an ideographic research strategy describing a limited number of cases. Shurink (Prinsloo, 2001:6) expand on this quoting Denzin and Lincoln's definition of a qualitative research approach: "[Qualitative research is] *a multi perspective approach (utilising different qualitative techniques and data collection methods) to social interaction, aimed at*

describing, making sense of, interpreting or reconstructing this interaction in terms of the meanings that the subjects attach to it.”

The main aim of the qualitative research approach is to understand social life, as well as the meaning individuals attach to it. The qualitative research paradigm refers to research, which explains the meaning, experience and perceptions the research participants render to it. Data are reproduced in the research participants' own words. Tutty, Rothery and Grinnell (1996:5) state that the qualitative researcher develops an understanding and empathy for the research participants. Babbie (2001:276 & 300) emphasises the applicability of qualitative research when it is difficult to quantify subjects and processes. Stress is an abstract concept and thus difficult to quantify. For this research it has been important to determine the reasons behind the career-related stress experienced by teachers and their processes in coping with, and perceptions of the experienced stress in order to address the causes of the said stress with the ultimate aim of regaining homeostasis

The qualitative researcher regards that which is construed by the research participants as the only reality. According to De Vos (Prinsloo 2001:6), multiple realities exist in any situation and a true reflection of these realities must be reproduced. The qualitative researcher interacts with the research participants, attempting to bridge the distance between researcher and research subject. In this research the researcher acted as facilitator and has been actively involved in the application of the designed and developed theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model within a functional Gestalt therapeutic programme presented as a workshop. The qualitative data collected therefore reflected the values of both the researcher and the research participants. This qualitative research approach could thus be defined as interpretive with explicit mention made of the values and judgements of the researcher.

Mouton and Marais, as well as Reid and Smith (Fouché & Delport 2002:80) characterise the qualitative approach, which has been applied in this research study as explained in table 1:1 below.

**TABLE 1:1 THE CHARACTERISTICS AND APPLICATION OF THE
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH (MOUTON AND
MARAIS)**

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH	APPLICATION
The procedures are not as strictly formalised as in quantitative research.	The research developed according to the needs of both the researcher and the research participants over a period of three months. No pre-determined steps were followed during the research.
The scope is more likely to be undefined.	As the research progressed the scope broadened and included causes of stress other than those specifically caused by career-related factors
A more philosophical mode of operation is adopted.	Understanding of the life of the teachers, the meaning they attach to their experiences and processes, their knowledge their beliefs, values and cultures
The researcher attempts to gain first-hand, holistic understanding of phenomena of interest by means of a flexible strategy of problem formulation and data collection.	The researcher applied various methods to come to a holistic understanding of the career-related stress and addressing thereof by the research participants.
This takes shape as the investigation proceeds.	The needs of the research participants determined the number and nature of the encounters and the approach applied during the encounters
Methods such as participant observation	Informal interviews

<p>and structured interviewing are used to acquire an in-depth knowledge used to guide the study further.</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews Structured interviews Group interview Open-ended questionnaire</p>
<p>Qualitative methodology rests on the assumption that valid understanding can be gained through accumulated knowledge acquired first hand by a single researcher.</p>	<p>The researcher had personal contact with the research participants throughout the research study, which contributed to the trustworthiness of the research outcome.</p>

The aim of the **quantitative research** approach is the objective measuring of the social world, the testing of hypotheses and the predicting and controlling of human behaviour (Fouché & Delport, 2002: 79). Quantitative researchers use the deductive approach and depart from universal propositions and generalisations (Zaaiman, 2003:12). The quantitative approach is more formalised and controlled than the qualitative approach, the range is, according to Marais and Mouton (Fouché & Delport, 2002: 80), more exactly defined and it is relatively close to the physical sciences. Although the quantitative research approach was less dominant in this research study, it was supportive of the qualitative research approach and contributed to the validity and reliability of the research outcome.

Reid and Smith (Fouché & Delport 2002:80) characterise the quantitative approach further, which has been applied in this research study as explained in table 1:2 below.

**TABLE 1:2 THE CHARACTERISTICS AND APPLICATION OF THE
QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH (REID AND SMITH)**

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE QUANTITATIVE APPROACH	APPLICATION
The researcher's role is that of objective observer.	Only the raw data collected was diagrammatically presented in histograms and interpreted accordingly.
Studies are focused on relatively specific questions or hypotheses.	The career-related stress symptoms experienced by teachers and the degree to which they were experienced, before and after the therapeutic intervention were measured using a self-constructed non-standardised index as measuring instrument Annexure I).
Questions and hypotheses remain constant throughout the investigation. Data collection procedures and types of measurement are constructed in advance of the study and applied in a standardised manner.	The hypotheses stayed the same. The measuring instrument had been developed in advance.
Data collectors are to avoid their own impressions and interpretations.	The raw data had been collected, presented in histograms and objectively interpreted.
Measurement is focused on specific variables that are quantified through rating scales, frequency counts and other means	The variables were career-related stress symptoms experienced by teachers and the Gestalt therapeutic process model. A rating scale has been used to quantify the frequency of the career-related stress

	symptoms experienced by the research participants.
Analysis proceeds by obtaining the statistical breakdown of the distribution of variables.	Histograms
Statistical methods are used to determine associations (or differences) between variables.	Histograms were used to determine the effect of the Gestalt therapeutic process model on the career-related stress experienced by the research participants

The qualitative, as well as the quantitative research approach, contributes to the social knowledge base. Although the contribution differs from each other, it supplements each other. As the research process progressed, it became clear that the data from both approaches supplemented each other.

During the researcher’s M.DIAC degree titled, “*Movement in Gestalt Therapeutic Intervention for Adolescents with Disruptive Behavioural Tendencies*” (Horn, 2004), she became aware of the pernicious career-related stress levels of teachers. In semi-structured interviews with the teachers of the adolescent research participants, the need for intervention research addressing the career-related stress of teachers became apparent.

1.3.2 INTERVENTION RESEARCH AS APPLIED RESEARCH

When a model is being developed in research, **intervention research** is a relevant and applicable approach to design a model. The Design and Development model, a research model directed towards developing innovative interventions, was designed by Thomas and Thomas and Rothman and forms part of developmental and intervention research. (Fouché, 2002 (a):112). Schilling (De Vos, 2002(d):396) describes intervention as “...an action undertaken by a social worker or other helping agent, usually in co-operation with

a client or other affected party, to enhance or maintain the functioning and well-being of an individual, family, group, community or population”.

The rationale for choosing intervention research can be found in the aim of the research, in other words “*the end towards which the efforts or ambition is directed*” (Fouché, 2002(a):107) or “*the broad conditions or outcomes that are desired by the community of interest*” (De Vos, 2002(d):404), was the empowerment of teachers suffering from career-related stress to regain homeostasis, through a school-based therapeutic process model. Intervention research was therefore an appropriate model of research to be used.

The goals of professional research can either be **applied** or basic. Fouché (2002 (a):108) explains that applied research focuses on solving specific problems in practice or helping practitioners accomplish tasks. Applied research seeks to produce recommendations on, or solutions to, some problem faced by a specific group of people in a particular situation. The aim is to apply theoretical insights to real-world situations. For this research, applied research was used because this study sought to produce a specific model to help teachers with career-related stress. The Design and Development model was used, because the researcher systematically designed and developed an intervention model.

De Vos (2002(d):397) explains that Design and Development Intervention research is a phase model that consists of six phases each comprising of a series of steps or operations. For the purpose of this study five phases, were completed. The dissemination phase of the study, phase six, was not an objective of this research study.

Although the subject of the teacher and career-related stress has been researched, written about and addressed at conventions in most first world countries, the focus in South Africa lacks a general therapeutic approach to empower teachers suffering from career-related stress. A specific approach, such as a Gestalt therapeutic approach, where the emphasis on a holistic method focuses on all aspects of the teacher’s career-life, has never been successfully implemented in South Africa.

The reasons for focussing on, and applying Gestalt therapy as foundation for the development of a Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress are: Gestalt therapy's regarding of psychotherapy as a means of increasing human potential, the attempting of the non-manipulative observation of the *here-and-now* and the stressing of the importance of *awareness* (Simken, 1978:4&5; Yontef, 1978:163). The criterion for success is, according to Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951:15), "*the patient's own awareness of heightened vitality and more effective functioning.*" Gestalt therapy sees the individual as holistic (Latner, 1973:5; Yontef, 1978:167). The holistic understanding of human beings brings the functioning of the physical body, emotions, thoughts, culture and social expressions into a unified picture. This leads to the Gestalt principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Latner, 1973:6). The Gestaltist looks for ways in which things come together and is therefore more attuned to the processes and principles that reoccur in behaviour, than to the temporary forms these processes take. The Gestalt field theory emphasises that nothing exists in isolation. Everything has a context or field within which it exists. To understand teachers within their environment one must look at the situation holistically (Sills et al, 1996:77), therefore the application of Gestalt therapy to design and develop a process model addressing the career-related stress of teachers in their quest to regain homeostasis.

In the healthy individual, a configuration or gestalt is formed with the organising figure being the dominant need, thus being in the foreground. The individual meets this need by contacting the environment with some sensory-motor behaviour. The contact is organised by the figure of interest against the background of the individual/environment. As soon as the need is met the "gestalten" it formed become complete, cease to exert an influence, and the individual is free to form new "gestalten". This developing and destroying of "gestalten" is called *organismic self-regulation* (Perls et al, 1951:275). Along with awareness and process, dialogue is seen as the primary therapeutic tool in Gestalt therapy (Yontef, 1993:221; Sills et al, 1996:110). Dialogue refers to contact between the individual and another person or the environment. Gestalt therapy proposes a dialogical relationship, resulting in what Buber called the I-Thou relationship (Sills et al, 1996:110; Joyce & Sills, 2001:43). An I-Thou relationship between two individuals means that they

are fully in the present, willing to meet each other honestly and to be aware of thoughts, feelings and behaviours which are developing in response. Through awareness, dialogue and the process of organismic self-regulation the teacher can regain homeostasis. The said process model, based on Gestalt therapy, will therefore address the career-related stress experienced by teachers and the consequences thereof holistically, in the present, within their environment and with improved awareness and dialogue. This improved awareness and dialogue will result in and interrelate with healthy organismic self-regulation. Organismic self-regulation is part of the Gestalt process which, in itself, is a research process.

Another reason for the use of applied research, as research method, was the fact that relevant knowledge and sources of knowledge, including that of the researcher, could be identified, collected, integrated and assessed. Based on the knowledge gained from this information gathering and synthesis process, regarding the factors causing teacher stress and the consequences thereof; the Gestalt therapeutic approach; as well as existing coping strategies and stress-management programmes; the researcher designed a theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model (phase 3) as intervention to assist teachers suffering from career-related stress to regain homeostasis. In phase 4, which is the early development and pilot testing of the process model, the researcher involved teachers, heads of department and a deputy principal to evaluate the process model with the view to develop this further. This was followed by phase 5, which involved a general summary, conclusions and recommendations.

Applied research is, according to Fouché (2002(a): 108), aimed at changing a troublesome situation. In this research the troublesome situation was the career-related stress experienced by teachers and the consequences thereof for the individual teacher, as well as for the learners and education in general. To eradicate or lower the consequences of the said stress a Gestalt therapeutic process model, addressing career-related stress experienced by teachers, has been designed and developed based on teachers' identified needs, existing Gestalt therapeutic intervention approaches, as well as a thorough literature review. Before the commencement of the pilot study, as well as after the three-

month empirical research study, the incidence of career-related stress symptoms experienced by the research participants had been determined through a group administered questionnaire (Delpont, 2002:174), participant observation (Strydom, 2002 (b): 280-281) as well as group, informal, semi-structured and structured interviews (Greeff, 2002:302& 305) and an open-ended questionnaire (Delpont, 2002:172).

Intervention research, as a form of applied research (Fouché, 2002(a):112), was used to design and develop an innovative intervention. To ensure the trustworthiness, reliability and validity of the outcome of the empirical research, based on the implementation of the designed Gestalt therapeutic process model, the incidences of the career-related stress symptoms of the research participants were measured with a self-constructed index (Annexure I and Q), designed by the researcher (quantitative). The researcher, a member of the school where the research was conducted, further had personal contact with each of the research participants (qualitative). Before, during and after the implementation of the therapeutic intervention, the researcher held informal, semi-structured, structured and group interviews with the research participants (qualitative). Seven days after the therapeutic workshop, the participants had to complete an open-ended questionnaire (Annexure K), in addition. Finally the qualitative, as well as the quantitative data was presented.

The collected qualitative data, as well as the quantitative data indicating the effect of the variables on each other, were compared to confirm the trustworthiness, reliability, validity, applicability and neutrality of the collected data. It was also important to determine whether the research data collected concurred. Both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches were thus applied during the empirical study.

Applied research takes certain problems in the social world as experienced by a specific group of people as its point of departure (Mouton, 2002:105; Zaaïman, 2003:16). The aim of applied research is thus to solve encountered problems. The results of applied research improve the researched situation. Applied research is generally descriptive and can be applied immediately after the obtaining of the results (Collins, Du Plooy, Grobbelaar,

Puttergill, Terre Blanch, Van Eeden Van Rensburg and Wigston, 2000:84). Intervention research includes the development and implementation of the intervention model, as well as the evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention. Within the context of applied research, intervention research, combined with developmental and evaluative research (De Vos, 2002(d):396-397) was thus the most applicable for this research study. Problem analysis and project planning were followed by the collecting of information and synthesis, ultimately leading to the development and design of the intervention model. Pilot testing, during the early intervention stages, resulted in the evaluation of the model and further development and recommendations (De Vos, 2002(d):397).

1.4 WORK PROCEDURE

The first phase of the Design and Development model of intervention research is problem analyses and project planning.

4.1 PROBLEM ANALYSES AND PROJECT PLANNING

In the problem analyses and project planning phase it was important to determine what was considered as the problem for the research study. According to Hastings (De Vos, 2002(d):397) problems can be either personal or social. Hastings continues to define social problems as “...*a condition affecting a significant number of people in ways considered undesirable*”. For the purposes of this study the social problem identified was the need for teachers suffering from career-related stress to be exposed to an empowering school-based therapeutic intervention process model in order to regain homeostasis. According to Hastings (De Vos, *ibid*)...

- social problems are conditions of society, deviating from some social standard, affecting a significant number of people in ways considered undesirable.
- something can be done about social problems through collective action.

The problem was analysed in terms of the following questions, exploring the reasons for the existing problem and the need for intervention (De Vos, 2002(c):403):

- What was the nature of the discrepancy between “ideal” and “actual” conditions which defined the problem?
- For whom was the situation a problem?
- What negative consequences did the problem pose for the affected individuals?
- What were the negative consequences for the community?
- Who should be involved in the solving of the problem?
- What and whose behaviour needed to change for the problem to be considered as solved?
- Which conditions were necessary for change?
- At which level should the problem be addressed?
- Did the problem affect the behaviour of key individuals in the social environment?
- Whose behaviour should change?
- In which sector did they function?

The above questions were used to analyse identified problems and existing approaches to intervention. This determined the value of the development of an alternative intervention approach.

Qualitative research requires a research question (Fouché & Delport, 2002:79). The research problem was stated as a general question regarding the relationship between the dependent and independent variables (Mouton 2002:122). The dependent variable was the career-related stress experienced by teachers and the independent variable was the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model addressing the stress experienced.

Although one of the purposes of the qualitative research method, according to Fouché (2002(a):119), is to discover important questions, processes and relationships, she further emphasises the importance of including a more precise statement of the problem and a research question. Brink (1996:91) thus justly defines a research question as precise and specific, and thus focusing the research study. Hoskins (1998:5) and Flick (2002:46) describe the identification and phrasing of the research question as the most important

initial step in developing research, and Cresswell (Fouché, 2002(a):106) states that the research question relates to “how” and “what”, to which Zaaiman (2003:14) adds “why”.

The research question emerged from the introductory comments and the rationale for the research study. The therapeutic value of Gestalt therapy was demonstrated by exploring the therapeutic value of a Gestalt therapeutic process model addressing the career-related stress experienced by teachers.

The research question for the research study was as follows:

Which components of a Gestalt therapeutic process model will be most applicable in assisting the teacher suffering from career-related stress to regain homeostasis?

In this research study the quantitative research approach was supportive of the qualitative research approach, therefore the need of a hypothesis.

A hypothesis is a tentative, concrete and measurable (Mouton, 2002:121) answer to a question regarding the relationship between variables. The hypotheses will be relational and can further be distinguished as correlational or descriptive (Mouton, 2002:122). The hypothesis also claimed that there was a relationship between the implementation of a Gestalt therapeutic process model and the levels of career-related stress experienced by teachers. The researcher had to determine whether the hypothesis should be supported or rejected.

The hypothesis formulated for this research study was as follows:

Teachers suffering from career-related stress, who have been exposed to a Gestalt therapeutic process model, will experience lower stress levels.

An objective of the problem analysis was to determine and evaluate existing forms of intervention, as well as the value of the development of alternative intervention.

The first step of the problem analysis and project planning phase was to identify and involve clients.

1.4.1.1 Identifying and involving clients

De Vos (2002(d):398) argues that intervention research which, involves clients or the population, has a greater chance of receiving support from the community, target population and the sample. De Vos goes on to suggest that in research there is always the simultaneous existence of a population or universe. Intervention researchers choose a population with whom to collaborate. For this research the specific problem had to be applicable to the population. The specific targets and goals of the intervention were identified. The researcher received more support from the target group because a real problem experienced by the target group was addressed.

At this stage the researcher distinguished between the terms “universe” and “population”. Arkava and Lane (Strydom & Venter, 2002:198) state that “universe” refers to all potential subjects who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested. Within the framework of this research the universe was teachers. A complete coverage of the total universe is seldom possible, though. The main reason for sampling is thus feasibility as stated by Reid and Smith and Sarantakos (Strydom & Venter, 2002:199). “Population” is a term, which sets boundaries and refers to individuals in the universe who possess certain characteristics. A population is the total set from whom the individuals or units of the study are chosen (Strydom and Venter, 2002: *ibid*). A population is also a set of entities in which all the measurements of interest to the practitioner or researcher are represented (Strydom & Venter, 2002:198). In this research the population consisted of teachers suffering from career-related stress.

A “sample”, on the other hand, is a small portion of the total number of persons comprising the subject of this study (Strydom & Venter, 2002:199). The sample is not a means in itself, but a means of helping the researcher explain some facet of the

population. **Sampling** is described as taking a sample of a population or universe and ensuring that it is representative of that population or universe.

There are two kinds of sampling, probability sampling, based on randomisation, and non-probability sampling done, without randomisation (Strydom & Venter, 2002:203). The researcher used non-probability sampling for the empirical research study. Non-probability sampling can further be divided into accidental, purposive, theoretical, quota, dimensional, target, snowball and spatial samples. Purposive sampling is based, according to Singleton (Strydom & Venter, 2002: 203-207), on the judgement of the researcher, because it is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics and typical attributes representative of the population. The researcher used **purposive sampling** by selecting ten teachers with specific stress-related characteristics, from the chosen school. After the first workshop the researcher became aware of voids in her sampling and through **theoretical sampling** five more teachers were selected to study only specific matters, to obtain more precise information, which made the outcome of the research more definitive and useful (Strydom & Delport, 2002:335). For this study, fifteen teachers, including two heads of department and a deputy principal constituted the sample. In qualitative research this type of research is referred to as a case study bounded by time and place (Fouché, 2002 (b):275). Multiple individuals were involved, thus it was a collective case study.

Intervention researchers must avoid projecting external views of the problem and its solution and must attempt to understand the issues of importance to the population. The issue of importance in this research was the career-related stress experienced by teachers. The present career-related stress levels of teachers are of great concern to education and society in general. Over and above the concern of the teachers experiencing the stress, education officials, principals, colleagues, family, friends and outsiders are concerned about the growing number of teachers suffering from career-related stress.

1.4.1.2 Gaining entry and co-operation from settings

De Vos (2002(d):399) states that successful intervention researchers form a collaborative relationship with representatives of the setting, by involving them in identifying problems, planning the project and implementing selected interventions. Conversations with key informants help researchers to understand what they have to offer and how to articulate the benefits for potential participants.

Due to the nature of the research, which was not within the job description of the research participants, but within teacher well-being, it was not necessary to request permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research. Permission to use the school's facilities was requested from, and granted by the School Governing Body of the school where the research was conducted (Annexure A). Consent was extended to the researcher by the applicable research participants (Annexure E). Support was extended to the researcher by the Gauteng Department of Education in the form of study leave and motivation. All respondents (teachers) were thoroughly informed of the purpose and process of the empirical research study before the research commenced (Annexure B, C and D). The research participants, as well as the independent observer, signed written contracts giving their informed consent to be included in the empirical research study (Annexure F).

1.4.1.3 Analysing concerns or problems identified

The nature of the discrepancy between the ideal and the actual conditions defining the problem was analysed. Questions leading to explanations were asked to determine for whom the situation was a problem. The consequences for the individuals and society were investigated and the reasons for the failure of previous interventions were considered. Further questions concerning those affected by the problem and those involved in the intervention were asked. These questions offer, according to De Vos (2002(d):403), valuable guidelines for analysing identified problems. The problem of career-related stress experienced by teachers was analysed. The work performance of

teachers, as well as the number of teachers leaving the profession, was an indication of the number of teachers suffering from mental, emotional and attitudinal exhaustion.

1.4.1.4 Setting aims and objectives

The aim of the research study was the design and development of a Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress to assist them in regaining homeostasis.

A clear problem analyses helped to establish clear targets for change. De Vos (2002(d):404) states that broad aims and specific objectives clarify the proposed ends and means of the intervention research study. This aim indicated what the researcher wanted to achieve. Objectives are, according to Fouché (2002(a):107-108) the realistic steps one has to take, at grassroots level, within a certain time span, in order to attain the dream. The objectives for this study are stated below.

Based on the aim the following objectives were formulated and achieved:

- To investigate through a **literature review** ...
 - the factors causing the career-related stress experienced by teachers,
 - the symptoms of the experienced career-related stress,
 - existing coping strategies and stress-management programmes and
 - the Gestalt therapeutic approach as an effective way to cope with stress
- To investigate through **empirical research**...
 - teachers' experience of career-related stress,
 - the career-related stress symptoms experienced by teachers,
 - existing coping strategies and stress-management programmes
 - the Gestalt therapeutic approach as an effective way to cope with stress
- To design, develop and implement a school-based **Gestalt therapeutic process model** for teachers suffering from career-related stress to assist them in regaining homeostasis.

- To train school management team members to implement the Gestalt therapeutic process model at school.
- To evaluate the research process in order to reach conclusions and make recommendations regarding the literature and empirical study, as well as recommendations to other Gestalt practitioners and to education at large

The research would eventually be interpreted in terms of the South African context.

1.4.2 INFORMATION GATHERING AND SYNTHESIS

When planning an intervention research study it is important to determine what other researchers have done in order to address and understand the problem (De Vos, 2002 (c):405). Relevant knowledge and sources of knowledge or information were identified, collected and integrated.

1.4.2.1 The use of existing sources of information

The literature review consisted of a study of selected empirical research, reported practice and material innovations relevant to the career-related stress experienced by teachers. Computerised databases were valuable in retrieving possible sources of information. Because of the importance of the integration of the human sciences, literature outside the particular field of study was considered and reviewed. A literature search had been undertaken by the University of South Africa covering the fields of Gestalt therapy, career-related stress experienced by teachers, education in general and existing intervention practices addressing career-related stress in general and teacher stress in particular.

The preliminary literature review produced inadequate recent sources addressing a therapeutic approach to the career-related stress experienced by teachers in South Africa. Insufficient literature, or empirical research, addressing this phenomenon from a Gestalt therapeutic perspective in either South Africa or abroad, was found. At this point it is

applicable to quote Ramey (Prinsloo, 2001:15): “*It is interesting that we shifted from an emphasis on healthy development to solving problems and that now society is shifting back to emphasis on creating well-being.*” In order to create well-being natural examples must be studied.

1.4.2.2 Studying natural examples

The observation of members of the society experiencing this specific problem was a valuable source of information. Thirty informal personal interviews with teachers in the Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Western Cape provinces, experiencing career-related stress, led to insight into existing interventions. The researcher further conducted informal telephonic or personal interviews with six individuals residing in the Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West and Western Cape provinces who have knowledge about career-related teacher stress and existing interventions, whether successful or not, which led to further insight. This also led to insight in variables, which had an effect on the success of interventions. The study of unsuccessful interventions led to valuable information, which was applied in the planning of the project (De Vos, 2002 (d):406). This information was obtained during the preliminary investigation. The researcher’s MDiac (Direction:Play therapy) dissertation indicated that teachers experience career-related stress, which should be addressed through Gestalt therapeutic intervention.

From the interviews it had been clear that the large number of teachers suffering from mental, emotional, attitudinal and physical exhaustion, resulting from a prolonged experience of stress, as well as the number of teachers leaving the profession or wishing to leave the profession, justified the need for a new and different approach to intervention.

1.4.2.3 Identifying functional elements of successful models

Once information had been gathered the researcher analysed critical characteristics of existing programmes addressing the problem. The following two questions should be

asked when existing programmes are analysed (De Vos, 2002(d):407): Does a successful intervention approach exist and which elements of the programme led to its success? Which intervention approaches failed and which elements contributed to their failure? No elements in existing programmes could be found that would address teachers as holistic beings within their total environmental field in the here-and-now. The researcher identified potentially useful elements of intervention applicable to Gestalt therapeutic intervention. These identified elements, namely awareness, dialogue and process with field theory, were applied in the design and development of a Gestalt therapeutic process model to address the career-related stress experienced by teachers.

Elements of the intervention approaches studied during the literature review were applied in the designing of the above mentioned Gestalt therapeutic process model. This formed part of the initial intervention and has been included in the final intervention model in Chapter 5.

1.4.3 DESIGN

Thomas (Prinsloo, 2001:16) defines design as the planned and systematic application of scientific, technical and practical information in the development and compilation of new elements. Researchers must develop a method to observe relevant events in a natural way. Clients, affected by the problem, should be involved to specify the behaviour and approaches to the problem, which should be changed. Through observing the problem, as well as the natural changes observed, the researcher was able to identify certain elements in the Gestalt therapeutic approach applicable to the intended intervention. The elements, namely the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process were described in the designed and developed theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model in such a way that other trained intervention agents would be able to apply them.

1.4.3.1 Designing an observational system

The Gestalt therapeutic process model addressing the career-related stress experienced by teachers in their quest to regain homeostasis was based on the teachers' identified needs, existing Gestalt therapeutic intervention techniques and approaches, as well as a thorough literature review. Before the commencement of the pilot study, as well as during and after the period of intervention, the incidences of career-related stress symptoms experienced by the research participants were observed by the researcher, the independent observer, as well as the participants themselves.

Before and after the implementation of the Gestalt therapeutic process model, the incidences of career-related stress symptoms experienced by the research participants were measured with a self-constructed index as measuring instrument called: "The incidence of teachers' career-related stress symptoms" featuring as "Section A" of Annexure I (quantitative). This was thus a one-group pretest-posttest design (Fouch & De Vos 2002:144) and the variables compared were the Gestalt therapeutic process model as the independent variable, X, and the influence thereof on the incidence of career-related stress symptoms experienced by the research participants as the dependent variable, O₁ and O₂. The researcher, a member of the school where the research was conducted, interviewed each of the research participants (qualitative). Before, during and after the implementation of the therapeutic intervention, the researcher conducted group interviews, as well as informal, semi-structured and structured interviews with the research participants (qualitative). One week after the intervention workshop an open-ended questionnaire (Annexure K), collecting qualitative data was completed by the research participants.

The researcher, as part of the observational system, made notes during the group, informal, semi-structured and structured interviews of the verbal and non-verbal responses of the research participants to be used in the empirical research report as an indication of their experienced stress, as well as their growth over the three-month period. The independent observer, one of the deputy principals of the said school, attended the

workshop as well as the group interview as part of the observational system. The independent observer made written notes of the verbal and non-verbal responses of the research participants. The information noted by the independent observer was used as verification of the observations made by the researcher. The research participants were also part of the observational system and over and above their verbal report back on their growth towards maturity and self-support, they completed a daily checklist, based on the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process as self-monitoring instrument. Two weeks before the termination of the empirical research study, all the checklists were collected to be implemented as further verification of the qualitative data collected.

Through the qualitative data and quantitative data collected through the observational system, the effect of the said variables on each other was compared to confirm the trustworthiness, validity, reliability, applicability and neutrality of the collected data. The qualitative research approach was applied throughout all the phases of the empirical study. The quantitative research approach was applied before the therapeutic intervention commenced in the form of a self-constructed index (Annexure I) and three months later the same self-constructed index, as measuring instrument, was completed as part of the termination process.

According to De Vos (2002(d):408) the observational system is closely linked to the process of designing an intervention, because it serves as feedback for refining early feedback-systems. Researchers must thus design a way of observing events related to the phenomenon naturalistically, as well as a method system for discovering the extent of the problem and detecting effects following the intervention.

Based upon the process described above, the researcher designed, developed and implemented a theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model, which could be implemented at schools. This intervention process model not only focused on the teachers experiencing career-related stress, but also on the school management team and their approach to the teachers on their staff. This preliminary observational system and intervention were refined in the next phase of intervention research. De Vos

(2002(d):409) is further of the opinion that the procedural elements of an intervention often become part of the eventual practise model, which forms the final product of the research.

1.4.3.2 Early development and pilot testing

This was the process through which the Gestalt therapeutic process model was implemented and used on a trial basis. This tested the validity of the intervention, and lead to the refining of the original intervention model.

- *Developing a preliminary intervention:* The proposed process of intervention (sequence of events), a detailed description and motivation for each step, as well as the time frames for the completion of the intervention were included. A theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model was designed based on the Gestalt therapeutic principles of awareness, dialogue and process (Chapter 5). Based on the said process model a functional Gestalt therapeutic programme was developed, with relative activities and the objective of assisting teachers suffering from career-related stress in their quest to regain homeostasis. This functional Gestalt therapeutic programme was presented as a workshop with a group of ten teachers and again, as verification and to fill identified voids in the research, with a second group of five teachers (Chapter 6).

Conducting the pilot test: The aim of the pilot test was to determine whether the intervention would work (De Vos, 2002 (d):410). The pilot test was implemented in a setting convenient for the researcher, and similar to the one in which future interventions would be conducted. The pilot test was conducted in the form of two workshops. For the first workshop ten teachers between the ages of twenty two and fifty five years of age were asked to volunteer. During the course of the pilot study the intervention model was further refined, developed and tested and implemented with a second group of five teachers ranging in age between twenty eight and fifty five. The format of the process will be reported in Chapter 6.

- *Applying design criteria to the preliminary intervention concept:* Fawcett (De Vos, 2002(d):411) indicates that these design criteria help to guide the design of interventions, subjected to pilot testing and formal evaluation. In table 1:3 below the design criteria which were applied to the preliminary intervention concept and the relevant chapters are reported.

TABLE 1:3 THE DESIGN CRITERIA APPLIED TO THE PRELIMINARY INTERVENTION CONCEPT AND THE RELEVANT CHAPTERS

DESIGN CRITERIA	CHAPTER
The effectiveness of the intervention model	6 & 7
The possibility of other end-users applying it	6 & 7
The simplistic nature of the intervention model	5,6 & 7
The practicality thereof and the adaptability of the model for various school contexts	6 & 7
The compatibility of the model with the values and customs within the various school contexts.	6 & 7

1.4.3.3 Evaluation and advanced development

Evaluation in intervention research is based on the research methodology previously determined. The evaluation of the developed intervention model aims at the refining and possibility of general implementation of the intervention model after the advanced development stage. The evaluation process included the selecting of an experimental design, the collecting and analysing of data, replicating the intervention under field conditions, and refining the intervention and dissemination.

- *Selecting an experimental design:* Mouton (2001:55) defines a research design as a plan of how the researcher intends to conduct the research. A research design focuses thus on the end product, formulates a research problem as the point of

departure which focuses the research, and leads to an economical approach (Huysamen, 1993:10). In this research study the interrupted time-series design or multiple baseline design was used as the experimental design (Fawcett, Suarez-Balcazar, Balcazar, White, Paine, Blanchard & Embree, 1994:38). With this design repeated measures of the target behaviour were obtained before, during and after the intervention, which were staggered across a group and the individuals within the group. This process is reported in Chapter 6.

Collecting and analysing data: Data was collected continuously and analysed during the pilot test and the final evaluation of the intervention (Fawcett et al, *ibid*). This record-keeping process helped to determine when initial intervention or supplemental procedures had to be implemented. The collecting and analysing of data was the responsibility of the researcher, assisted by the independent observer, during group sessions. During the course of the research process records were kept on a continuous basis with specific reference to the aim and objectives of the research study. The process records are attached as Annexure L, M, O and P. An open-ended questionnaire (Annexure K), a quantitative self-constructed index to determine the incidence of stress symptoms experienced by the research participants (Annexure I and Q) and a checklist (Annexure N) as self-monitoring instrument supplemented the data collected during personal contact with the research participants. This process is reported in Chapters 6 and 7.

- *Replicating the intervention under field conditions:* Both the pilot study and the refined intervention model were conducted under field conditions, namely a school. The objective of the empirical research study was not only to eradicate or alleviate the career-related stress levels of teachers, but to empower at least one member of the school management team to implement the model at school. With this objective in mind three school management team members were asked to be part of the first pilot group. This process is reported in Chapter 6.

- *Refining the intervention and dissemination:* Before the distribution of an intervention model the researcher must ensure the elimination of all possible problems regarding implementation and measurement. Possible markets for the intervention model must be identified, the model must be marketed and facilitators must be trained (De Vos, 2002(c):414). The aim of the research study was to design and develop a Gestalt therapeutic process model which could be implemented at school by a trained member of the school management team. Dissemination was thus not an objective of this research, because the dissemination of this Gestalt therapeutic process model justifies a research of its own.

1.5 ETHICAL ASPECTS OF THE RESEARCH

It is the right of social scientists to study what they deem to be of interest, but this right also implies the responsibility to meet certain ethical requirements. According to Strydom (2002 (a):63) “[E] *ethics is a set of principles which is suggested by an individual group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students*”. The ethical aspects discussed below are deemed as important by Strydom (2002(a) 63-73). The researcher supported the importance of the ethical aspects and applied and upheld it throughout the research study.

1.5.1 HARM TO EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS AND/OR RESPONDENTS

The research did not harm the participating teachers physically or emotionally. To prevent emotional harm the research participants, as well as the independent observer, were verbally, and through an information-pamphlet, (Annexure A, B and C) informed about...

- the type and aim of the research,
- the confidentiality and anonymity surrounding the research,

- the research procedures applicable to the empirical research ,
- the fact that there was no threat of physical harm ,
- the advantages of being a research subject for this particular research,
- the financial obligations, which would be that of the researcher,
- the availability of the researcher to assist them therapeutically should a further need arise after the termination of the empirical research study and
- their right to withdraw from the empirical research study, should they so wish.

1.5.2 INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent was obtained from the research participants and the independent observer (Annexure E). This implied that all possible or adequate information regarding the objective of the investigation, the procedures during the investigation, the possible advantages and disadvantages, as well as the credibility of the researcher, were disclosed to the teacher participants. This left them with the opportunity to withdraw from the empirical research study if they so wished.

1.5.3 DECEPTION OF PARTICIPANTS AND/OR RESPONDENTS

No deception, whether deliberate or unintentional, occurred during the empirical research study. The aim and objectives of the research were explained in detail and no covert questions were asked in the questionnaires or during the workshops, informal, semi-structured, structured, and group interviews. The verbal and non-verbal responses of the research participants were noted by the researcher, as well as by the independent observer, as means of verification. No additional information was added to the questionnaires completed by the research participants.

1.5.4 VIOLATION OF PRIVACY/ANONYMITY/CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality was considered at all times. Teachers involved signed a form undertaking that all information would be considered as confidential (Annexure F). Teachers involved

were not allowed to be discussed with anybody outside the scope of the research. The independent observer, as part of the observational system, also signed the agreement to confidentiality. The researcher, who has been the principal of the school where the research was conducted, signed a confidentiality agreement indicating that no information gained during the course of the research programme would be used against the research participants in any way (Annexure H). To ensure anonymity the research participants were referred to as letters of the alphabet in the research report. This was an overt research and no concealed video cameras, one-way-mirrors, microphones or tape-recorders were used.

1.5.5 ACTIONS AND COMPETENCE OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher was competent and adequately skilled to have undertaken the research. The researcher has been involved in education for the past thirty years of which the past twenty-three involved counselling learners and the past seven, counselling teachers. The researcher does have applicable academic and professional qualifications, and is adequately skilled in the implementation of the Gestalt therapeutic approach (Annexure B, C and D). The researcher did not lack knowledge and skills and none of the participants had to be referred to another professional in the field.

1.5.6 RELEASE OR PUBLICATION OF THE FINDINGS

The research report is as objective and accurate as possible. Honesty regarding the execution of the research process was maintained. Research results were formulated and conveyed clearly to avoid or minimise misappropriation by the research participants, the general public, colleagues and the Department of Education. Recognition was given to sources and people consulted. The limitations of the empirical research study are indicated in Chapter 7 along with recommendations for further research. The research participants were informed about the findings of the research study.

1.5.7 DEBRIEFING OF PARTICIPANTS

Therapeutic contact was scaled down after the empirical research study had been terminated to prevent separation anxiety. The researcher was skilled to do debriefing and as a permanent member of the school's staff, did follow-up intervention, as well as debriefing with the teachers who were involved in the empirical research study.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS AND KEY CONCEPTS

The following terms and key concepts can be regarded as the essence of the research study and therefore deserve further description.

1.6.1 GESTALT THERAPY

“Gestalt is a humanistic/existential therapy, which believes that people are born with the resources and ability to be in rewarding contact with other human beings, and lead a satisfying creative life. However, often during childhood and sometimes later on, something interrupts this process and the person becomes stuck in fixed patterns and beliefs about themselves that get in the way. Gestalt aims to investigate and uncover how these patterns are still active and affecting a person's present life” (Joyce & Sills, 2001:7).

“Gestalt today is an exciting mix, as it always was. At its heart are the therapeutic relationship and a method of exploring and increasing dialogue. Within the context of this relationship, the Gestaltist may invite the client to expand their limitations in a variety of ways that are uniquely Gestalt” (Sills et al, 1995:12).

Gestalt therapy is a holistic approach addressing the growth of the total person. The therapeutic relationship as a process, dialogue and awareness lie at the heart of Gestalt

therapy. Gestalt therapy is also an exciting experimental approach to psychotherapy in which the client is supported to come to alternative ways of addressing problematic issues. The Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress was modelled on the Gestalt therapy and therefore its importance as a key concept.

1.6.2 AWARENESS

“Awareness is the process of being in vigilant contact with the most important events in the environment/field with full sensori-motor, emotional, cognitive and energetic support. Aware contact creates new meaningful wholes and thus is in itself an integration of the problem” (Yontef, 1993:144).

“Awareness is a fundamentally positive, essential quality of all healthy living. It is the energy or assimilation of growth at the contact boundary, for self-knowledge, choice and creativity.” (Joyce & Sills, 2003:27).

Awareness includes being aware of one’s inner zone of experience which is one’s feelings, thoughts and also bodily sensations. One’s outer zone of experience indicates awareness of everything in one’s environmental field, using the senses, and awareness of the middle zone, which includes all the ways in which one makes sense of both internal and external stimuli. This awareness is constituted in the present. For this research study awareness is an important key concept, because of it being a key principle of the Gestalt therapeutic approach.

1.6.3 DIALOGUE

“Dialogue is what emerges when you and I come together in an authentically, contactful manner. Dialogue is not you plus I, but rather emergent from the interaction. Dialogue is something that may happen when both parties make themselves present. Dialogue can happen only if the outcome is not controlled or determined by either party. Dialogue is

based on experiencing the other person as he or she really is and showing the true self, sharing phenomenological awareness.” (Yontef, 1993:39 & 132).

“Dialogue is an attitude of genuinely feeling/sensing/experiencing the other person as a person (not an object or part-object), and a willingness to deeply ‘hear’ the other person’s experience without prejudgement. Furthermore, it is the willingness to ‘hear that is not spoken, and to ‘see’ what is not visible.” (Hycner & Jacobs in Joyce & Sills, 2002:43).

Dialogue refers to a relationship based on engagement, thus being fully present in the moment of contact. It is an honest meeting between people where they hear more than the spoken word, but also understand what is not spoken, but what can be observed. True dialogue between two people is called an I-Thou relationship, where both meet each other with their resources at the contact boundary so that a co-creation takes place. For this research study dialogue is a key concept because of it being an important principle of the Gestalt therapeutic approach

1.6.4 PROCESS

“In Gestalt therapy field theory [process], everything is considered the energy and movement of a field (our area: the organismic/environment field). Everything is action and is in the process of becoming, in the process of evolving and changing. The process orientation trusts what emerges, the emerging gestalt, rather than relying on fixed static concepts.” (Yontef, 1993:315)

“[The organism is] striving for the maintenance of an equilibrium which is continuously disturbed by its needs and regained through gratification.” (Perls, 1947:7)

The word “process” implies a change in the individual. This change or growth towards maturity and self-support is the result of organismic self-regulation, which is based on the dominant need of the individual and the paradoxical theory of change. This indicates that

people can only grow once they have accepted themselves as they are. Along with awareness and dialogue, process is a key principle of the Gestalt therapeutic approach and therefore deserved further description.

1.6.5 STRESS

“Stress is primarily the body’s natural emotional and physiological reaction to the perception of danger in one’s environment. The body is prepared for fight or flight. The perception of threat to one’s self-esteem and mental well-being in general is also a potent trigger of this emotional state.” (Capel, 1989:37).

“A state resulting from bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to alter an existing equilibrium” (Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 2003, s.v. ‘stress’)

Stress is the physiological, mental or emotional response to environmental stimuli, either negative or positive. Negative stress has a debilitating effect on the individual experiencing the stress, as well as on the people and environment in relation to the individual. It is much more than nervous anxiety and feelings of tension and tightness. It may be clearly visible to the individuals and the people around them, or it may be subtle, with the individual unaware of the effects of stress until an illness or disorder surfaces. Stress is an important concept for this research study, because the researched is aimed at the eradication or alleviation of the career-related stress experienced by teachers.

1.6.6 TEACHER

“A teacher (educator) is one who voluntarily elects to follow a profession which seeks to help youth to become equipped for life, to realize their potential and to assist them on their way to self-actualisation and to ultimate adulthood. A teacher is not forced to teach, but sees in teaching a most worthwhile and fulfilling task.” (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg ,1988:225).

“[Teachers] have a sense of mission. They are compassionate and caring, which makes them especially vulnerable to the excessive demands that are made on them. The population they are dealing with is in extreme need. It is composed of troubled or deprived human beings with a void so huge it is almost impossible to fill it. These people take, drain and demand. They require continual giving and assume an endless supply on the part of the helper.” (Freudenberger in Greenberg, 1984: 25)

A teacher is a qualified professional with a calling to empower learners with knowledge and life skills. A teacher does not only impart knowledge, but acts as *in loco parentis* and is thus co-responsible for the holistic development and care of a child. To fulfil this multi-faceted role, teachers must stay lifelong students adapting and extending their knowledge to provide for the demands of the country. The term teacher is important for this research study, because the dependent variable for the research study is the career-related stress experienced by teachers.

1.6.7 HOMEOSTASIS

“This balance must be maintained within certain limits of survival; this is the principle of homeostasis. There is an inherent drive within individuals to maintain this equilibrium in order to grow and develop to their full potential: people do this by accepting the feelings and experiences arising within them.” (O’Leary, 1992:12)

Self-regulation is the natural tendency of humans to maintain a state of equilibrium. [This is] an organismic tendency to include the functions of thinking, making meaning and organising ourselves and our world.” (Sills et al, 1996:10)

Regaining homeostasis is a self-regulatory process, determined from within. Homeostasis is an ongoing process of becoming aware of dominant external or internal needs and answering to the dominant need, in order for the next dominant need to emerge. At every moment an individual is faced with dissonance so that homeostasis is never maintained.

Homeostasis is an important key concept for this research study, because the aim of this research was to design and develop a Gestalt therapeutic process model which would assist the teachers suffering from career-related stress, in regaining homeostasis.

1.6.8 MODEL

“A model is a copy, replica or analogy that differs from the real thing in some way. A social science model is one that consists mainly of words, a description of the social phenomenon, abstracting the main features of the phenomenon without attempting to explain it or predict anything from the description.” (Bailey in De Vos, 2002(a): 37-38)

“...a model does not pretend to be more than a partial representation of a given phenomenon. A model merely agrees in broad outline with the phenomenon, of which it is a model. Certain characteristic of the phenomenon, irrelevant for the model, are conveniently excluded, while the most obvious aspects are emphasised.” (De Vos, 2002(a): 38)

A model is a miniature representation, partial representation or simplified representation of an existing phenomenon or approach, which is of such a standard that people should copy it. A model does not necessarily represent, for example, a total therapeutic approach, but only those characteristics or concepts relevant to the model. For this research study a theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model was designed and developed for teachers suffering from career-related stress, in order to regain homeostasis.

1.6.9 PROGRAMME

A programme is *“a planned series of events, especially of related activities having a particular objective.* (Oxford Students Dictionary, 2002, s.v. ‘programme’)

A programme is “*a plan of activities for achieving something.*” (Macmillan English Dictionary, 2002, s.v. ‘programme’)

A programme is a series of related events or activities, which is planned to achieve a specific objective. A functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model, was planned and developed, to address the career-related stress experienced by teachers, to assist them in regaining homeostasis.

1.6.10 WORKSHOP

A workshop is “*a meeting at which a group comes together to discuss a subject and take part in activities relating to it.*” (Oxford Students Dictionary, 2002, s.v. ‘workshop’)

A workshop is “*a brief, intensive, educational programme for a relatively small group of people that focuses especially on techniques and skills in a particular field.*” (Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 2003, s.v. ‘workshop’)

A workshop is a brief, intensive meeting on a specific subject attended by a limited group of people. The group participates in the discussions and activities related to the subject to acquire specific skills. During workshops the functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, was presented in the form of discussions and activities. The aim of this workshop was the eventual assimilation of the Gestalt therapeutic principles of awareness, dialogue and process.

7. THE FEASIBILITY OF THE STUDY

The feasibility of the study was measured against the following:

7.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Brink (1996:76) defines a literature review as “*a process that involves finding, reading, understanding and forming conclusions about the published research and theory on a particular topic.*” She takes this further indicating the main reasons for a literature review as ...

- determining existing knowledge,
- obtaining clues to methodology and instruments,
- refining the study,
- forming the basis for comparison when interpreting findings from the current research and
- supporting the present research.

There was sufficient literature available on the factors causing the career-related stress experienced by teachers and the consequences thereof, existing coping strategies and stress-management programmes and Gestalt therapy, to have made this research feasible. Literature regarding the use of Gestalt therapy, or a model using the Gestalt therapeutic approach to address the problem, did not exist though, therefore the importance of this research study.

Gestalt therapy with awareness, dialogue and process as the main objectives (O’Leary, 1992; Clarkson & McKewn, 1993; Yontef, 1993; Sills, Fish & Lapworth, 1995; Hamilton, 1997; Crocker, 2001; Feldhause, 2001; Barlow, 2003; Joyce & Sills, 2003) formed the foundation for this research study.

The career-related stress levels experienced by teachers (De Kock, 1988; Capel, 1989; Kyriacou, 1989; Adamson, 2002; Davidson, 2003; Klos, 2003; Holt, 2005; Niebuhr, 2006) were the dependent variable of this research study.

The primary and secondary factors causing career-related stress experienced by teachers were researched in view of recent educational laws, the curriculum, as well as recent publications, news bulletins and educational conference material and seminars. Existing

coping strategies and both international and national programmes were researched and assessed against the background of the Gestalt therapeutic approach.

7.2 CONSULTATION WITH EXPERTS

Although literature and publications do exist covering a large scope of the research study, it may only represent a section of the knowledge of people involved in a specific field on a daily basis (Strydom, 2002(b):212). The researcher thus consulted with the following experts in the fields of education and stress management:

- Piet Oosthuizen co-creator of the course for teacher-stress intervention at the University of North West
- The Gauteng Employer Assistance Programme a department of ICAS a behavioural risk management company
- Dr Eugene Allers chairperson of the Psychiatric Association of South Africa was consulted on the incidence of teacher stress resulting in early retirement.
- Dr Helgo Schomer of the University of Cape Town was consulted regarding the lowering of teacher stress through a healthy life style.

1.8. CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

- Chapter 1: (Phase one - Problem analysis and project planning) Orientation and background
- Chapter 2: (Phase two – Information gathering and synthesis) Career-related stress experienced by teachers
- Chapter 3: (Phase two – Information gathering and synthesis) Existing approaches to address teacher stress
- Chapter 4: (Phase two – Information gathering and synthesis) The Gestalt therapeutic approach
- Chapter 5: (Phase 3 – Design) The Gestalt therapeutic model for teachers suffering from career-related stress
- Chapter 6: (Phase 4 -Early development and pilot testing) Empirical study

- Chapter 7: (Phase 5 – Evaluation) General summary, conclusions and recommendations

1.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the need to address career-related stress experienced by teachers was discussed. Present therapeutic and other forms of intervention appeared to be unsuccessful and teachers were left with feelings of dissatisfaction and a wish to leave the profession. The possibility of a school-based Gestalt therapeutic process model was thus proposed.

The problem was formulated based on the debilitating stress levels of teachers and a need for an alternative form of intervention. Although stress was addressed in various ways it did not solve the problem in the long run.

The objective was stated as the development, implementation and evaluation of a Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, in order to regain homeostasis.

The research question was stated as: Which components of a Gestalt therapeutic process model will be most applicable in assisting the teacher suffering from career-related stress to regain homeostasis?

The research hypothesis was stated as: Teachers suffering from career-related stress, who have been exposed to a Gestalt therapeutic process model, will experience lower stress levels.

A combined dominant/less dominant qualitative and quantitative research approach was applied.

The type of research, namely intervention research, was discussed in detail. Intervention research can briefly be described as the design, development, implementation and evaluation of an intervention model.

The ethical aspects, which received attention throughout the research process, as well as the feasibility of the study, including the literature study, consultation with experts and the pilot study were discussed.

In Chapter 2 the factors causing teacher stress, as well as the consequences of this career-related stress for the individual teacher, the learners and education at large will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

PHASE TWO: INFORMATION GATHERING AND SYNTHESIS

CAREER-RELATED STRESS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS – USING EXISTING INFORMATION RESOURCES, INCLUDING AN AUTO- ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the context of an intervention research study, it is important to determine what other researchers have done to address and understand the problem (De Vos, 2002(d):405). Relevant knowledge and sources of knowledge, including that of the researcher involved in teaching for the past thirty years, were thus identified, collected and integrated.

Through the information consulted and collected, the researcher came to the conclusion that teaching will always be inherently stressful. It is thus unavoidable although undesirable (Esteve, 1989:3). Stress amongst teachers is not about a few teachers' failure to cope. All teachers experience stress to some degree and it should not be seen as an essential inadequacy of the teacher. The present nature of teaching, the changes currently occurring in education, as well as the changes in the attitudes of the society at large, are increasing the stress experienced by teachers. Not only does the individual teacher suffer the consequences of prolonged stress, but it is also to the detriment of the learners, education at large and ultimately the country.

2.2 FACTORS CAUSING STRESS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS

Many sources of stress have been identified, although the main source of stress for an individual teacher in a particular school may vary greatly. In isolation some of the factors causing stress may be relatively unimportant, but *en masse* they have a profound effect on teachers' self-esteem, behaviour, physical and mental health and their view on the profession. Through the work done in phase one, it became evident that teacher stress is caused by primary and secondary factors. Primary factors are those directly related to the day-to-day activities in the classroom. Secondary factors are environmental and are brought on by forces in society about which the teacher can do little. To this should be added personality factors because it is clear that teachers who, for example, suffer a low self-esteem, who tend to be more depressed and those lacking in commitment, are more susceptible to stress than others (Kyriacou, 1989:28).

2.2.1 PRIMARY FACTORS

Primary factors directly affect the day-to-day activities in the classroom, thus limiting the success of teaching or causing tension (Esteve, 1989:6). It is important to understand, though, that these factors are interrelated although they will be discussed under different headings.

2.2.1.1 Learner indiscipline and classroom management

Learner misbehaviour and indiscipline are major sources of stress for teachers (Otto, 1986:115; Cox et al, 1989:107; Kyriacou, 1989:31; Dunham, 1992:44-51; Phillips, 1993:187; Everaert & Van der Wolf, 2003:122; Kiziltepe, 2003:147; Day et al, 2005:4; Schlichte et al, 2005:36) and the most common predictor for career stress (Phillips, 1993:188; Berkson, 2006:10). This lack of discipline is aggravated by teachers with poor classroom management, resulting in the next teachers on the time table having to deal with the problem, leaving them with feelings of inadequacy. In township schools the situation is even bleaker. Learner and teacher discipline are both poor, there is no order,

and violence, card games, gambling and the overt smoking of marijuana are the order of the day (Motseke, 1998:91).

Learners who are alienated from school see teachers as agents of a system which failed them (Woods, 1989:86), because it does not address their needs or prepare them for possible future careers. A teacher may win an alienated child the one day and lose them again the next, leaving the teacher frustrated and stressed. In South Africa, similar to the United States of America, cultures of resistance have been noticed amongst groups of black children as well as children from minority groups who felt themselves victimised by individual teachers, as well as the whole school system (Woods, 1989:88). Holt (2005:49) is of the opinion that vandalism at school is a sign of learners' need for revenge. Even hardened teachers are left impotent by the delight some learners take in baiting them.

It is not only alienated learners who serve as a stressor for teachers though, in the researcher's experience the majority of learners do not want to study and the intrinsic reward for the teacher resulting in good academic results is thus not forthcoming. According to a research questionnaire completed by 368 teachers in 26 township schools in the Province of the Orange Free State, teachers indicated that learners who do not do their homework are the greatest cause for their career-related stress (Motseke, 1998:83).

Learners are not only alienated, but do not want to attend school regularly in the township schools. They also arrive either late or leave early, thus missing the first and last lessons of the day (Motseke, 1998:90). The researcher also experienced this trend at the school where she is employed. Learners residing in townships tend to be late for school and in spite of being disciplined are not perturbed. Parents are seldom aware of their children being late for school and are not overly concerned when informed by the school management, probably due to their own township school education experience. To avoid punishment and to ensure that their parents are not requested to attend a parent-principal conference, learners stay away from school when their transport arrives late to take them to school.

The school system is a paradigm of society's hierarchical structure and learners are expected to know their place in society without questioning it and to respect each other and their teachers (Otto, 1986:117; Garrahy, Cothran & Kulinna, 2005:59). This is unfortunately not the case and teachers are left feeling like prison wardens (Woods, 1989:98; Holt, 2005:49), threatening, yelling or cajoling the learners. Aggressive behaviour from learners has increased over the years. Learners get upset when things do not go their way, shout and yell at the teachers, question their authority and talk back (Garrahy et al, 2005:59).

Classrooms are made into battlefields and teachers who went into teaching full of hope and good intentions start to perceive children as their "*natural enemies*" (Holt, 2005:51). Ho and Au (2006:180) indicate that teachers experiencing higher stress levels also experience difficulties with classroom management. Berkson (2006:7) goes further indicating the frustration felt by teachers when their careful approach to discipline does not work. A further frustration is that too much time is spent with only a few learners because of their disruptive behavioural tendencies.

Classroom management consumes personal resources and individual talent. Learning to manage a class is an ongoing developmental process influenced by teachers' circumstances, personality and attitude towards their career, as well as contextual factors (Garrahy et al, 2005:61) such as limited resources and training opportunities and knowledge of subject content. Dunham (1992:51) goes further indicating that the range of learner attitudes and behaviour is beyond the teachers' experience, training and expectations, which are further sources of insecurity. Job satisfaction plays a role in the successful management of a class and Ho and Au (2005:180) indicate that teachers with low job satisfaction also experience more classroom misbehaviours. Contributing to the stress of teachers is the general public's opinion that good teachers are those who can control learners and who can make them learn regardless of the content or methods used. Teachers find it stressful to deal with the apathy of learners who are forced to come to school (Otto, 1986:115; Dunham, 1992:46; Phillips, 1993:187; McCann & Johannessen,

2004:7; Holt, 2005:105). Teachers work with learners ranging in age from 5 to 13 or 16 in primary schools and from 13 to 21 in secondary schools and sometimes even older in township schools (Motseke, 1998:89). This diversity calls for multiple strategies which are developmentally appropriate for children of a specific age (Garrahy et al, 2005:58).

Classroom management is made difficult due to the large number of learners per class (Otto, 1986:112; Kiziltepe, 2003:147; Holt, 2005:105; Balt, 2006). In spite of the fact that the South African School's Act stipulates that the teacher:learner ratio in secondary schools must be 1:35 and in primary schools 1:40 (Motseke, 1998:87), it is only possible in theory. Classes are overcrowded (Balt, 2006) and sizes differ from 35 to 60 learners in public schools. According to the Gauteng Department of Education's annual report the teacher:learner ratio was 1:39 in secondary schools in 2005 and 1:45 in primary schools (GDE, 2006:38) whilst the average class size for 2005 was indicated as 45 learners per class across the board. Where schools manage to have fewer learners in a class, it is due to the large number of teachers employed by the School Governing Bodies (Department of Education, 2002:20, 22-29). Due to the large class sizes, learners are disruptive, teachers' marking and administration increased and classrooms are crowded.

Although certain factors causing teacher stress can be changed over a short period of time, challenging learner characteristics can only be changed by large-scale systemic efforts (Hakanen et al, 2006:14). The increasing noise levels experienced in schools is another cause for concern. The reasons for the increased noise levels, in the opinion and experience of the researcher, are the lack of respect for authority, lack of and concern for academic achievement, group work as required by the new National South African Curriculum, the shortage of assertive teachers, large class numbers and the loud township culture. This has been verified by principals of various schools across South Africa during provincial and national principals' conferences in informal interviews and discussions. Dunham (1992:60) mentions research reports indicating the decibel count of some schools as between 60 and 75 which is the same as a very busy road. There can be negative physical, as well as emotional, consequences for people who work in prolonged

noisy environments and it should be considered as a contributory factor in the development of stress.

The abolishment of corporal punishment left a void in the redirecting of unacceptable behaviour (Garrahy et al, 2005:59) and teachers had to find new techniques, which were sometimes difficult to implement, to instil discipline. Fitzpatrick (2006(a):209) goes as far as to state that discipline in South African schools has been discredited in general since the abolishment of corporal punishment (South Africa 1996(b):9). Teachers experience the school management's inability to solve serious discipline problems as an unwillingness to support them (Dunham, 1992:56), although a South African expulsion can't be realised unless the Department of Education approves it and that almost never happens (Fitzpatrick 2006(a): 209; Government Gazette 23 January 2006 no 69). Although the abolishment of corporal punishment reduced the violence of teachers towards learners, there was an increase in conflict between learners in the USA (Davidson, 2003:9) , as well as violence against teachers (Otto, 1986:116), which is also evident in South Africa (Wyngaard, 2007:4). The opposite of corporal punishment, for instance the touch of a shoulder, a hug or a pat on the head as a positive consequence, also became problematic, due to the emphasis on sexual harassment (Garrahy et al, 2005:60).

2.2.1.2 Violence

There is a world-wide increase in violence in teaching institutions (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1986:13; Esteve, 1989:17), which does not exclude South African schools (Botha, 2006:x; Fitzpatrick, 2006(a):208; Mithileni, 2006:xi). There are acts of physical aggression and verbal attacks (Dunham, 1992:47 & 48) towards teachers and learners fear attacks by other students. The attacks and violence may be isolated, but it has a psychological influence on the other teachers who fear that they might also be attacked.

Examples of acts of physical aggression towards teachers, as well as increasing violence between learners have been recorded in South African media reports the last couple of

years. The South African Press Association (SAPA) reported on 7 October 2004 that Education Minister, Naledi Pandor, had reported at least 115 assaults, 111 acts of sexual violence and four acts of violence with a fire arm at schools from January up to September 2004. These were only incidents reported to the police and excluded two of the nine South African provinces. In popular magazines such as the “You” of 26 October 2006, in an in depth article titled “*Catastrophe in our schools*”, it was indicated that the levels of violence in South African schools are high. Mention was made of a fellow learner stabbed to death, a grade 6 boy assaulting a girl in the same grade till she bled from her mouth and nose, gang activities in schools, six known cases of teachers in Gauteng province being assaulted by learners during 2006 and the case of a female teacher, with thirty years experience, being kicked in the face and beaten unconscious (Fizpatrick, 2006: 208-209). In the newspaper “Rapport” of Sunday 1 April 2007, G. De Bruyn reported the murder of a Kwa Zulu Natal teacher at the hand of a learner. In the same newspaper H. Wyngaard reported that a learner killed another learner for his cell phone in Oudtshoorn. Although the case studies mentioned in the “You” magazine and the newspapers reflect unscientific news and were thus not consulted for scientific purposes, it reflects the public voice on this matter. During the national industrial action of Government employees during June 2007 violence became the order of the day, leaving both teachers and learners fearful and stressed. The attacks and violence, excluding those during the industrial action, may be isolated, but it has a psychological influence on the other teachers who fear that they might also be attacked.

Davidson (2003:9) indicated an increase in violence associated with gangs. Although there is an emphasis on school security, including guards, metal detectors and surveillance cameras, weapons and drugs are still coming into the schools and in isolated cases learners have brought guns to school, shooting teachers and peers (Davidson, 2003:10; De Bruyn, 2007:4). School violence is not a characteristic of poor inner city or township schools exclusively, but violence in township schools is reaching alarming proportions. Teachers are threatened or assaulted, girls are sexually molested or raped and learners are even killed on the school premises (Motseke, 1998:92).

Although school violence is increasing in all schools, it is prevalent in township schools according to Motseke (1998:46). The Financial Mail of 11 October 1996 (Motseke, *ibid*) reported that learners in township schools are especially liberal and intimidate teachers, supported by parents who demonstrate a scant regard for school rules. Motseke continued indicating that there has always been a difference between political beliefs of students and those of teachers and parents. Teachers and parents wanted to continue the struggle against apartheid while learners wanted to be in the class. Learners therefore saw their teachers as weak and defied them. Teachers on the other hand, needed the learners' involvement in their struggles, for the recognition of teacher unions, salary increases and the chasing away of inspectors, now called subject facilitators, from the schools. A recent example of this learner involvement was the national industrial action of June 2007. In the suburbs the schools carried on with the education of the learners who attended, regardless of the fact that the larger percentage of learners came from townships. These schools carried on with education and learners attended. In the township schools no teaching took place and learners were thus involved again in helping the teachers gain their increment. It should be noted though that neither learners nor teachers could attend township schools, even if they wished to, due to intimidation and threats of violence mostly orchestrated by the South African Democratic Teacher Union (SADTU).

2.2.1.3 Bullying

Bullying is yet another form of violence and is receiving much attention from both the South African media and the National Department of Education. Bullies create an environment of fear and hostility in a school and they select targets weaker than themselves (Davidson, 2003:19). These targets do not exclude teachers perceived as weak. Bullies often have the support of their parents encouraging them not to let other people walk over them. Sadly these parents are often bullies themselves and the teachers are their victims (Everaert & Van der Wolf, 2003:122). Sexual harassment, hate threats and threats of legal action further increase the hostile and stressful environment of schools. Bullies are often learners who want to take revenge. They want to do unto others what has been done to them. These learners experience rejection. Learners are for the

same reason in need of a feeling of power and will do what they want to, and nobody will stop them and they will accept no form of authority (Basson, 1999:76). Bullying can take many forms. It can be pushing, shoving, hitting, spitting, name calling gossiping or anything that can be distinguished from normal peer conflict.

D'oré (2007:14) define teachers and school administrators as the second vital stake holder, as a group where bullying and the prevention of it is concerned. She recommends that teachers attend workshops to empower them on how to deal with incidents of bullying. This adds to the stress and workload already experienced by the teachers. In the Health and Wellness Newsletter (Autumn, 2007: 6) cell phone bullying is defined as a new dimension to bullying. This form of bullying includes threatening messages of emotional or bodily harm, the building of fake profiles, statements that may lead to stalking, signing the innocent up for porn-sites, breaking into online accounts, sending images of children to others and sharing intimate information about children. Once again the teacher is identified to help in the prevention of this form of bullying. The researcher had to do therapy with a Grade 12 learner who wanted to commit suicide when the girl he was having a 'mix it' relationship with broke up with him. They have never met during the seven months of the relationship and still he believed that they were going to get married.

Acquired skills to manage the above behaviour are thus necessary. These skills are not necessarily taught at training institutions, which implies that teachers exposed to such behaviour may experience stress in practice.

2.2.1.4 Workload

The workload of teachers can be seen as the second largest stress factor (Cox et al, 1989: 106; Bindhu & Sudheeskumar, 2006:2; Berkson, 2006:6). Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli (2006:12) argue that teachers' cognitive and emotional workload may evoke chronic stress, over fatigue and finally burnout, which may lead to psychosomatic disorders and complaints, as well as restrictions in pedagogical performance. Stressful

workloads involve excessive levels of work and too much responsibility. The stress caused by an excessive workload can further lead to the feeling that they are perpetually behind schedule (Segumpan & Bahari, 2003:166), which is a powerful stressor in itself.

Teacher exhaustion and increasing demands made on teachers, the lack of time (Otto, 1986:109; Kyriacou, 1989:31; Basson, 1994:48; Day et al, 2005:3; Grant & Hill, 2006:21) and the fragmentation of the teacher in the classroom are also contributing factors resorting under workload. Teachers must plan work, mark exams and evaluate (McCann & Jahannessen, 2004:4). Esteve (1989:22) indicates that the highest incidences of stress occur at the end of each term and at the end of the academic year. This is due to the accumulation of stress during the term and the examinations and marking at the end of each term. Further demands made upon teachers are to help learners plan for the future, talk to parents and keep them informed of the progress of their children, organise extra curricular activities (Capel, 1989:40) and other public acts, such as community service, as well as attending staff and departmental meetings (Day et al, 2005:3). Teachers are also exposed to bureaucratic problems and as part of their role as *in loco parentis* do playground and bus duty (GDE 1997). Teachers are responsible for an overwhelming and frustrating amount of administrative tasks, which have little to do with the curriculum and actual contact with the learners (Dunham, 1993:58; Holt, 2005:105). South African teachers have experienced a substantial increase in the administrative tasks since the implementation of the various curriculum changes since 1997 and the researcher is becoming increasingly aware of the stress experienced by the teachers in education.

Motseke (1998:7) qualified three kinds of workload stress. Quantitative stress refers to too much marking, preparation and extra curricular activities. Qualitative overload indicates that the work required from teachers is above their capabilities and under-load which refers to boredom and routine. In the South African context the new National Curriculum led to all three. The preparation to implement the new curriculum, as well as the marking, increased the workload of teachers. Teachers who studied at tertiary institutions, not necessarily focussing on the South African teaching conditions or the

new curriculum, add to the responsibilities of the teachers who were exposed to better and more effective tertiary education, who need to train the afore mentioned teachers on an ongoing basis. Boredom is, in addition, caused by the over emphasising of administrative tasks due to the lack of creativity involved.

2.2.1.5 Role ambiguity

There is an increase in the confusion about exactly what it is that teachers are supposed to be able to do and about the wide-ranging and complex role society has entrusted to them (Esteve, 1989:10; Dunham, 1992:62; Day et al, 2005:6). Teachers have to combine various roles, which are basically conflicting and which demand that they maintain a precarious balance between various positions. Teachers play the roles of friend, colleague, companion and helper in general. This is incompatible with their roles as selectors, evaluators and disciplinarians, which are also entrusted to them (Woods, 1989:95).

Lieberman and Miller (2005:152) point out that teaching is seen as highly intellectual work and teachers assume the roles of researchers, mentors, scholars and developers, but on the other hand learners with personal difficulties rely on teachers with little or no training in the area, to advise them. This leaves the question of time, because the other roles played by teachers are all consuming. This role conflict and role ambiguity, are significantly related to teacher stress (Capel, 1989:38; Phillips, 1993:188). Teachers are in an invidious position in that they are expected to be paragons of virtue and set an example to children and that they should know almost everything. Learners view teachers as less than human, which can be attributed to the frequent role change a teacher is involved in (Woods, 1989:90).

The general public is of the opinion that good teachers are those who can “control” learners and who can make them learn content regardless of the content or of the methods used. The general public further believes teachers to be well prepared, to perform constantly well and to like all children. Part of the expected role of teachers is

that they should also train learners in a sport or cultural activity (Capel, 1989:40) for which they have either limited or no formal training (Everaert & Van der Wolf, 2003:122). These activities are done after academic contact time and take up even more of teachers' time which should be used, not only for preparation and marking, but also to recuperate or spend with their families. Teachers are seldom trained to do these extra-curricular activities and must either attend courses or use a training manual to do the compulsory activity.

At the school where the researcher was employed both the soccer and cricket coordinators were ladies who had to attend training courses after school hours to master the finer details of the various sports. It is assumed that language teachers can do any cultural activity and are responsible for public speaking, debating, drama and quiz competitions. Although the teachers at the school in question did receive a taxed gratuity (called "top up salaries" by the Department of Education) from the school's governing body to perform these activities, not all schools can afford it. On the other hand some schools offer much larger gratuities, putting pressure on the other schools to either equal or better their gratuities or lose a teacher. At schools where great emphasis is placed on winning, teachers are employed based on their skills regarding a specific sport. In the experience of the researcher these teachers often lack academic and administrative abilities, which require other teachers or the heads of department to carry an extra burden in this regard. Where more than one school compete to enrol learners from the same area, teachers are pressurised to achieve on extra curricular terrain as part of the school's marketing strategy.

2.2.1.6 Inclusion

Inclusion can reside under both classroom management and role ambiguity, but with the South African Department of Education's emphasis on the inclusion of learners with personal, emotional, developmental and/or physical problems or disabilities in mainstream education, based on *Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (Department of Education 2002: 4-

18). This policy is steadily becoming a stress factor to be reckoned with and should receive separate attention.

Kapp (1990:26) indicates that these disabilities can be either due to an impeded milieu and education or due to limitations to the learner's given potential. Teachers who are not trained or do not have the personality to deal with these learners in the educational milieu, experience frustration and stress (Otto 1986:115; Firth et al, 2003:66). Because of the rights of children they are not allowed to be placed in classes according to the marks obtained and both teacher and committed learners suffer.

Teachers must operate on various fronts. A teacher must maintain discipline and be sympathetic, give attention to both brighter and slower learners and they must be in the same class due to inclusive education (Department of Education, 2002:4-18; *Fokus*, 2006; South Africa, 2007:9). Teachers are thus trying to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse learner population at a time when a standardised, one-size-fits-all curriculum is mandated (Lieberman & Miller, 2005:151; Webb, 2006:10).

It is a special, usually more idealistic teacher who specialises in the field of children with special educational needs. Mainstream education does not cater for children with these needs and they challenge the teacher's feelings of professional competence and confidence (Firth et al, 2003:68). Learners with special needs challenge teaching styles, the understanding of how learning occurs, classroom processes, group management, task analysis, the ideals of education and the teacher's personal reaction to the learners. Chan and Dally (2000) (Firth et al, 2003:66) are of the opinion that behaviour problems are characteristic of approximately 50% of these learners. Teaching special needs learners is more challenging to the positive feedback loop and causes greater stress and mainstream teachers define teaching them as outside their role. Approaches which usually work, do not work when special needs children are in the class.

M. Victor, a head of department responsible for the counselling and guidance at an Afrikaans medium primary school in the province of Mpumalanga, indicated in an

informal interview with the researcher that inclusive education will result in her resignation from the teaching profession. According to Victor it is a stress inducing factor for teachers because of time and discipline issues, as well as the fact that teachers have to read the question papers to these learners and write their answers for them in spite of the 35+ other learners in the class (Victor, 2008).

2.2.1.7 Educational policies, change and relationship with departmental officials

It is important to remember that stress-producing problems encountered in schools derive, in part, from the schools' dependence on the wider education system and state departmental policies. One of the frustrations indicated by teachers is that they can exert little or no influence over education department decisions (Mathison & Freeman, 2003:50). Policy changes and the extra work associated with the changes are contributory factors to teacher stress (Cole & Walker, 1989:x; Kyriacou, 1989:32; Dunham, 1992:62). Basson (1999:64) justly states that never before in the history of South African education have so many new important policy documents appeared.

In countries where the government has intervened in education in order to raise standards of teaching, learning and achievement, the nature of teachers' work has become increasingly performance orientated and audit driven (Phillips, 1993:189; Mathison & Freeman, 2003:52; Lieberman & Miller, 2005:152; Grant & Hill, 2006:20) and accountable to a range of stakeholders (Day et al, 2005:3). Webb (2006:2) quotes Sirotnik (2002) regarding the emphasis on testing: "*evidence is emerging about teacher demoralisation and attrition as a result of frustration with the overemphasis on mandated testing for high stakes accountability purposes*". Moteske (1998:90) points out that the grade 12 results in South African township schools are very low in comparison to those of suburban schools and the audit driven approach left even experienced teachers stressed. These changing national education policies may thus enhance or diminish teacher commitment. The quality of teaching may become steadily worse as teachers become more and more demoralised (Phillips, 1993:183), feeling that they have little control over their actions and policy (Grant & Hill, 2006:20). Kiziltepe (2003:148)

agrees with this statement, pointing out that policymakers' failure to consult teachers when considering new policies, results in the de-motivation of the teacher corps.

Factors which diminish teacher levels of commitment are, in the experience of the researcher, and also confirmed by Day, Elliot and Kington (2005:14), time-related imposed innovation and the steep learning curves involved, department initiatives increasing bureaucratic tasks, the cutting down on resources, the reduction of classroom autonomy and the decisions being made about your learners in forums outside of your control. This is detrimental to any changing society where there is an increasing necessity to meet its specialist needs (Esteve, 1989:13; GDE, 2006:1). It is of vital importance though, that central government and education authorities realise and acknowledge that burnout and stress leave teachers less effective (Capel, 1989:45).

After the general elections in 1994 and the subsequent change of government, teachers were increasingly viewed as the main change agents in the move towards a non-racial, non-sexist, united and democratic South Africa. To meet these challenges the government put a number of policies and legislation in place. One of these was the introduction of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) under the auspices of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). Another was the introduction of outcomes based education (OBE), also known as Curriculum 2005 (De Vos & Schulze, 2002:14-15). Teachers were, and are still, faced with many challenges brought about by the new approach to education. Content and the relevance there of was stressed, methodology had to change to learner-oriented, continuous methods of assessment were implemented and racism and inequities had to be addressed. Schools were expected to acquire resources based on affordability, get involved in the community and establish new partnerships. The ultimate aim being the creation of high performance schools with dedicated teachers (Department of Education, 2002; De Vos & Schulze, 2002:15-16).

The approach to the South African Outcomes Based Education (OBE), as announced by Professor Sibisiso Bengu, then Minister of Education, in 1997, changed twice since its inception and the approach to the foundation (Grade 1-3), intermediate (Grade 4-6) and

senior (Grade7-9) phases has once again been changed in 2005 with the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (Petje, 2006:3). The NCS also includes the Further Education and Training Phase (FET) for Grades 10 – 12 (Pretorius, 2006:1). An approach away from knowledge and formal exam based education to that of “accidental learning” and “skills based education” has completed a 360° circle and is back at providing knowledge tested in formal exams counting 75% of the final promotion mark at the end of the grade 10-12 years (Niebuhr, 2006:15). Teachers had to attend week-long training sessions (GDE, 2006: 102) during the holidays each time the curriculum was changed. This in itself contributed to the stress experienced by teachers. During the term stress accumulates and the holiday at the end of the term is an important means to regain personal equilibrium. The researcher agrees with Motseke (1998:88) that these training sessions were not adequate and a large number of teachers had to undergo training for and teach subjects they were not qualified to teach, which left them at risk. The assessment system has increased teachers’ administrative duties (Niebuhr, 2006:14-16) leaving them with even less time to recuperate.

These changes left the teachers uncertain about the objectives of the teaching profession, and the furthering of knowledge. The in-depth knowledge of any subject is made difficult to the point where it affects the teacher’s self-confidence. Teachers cannot make a deliberate choice as to the type of education they wish to present and which values they wish to encourage, repress or fight openly (Esteve, 1989:6; South Africa, 1996(b):8 & 9). Added to the stress caused by the changes and the pressure on teachers to produce results there are coercive threats of dismissal and hearings, leading to demoralisation and stress (Webb, 2006:2). The teacher evaluation instrument called IQMS (Integrated Quality Management System) (ELRC, 2003) also adds to the teachers’ stress, not only because of the normal stress associated with evaluation, but also because of the extra administration involved (ELRC 2003, 16-62). Teachers see this as an unnecessary burden because it will only mean an increment of 1% should they meet the minimum requirements.

Although teachers in former white South African or ex-model C schools are of the opinion that apartheid is something of the past and that 14 years down the line it is time

for the black teachers to follow the instructions and guidelines laid down by the various departments of education, there is still an inherited attitude present based on the fact that prior to 1994 township teachers taught inferior syllabi and work programmes to black learners. In an attempt to avoid a repetition of this, they vehemently rejected any curriculum development that may exclude their participation (Mboya, M.M. 1993:64; Motseke, 1998:48). In the researchers' opinion this is still true to a certain extent.

A detrimental decision was made by the Government in 1997 allowing experienced teachers and principals to take voluntary severance packages (Motseke, 1998:53). Although these teachers wished to come back to education and are not of retirement age, the Government would not allow it, and many of these teachers are now employed by the school governing bodies. Three experienced teachers on the staff of the school where the researcher was employed took this severance package and were employed by the school governing body. A change to this regulation was made in 2007 with the Western Cape Department of Education taking the lead. In the Gauteng Department's vacancy list, ABC Volume 1 of 2008 (GDE, 2008:7), it was published that teachers who took the 1997 severance package would be allowed to apply for permanent positions and would be appointed for a term of three years, which could be extended for another three years at the end of the first three-year term. Appointments would only be made if no other suitable teacher applied. Although not stipulated in the said vacancy list, the teachers recommended by the School Governing Body of the school where the researcher was employed, were not appointed because they were not recommended to teach, or trained to teach Mathematics, Physical Science and/or Technology (Mekwa, 2008). Uncertainty regarding the implementation of policy therefore resulted in stress experienced by the teachers.

2.2.1.8 School organisation

It is not only so called "bad" teachers who experience stress and not only so called "good" teachers who do not experience stress – it depends on the conditions under which teachers work. There are specific dimensions of the organisational environment either

preventing or promoting stress. The factors to be discussed will be management and the autonomy of the teachers, their growth, actualisation and promotion possibilities, the relationships, communication and support within the school.

A reality, which may challenge the idealism of teachers, especially young teachers, is the inability of management to change their approach, even though outdated (Day et al, 2005:12). Problems with the principal and deputy principals (Otto, 1986:119; Chakrovoty, 1989:74; Kiziltepe, 2003:154), as well as their leadership styles may lead to stress (Dunham, 1992:58; Schlichte et al, 2005:36).

In South Africa the relationship between the principals and teachers in township schools is further complicated by politics (Motseke, 1998:99). In the late 1980's township principals were appointed according to their political association, to serve as collaborators against the apartheid system of education. Between 1989 and 1994 township principals were the targets of SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers Union) because they were seen as symbols of the apartheid authority. The perception thus existed that the relationship between teachers and principals was not based on trust. At present many of the township appointments and even the appointments at district and provincial level are, in the experience of the researcher, based on SADTU affiliation.

An unwillingness of teachers in managerial positions to delegate responsibilities (Dunham, 1992:65) also contributes to stress. Teachers want to influence decisions which affect them. They want to give input particularly when administrators behave in an autocratic manner, overruling teachers' personal judgement and ideas or interfering with what teachers see as their own area of responsibility (Otto, 1986:121; Dunham, 1992:65).

Inadequate transmission of information from management to teachers is a cause of resentment particularly in a climate of educational change. A lack of positive feedback from management for the efforts and talents of teachers (Dunham, 1992:62; Segumpan & Bahari, 2003:166; Berkson, 2006:6) is a source of stress for committed teachers with a sense of self-efficacy (Day et al, 2005:11). Otto (1986:122) adds to this, unfair work

distribution and the lack of attention to teachers' problems. Schools where problem-solving channels, shared values and aims are lacking are breeding grounds for stress (Cox et al, 1989:107; Day et al, 2005:12).

There is limited room for promotion in a school, which leads to frustration and hampers the growth and actualisation of ambitious teachers (Dunham, 1992:62; Phillips, 1993:188). The reverse side of this problem is that improvement in education is thwarted by the promotion of inexperienced people in senior positions, especially in provincial education departments (Motseke, 1998:53). This is also the experience of the researcher where the deputy director of the Ekurhuleni North school district in Gauteng, informed her that her Departmental and Institutional Support and Development Official (IDSO), who was promoted from a deputy principal's position in an underachieving township school, does not know what her work entails and that the principals of self-managing schools, must train her. The researcher, who is a secondary school principal, experienced the inadequate knowledge of subject facilitators of the following subjects in 2006: Business Studies Grade 10 – 12, Economics Grade 10-12 and Compu Typing/ Computer Applications Technology and Computer Studies/Information Technology. The subject facilitator (post level 3) for the latter two subjects, who used to be a grade 4 teacher, admitted that she knew nothing about the subjects and requested that the teachers teaching the subjects (post level 1) train her. This resulted in 21 failures in Compu Typing in the said secondary school at the end of 2006, because the teacher, teaching the subject to the grade 12 learners, was, because of the lack of trained teachers in the said subject, under-qualified and inexperienced.

A further stressor is the lack of parental support. Teachers indicate relationships with parents as an important stress factor (Kizeltepe, 2003:148; Berkson, 2006:11). There is a lack of involvement from parents in the lives of their children and even more so regarding behavioural situations at school and in some cases parents become accomplices in their children's poor behaviour (Garrahy et al, 2005:59).

In spite of the lack of parental involvement there is a move towards greater parent influence on school councils or school governing bodies, backed by legislation (South Africa 1996(a):23). This is also a source of ambivalent feelings on the part of teachers. Parental pressures can be a threat to the current way schools are managed and can become a source of conflict. Teachers may feel that they are losing their decision-making rights as professionals. This can be trying when it is felt that parents lack adequate understanding of the requirements of a teacher's work and that they demand without sharing responsibilities (Otto, 1986:128-129). Teachers thus have to work within the punitive framework of public accountability (Webb, 2006:2).

In schools with a negative work climate, less experienced and even experienced teachers experience high stress levels. Those with support from administrators, teachers and parents experience less stress though (Capel, 1989:38; Cox et al, 1989:107; McCann & Johannessen, 2004:6; Day et al, 2005:4). Inadequate communication and cohesion between colleagues at all levels lead to stress (Dunham, 1992:55; Chakrovoty, 1989:79). Berkson (2006:8) describes the communication between teachers as a delicate process which it is indeed. Support from colleagues, sharing mutual apprehension is thus very important, eliminating situations of ambivalence, conflict and distrust (Otto, 1986:124; Schlichte et al, 2005:37). Motseke (1998:49) also indicates gossip and back biting as a stressor. The professional idealism of young teachers is exposed to the cynicism of older teachers. Young, as well as new teachers find it stressful when there is obvious favouritism and cliques on the staff.

Due to the diverse South African teaching corps, the cultural backgrounds of teachers need to be taken into account when a school is managed and organised. South African teachers are from different cultures and backgrounds, and are members of the same staff. In collective cultures social support, group goals, harmony, unity and calmness are priorities. In the individualistic European and to a large extent the Eastern cultures, individual goals, competition, separation and a sense of anxiety prevails (Brown & Uehara, 1999:16). This leads, in the researcher's experience, to stress when teachers from the two different life approaches are in one subject department. Teachers from one

culture may find it difficult to work independently while others resent the fact that they have to curb their own individualistic and competitive approaches to ensure the smooth running of the subject departments of which they are members. This may also lead to racial tension.

Motseke (1998:96) further points out that there is tension in township schools between members of the liberation aligned teachers' union SADTU, an affiliate of the African National Congress and those who were members of other teacher unions such as NAPTOSA (National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa) and the SAOU (Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysunie). This divides teachers into "progressives" and "conservatives". This divide was also clear during the strike action of June 2007. SADTU members prevented the other teachers in the townships from going to school and even stopped black teachers, teaching in so called suburban schools, to join in the marching. In schools where there were only one or two SADTU members, the schools were phoned on a daily basis to ensure that the members did not attend school in spite of the fact that the school progressed as usual. These external stressors contribute to personal stress levels and emotional turmoil in teachers.

2.2.1.9 Fiscal factors

Teachers are asked to do more with less, because school budgets are shrinking (Lieberman & Miller, 2005:151). Ho and Au (2006:180) also point out that teachers, experiencing a higher stress rate, perceive that they have inadequate resources. Employees are thus sensitive to working conditions and Grant and Hill (2006:21), as well as Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli (2006:12) indicate that the lack of resources to meet the demands may be associated with stress, undermining work engagement and a lower organisational commitment. They even went as far as to predict that a lack of resources leads to an increase in staff absenteeism.

Because school budgets are shrinking (Lieberman & Miller, 2005:151) in the face of the current inflation rate and Government funds are either insufficient or lacking, fiscal

factors are becoming a stressor to be reckoned with. At the school where the researcher is employed R91 000 for the period 2006/7 was provided by the Government because of its Quintile 5 status. A Quintile 5 status implies that the school is not a school fee free school and that it falls in the highest quintile indicating that the school receives a very small government grant. School governing bodies must thus raise money through the charging of school fees or fundraising to supplement the funds provided by the government (South Africa, 1996(b):21). The balance of the R4 000 000 budget for the 2007 financial year, of the said school, had to come from school fees or fund raising. As parents are increasingly reluctant to pay their school fees due to the false impression created by the South African Government that education is free (South Africa, 1996(b):5), resources are becoming inadequate or of an inferior quality. Ho and Au (2006:180) also point out that teachers experience a higher stress rate when they perceive their resources as inadequate.

An important fiscal stressor is overcrowded classrooms (Basson, 1999:64; Balt, 2007). Some classes were designed for groups not exceeding 25 learners and now accommodate 35 – 40 learners in public schools in the suburbs and 45-80 learners per class in township schools (Motseke, 98:84). As a result of the large number of learners per class, the process of dealing with discipline is a challenge, the teachers' assessment and administration increase and the classroom atmosphere changes. The majority of classes at the secondary school where the researcher was employed measures 42m². There are between 35 and 40 learners in a class. The rows are 50 cm apart; there is 20 cm between the desk in front of the teacher's desk and the teacher's desk and 70 cm between the rest of the front desks and the chalkboard. This leaves insufficient space for the overhead projector, let alone all the learner portfolios which must be kept at school as regulated by the National Curriculum Statement. This gives rise to disciplinary problems (Dunham, 1992:59; Kizeltepe, 2003:154). The noise from prefabricated classes, with poor sound insulation, also leads to tension between teachers. This is a problem in a country, such as South Africa, where group work is prescribed.

The lack of money for school resources has hampered the development of new courses and has blocked the use of new textbooks. The lack of technological material in classes

leads to stress (Kizeltepe, 2003:154). Teachers are increasingly purchasing their own technological advanced equipment to use in their classes, causing stress because of the financial implications for the individual teachers. In South Africa with its Section 21 and Non-Section 21 schools (South Africa, 1996(b):21) there are two different sides to the problem. In the some of the Section 21 schools the learners have to buy a large number of their textbooks from local suppliers, but don't, which impacts negatively on their academic results and classroom behaviour leading to teacher stress. In the Non-Section 21 schools, the government provides all the textbooks, but the suppliers are responsible for the late delivery of these textbooks. In the researcher's experience these textbooks are either of a dubious standard or do not cover the total curriculum. The teachers teaching at these schools, which are township schools, do not have the facilities or the knowledge to add to the information in the books. This discrepancy leads to stressful situations during subject cluster meetings where schools are divided into clusters in such a way that the Section 21 schools, also formerly known as "ex-model C schools", are clustered with teachers from township schools.

Township schools suffer theft and vandalism. Classroom doors, windows and roofing are removed to build shacks on the perimeter of the school. Water taps, toilets and playgrounds are used by shack dwellers (Motseke, 1998:92). Basson (1999:80) refers to Reeves mentioning a Soweto teacher who never unpacked the apparatus for Physical Science and Biology, now named Life Sciences, because it was foreign to him. Motseke (1998:88) on the other hand indicates that there is a shortage of material to implement the new National Curriculum also called Curriculum 2005.

These are the identified primary factors, which will be followed by a discussion of the secondary factors. It is once again important to emphasise the interrelated nature of the primary and secondary factors and that the sub-divisions are academic.

2.2.2 SECONDARY FACTORS

Secondary factors contributing to teacher stress are more disconcerting and give rise to more feelings of helplessness, because they are brought about by forces in the society about which teachers can do little. Secondary factors which bear an impact on teacher stress are socio-economic factors including cultural and religious diversity, the declining status of teachers, the training received by prospective teachers, as well as the impact of the mass media on teaching and teachers.

2.2.2.1 Socio-economic factors

As communities and nations encounter economic and social changes, there is conflict between those who believe in a set of unchanging rules about how the world was created and how life should be lived (fundamentalism), and those who believe that change brings diversity and offers opportunities for variety and improvement (cosmopolitanism) (Lieberman & Miller, 2005:151). This conflict is also experienced within the teaching profession and in the researcher's opinion it is those teachers resisting the change and cosmopolitanism who experience distress. Globalization further demands a new view of work and career (Day et al, 2005:3). There is a decline in the need for manual labourers and an expansion in the demand for knowledge workers. A high school certificate is no longer a guarantee for a job or a career, post secondary education will become a necessity for all.

The restriction of education to only upper and middle class children has been erased (South Africa, 1996(b):3; Davidson, 2003:7) and in 2006 Gauteng reported a 100% enrolment rate in basic education (Motsheka, A.M. 2006:1). Young (Kiziltepe, 2003:148) pointed out that teacher motivation in developing countries is so poor that it may threaten the aim of providing primary education for all children by 2015. Management has had to change because of the changing learner population. Out-of-school socio-economic changes with an effect on teachers and their traditional role include, single parent and child-headed families, lack of parental discipline and dysfunctional families (Garrahy et al, 2005:59). They go on to point out that teachers were never trained to deal with sexual, physical and emotional abuse and poverty. Teachers are therefore faced with learners

who are unlikely to be able to learn on any given day if they are hungry (Nassar-McMillan et al, 2003:100). Motseke (1998:80) is justly of the opinion that teachers in townships experience more stress because many black learners live in squatter camps and the income of their parents, if employed, is generally low.

Many children entering the schools are not only poor (Lieberman & Miller, 2005:152; Berkson, 2006:6), but come from diverse countries and ethnic groups, represent different languages and cultures and enter schools with unequal social capital (Segumpan & Bahari, 2003:164; Webb, 2006:10). Teachers need to teach learners of whom a large number are alienated from school based learning and curricula, which they perceive as largely irrelevant to their interests and needs (Day et al, 2005:3). According to Basson (1999:74) there is a correlation between the level of poverty, unemployment and crime in the community and the discipline problems in a school.

Alternative family structures are challenging long-held beliefs about the nuclear family as the model of how children should be raised in industrialised countries. Conventional roles are being altered if not reversed. Grandparents are often primary caretakers; same sex partners are increasingly parenting the young and women are working in high-powered positions while more men are becoming homemakers (Lieberman & Miller, 2005:152). To add to this, there is an increase in single parent and child-headed families. Teachers feel powerless because they cannot change the chaotic circumstances in which some children live (Dunham, 1992:53; Webb, 2006:10).

Tellenback (Phillips, 1993:187) developed a model regarding teacher stress which incorporated a new component, neighbourhood characteristics. Neighbourhood characteristic refers to the status of the area in which a school is situated. In South Africa the town centres, as well as the surrounding older neighbourhoods are now inhabited by poorer and extended families, resulting in the character of the school being changed accordingly. Learners also come to schools in the suburbs using taxis or trains, which changed the character of the majority of schools in South Africa. Township schools, on the other hand, are often surrounded by squatter camps which cause the same change to

neighbourhood characteristics and thus the social context of the school. The changing characteristic of the schools in South Africa therefore makes this a relevant stressor. The former model C schools (previously white only schools), as well as the Indian schools' character and tone changed since 1994.

The researcher, as principal of a former model C secondary school, also experienced that many teachers teaching in township schools apply to former model C schools to better their working environment. Phillips (1993:190-191) states that the decline of a school creates stress. The principal and teachers face the dilemma of how to handle the blame for the decline. Whether the decline is as the result of the external environment, the principal and teachers, the learners or the present political dispensation, decline causes stress. To aggravate the situation, there is a drift of strong learners away from public to private education and those learners who remain are seen to be problematic or of a lower socio-economic background (Day et al, 2005:3). Although Webb (2006:3) points out that very poor schools exacerbate teacher attrition, in the researcher's experience so do the changing characteristic or social context of a school.

There is a correlation between the violence of the society and the violence in schools. There is an increase in the use of illegal drugs, greater family instability due to divorce, a popularity of graphic movies and violent song lyrics and access to guns (Davidson, 2003:10; Webb, 2006:9). Motseke (1998:85) indicates that township schools, surrounded by shacks, suffer a high incidence of theft, vandalism and graffiti and teachers in these schools therefore experience a high incidence of stress. In the Sunday Times of 29 July 2007 S. Naidoo reported that the principal of a primary school in Kwa Zulu Natal called a state of emergency and closed the school after a teacher was stabbed by a person living in the adjacent, notorious squatter camp called Bottlebrush. This was not the first incident of crime and violence the school had been exposed to and after previous requests directed to the Department of Education, the school still had no fencing. The superintendent-general of education in the Kwa Zulu Natal province, Dr Cassius Lubisi, said that he was aware of their problems, but he was disturbed that the school had been closed. He went further by pledging the Department's safe schools policy, but added that

all schools could not be helped at the same time. He also stated that the Kwa Zulu Natal Education Department would study the situation and would then advise on appropriate action. One teacher summarised the concerns of the rest of the staff by saying that they do not know, on a day-to-day basis, whether they would leave the school alive.

The classroom is a dynamic meeting ground for teachers, learners, cultural diversity and learning content. Differences include aspects such as socialisation, eye contact and attention span, as well as the way in which they learn (Woolfolk, 1995:166). Further problems caused by the above are disrespect for other cultures, disregard of human rights of other, uncivilised social approaches and the perception that other cultures are worth less than their own culture (Pretorius, 1998:166). White and Indian teachers experience the stress of learners communicating in languages other than English or Afrikaans, knowing that learners often swear at them in their mother tongue. In the experience of the researcher this is a cause for stress and conflict.

Multicultural diversity represents a potential area of stress for teachers in today's schools. Cultural differences exist because each culture is shaped by its unique set of physical environments, historical context, political events, and dominant religions and philosophies (Wong, Wong & Scott, 2006:2). Multiculturalism, according to Wong, endorses diversity, inclusiveness, and equality while recognising the legitimacy and value of ethnic differences and cultural heritage. The context of contemporary society is more culturally diverse than ever and teachers are increasingly called upon to develop multicultural competencies to best serve their respective learner bodies. The result of cultural mismatches in perception, or cultural frames of reference may impact racial groups differently. The National Assessment of Educational Progress in the United States of America indicated that learners who are culturally and linguistically diverse consistently achieve below their potential (Nassar-McMillan et al, 2003:90). This is also experienced in South African schools where the medium of learning and teaching of the majority of schools is English, while the learners' home language is one of the other nine (excluding sign language) official languages. Teachers report that they are provided with

inadequate resources to handle linguistic and multicultural diversity. Inadequate training did not prepare them for the diversity contained in the classroom.

Teachers need the help of parents to assist in their quest to help these learners, but it is difficult to gain their support. This creates much stress in a country, such as South Africa, where previous inequalities need to be addressed and levelled out. South Africa, as a divergent society, demands much diversification in the life of a teacher, because behind each 'group' of people a concept of life is based. Although there is advancement, it seems as if prospective teachers are not totally prepared for this diversity and are uncertain how to integrate multicultural issues in the classroom (Nassar-McMillan et al, 2003:91). This is also a stress factor during parent-teacher interaction, where there is an immediate tension when the parent and teacher are from different race groups (Nassar-McMillan, 2003:99). The researcher has also experienced a negative attitude from black parents towards black teachers in schools with a predominantly white teaching staff. Black learners has the same attitude and are of the opinion that the black teachers know less than the white and Indian teachers and are therefore disrespectful towards them. This was verified in an informal opinion pole held in January 2007 at the school where the researcher was employed. The antecedent to the pole was the negative reaction of the 215 grade 11 learners, of whom 90% were black, when they were allocated a black teacher to teach them.

South Africa is a multi-religious country, although 60 percent of the people claim allegiance to Christianity. The Constitution of South Africa upholds a balance between freedom of religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination. Citizens are thus free to exercise their basic right to religious conviction, expression and association (South Africa, 2003:10-11) Religious diversity is thus a stress factor in multicultural schools where the basic values of teachers are ignored to accommodate a culture of tolerance towards all religions. The main religious groups in multicultural schools are Christians, Hindus and Muslims. The researcher experienced no conflict amongst, or from the learners in the school where she was employed in spite of the fact that the religion of the majority of learners in the school, as well as during the

school assemblies was Christianity. Stress is caused though because of the Muslim boys leaving at twelve o'clock on a Friday for prayers, and Hindu and Muslim learners being absent from school on religious holidays, thus missing contact time or tests. Exam timetables during these periods accommodate days for religious observance lengthening the exam period, and leaving fewer days to complete the curriculum also causing teacher stress. The principal of an English medium secondary school in Benoni, did experience conflict with people of the Islamic faith in his school and was often confronted with groups of parents. According to the principal of a predominantly Indian secondary school in Benoni, no religion was practised at his school during assemblies, to avoid this conflict. (These two principals did not want to be named).

The South African teacher's role as *in loco parentis* has become crucial over the past few decades. The family used to be the traditional agent for social integration, but this has changed in the present socio-economic climate. Working mothers, one parent families and children being raised by grandparents, other relatives or by siblings cause a reduction of parental involvement not only in education but in the holistic development of the child. At present this responsibility rests to a large extent with the teachers. The larger percentage of parents is either uneducated or inadequately educated resulting in learners lacking fundamental knowledge and skills. Parents are unable to assist their children with their homework, which leaves the responsibility with the teacher. The lower educational level of black parents causes black learners to be low achievers in general (Motseke, 1998:90). The stress experienced in former model C - and Indian schools are therefore high, because the majority of learners in English medium schools are now black and teachers need to cope with the low academic results without blaming themselves.

It is thus clear that socio-economic factors are the main secondary factor causing teacher stress. Another factor also caused by the socio-economic climate is the declining status of teachers. This has a profound effect on teachers and will be discussed as a separate factor.

2.2.2.2 Declining status of the teaching corps

There is a change in the attitude of society towards teachers. As far as their work is concerned teachers feel themselves to be under constant attack and are dominated by feelings of persecution (Esteve, 1989:11) and disrespect (Phillips, 1993:188). From the politicians responsible for education to the parents and learners, as well as the mass media, which will be discussed under 2.2.2.4, the teacher is perceived as responsible for the many deficiencies of the education system (Otto, 1986:128), whose first victims are in fact the teachers themselves.

Teachers feel they have lost the respect of both the public and politicians. Holt (2005:106) also determined that some teachers must keep two jobs to support their families. The inadequate salary scales of teachers in comparison to other professionals such as doctors and lawyers, affect both the living conditions, as well as the recreational pursuits of teachers (Gold & Roth, 1993:19). Teachers in the field of Mathematics and Science (Motseke, 1998:82), as well as Accounting and Information Technology, leave the profession as they are wooed by the private sector with much larger salary packages. Knowledge, self-sacrifice and vocation have lost their value as far as society is concerned (Esteve, 1989:11). People outside of education do not realise how demanding the teaching profession is (Otto, 1986:128; Berkson, 2006:6). Society perceives teaching as a career choice and not a vocation, thus proof that the person can't do anything better. The reason for this perception is that teachers receive remuneration markedly inferior to other professionals with similar qualifications (Esteve, 1989:13; Bindhu & Sudheeshkumar, 2006:7). In South Africa teachers earn less than individuals with no formal training or skills, such as taxi drivers (Motseke, 1998:47). Teaching seems to have its share of status anomalies: it is honoured and disdained, praised as dedicated service and lampooned as easy work; it is permeated with rhetoric of professionalism, yet features incomes below those earned by workers with considerably less education; and it is middle-class work in which more and more participants use collective bargaining strategies developed by wage earners in factories (Motseke, 1998:46).

These inadequate salaries were the direct cause of the indefinite national industrial action by state paid teachers in South Africa in June 2007. The motivation for this action was the South African Government's offered salary increase of only 6% instead of the requested 12%. This requested increase was based on the fact that since 2001 teachers have been held to an inflation linked general salary increase while the salary increase in the private sector was up to 3% more. This must also be seen in the light that the teachers' remuneration package compares unfavourably with the salary packages of people with equal qualifications in the private sector. This unsatisfactory salary package included, over and above the basic salaries and the low housing allowance of R456 per month, the discrimination in maximum medical aid subsidy as opposed to teachers who belong to medical aid schemes, other than the medical aid scheme GEMS (Government Employees Medical Aid Scheme), instituted by the Government in 2004/5. Another point of contention is the disregard of qualifications improved above the required 4-year qualification. Staff members who improve their qualifications receive a once-off bonus of R9 000 (tax excluded) instead of a monthly increase based on their new qualification (Balt, 2007). In March 2008 a final agreement between the various teacher unions and the Government after the industrial action, which lasted for one calendar month, was still not reached.

2.2.2.3 Pedagogical factors

Few strategies are taught at teacher training facilities to address societal changes causing teacher stress. The result is that few teachers give credit to their teacher education programmes, because there is a discrepancy between the theory taught at training facilities and practice. Teachers attribute their pedagogical knowledge to learners, colleagues and professional development. They also indicate their willingness to learn from failure as the key to their knowledge growth (Garrahy et al, 2005:58). Teachers further use the examples that they had at school and thus imitate teachers who could 'handle things'.

Conflict management, assertiveness training, stress management and longer teaching practice periods should be included in teacher training programmes. Gold and Roth (1993:22) state, quite correctly, that most teachers have not been trained to cope with the many difficult stressors in their profession. New teachers are faced with the worst classes, the worst timetables and the worst working conditions. McCann and Johannessen (2004:2) agree with this when they mention the uncertainty of novice teachers regarding discipline, standards expected from learners and reactions to classroom situations. A void in their teacher training programme was the development of their management skills, including classroom management. It either conflicted with what they experienced as first year teachers or it received no attention (Garrahy et al, 2005:58). During an informal interview with a first-year teacher at the school where the researcher was employed, it came to light that she found it very difficult to adjust to the teaching situation because “*certain aspects were never taught*” at the tertiary institution where she received her training as a teacher. Too much emphasis was placed on subject theory and too little emphasis was placed on learner misbehaviour and how to deal with it and students were not prepared for the overwhelming amount of administrative work, which teaching entails (Cloete, 2007). Cloete also indicated that they received no guidance on how to cope with the career-related stress caused by teaching. Cloete resigned from education at the end of 2007 to pursue a career in psychology instead.

Often teachers have to teach subjects they are not trained to teach (Chakrovoty, 1989:74), which may lead to anxiety. This reality shock leads to the collapse of the missionary ideals gained during teacher training (Esteve, 1989:15). The professional idealism of young teachers is often exposed to the cynicism of older teachers and teacher training should aim at empowering teacher trainees to create their own boundaries to prevent disillusionment. Esteve goes further stating that after approximately five years in education a conflict between the teacher’s “real I” and “ideal I” is reached, which results in fluctuating teaching behaviour and self-image, decreased personal involvement in the task of teaching and the continuous comparing of the poverty of the daily practice and the ideals which the teacher wishes to realise.

No matter how well trained though, teachers suffer a reality shock when placed in a classroom as the sole person responsible for the education of some 30 learners. Incorrectly handled, the impact of this experience may eliminate any skills and knowledge prospective teachers learn in formal tertiary training (Gold & Roth, 1993:11). Hand in hand with teacher training goes the issue of in-service-training. Teaching offers the promise of being intellectually rewarding and stimulating. However, as the years pass by, teachers become bored because they teach the same subjects at the same level every year. Routine work and a lack of time further pose to be a difficulty in pursuing their own further studying (Motseke, 1998:49).

Although research indicates that younger teachers are more prone to stress than more experienced teachers, Motseke (1998:214) found in his research that older teachers indicated higher stress levels when faced with political dilemmas. The reason could be that the younger, particularly black, teachers, became involved in politics during their student days and therefore political activities no longer caused them stress. This will apply to teachers above 45 years of age, thus being those who were not involved in the riots of 1976. This may also apply to novice teachers who were never exposed to political activities due to either the school or the tertiary institution they attended. Teacher training in the past did not train teachers to deal with the two-way dialogue of today's classrooms where learners want to be an active part of the teaching experience (Motseke, 1998:86) and teachers experience stress when learners express their opinions.

Black teachers in South Africa are generally poorly qualified, both academically and professionally, compared to white and Indian teachers (Motseke, 1998:85). It seems as if black teachers are more indecisive and lack decision-making skills and act out the experience they acquired as learners in their so called "Bantu Education days". This resulted in many black teachers attempting to improve their qualifications leading to extra stress. It is true, though, that this was often done to improve their salaries or for promotional purposes. It is also true that these teachers used teaching time to study, while learners sat outside (Motseke, 1998:86).

2.2.2.4 Mass media

Teachers have to take into consideration powerful sources of information for example television and other mass media. Teachers have to modify their traditional role to incorporate the information-giving potential of the media. Not only do they have to take the information-giving potential of the media into consideration, but have to compete with it ensuring that their lesson presentations capture the attention of their over-stimulated learners.

On the other hand there is the problematic image, put over mainly by the press, of classroom violence, low salaries, lack of materials and the creation of a negative image of teachers (Otto, 1986:129; Esteve, 1989:14). Webb (2006:1) also mentions the publication of results and comparisons thereof by the mass media as stressful because the socio-economic climate of schools is not the same and has an effect on the results achieved. Mathison and Freeman (2003:55) are of the opinion that public exposure based on results, is a characteristic of outcome-based accountability that dramatically increases the stress levels for teachers. What contributes even more to these levels of stress is the fact that teachers have little control over the outcomes of external examinations due to cut-off points, as well as the politically-based inflation of marks and acknowledgement of results.

The mass media contributes to the general acceptability of violence which flow over to the school environment. Violent imagery is common in the media for example violent acts on prime-time television series, television movies, music videos and movies released in theatres. The full act, and not only the results, is shown on television, the injuries and death are often not shown, and rarely is violence shown to cause emotional harm to anyone whether perpetrator, victim or witness (Davidson, 2003:46). Davidson goes a step further pointing out that the “good guys” instigated violence almost as often as the “bad guys” and claim that one violent act occurred every two minutes on American television (Davidson, 2003:46), and that these programmes are also broadcast on South African television. Although there is no consensus about the influence of violent TV games and

television, it is true that more aggressive children more often watch violent movies and play violent TV games than non-violent children (Davidson, 2003:47), which in the researcher's opinion aggravates their aggressive tendencies.

In spite of the fact that all teachers are exposed to both primary and secondary stress factors, not all teachers experience the same levels of stress. It is thus clear that personality factors play an important role in the way teachers cope or do not cope with stress factors or in stressful situations.

2.2.3 PERSONALITY FACTORS

All teachers are exposed to a large number of primary and secondary stressors, yet not all teachers experience the same high levels of stress. The answer to this is located in the unique personality of each individual teacher (Basson, 1999:59). Teachers' stress is determined by their perception of situations. Kyriacou (1989:28) mentions research which indicated that the degree of control teachers feel they have over the demands made upon them, is of crucial importance. Teachers who feel as if they have control over their lives thus seem to experience less stress than teachers who are primarily influenced by complex and unpredictable environmental forces, as well as powerful others. Teachers who are more depression prone or those who fear failure, are also generally unable to cope and more vulnerable to stress and eventually burnout (Kiziltepe, 2003:147).

Teachers with a higher self-esteem experience a higher level of teaching satisfaction and less career-related stress (Otto, 1986:129; Phillips, 1993:190; Ho & Au, 2006:181). The self is a crucial element in the way teachers construe and construct the nature of their work. Teachers with an external locus of control are more prone to stress (Capel, 1989:38) due to their dependence on positive feedback from external sources. Gold and Roth (1993:12) indicate that teachers who feel that events related to their profession are contingent upon their own behaviour, are able to control it, and thus possess an internal locus of control. Teachers who feel professionally adequate do not find discipline problems overly stressful nor do they have trouble motivating the unmotivated. Teachers

who are less knowledgeable and who do not understand the different cultures they work with, are at risk (Otto, 1986:129; Woods, 1989:96).

Commitment is a necessary element of professionalism. Motivation, self-efficacy, job satisfaction and commitment are closely linked with identity, and a teacher's identity is the result of interaction between personal experiences and the social, cultural and institutional environment in which they function on a daily basis (Day et al, 2005:5). Although the more committed teacher experiences less job dissatisfaction, this commitment may also lead to the teacher's vulnerability (Woods, 1989:93). Teachers who are too committed, and make the school the centre of their lives, need balance in their lives. Committed teachers fight for the things they believe in, but will eventually suffer burnout. Less committed teachers who are caring and dedicated also experience higher levels of stress (Day et al, 2005:4). Characteristics associated with commitment are courage, care, integrity, honesty, fairness and a strong sense of values. Teachers who do not experience teaching in the pastoral sense (Capel, 1989:38; Woods, 1989:93; McCann and Johannessen, 2004:6) are thus at risk of suffering career-related stress.

Effective teachers reflect all the time on what they are doing, and are self-critical (Otto, 1986:129; Day et al, 2005:12). This is not really to their advantage if the self-criticism leads to self-blame, perfectionism, an imbalance between work and life outside of work and a declining self-image. Teachers with high personal standards can become frustrated when time pressures interfere with their reasoning.

Teachers who feel that their work situation places constraints on their chances for self-growth and self-expression, may experience stress because they feel their career is neither challenging enough nor helping them to develop personal skills, talents or interests (Otto, 1986:130). Teachers with an external locus of control may also feel the need to suppress their own personalities to fit the image of a teacher.

Rigidity leads to stress. Teachers must be flexible in their approach and they have to tolerate the role ambiguity of the teaching profession (Capel, 1989:38). A teacher who

perceives job security as more important than job satisfaction is also at risk (McCann & Johannessen, 2004:6). The latter includes people who took up teaching because other career-paths seemed unattainable or unclear.

Humphrey and Humphrey (1986:46) distinguish between Type A and Type B personalities. Type A personalities are observed in people who are aggressive, competent, ambitious and restless, while Type B personalities are observed in people who are more contemplative, relaxed and casual about time. Type A personalities are more likely to suffer from stress and heart failure than Type B personalities. Closely related to this are teachers' dispositions, referring to their temperaments or frames of mind. Cranwell-Ward (190:23-24) indicates that ambitious, energetic and conscientious people are more prone to stress than calm and non-assertive people who thrive on change. With this in mind it is especially important to develop a model addressing the stress of teachers because it is clear that your high achievers are those teachers who are at risk of suffering career-related stress.

Although learner indiscipline and workload are indicated as the two main stressors for teachers, Jaye (2002:89) found in her research done at three ex-Model C schools and one independent (private) school, that the main stressor was a low self-image. These schools can, however, in the words of Jaye, not be seen as typical of South African schools because they can be classified as relatively privileged schools where learning and teaching are taking place (Jaye, 2002: 90).

It is thus clear that the perceptions and consequences of stress depend on a teacher's capacity to deal with demanding situations. This may have as much to do with whether the consequences of stress are positive or negative as with the type or intensity of stress itself. Generally the most negative consequences are expected to occur under conditions in which stress exceeds the teacher's capabilities to mediate it (Segumpan & Bahari, 2003:164).

Teachers are exposed to primary and secondary stress factors which may be aggravated by certain personality factors, and teachers, learners and education at large suffer the consequences of these career-related stressors.

2.3 CONSEQUENCES OF THE STRESS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS

Stress in teaching has deleterious consequences on teacher performance and it is reasonable to believe that this would affect student performance and learning. In contrast to this is the effect of career-related stress on the teachers' physical, emotional and cognitive well-being, resulting in teacher absenteeism and attrition.

2.3.1 CONSEQUENCES SUFFERED BY THE INDIVIDUAL TEACHER

Chronic stress is long-term, constant, unrelenting stress on the body, mind or spirit (Adamson, 2002:7). The problem with chronic stress is that teachers become so used to it that they often can't begin to see how to get out of the situation. They come to believe that life is supposed to be painful, stressful or miserable. People, and thus teachers, do have an inherited level of stress tolerance. Some teachers can take a lot and still feel great and even do their best work under stress, while others require low stress lives to function productively.

According to Dunham (1992:95-96) Livingston-Booth suggested that the sequence of reactions when stress coping strategies are not effective and personal resources are becoming depleted has three stages.

Stage one can be recognised through the speeding up of all activity such as the individual...

- eating faster – often taking a sandwich on the job,

- drinking faster – leaving many half-empty cups of coffee or tea,
- feeling under pressure of time and
- feeling as if (s)he is being driven.

Stage two can be recognised by the individual's...

- altered sleep pattern,
- over-reacting to every difficulty,
- increased irritability,
- unreliable memory,
- physical symptoms such as tension headaches and dyspepsia and
- emotional symptoms such as anxiety and depression.

Stage three can be recognised by the individual experiencing...

- palpitations and chest pains,
- dizziness,
- a weak immune system,
- poor decision making skills,
- loss of concentration and memory,
- loss of joy, laughter and pleasure and
- tearfulness.

Dunham (1992:92) on the other hand categorises the consequences of stress in behavioural, emotional, cognitive and physical consequences. Although these consequences are interrelated, the researcher will use these categories to discuss the consequences of stress for the individual teacher.

2.3.1.1 Behavioural consequences

Stressed teachers display a-typical behaviour, which includes short temperedness, over reacting, complaining, a loss of imagination or enthusiasm, not achieving in spite of long

hours and an inability to relax or sleep (Dunham, 1992:92). Stressed teachers eventually become mentally or emotionally exhausted resulting in the avoidance of learners and colleagues (Capel, 1989:42; Phillips, 1993:194) and a tendency to be impulsive (Everaert & Van der Wolf, 2003:122). Stressed teachers may display manic episodes (mania), they have panic attacks and develop drinking problems (Chakrovoty, 1989:69; Dunham, 1992:92; Phillips, 1993:94), and smoke excessively (Basson, 1999:48). Teachers reported that they laugh less than people in other professions (McCann & Johannessen, 2004:2), which also lowers the endorphins counter acting depression.

Teachers suffering from career-related stress further show fluctuating behaviour in their teaching, they become less personal involved in the task of teaching, develop negative attitudes (Phillips, 1993:194) and compare their present daily practice with the ideals they had when entering the profession (Esteve, 1989:15). These negative attitudes may also be reflected in behavioural actions, which are generally aggressive, and a decreased ability to deal with classroom problems (Phillips, 1993:194).

2.3.1.2 Emotional consequences

Although spiritual stress cannot be measured it remains a potent and harmful form of stress and links to physical and mental stress. Spiritual stress is the loss of our dreams, hopes, loves, plans, and the desire to reach for something better and more desirable in life (Adamson, 2002:25). Signs of stress and burnout include loss of interest, joy and motivation in life; an escalating sense of loss of control, constant negative thinking, detachment from personal or work relationships, and a loss of focus and life-purpose (Adamson, 2002:25).

Teachers feel inadequate, ineffective (Basson, 1999:59; Sann, 2003:491; Schlichte et al, 2005:36), under valued (Dunham, 1992:46) and there is a sharp decline in their self-efficacy because they feel they cannot live up to their ideal performances (Berkson, 2006:7). They lack self-confidence when dealing with learners, parents, colleagues and administrators (Esteve, 1986:13; Day et al, 2005:6; Berkson, 2006:8). This lack of

confidence has a negative effect on their motivation to work, although the rapid accumulation of knowledge required to teach new curricula is one of the causes of a lack of self-confidence. This lack of confidence goes hand in hand with a low self-image and self-doubt (De Kock, 1988:36; Basson, 1999:59; McCann & Johannessen, 2004:3; Ho & Au, 2006:175). Day, Elliot and Kington (2005:3) extended this thinking describing this as feelings of extreme uncertainty and an identity crisis within what, historically, has been for many teachers a stable profession.

Teachers also experience feelings of anxiety, confusion or disorientation (Chakrovoty, 1989:68; Esteve, 1989:10; McCann & Johannessen, 2004:3; Lieberman & Miller, 2005:151; Ho & Au, 2006:183) and paranoia (Berkson, 2006:9). This is particularly true in the case of novice and young teachers who think they will never develop into good teachers because they are under the impression that experienced teachers do not have problems (McCann & Johannessen, 2004:3). Emotions experienced from stressful situations are often feelings of helplessness, anger and frustration resulting in negative behaviour patterns such as over reacting (Gold & Roth, 1993:20) and anger (Basson, 1999:59).

Changes to the education system are too rapid. With all the changes and the increasing administration and marking, teachers do not have time to relax and, if they do take personal time off, they are ridden by guilt (De Kock, 1988:36; Woods, 1989: 90). Newly-qualified and even experienced teachers are often ill-equipped in reaching the basic skills in the face of rapid change and become cynical and disillusioned, and feelings of doubt and guilt are often repressed (Dunham, 1992:63; Everaert & Van der Wolf , 2003:122).

As a result of teachers working in isolation in their classes, they experience a sense of loneliness and, without a functional support system at school teachers will feel insignificant and dissatisfied, questioning their professional choice (Esteve, 1989:21; Schlichte et al, 2005:40). Teachers who are perceived as stressed, for whatever reason, are perceived as failures by their colleagues and are avoided (Klos, 2003:190). This leads to an even faster decline of the stressed teachers and feelings of rejection (De Kock,

1988:36). Hand in hand with this isolation is the social isolation of teachers, who are too tired to invest in family or social relationships outside of school, thus diminishing their social support system (Gold & Roth, 1993:19).

Teacher moral is low (Day et al, 2005:4) and there are growing feelings of frustration (Day et al, 2005:6) and disillusionment (Woods, 1989:89) amongst teachers leaving them demoralised and unmotivated. Teachers experiencing stress have a desire to leave the profession (Esteve, 1989:21). School conflict adds to the low teacher moral and does more than physical harm. It also causes emotional distress and anxiety for the people who are involved and even for those who witness it (Davidson, 2003:17).

Mental illnesses experienced by teachers suffering from career-related stress are anxiety, irritability, nervous debility and depression (Chakrovoty, 1989:69; Esteve, 1989:21; Klos, 2003:191; Ho & Au, 2006:183). Salduker, media spokesman for the South African Society of Psychiatrists, at the time, maintains that symptoms of depression range from headaches to spirit-possession in blacks, and sadness, listlessness and eating or sleeping disorders in Westernised people (Klos, 2003:192).

2.3.1.3 Cognitive consequences

Poor physical health and psychological burnout can lead to poor teaching performance (Basson, 1994:58), bad judgement (Ho & Au, 2006:176) and poor decision-making (Dunham, 1992:95). Teachers suffering from stress are not very good at what they are doing. They lack enthusiasm for teaching, which is reflected in their preparation (Schlichte et al, 2005:10). De Kock (2002:36) indicates that stressed teachers have no goal or purpose in life and lack plans to achieve their goals if they do have goals.

Adrenalin secreted under stressful circumstances can help you to think more quickly and more clearly and to react more accurately in a given situation when first exposed to stress. After you have reached your stress tolerance point though, your brain begins to

malfunction. You start to forget and lose things and you find it difficult to concentrate (Dunham, 1992:94-95; Basson, 1999:59; Adamson, 2002:13, 19-20).

2.3.1.4 Physical consequences

According to Gold and Roth (1993:19) health concerns are high on the list of complaints when stress is a significant part of an individual's life. When stress levels become too high, a person's immune system is weakened with the result that it cannot defend itself against diseases and this leads to a number of diseases such as gastro-intestinal disorders, diabetes mellitus, allergies and skin diseases. The extent of the illness depends on the level of stress. Research done in Germany in 1993 and 1996 indicated that 60% of female and 40% of male teachers suffered from stress related somatic complaints (Sann, 2003:489). According to Gold and Roth (1993:19), statistics indicate that beginning teachers are likely to contract an illness within the first three weeks of the year leading to absenteeism.

The constant release of adrenalin and cortisol, which cause one to think and react much quicker, will, on a daily basis, lead to tiredness, physical pain and insomnia (Adamson, 2002:13). If feelings of anxiety are slight, teachers may thus experience a sense of stimulation and alertness which is pleasurable rather than stressful, but the arousal of higher levels of anxiety may be unproductive leading to impaired decision making and concentration (Dunham, 1992:97). One's body will become out of balance, because one is not supposed to be under stress all the time.

Prolonged teacher stress can result in both mental and physical ill-health (Kyriacou, 1989:28). Chronic stress can trick our bodies into thinking they are in equilibrium. The stress of not giving the body what it requires, though, will eventually catch up with a person (Adamson, 2002:9). Anxieties, tensions and frustrations, as well as sensory annoyances, especially noise, cause the release of chemicals into the blood stream which may contribute to the development of sudden heart attacks (Dunham, 1992:98; Basson, 1999:59).

Westernised and traditional manifestations of stress experienced by South African teachers are illnesses affecting the immune system caused by chronic and acute stress (Adamson, 2002:19; Klos, 2003:191). Alcohol and drug abuse are often ways to counter act and compensate for the negative effects of a stressful life. The excessive use of carbohydrates also raises the serotonin levels and can also be abused, anorexia nervosa and bulimia and loss or increase of appetite are also affective eating disorders associated with stress (Basson, 1999:59; Adamson, 2002:4; Klos, 2003:214-219). Klos (2003:218-219) also mentions somatoform disorders which are ailments or syndromes that have physical symptoms, but are actually rooted in psychological and affective disorders. The following symptoms were recorded: bodily pain such as arthritis, gastrointestinal problems, sexual symptoms, asthma (Adamson, 2002:19) and neurological conditions such as blindness or paralysis (De Kock, 1988:26; Adamson, *ibid*), as well as restricted breathing due to restrictions around the pharynx (Dunham, 1992:92). Teachers suffering stress are also inclined to suffer from skin irritations and disorders (Dunham, 1992:97). General physical consequences of prolonged stress are: headaches and acne (Adamson, 2002:19) and exhaustion (Day et al, 2005: 3; Ho & Au, 2006: 176).

According to Cranwell-Ward (1990:68), stress manifests physically in the mouth (ulcers) digestive tract (colic, diarrhoea/constipation, indigestion and heartburn, ulcers, diabetes), reproductive organs (pre-menstrual tension, impotence, menstrual disorders), hair (alopecia), bladder (irritability, frequent need to urinate), skin (eczema, psoriasis), cardio-vascular system (heart attack, palpitations, angina, migraine, haemorrhoids), lungs (asthma, coughs, dizziness, fainting, breathlessness, breathing difficulties) and the skeletal-muscular system (muscular twitches, gnashing of teeth, backache, neck-ache, tension headache, arthritis).

Not only do teachers suffer negative consequences due to career-related stress, but the learners suffer in the long run, because teachers suffering from career-related stress are less effective as teachers.

2.3.2 CONSEQUENCES SUFFERED BY THE LEARNERS

Learners are the ultimate sufferers of teacher stress. Stressed teachers contribute little to the learners' academic growth and many learners may suffer a lower self-esteem and feelings of anger or anxiety as a result of the teacher's uninterested, hypercritical and uncaring behaviour (Everaert & Van der Wolf, 2003:122). Stress is detrimental to teachers' implementation of teaching techniques and their creativity. Teachers, who are nervous of coming to school, may be unnecessarily tough on the learners (Holt, 2005:97) and defensive teaching strategies to maintain discipline in the classroom cause tension (Jaye, 2002:117) and effective teaching and learning cannot take place.

A feeling of dissatisfaction with their chosen career is detrimental to teaching outcomes (McCann & Johannessen, 2004:6; Bindhu & Sudheeshkumar, 2006:3; Ho & Au, 2006:175). Teachers give the reason for their chosen career as a wish to work with people. Teachers thus get their job satisfaction from the positive feedback from learners. This feedback loop is very fragile and even minor interruptions can break it and it takes some time to establish it again. This feedback loop can also be interrupted by learners' poor home circumstances and Dunham (1992:53) indicates that teachers harbour feelings of incompetence when they learn about them. Job satisfaction has an inverse relationship with stress, because the more satisfied teachers are with their jobs, the less stress they experience.

Burned out teachers give less info and praise, show less acceptance of the learner's ideas and interacts less frequently with them (Capel, 1989:39; Phillips, 1993:194). Learners are aware when teachers fail to perform in class (Day et al, 2005:10) and take advantage by either misbehaving or not doing their work (Basson, 1999:80). As a result of stress teachers may react negatively and irritably towards problem children. This deprives the learners from human contact, attention and the support they may need, which in turn may result in problem behaviour (Everaert & Van der Wolf, 2003:122). Sann (2003:489) goes as far as to state that stress limits the teacher's function as a role model.

High teacher turnover, which will be discussed under point 2.3.3, has a negative effect on student achievement (Brown & Uehara, 1999:8). Not only teacher turn-over, but also absenteeism leads to disruptions to the academic year and compromised competence. Learners miss out on lessons and although this loss is difficult to quantify, it may have long-term effects on the economy of the country and the quality of its citizens.

2.3.3 CONSEQUENCES FOR EDUCATION AT LARGE

Stress has been recognised as an ‘occupational disease’ amongst teachers in Europe and the USA (Chakrovoty, 1989:68). Stress has been identified as one of the reasons for teacher attrition (Adamson, 2002:12; Kiziltepe, 2003:147; Day et al, 2005:3; Berkson, 2006:9) and the high turnover of teachers and high absenteeism statistics (Capel, 1989:42; Esteve, 1989:21; Brown & Uehara, 1999:8; Ho & Au, 2006:176). According to the American Institute for Stress in Yonkers, New York, an estimated one million people in the work force are absent on an average workday because of stress-related complaints (Adamson, 2002:9).

Teachers being absent due to prolonged psychiatric illnesses, ranging from anxiety to depression and obsessions, are absent for up to three years and it usually results in resignation or early retirement (Chakrovoty, 1989:69). In the meantime the gap is filled with a substitute teacher, if one is available. This is a substantial wastage of human and national resources, and as early as 1974 the Financial Times indicated that stress costs more than strikes (Chakrovoty, 1989:80). The result is thus the premature loss of able, experienced teachers on grounds of ill-health (Motseke, 1998:78; Day et al, 2005:3).

Stress can lead to problems in the workplace, such as low moral, lower productivity and high medical costs and a larger number of teachers retiring earlier (Brown & Uehara, 1999:9). The lowering of professional standards because of the workload (Dunham, 1992:46) can be added to this. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD 1989) (Kizeltepe, 2003:148) reported that an uncommitted and poorly motivated teaching corps will have disastrous effects for even the best of intentions regarding change. Working conditions seem to deteriorate in many developing countries, such as South Africa, leading to demoralisation, abandonment of the profession, absenteeism, and the search for other occupations, which have a negative impact on the quality of education offered.

There is a shortage of 20,000 teachers in South Africa (Balt, 2007) and similar situations are experienced universally. Not enough teachers qualify to answer to the global needs and it is thus important to retain teachers who are employed (Brown & Uehara, 1999:9).

2.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher came to the conclusion that teachers have always worked under pressure, but for many, today's pressures outweigh their ability to cope, resulting in stress-related symptoms. Severe forms of stress reaction, referred to as burnout, are difficult to reverse because of the erosion of coping resources. When teachers are personally insecure, lack confidence or have a sense of not being in control of themselves or their environment, it is not likely that they can be successful at teaching, regardless of how strong the technical preparation has been. It is thus of importance to identify coping strategies which will be in the best interest of the individual teacher, the learners and education at large.

In Chapter 3 information will be collected as part of Phase two, and the Gestalt therapeutic approach, based on the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process will be discussed and assessed as an approach to assist teachers suffering from career-related stress in their quest to regain homeostasis. In spite of the fact that many stress-management programmes and strategies addressing teachers' career-related stress do exist, teachers still experience career-related stress. Chapter 3 will thus be followed by Chapter 4 where existing programmes and strategies will be discussed and then evaluated against the Gestalt therapeutic approach. This evaluation will ultimately result in the

design of a Gestalt therapeutic model to support teachers suffering from career-related stress to regain homeostasis.

CHAPTER 3

PHASE TWO: INFORMATION GATHERING AND SYNTHESIS

THE GESTALT THERAPEUTIC APPROACH – USING EXISTING INFORMATION RESOURCES INCLUDING AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the context of an intervention research study, as stated in Chapter 2, it is important to determine what other researchers have done to understand and address the problem (De Vos, 2002(d):405). Relevant knowledge and sources of knowledge, including that of the researcher who has been involved in teaching for the past thirty years, were thus identified, collected and integrated.

Through the information collected and identified, the researcher has come to the conclusion that although there is no specific mention made in Gestalt therapy references of a Gestalt therapeutic approach to addressing career-related stress in general, and that of teachers in particular, Gestalt therapy, as such, will address the consequences of stress. The researcher agrees with Latner (1973:10) that Gestalt therapy should not have been

called a therapy, but an orientation to life. Teachers who can assimilate this life orientation will experience less stress and will lead healthy and balanced lives, imbedded in awareness. This will not only have a positive effect on them, but on the people, including learners, colleagues and parents, with whom they are in contact.

According to Phillips (1993:195) individuals use both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused strategies are used when an individual appraises a stressful situation as changeable, while emotion-focused strategies are used when the situation is perceived as unchangeable. The researcher is of the opinion that teachers should apply both strategies due to the fact that although teachers may be able to change or eliminate some of their stressors, it is not within their power to change all the stressors associated with teaching.

In this chapter the researcher will discuss the Gestalt therapeutic approach based on awareness, dialogue and process in the achievement of homeostasis. Due to the dynamic South African environment, more emphasis is placed on the Gestalt process as an integrated holistic approach, safe for a developing environment and with a focus on the wider experience. Although the researcher will discuss awareness, dialogue and process as separate subsections they are interrelated and constantly in process. A theoretical introduction to Gestalt therapy will illustrate the interconnectedness of the various Gestalt principles. An auto-ethnographic description of the researcher will form part of this literature review in order to include personal experience in a more objective way.

3.2 THE AIM OF GESTALT THERAPY

The aim of Gestalt therapy is the awareness continuum. It is the freely ongoing Gestalt formation where what is of the greatest concern and interest to the individual, the group or the society becomes Gestalt, according to Laura Perls Yontef, 1993:144) thus comes into the foreground where it can be fully experienced and coped with and then moved into the background to leave the foreground free for the next relevant gestalt . The aim of Gestalt therapy is to help the individual change through emotional and cognitive self-

understanding (Yontef, 1993:133). To fully appreciate Gestalt therapy and the principles of awareness, dialogue and process a theoretical overview follows.

The German word 'gestalt' means a whole or a complete pattern, form or configuration, which cannot be broken without destroying its nature. Individuals make patterns or wholes of their experience, they thus have a spontaneous urge to complete or make meaning out of perceptual stimuli (Mackewn, 1997:15). Psychologically individuals organise their world, or environment and our experiences into meaningful wholes. Individuals thus have a strong urge to complete or make meaning of their emotional life and see it against the background of the rest of their environment.

3.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO GESTALT THERAPY

Gestalt therapy regards psychotherapy as a means of increasing human potential, attempts the non-manipulative observation of the *here-and-now* and stresses the importance of *awareness* (Simken, 1978:4&5; Yontef, 1978:163). The criterion for success is, according to Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951:15), "*the patient's own awareness of heightened vitality and more effective functioning*". Gestalt therapy is further a theory of behaviour based on the holistic epistemology. It is descriptive, integrative and structural, emphasising phenomenology, ontology (Walker, 1971:75 & 76) and the present (Walker, 1971:16; Latner, 1976:61; Korb, Gorrell & Van de Riet, 1989:5). Gestalt therapy sees the individual as holistic (Latner, 1973:5; Yontef, 1978:167). The holistic understanding of human beings brings the functioning of their physical body, emotions, thoughts, culture and social expressions into a unified picture. This leads to the Gestalt principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Latner, 1973:6). The Gestaltist looks for ways in which things come together and are therefore more attuned to the processes and principles that reoccur in behaviour than to the temporary forms these processes take. For the purpose of this research the Gestalt process will allow enough scope for teachers in their total environment – working with more than the parts at stake, whilst keeping the field/environment in mind.

The Gestalt field theory emphasises that nothing exists in isolation. Everything has a context or field within which it exists. To understand something we must look at the situation holistically (Sills et al, 1996:77). In the healthy individual, a configuration or gestalt is formed with the organising figure being the dominant need, thus being in the foreground. The individual meets this need by contacting the environment with some sensory-motor behaviour. The contact is organised by the figure of interest against the background of the individual/environment. As soon as the need is met, the “gestalten” it formed become complete, ceases to exert an influence and the individual is free to form new “gestalten”. This developing and destroying of “gestalten” is called *organismic self-regulation* (Perls et al, 1951:275). It is important to note that in Gestalt therapy, both sensing the environment and motor movement in the environment are active, contacting functions. For the purpose of this research it is important to note that when this gestalt formation and destruction is blocked or rigidified due to a lack of awareness, and needs are not recognised or expressed, the flexible harmony and flow of the individual/environmental field is disturbed (Yontef, 1978:164).

With awareness individuals can mobilise their aggression (action) (Latner, 1973:31) so that the environmental stimulus can be contacted and either be rejected or assimilated. When awareness does not develop into a clear gestalt with a figure and a background, or when impulses are not expressed, incomplete “gestalten” are formed and psychopathology may develop (Yontef, 1978:164). When individuals lose their awareness they lose the sense that it is they who are thinking, sensing, feeling and doing. Gestaltists speak of awareness and lack of awareness. Things are out of individuals’ awareness because they are either irrelevant to the present course of their living, or because individuals actively keep aspects of themselves out of awareness (Latner, 1973:65). The intention of increased awareness is to confront individuals with the full responsibility for their behaviour, to increase authentic self-expression and to minimise self-deceptive, evasive, self-frustrating and meaningless behaviour (Greenwald, 1976:269).

Along with awareness, dialogue is seen as the primary therapeutic tool in Gestalt therapy (Yontef, 1993:221; Sills et al, 1996:110). Dialogue refers to contact between an individual and another person or the environment. Gestalt therapy proposes a dialogical relationship between therapist and client, or between two individuals, resulting in what Buber called the I-Thou relationship (Sills et al, 1996:110; Joyce & Sills, 2001:43). An I-Thou relationship between two individuals means that they are fully in the present, willing to meet each other honestly and to be aware of thoughts, feelings and behaviours which are developing in response. This dialogical relationship therefore entails the teachers' relationship with the environment.

3.4 AWARENESS

Joyce and Sills (2003:27) define awareness as “...*a fundamentally positive, essential quality of all healthy living. It is the energy or assimilation for growth at the contact boundary, for self-knowledge, choice and creativity*”. Awareness can, according to Yontef (1993:144), be defined as being in touch with one's own existence and with *what is*. It is a form of making meaning of one's experiences (Mackewn, 1997:113). Full awareness is the process of being in full contact with the most important events in the individual/environmental field with full sensory-motor, emotional, cognitive and energetic support. Insight, which is a form of awareness, is the immediate understanding of the unity of disparate elements in the field. Awareness is always accompanied by gestalt formation (Perls et al, 1951:viii) and through aware contact, new, meaningful wholes are created. Sills, Fish and Lapworth (1996:22) thus justly state that awareness is at the heart of Gestalt therapy.

Individuals can never be aware of nothing. They are always aware of something, even if it is of nothingness (Perls, 1976:30). It is important though, to point out that mere awareness of content without awareness of structure does not relate to energised individual/environmental contact. Gestalt therapy starts a process, but the exact reaction is determined by the individual and the environment. The 'cure' is not a finished product, but individuals who have learned how to develop the awareness they need to solve their

own problems (Yontef, 1976:216). Raising awareness is thus the first task in Gestalt therapy. In therapy, focus is on the obvious, such as the individual's movements, postures, language patterns, voice, gestures and interactions. Within the teaching environment awareness of self and awareness of the environment are therefore prerequisites for change.

3.4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF AWARENESS

Awareness is grounded in the dominant present need within the reality of a situation leading to contact, which will result in growth. Teachers need to go through this process of awareness in order to identify their areas of growth and pain.

3.4.1.1 Awareness is grounded in a dominant present need

Yontef (1993:184) states: "*Awareness is effective only when grounded in and energised by the dominant present need of the organism [individual]*". Awareness therefore leads to the regulating of internal needs (Korb et al, 1990:22). Without awareness individuals will be unaware whether they experience nourishment or toxicity. Yontef extends this by indicating that an emerging figure is meaningless without energy, excitement and emotions being invested in it. Awareness further involves the total self focusing on the figure, being concerned with the obvious and not the unconscious (O'Leary, 1992:13).

3.4.1.2 Awareness and the reality of how the individual is in the situation

An individual sees, knows and reacts to a situation with awareness in order to be in full contact. Individuals, who are partially aware of their behaviour, but do not feel in a physical way what they do and how they do it, are unaware. Awareness is in this respect accompanied by owning, which means knowing that you have control over your behaviour, a choice of how to behave and that you have to take responsibility for your behaviour (Yontef, 1993:184).

In Gestalt therapy there is a constant and careful emphasis on *what* individuals do and *how* they do it (Yontef, 1993:153). There must be a relation between action and awareness. Awareness without action, according to Polster (Sills et al, 1996:152), leads to compacted energy or implosiveness or dreaminess. Action without awareness, on the other hand, is mechanical, purposeless and unrewarding.

Awareness must also include self-acceptance and self-acknowledgement. If individuals merely know that they are dissatisfied with a problem, without knowing clearly what they do to create or perpetuate a situation, they are not aware.

3.4.1.3 Awareness and present centredness

Awareness also means *being in the present* (Perls et al, 1951: 17; Sills et al, 1996:22), although the content may be located in the past (Yontef, 1993:185). Gestalt rests, according to Fritz Perls (1976:55 & 56), on two pillars the *now* and the *how*. Not the *why*. Perls takes this further: “*Now covers all that exists. The past is no more and the future is not yet. Now includes the balance of being here, is experiencing, involvement, phenomenon, awareness. How covers everything that is structure, behaviour, the ongoing process.*” Gestalt deals with present behaviour or the here-and-now (Greenwald, 1976:269; Simkin, 1976:226; Joyce & Sills, 2003:27) because the past rarely leads to change (Van de Riet, Korb & Gorrell 1980:15). Natural behaviour is present-centred, therefore in health our awareness is of the present moment, thus of the present moment of gestalt formation (Korb et al, 1989:5). To be in the present brings into being all the other aspects of healthy functioning, and ensures the existence of the figure/ground process in all its aspects (Latner, 1973:61).

In Gestalt therapy the therapist starts with what the individual is doing and not with what (s)he wants to do or what has been done. Behaviour held over from the past or anticipations of the future (Perls, 1976:53) diminish the amount of attention and energy a person can apply to the future (Korb et al, 1989:5). Joyce and Sills (2003:27) argue on the

other hand that being aware at that moment that you are thinking about the past, the situation has subtly changed. Mackewn (1997:114) agrees with this, stating that awareness of the here-and-now does not disregard the importance of the past or future, it means that although individuals remember the past and plan for the future, the remembering and planning happens in the present.

Only from the present influence of the field can individuals make sense of their present experience (Sills et al, 1996:79). If, for example, somebody made you angry a week ago, your present anger is because of your present field of thoughts. The experience of remembering is thus important rather than what is remembered. Instead of reliving a past experience perpetually, it can become a memory. What happened in the past is either assimilated and becomes part of the individual, or is carried around in the form of an unfinished situation thus an incomplete gestalt (Perls, 1976:62), such as memories, regret and bodily tension. It is thus important how the past or future is experienced in the present in the current field. Change occurs due to personal choices, but will not occur until the individual accepts what is in the present, the individual should therefore have the discipline to understand and live the now and the how (O'Leary, 1992:13) and confront the actual situation in the present moment. In the experience of the researcher, it is beneficial to address unfinished business by redirecting it to emphasise the positive consequences that came from, for example, a negative experience.

3.4.1.4 Awareness results in growth and transcendence

The present or now changes every moment. Awareness excludes an unchanging way of seeing the world. Awareness can never be static and is trusted by the individual as being constantly in a process of evolving (Polster & Polster, 1973:211; O'Leary, 1992:13; Yontef, 1993:185; Joyce & Sills, 2003:27). Gestalt therapy, through emphasising the awareness continuum of oneself and the world, is a way of living and enhancing one's experience (Greenwald, 1976:269; Yontef, 1978:164), and regulating internal needs (Korb et al, 1990:22). Without balanced organismic experiencing, an individual cannot be

in full contact with nature or self-supportive, resulting in impaired learning (Yontef, 1978:165) and unhealthy functioning (Latner, 1973:45; Korb et al, 1989:5).

3.4.1.5 Awareness and contact

Awareness is characterised by contact, sensing, excitement and gestalt formation (Perls et al, 1951:viii). Although contact is possible without awareness, awareness is not possible without contact.

To become fully aware it is important to dissolve the resistances in oneself which prevent full awareness. In some instances individuals can become aware by pointing out that they are unaware. People cannot be only aware of what they feel in their bodies, or just emotionally (Perls et al, 1951:36). The experience of increased awareness is frequently accompanied by a release of tension which is pleasurable, even when a painful situation is realised (O'Leary, 1992:14).

3.4.2 ZONES OF AWARENESS

There are three zones of awareness, namely the inner, outer and middle zone (Van de Riet et al, 1980:40-42; Sills et al, 1996:24-28). Although this will be discussed, as a means of clarification, as separate zones, awareness is always holistic (Mackewn, 1997:113; Joyce & Sills, 2003:30). The teacher's experience of awareness needs to move through these zones to ensure the identifying of relevant strategies in dealing with stress.

The inner zone includes individuals' experience of everything that occurs in their bodies, for example, mood, emotion, proprioceptive stimuli, hunger and adrenalin surges. This does not include awareness of the quality of the experience though. Although they could

also be part of the middle zone of experience, emotions are also located in the inner zone (Joyce & Sills, 2003:30). Awareness of the inner zone can be heightened by drawing individuals' attention to their bodies and sensations.

The outer zone, thus the immediate environment, is experienced through the senses and awareness emerges through the individual's eyes, ears, nose, throat and skin, as well as the personal association with the phenomena that are being experienced (Van de Riet et al, 1980:41). The outer zone further includes all behaviour, speech and action (Joyce & Sills, 2003:31). Focusing on the outer world leads the individual to experience the world as richer and more vibrant. Awareness of the outer zone leads to becoming aware of one's actions and the effect they have on other people.

The middle zone includes all the ways in which individuals make sense of both their internal stimuli and external stimuli. Joyce and Sills (2003:32) refer to it as the mediator between the inner and outer zones. This is the experience about experience and thought is the controlling function and may be realised, for example, as memory, fantasy, imagery, dreams and/or wishes. According to Fritz Perls (Van de Riet et al, 1980:42), the middle zone mediates, improves, destroys biases, organises and influences the quality of the experiences of the interior and exterior zones. Individuals must not become confused by believing that how they process or think about interior or exterior experiences are the experiences themselves. The interior and exterior experience is immediate, spontaneous sensation or contact, whilst the middle zone is neither contact nor spontaneous and immediate. Experienced events are interpreted according to individuals' belief systems and the emotions experienced are caused by their own believe systems. Raising awareness of the middle zone is the most subtle, because it is important not to assume what a person is thinking or imagining.

3.4.3 SELF-AWARENESS

To be fully aware means being aware of oneself and living one's life in a richer way. Joyce and Sills (2003:27) state that full self-awareness is sometimes called full contact, or

peak experience. Greenwald (1976:268) states that awareness must be enhanced to make obvious what individuals do, that is their *authentic selves*, and what they do that is phoney and manipulative or avoiding being their own person. Self-rejection and full self-awareness is mutually exclusive (Yontef, 1993:145). Self-rejection is a distortion of awareness because it denies who an individual is.

Introspection must not be confused with self-awareness. Directed self-awareness in Gestalt therapy is not the same as introspection (Perls et al 1951:389; Yontef, 1993:63). In Gestalt therapy individuals observe themselves in action and eventually as action for which introspection is inadequate and also speculative. Joyce and Sills (2001:27) describe introspection as over-analysing oneself. In introspection the self is both subject and object. The self is thus both 'I' and 'me', where 'I' is the self as observer and 'me' the self as observed. The self is thus split (O'Leary, 1992:13).

3.4.4 AWARENESS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD

Awareness is always the subject of experience, the apprehending with the full scope of one's senses, the phenomenal world inside and outside one as it occurs (Perls et al, 1951:viii). Awareness is thus clearly not just of the individual, but of the environmental field within which the individual exists, and without which (s)he cannot exist. The emphasis is therefore on the interconnectedness of individuals with their surroundings. Awareness of context and responsibility within that context are as much part of the healthy ideal as the own intra-psycho processes. This includes relationships with other individuals and the local and global community (Sills et al, 1996:39-40). Zinker (1977:9) justly states that a life of limited exposure to the world and its potential experiences leaves little possibility for creativity, because creativity is impatient with stasis of experience and can thus not flourish. O'Leary (1992:14) agrees with this stating that many people fail to use their senses properly and therefore the Gestalt therapist invites individuals to use their senses to become aware of how they avoid the obvious and to open the self to what is here and now.

The environmental field is experienced through cognitive, sensory and affective awareness (Yontef, 1993:145; Joyce & Sills, 2003:28). The therapist seeks to catalyse awareness in individuals until they awaken to their responsibility for thinking, feeling and acting (O’Leary, 1992:13). Perls (Yontef, 1978:167) stresses the use of the external senses, as well as the internal proprioceptive system of self-awareness. Through being re-sensitised, the individuals can once again become aware of their rejection of awareness and the expression of impulses. When individuals are able to control their awareness (censor), they will be able to fight for survival with their own sensory-motor behaviour and will thus learn, become integrated and self-accepting. Awareness thus leads to the creative integration of a problem and to change (Yontef, 1976:215). Although undirected awareness may sometimes lead to change, at other times an individual needs to experiment with directing awareness (Simkin, 1976:227). Directed awareness is the central therapeutic activity for the Gestalt therapist. Awareness can be focused on one particular aspect such as body language or it can be broadly directed to bring a holistic perspective (Joyce & Sills, 2003:28).

Awareness in the here-and-now is a prerequisite for contact in a dialogic relationship. Just being aware does not imply change, though. Change will only occur once awareness of stress-related burnout has been mobilised.

3.5 DIALOGUE

The dialogic relationship is an attitude of genuinely feeling/sensing/experiencing the other person as a person and a willingness to listen and to hear the other person’s experience without prejudgement. Dialogue is something done rather than something talked about. Yontef (1993:132) therefore refers to dialogue as being lived.

Dialogue in therapy means a relationship based on engagement (Yontef, 1993:34). Engagement is the hearing of not only the spoken word, but also of that which is not spoken (Joyce & Sills, 2001:43), such as body language, gestures, tone of voice and facial expressions. Dialogue involves the willingness to meet the other person honestly,

to be aware of one's thoughts, feelings and behaviours in response to the other person and to the developing relationship (Sills et al, 1996:110). A real connection can only take place when one is fully in the present and is willing to give oneself unreservedly to the meeting in that moment. This is a move towards each other in genuine and open exploration (Yontef, 1993:39). This is called the I-Thou moment (Buber, 1947:xii), and in a dialogic relationship there is a constant movement between the I-It and the I-Thou relationship (Sills et al, 1996:111).

Buber (1947: 117-119) distinguishes three main forms of the dialogical relation. The first rests on an abstract, but mutual experience of inclusions. This happens when two strangers meet who are thoroughly different in outlook, nature and calling, but experience in an instant the other's full legitimacy and recognising of each other as such. This is awareness of the truth of existence and the existence-of-truth. The two people become able to acknowledge each other. This, according to Buber, is the recognition of humans as a spiritual beings and the full reality of their being and life. The other two forms of the dialogic relation proceed from the inclusion of this full reality. The second form is a one-sided experience of inclusion. This is the dialogic relation between learner and teacher. Teachers influence the lives of learners with their own lives. The teacher experiences a deeper need in the experience of inclusion, which is service on a higher level. No matter how intense the mutuality of giving and taking with which teachers are bound to their learners, inclusion cannot be mutual in this case. The teacher experiences the learner being educated, but the learner cannot experience the teacher as being educated. The moment learners can throw themselves across and experience from the other side, the education relation will be destroyed or it will change into friendship. Friendship is therefore the third form of dialogic relation, because it is based on a concrete and mutual experience of inclusion. This is true inclusion of one another through human souls.

The relation in education, according to Buber (1947:115-117), is a pure dialogic one. Buber emphasises that this is especially true when the educator is a teacher, therefore the researcher's choice of the term 'teacher' above that of 'educator'. Trust is the most inward achievement in education. Because teachers as human beings exist, they must be

really there, really facing the child, not merely there in spirit. In order to be and to remain truly present to the child the teachers must experience this as one of the focuses of their responsibility towards the world. Although teachers cannot, and ought not, be continually concerned with the child, either in thought or in deed, the gathering of the child into their lives means there is reality *between* them, thus mutuality. This mutuality, which constitutes the peculiar nature of the relation in education, cannot be one of inclusion although the true relation of the teacher to the learner is based on inclusion. No other relation draws its inner life like this one from the element of inclusion, but no other one is so completely directed to one-sidedness, so that if it loses one-sidedness it loses essence.

3.5.1 ELEMENTS OF A DIALOGIC RELATIONSHIP

Dialogic contact isn't 'made,' it 'happens'. Each person can bring his/her will to the contact boundary, but the rest requires a response from the other person. This requires faith not only in your own resources, but also the resources in the rest of the individual/environmental field (Yontef, 1993:41). Martin Buber (Yontef, 1993:131) states that the individual (I) has meaning only in his/her relationship to others. This relation can only be an I-Thou or I-It relationship. The I-It is manipulative contact where the I-Thou is dialogic.

Gestalt therapy places importance on the interpersonal existential encounter. The therapeutic relationship in Gestalt is seen as an I-Thou relationship (Yontef, 1978:176). The Gestalt therapist retains the right to be independent in the I-Thou relationship. This independence can help remove the therapist's reinforcement of dysfunctional behaviour and will help the therapist to be self-supportive and self-directive, thus modelling self-actualisation. A true I-Thou encounter necessarily involves discovery (Yontef, 1978:84), and leads to change (Korb et al, 1989:16).

In Gestalt therapy the contacts which are important are both intrapersonal (contact between individuals and aspects of themselves) and interpersonal (contact between the individual and perceived aspects of interactions with individuals or events from the past,

present or future). Since contact includes a sense of the inter-functioning between the individual and the environment, the spontaneous concentration on any aspect of the environment carries with it the energy for movement or change (Korb et al, 1989:16). Buber (Korb et al, 1989:16) describes casual contact between people as an I-It association, because although aggression beyond the contact boundary has been achieved, the contact is businesslike or habitual, therefore not incorporating significant contact, which is denoted as an I-Thou relationship. When two or more individuals are, on the other hand, completely present (in the here-and-now), completely real and aware of each other in their interactions, the I-Thou relationship flourishes. It is only in the contact of the I and Thou that the uniqueness of each individual develops (Yontef, 1993:41).

The relationship between the therapist and the individual is an essential part of Gestalt dialogue. Joyce and Sills (2001:44) state that a dialogic relationship is composed of four elements, namely: presence, confirmation, inclusion and willingness to open communication. The implementation of these four qualities of a relationship, results in an I-Thou or dialogic relationship. The researcher will therefore use these four composed elements to discuss the dialogic relationship further.

3.5.1.1 Presence

To be in the present, individuals, or the therapists, bring all their senses and awareness to bear and give them fully to the encounter. The individual meets the other person and holds his/her ground in a way that is contactful. It is bringing oneself to the boundary with the other person, but not breaking through the boundary to control the other person (Yontef, 1993:35). This is only possible when one lets go of all one's concerns and ideals and allow oneself to be completely present and real (Joyce & Sills, 2001:45). If individuals are distracted by something, not really interested or feel irritable, they must not pretend to be otherwise. It is thus important to show one's "*true self*" (Yontef, 1993:222).

3.5.1.2 Confirmation

Confirmation is more than acceptance and is also an affirmation of what one can become (Yontef, 1993:36). It is one of the cornerstones of the Gestalt therapy and indicates an intrinsic respect for diversity and differences. Individuals need to accept each other unconditionally, which means that an individual will be loved and valued however badly (s)he behaved or difficult (s)he is. In the words of Zinker (Joyce & Sills, 2001:45) “*Our deepest, most profound stirrings of self-appreciation, self-love and self-knowledge surface in the presence of the person whom we experience as totally accepting*”. Confirmation does not mean that everything should be condoned, though. Confirmation is the acknowledgement of the individual as a separate human being (Yontef, 1993:36). At the same time the therapist must be aware of what is figure for the individual or out of the individual’s awareness. Joyce and Sills (2001:46) points out that this may be difficult at times, but that seeing the individual as a vulnerable human being may help.

3.5.1.3 Inclusion

Inclusion, according to Yontef (1993:36-37) is the highest form of confirmation. The phenomenological world of individuals must be entered to see it through their eyes and to then offer confirmation. This is not total immersion or confluence, it is empathy with the individual because some experiences are universal (Sills et al, 1996: 112; Joyce & Sills, 2001:48) and therapists attempt to include the experience of the other person into their realm of understanding (Joyce & Sills, 2001:46). Yontef (1993:37) is of the opinion though that inclusion goes beyond empathy. Inclusion also encompasses the other person’s awareness of his/her own feelings, reactions and experiences.

Three perspectives make up the practice of inclusion, namely that of the individual including his/her phenomenology; the other person’s own perspective, which includes his/her awareness of his/her own phenomenology, reactions and responses; and thirdly the perspective of the relationship. Joyce and Sills (2001:47) describe the relationship perspective as the perspective of ‘the between’ where what happens is a co-creation.

Inclusion can be conveyed without direct expression through attitude, posture, tone of voice or any other form of non-verbal contact. Joyce and Sills (2001:49) are of the opinion that verbally communicating an understanding of the individual can add a deeper, powerful dimension to the said individual's understanding and acceptance of the self. Thinking, feeling and body processes are the most comprehensive practice of inclusion though. Cognitive inclusion involves resonating with the thinking and reasoning of the individual, bodily inclusion attends to the physical process, and emotional inclusion resonates the emotion of the individual and being aware of the response it invokes in one. Showing one's own feelings when appropriate can have a healing effect on the other person. It must be remembered though that in the therapeutic relationship the personal concerns of the therapist are irrelevant or only relevant to a minimum level. It is important to note that to maintain inclusion and presence is difficult and one will need solid self-support to be centred and flexible in order to move between one's own world and that of the other person.

3.5.1.4 Willingness to open communication

Buber (Yontef, 1993:35) describes genuine and unreserved communication as a characteristic of dialogic presence. Fully present people share meaning with each other, including despair, love, spirituality, anger, joy, humour and sensuality. This unreserved communication does not mean that therapists, for example, give themselves over to the dialogue without discrimination. It is important that individuals feel free to communicate any of their experiences to the therapist, who must be willing to openly communicate their responses. The therapist must share or communicate honestly what will be useful or helpful to the individual, and may at times communicate what is getting in the way of honest communication (Joyce & Sills, 2001:50). Therapists must be aware of the fragile relationship between them and the individuals and must not communicate their opinions prematurely and must not put words in the mouths of the individuals who are already in a position of weakness, because of their distress, and who might therefore feel that certain things are better unsaid.

Joyce and Sills (2001:50) state the characteristics of open communication as being:

- Honesty, which is an essential part of authentic relating
- The therapist's feelings, such as sadness or anger, which may help individuals identify or support their own feelings which might have been denied or deflected to date.
- The ability to demonstrate understanding for their situation.
- Validation of the use of a healthy repressed response, such as anger
- Therapists communicating some of their own feelings or experiences, which may help to equalise some of the power imbalance inherent to a therapeutic relationship
- A fresh perspective, which may transform an individual's view of a situation.

Yontef (1993:75) adds that communication in an I-Thou relationship must involve direct sending and receiving. He also emphasises the counterpart of speaking directly to a person, namely active listening. It must not be a passive reception of stimulation.

The universal rule to be kept in mind by the therapist is that it is important to know what, when, how and how much to disclose to the individual.

3.5.2 CONTACT

Contact is constituted by awareness. The contact between an individual and the environment defines the individual's identity (Yontef, 1993:33). It defines the ego-boundary, that which is experienced as 'me' and those which are 'not me' (Van de Riet et al, 1980:21). Part of psychological health is having good contact with self and others. If boundaries do not meet they cannot interrelate and without them interrelating there is no contact, and without contact there is no growth (Korb et al, 1989:39; Latner, 1992:27). How contact is made will be determined by the environmental conditions of every unique situation. Behaviour must therefore be adjusted or modified on an ongoing basis to meet each new situation appropriately. Perls (1976:76) states that a really healthy individual must have both a good orientation (sensory system) and an ability to act (motor system).

The polar opposite of contact is withdrawal – not loss of contact, but transference of good contact from the environment to internal processes. The rhythm of one's perceptual processes includes a constant flow of contact and awareness among the three zones of awareness (internal, external and middle). Contact with the environment is important, but clear and distinct withdrawals into the other zones are also important for optimal functioning. Withdrawal from contact must also include the physical retreat from a challenging and stimulating environment to a restful environment (Korb et al, 1989:39).

3.5.2.1 The contact boundary

The ego, or contact boundary, is the differentiation between the individual (self) and the otherness (people and environment). The self, according to Perls (1976:25), is defined by the otherness. The contact boundary is not fixed. If there is a disruption at the contact boundary, such as confluence, an individual may feel there is nothing left if the otherness is taken away. As an auto-ethnographic experience, teachers who identify too strongly with their profession and this is taken away, will feel that there is nothing left of the self and may even prefer death. When there is a boundary issue, conflict will develop. When too much emphasis is thus placed on the boundary it will lead to hostility (Perls, 1976:26).

Defining the self and connecting with the other, are the two functions of the contact boundary. To make good contact with your world, it is necessary to reach out and discover your own boundaries. Effective self-regulation is the assessment of what should be assimilated or rejected by the individual, which can only occur during contact with the environment (Yontef, 1993:141).

The boundary between self and environment must be kept permeable to allow exchanges, yet firm enough for autonomy, says Yontef (1993:141). Although there are toxins in the environment which need to be screened out by the individual during self-regulation, even what is perceived as nourishing for the individual needs to be assessed according to the individual's dominant need. For the purpose of this research, it is important to be aware

that metabolic processes are governed by the laws of homeostasis (Yontef, 1993:141) resulting in the self-regulatory process where the most urgent needs become gestalt until they are met or are superseded by a more vital need.

3.5.2.2 Modifications at the contact boundary

‘Disturbances’ or ‘interruptions’ are hindrances to full contact and vitality. In field theoretical terms no interruption can be considered as good or bad, helpful or unhelpful unless seen in the context of each unique situation. Joyce and Sills (2001:113) are therefore of the opinion that ‘modifications to contact’ is a more appropriate way to describe the series of processes, which are, according to them, either appropriate or inappropriate creative adjustments. These modifications should thus be judged in relation to the environmental conditions and the persons themselves.

Modifications are boundary processes and are natural functions of individuals and a part of their daily living. Each function can also function to interrupt, impede, or distort organismic self-regulation though (Korb et al, 1989:56), which characterise ill-health or disequilibrium. This imbalance within the individual may prevent the natural assimilation of input from the environment, inhibiting learning and growth. If you are not completely yourself, your contact boundary shrinks, and your power and energy become less and more rigid, resulting in a limited ability to cope with life situations (Perls, 1976:28). Sills, Fish and Lapworth (1996:58) point out that negative interruptions or modifications may become compulsive.

Healthy functioning involves good contact with self and others, but it is unrealistic to assume that we can make full contact with every emerging figure or need at all times. Every situation requires a unique response, and even an adjustment or modification to contact. The important issue according to Joyce and Sills (2001:128-129) is the ability to choose and apply the full range of contact options and adapting one’s contact style to different and new situations.

3.5.2.2.1 Projection

To project is to attribute to objects or persons in the environment the traits, attitudes, or behaviours that are actually personal. With projection individuals take some attitude, belief, perception or feeling from inside themselves and impose it on the world (Simkin, 1976:230; Korb et al, 1989:57; Latner, 1992:36; Yontef, 1993:142; Sills et al, 1996:62). All creative people use projection to create something or to do something in a new way, this is the ability to imagine something which is not there, to anticipate a possible future and to be creative (Korb et al, 1989:57; Joyce & Sills, 2001:123), but projection can also be used to deny experience, to distort, or deny a part of the self, believing it resides in someone else. It is important to note that it is not only negative qualities which are projected on others, but also positive ones if the quality has not yet been assimilated. Through projection, individuals perceive the world in their own images and distort perceptions of people or events in accordance with their beliefs, attitudes, or emotions. Projection without awareness, responsibility and receptivity to new information leads to the denial of important sensory information, replacing that information with one's own ideas or fantasies. (Korb et al, 1989:58).

The polarity of projection, according to Joyce and Sills (2001:125) is ownership. Ownership has always been a corner stone of Gestalt therapy, indicating taking responsibility for all aspects of the self. If taken too far, for example, accepting or owning what is not one's responsibility may, at the extreme, manifest in self-blame or excessive guilt.

3.5.2.2.2 Confluence

In the state of confluence individuals do not experience themselves as being distinct from their environment or the other person (Latner, 1992:37). Confluence is thus an inability to distinguish personal boundaries. Without personal boundaries individuals merge into the beliefs, attitudes, and feelings that surround them (Zinker, 1977:63). Contact with the

environment, established through clear awareness of self and not-self is therefore minimal (Korb et al, 1989:60). From time to time confluence is needed to empathise with another person, but it is important to become separate again (Sills et al, 1996:68).

The polarity of confluence is withdrawal. The healthy person can move fluently and appropriately along the continuum of confluence and withdrawal. Fixedness in any one of these polarities suggests some difficulty with either attachment or separateness (Joyce & Sills, 2001:120).

3.5.2.2.3 Retroflection

Retroflection, according to Yontef (1993:142) is “*a split within the self, a resisting of aspects of the self by the self. This substitutes self for environment....*” Retroflection involves the redirection of energy, which in healthy functioning would be directed outward into the environment to establish contact. The new direction is inward as retroflecting people do to the self what would spontaneously be done to objects or persons in the environment (Korb et al, 1989:59; Latner, 1992:39). In unhealthy retroflection anger or aggression is turned back on oneself. In healthy retroflection individuals’ conscious adaptation to social norms, through, for example self-discipline has functional value because it protects them from external threat. Self-discipline is retroflective in the redirection of energy through choice. However, these redirected impulses may lead to bodily tensions, somatic illnesses, depression or bodily harm (Joyce & Sills, 2001:114), because the person is a whole, thus mind, body and emotions (Sills et al 1996:66).

The other pole of this continuum is impulsiveness, which is the spontaneous vibrancy of action and contact. It can, however, also be an inappropriate expression of feelings and acting impulsively in a way which is dangerous for self and others (Joyce & Sills, 2001:115).

3.5.2.2.4 Introjection

This is the most pervasive of all modifications according to Sills, Fish and Lapworth (1996:60). To introject is a process whereby an opinion, an attitude or an instruction is unquestioningly taken in from the environment without properly analysing, digesting or assimilating, it without awareness (Simkin, 1976:230; Latner, 1992:38; Yontef, 1993:142; Joyce & Sills, 2001:125). Introjecting individuals absorb input from outside their boundaries and take it indiscriminately inside their boundaries. An introjection which, therefore, has been accepted without discrimination in the past, reverberates in the present. Individuals, who are under the influence of introjections, feel a strong pressure to conform to it and feel uncomfortable if they attempt to go against it. The majority of introjections come from one's parents, but are also culturally determined (Sills et al, 1996:61). Although some introjections, learned from parents, school or other significant others are healthy and growth producing, a significant portion of introjections are unhealthy, thus in conflict with self, organism (the individual), and organismic self-regulation (Korb et al, 1989:56).

The opposite of introjection is rejection and although it is healthy to reject what is against one's values and integrity, it is unhealthy to reject out of habit (Joyce & Sills, 2001:127).

3.5.2.2.5 Deflection

Deflection is turning away from either an internal or environmental stimulus to prevent full recognition or awareness (Sills et al, 1996:59; Joyce & Sills, 2001:116), and contact (Yontef, 1993:142). According to Latner (1992:40) the impulse is directed towards a substitute in the environment. Deflection includes avoiding eye contact, verbal circumlocutions, using generalities, excessively polite or stereotypic language, disallowing intense emotion, talking about the past or the future, instead of the present experience, and changing the subject (Korb et al, 1989:59). Contact at the boundary is thus defuse or weak. Deflection as an unconscious avoidance mechanism tends to reduce the contact and to increase the isolation of individuals from others and from their own

experiences. Deflection is a process of avoiding awareness, and a deflecting individual will also push away any intervention touching on the subject being avoided.

The other pole of deflection is reception, which indicates that a person is available and open to experience the world in full. Joyce and Sills (2001:117) warn that this can also be unhealthy if reception is without awareness of what is toxic and what is nourishing in the environment.

3.5.2.2.6 Desensitisation

Desensitisation is a process similar to deflection, because it is another way of avoiding contact with the stimulus. Deflection prevents a stimulus to reach the middle zone of awareness, while desensitisation is a shutting down at the level of the inner and outer zones, thus the internal and external stimuli (Sills et al, 1996:58). To determine whether an individual is deflecting or desensitising, therapists can monitor their own responses to the individual they are consulting. The therapist will feel sleepy and heavy in the presence of a desensitised individual and more energised (frustration, irritation, agitation) in the presence of a deflecting individual (Joyce & Sills, 2001:118).

It is possible for individuals to be sensitive to, for example, their bodily sensations, while desensitised to their affective and emotional associations and may therefore notice symptoms which they cannot explain (Joyce & Sills, 2001:119). Over-sensitisation may lead to avoidance and substances such as nicotine, alcohol, drugs and caffeine may be abused to numb these feelings (Sills et al, 1996:58).

3.5.2.2.7 Egotism

Egotism, as a form of habitual modification, is characterised by a preoccupation with one's own feelings, thoughts, behaviours and effect on others. Whether the preoccupation is positive or negative this self-reflection or consciousness of the self is avoidance of real relational contact (Joyce & Sills, 2001:122). In egotism, different to the other boundary

modifications, the boundary is not relocated or dissolved. Instead something which is characteristic of contact boundaries is dissolved, namely the interaction with the otherness (Latner, 1992:39) is dissolved. There is no or little mutuality and the boundary seems to be one-sided because the person is almost exclusively concerned with a sense of self.

The polar opposite of egotism is spontaneity which, when appropriate, is the characteristic of full vibrant living. Joyce and Sills (2001:123) warn that when this is unrestrained, there is a lack of necessary reflection and self-monitoring, which is also observed in impulse disorders such as mania and anti-social behaviour.

Awareness and contact leading to a dialogic relationship is not only a prerequisite for the Gestalt process, but is an integral part of the process. Teachers need to engage in a dialogical relationship with themselves, as well as a relationship with their external environment, in order to understand their own process of career-related stress.

3.6 PROCESS

The word process implies a change in the individual in which a consistent quality or direction can be discerned. A process is active because something is happening (Yontef, 1993:315). The individual organises the totality of the environment according to different situations and different needs with figure and ground, and different figures alternating on a constant basis (Yontef, 1993:130; Sills et al, 1996:78). Process therefore indicates that something is happening in the environment and/or the individual.

3.6.1 FIELD THEORY AND PROCESS

The scientific world view that underlies the Gestalt phenomenological perspective is called field theory (Yontef, 1993:130). Everything exists within a context or a field and to understand something or someone we have to look at the whole situation (Sills et al, 1996:77). Yontef (1993:130) describes this as “*The person in his or her life space*

constitutes a field". Field theory is a method of exploring which describes the whole field of which the event is currently a part rather than analysing the event. In the field the parts are in immediate relation to each other and respond to each other. It is important to see the whole situation before attending to the parts. Nothing in the field is thus uninfluenced by what goes on elsewhere in the field (Latner, 1992:20). Nothing thus exists in isolation. Attention is paid to the physical, emotional, psychological, social, historical and cultural environment of individuals from which they cannot be disconnected (Sills et al, 1996:78).

Joyce and Sills (2001:24) name three areas of phenomenological investigation, namely the internal world of the individual, the external world of the individual, as well as the therapist and the ever-changing relationship between them. In Gestalt therapy this is referred to as the 'experiential field', which is the field of individuals' awareness, thus how they organise their experience, as well as the actual or 'larger field', thus the larger context within which they exist. The latter includes what is not in the individuals' immediate awareness, as well as all the latent possibilities and potential of their growing self-expression.

Gestalt therapists work in the here-and-now and are sensitive to how the here-and-now includes residues of the past, as well as future anticipations. The way the individual and the therapist relate, is the field in which they make sense of experience and the experience itself will be affected by this field (O'Leary, 1992:98). Individuals are always actively organising the field, both in terms of their current needs and their fixed gestalts or unfinished business from the past. In the process of growing awareness, which is part of change or growth, the individual progresses through five layers of functioning (Perls, 1976:65-66; O'Leary, 1992:18-19, 24 & 27). The first layer is the *cliché or phoney layer*, which consists of shallow or token contact, followed by the *role playing or phobic layer* where people play roles rather than contacting their true selves. The third layer is the *impasse* which will be further discussed under point 3.6.3.5.2 because this is the point from where growth occurs. In the impasse, individuals reach a stage where they avoid working beyond a certain point which will result in growth and eventually maturation. The fourth layer, the *implosive layer* is characterised by fear, which, according to Perls

(ibid), is the result of two existing equally strong forces residing in the individual. The fifth layer is called the *explosive layer* and is the prelude to authentic living. This is the moment of insight where the deadness of the impasse is replaced by a feeling of aliveness.

3.6.2 THE CYCLE OF EXPERIENCE

A psychological cycle goes on in every person. It is related to the satisfying of needs and is also referred to as the cycle of organismic self-regulation (Zinker, 1977:90), or the cycle of awareness (Joyce & Sills, 2001:33), because the cycle of experience is the flow of awareness. This is an uncomplicated way of tracking the formation, interruption and completion of “gestalten”. It identifies stages from the moment of experiencing a sensation to withdrawal.

The cycle begins with sensation (I feel contractions in my stomach), which become awareness (I am hungry) which allow people to understand what their bodies need at that time. The awareness leads to mobilisation (planning to get up to go to the refrigerator and mobilising muscles), which leads to action (walking). The next step is contact (eating the food and realise that you are enjoying it, and the food and the individual become one). The individual experiences satisfaction (becomes aware of being full) and enters a stage of withdrawal. According to Sills, Fish and Lapworth (1996:51-52), there is a space between stage seven (withdrawal) and stage one (sensation) where the individual is at rest, which is referred to by Perls as the ‘fertile void’. The individual is now ready for the next cycle (Zinker, 1977: 90-92; Sills et al, 1996:48-53).

Joyce and Sills (2001:34-35) indicate that cycles of experience can be simple or complex. They are of the opinion that using this as a therapeutic tool is difficult, because human experience is often far more complicated than can be identified by the above model. It is useful to track simple singular experiences and is useful as a guide to find out where a process of aware-experience may be stuck. This can be used to great advantage when an

individual always interrupts the cycle at the same stage. An example is that of a successful workaholic who is interrupted between contact and satisfaction.

3.6.3 PROCESS PRINCIPLES

The individual organises the total environment according to different situations and different needs, sometimes making one particular aspect figure and sometimes another. The field is constellated around the individual. In any meeting a field is thus co-created. There are different principles on which the field process is based.

3.6.3.1 The individual/environment relationship

The relationship between individuals and their environment is critical, because together they comprise an interdependent unity in which the person strives to self-regulate. Latner (1973:16) indicates that the individual does not only need the environment, but is imbedded in the environment. Everything in the environment has possible meaning or relevance and therefore nothing in the environment can be ignored (Sills et al, 1996:82). In order to understand the existence and the functioning of the individual, the individual's relationship and functioning in the environment must be understood. It is thus important, For the purpose of this research it is therefore important to realise that although individuals can choose their environment, they cannot choose not to relate to it at all. The life of individuals thus depends on their relationship with their environment.

Individuals have two systems that assist in their interaction with the environment, namely the *sensory or orientation system* and the *motor system* (Latner, 1973:17; Perls, 1976:76). The sensory or orientation system is the organisation of faculties which receive information about the environment, namely the eyes, ears, skin and nose, as well as the receptors in the body. The motor system is the organisation of manipulative faculties,

which allows the person to make changes in the environment or to relationships. While our sensory and motor systems can reach out to the environment, the reverse is also true on condition that the person is aware and attentive to what is occurring in the environment. The organism and the environment are thus in contact and interact in the process on mutual accommodation, which is called creative adjustment (Latner, 1973:18). For the healthy functioning and realisation of their full potential, teachers require environmental support. Without environmental support the individual cannot maintain the self. If the environment can thus not maintain itself, with the teacher as part of it, the teacher will be destroyed by the environment and will thus experience total burnout.

3.6.3.2 Organisation

We derive meaning from perceiving the whole or the total situation (Sills et al, 1996:79). In order to understand the individuals, their needs within their environment must be understood as a whole, because an environmental field is constellated according to individual needs and circumstances. The researcher discussed organisation under different sub-sections to clarify the concept of a whole or total situation, and the figure and ground relationship as part of organismic self-regulation in order to reach psychological homeostasis. Although these concepts will be discussed under different sub-sections, they are all interrelated.

3.6.3.2.1 Holism

The organism or individual is a whole (Perls, 1976:24). Each individual with internal physiological, psychological and biochemical functions, exists in the context of his *total* environment (Van de Riet et al, 1980:6; Sills et al, 1996:77). The individual called the *self* is, a unitary concept encompassing physical, emotional, cognitive (Latner, 1973:50), social, historical and cultural (Sills et al, 1996:78) aspects of the self, of which each is a different manifestation of the self. Yontef (1993:90) refers to this as “*the entire biopsychosocial field*” The individual experiences by feeling, sensing and thinking

(Yontef, 1976:217). When the person rejects one of these modes of experience, the formation of new “gestalten” becomes blocked by unmet needs, which forms incomplete gestalten and therefore needs attention. In total you are yourself, and the fundamental characteristic of the self is gestalt formation and destruction (Perls, 1976:51).

The existence of the human being is the ongoing and changing nature of this collection of processes. Although individuals may vary within themselves, they are bound to the environment through the maintenance of further interrelationships. They therefore require nourishment from their environments in various forms and from their side contribute to their environments through their relatedness to it as whole organisms. Every person is a complex arrangement of figure-ground relationships, and because individuals are wholes, any change to any sphere of their lives or environments, will, as stated previously, result in a change in every other aspect (Latner, 1973:50; Van de Riet et al, 1980:7; Sills et al, 1996:79). It is thus clear that *“holistic principles means recognising not only the individualistic nature of a person’s organising and experiencing of events, but also that each person is more than the add-sum of behaviour, perceptions or dynamics”* (Van de Riet et al, *ibid*).

Due to human beings being holistic the Gestalt therapist pays attention not only to the words, but observes and attends, for example, to voice, posture, gestures, facial expressions, body language, and omissions (Perls, 1976: 64; Korb et al, 1989:6), because individuals may tell you that they do not need anything, while they are actually repressing their needs by not talking about it, although it is still there. Not only must the therapist be aware of the aforementioned, but individuals must also listen to their own body language (Simkin, 1976:228).

3.6.3.2.2 Figure- Ground

Gestalt starts with what *is*. In this the figure or foreground experienced is related to the background, which leads to meaning (Perls, 1976:70; Mackewn, 1997:16). In Gestalt therapy the undifferentiated field, which is the unity of individual and environment, is

called the background or ground and the emerging focus of attention and activity is called the figure or gestalt (Perls et al, 1951:ix; Korb et al, 1989:21). The background or ground contains what is irrelevant, unimportant and immaterial to the present moment (Latner, 1992:26). That which thus does not become part of the focus remains background (Latner, 1973:22; Korb et al, 1989:4). Figure and ground are mutually dependent. It is thus necessary to perceive both, because everything has importance and relevance because there is a connectedness within the whole (Sills et al, 1996:44). Although the field may recede in importance, or even seems to disappear momentarily, gestalt formation always occurs in the context of a field. The healthy formation of “gestalten” is a continuous process of emerging figures and receding grounds. Because contact requires difference, figure/ground is a function of contact. When there is no contact, the field is not differentiated and there is no figure and no background (Latner, 1992:26). A gestalt, which is a German word with no exact translation in English, is a whole, a pattern or a configuration which is cohesive and which cannot be broken down or changed without destroying the particular gestalt. Learning takes place through the formation of new “gestalten” which leads to insight (Yontef, 1976:217). Figure and ground thus explains the process by which individuals organise their perceptions to form wholes to create meaning (Sills et al, 1996:45).

In Gestalt therapy, gestalt formation is considered a primary characteristic of organismic functioning. In the school environment teachers must organise their environment field so that it makes sense to them, and this making sense means making gestalts (Latner, 1973:25). It is in the nature of a person to form gestalts and this precedes an analysis of the parts which constitutes the gestalt. In gestalt therapy, concerned with the total individual and his/her behaviour, gestalts are strong, graceful, clear and lively, or, on the other hand, weak, forced, diffuse and dull. The development of a clear meaningful gestalt produces a solution (Korb et al, 1989:7), while the latter four characteristics indicate impaired gestalts.

As individuals interact in the field, the different aspects of individuals as holistic beings, respond in ways characteristic to them. The cognitive faculties think, the senses feel, the

motor system acts and the affective level responds, with emotions. Individuals are aware of their own needs which will dominate spontaneously. This spontaneous dominance is a necessary aspect of good figure (gestalt) formation. Good gestalt formation is spontaneous because it is composed of whatever concentration is brought to the situation, plus the excitement produced in the merging of attention and the situation (Van de Riet et al, 1980:8). Gestalt formation is thus a total organismic act (Latner, 1973:27) or an ultimate experiential unit (Perls, 1976:32), instead of a solely cognitive decision. Individuals thus use all their faculties to choose what will be the controlling figure-ground relationship of situations (Korb et al, 1989:8; Sills et al, 1996:49), although they may not always be aware of the choice (Van de Riet et al, 1980:7). Sills, Fish and Lapworth (1996:49) indicate that healthy functioning is the process of noticing, forming a figure and taking action, in awareness, in the present moment, as well as taking responsibility for the choices we make both in the selection of figure and in our response to it. When individuals are forced to follow interests contrary to their own, their natural impulses are restrained. Due to this, energy, which could be used in the emergence of a gestalt, is lost.

Further into the background are a host of assimilated and partly assimilated experiences and undeveloped capabilities. This part of the background includes ideas, conclusions, memories, attitudes, feelings and beliefs. Although some of it may be false or inaccurate they constitute a substantial part of an individual's background at any given time (Latner, 1992:26). The background is thus always present as the foundation of contact, framing and supporting one's present experience (Beisser, 1992:26-27).

The ego is defined and identified through environmental contact. In terms of figure-ground formation the ego is the identification with the needs, desires and experiences which are clearly figural. It is the ego that indicates the need to the individual (Van de Riet et al, 1980:39). Identification with certain experiences and alienation from others can set up ego boundaries, and experiences of right and wrong may thus become rigidified (Van de Riet et al, 1980:40).

Teachers must be aware that one is never disgusted with a person, but with a behaviour or part of the person. Sometimes one may hate and at other times love the person. This is a matter of foreground and background or figure and ground. An individual can think of only one thing at a time and as soon as two figures want to take charge, one gets split and fragmented (Perls, 1976:28).

3.6.3.2.3 Organismic self-regulation

Self-regulation is the natural tendency of humans to maintain homeostasis (Sills et al, 1996:10). Healthy people are self-regulating individuals who are able to respond flexibly to changing circumstances and to support themselves while accepting mutual interdependence with other people and the environment (Mackewn, 1997:21). Health is thus not only personal and intrapsychic but is also contextual and inter-relational. Individuals have specific needs that must be met if they are to live. Without experiencing needs and impulses, organismic self-regulation is impaired. Without balanced organismic experience, individuals cannot be in full contact with nature or self-supportive and cannot learn from their environmental transactions. Learning, according to Perls (1976:217), takes place through discovery and the formation of new “gestalten” which leads to insight. As an individual interacts with the environment, “gestalten” are completed, awareness develops and contact takes place. Individuals therefore need to mobilise themselves and their environments for support to achieve organismic self-regulation.

Individuals must decide what they need from the environment and then it must be assimilated or rejected (Perls, 1976:228; Greenwald, 1976:270). When deficiencies exist, they move to the foreground and the organic system remedies them and when excesses are present, the system rids itself of them (Van de Riet et al, 1980:7). The behaviour of an individual will thus be directed toward the satisfaction of the dominant need. If the need is genuinely met, the situation changes (Simkin, 1976:227) allowing the individual to rest until a new need emerges and the cycle starts over again (Mackewn, 1997:17). In Gestalt therapy this general principle is called organismic self-regulation. The organism is thus

“striving for the maintenance of an equilibrium which is continuously disturbed by its needs and regained through gratification” (Perls, 1947:7).

Organismic self-regulation is therefore how Gestalt therapy refers to the process of attaining, losing and regaining biological balance. Organismic self-regulation comes out of organismic experiencing. It is therefore in the essential nature of individuals to have the capacity to cope and to be in harmony with the self (Latner, 1973:14). This latter statement is an indication that this self-regulation is not only on a physical level, but also on an emotional and mental level.

Implicit in organismic self-regulation is the idea that individuals have awareness (Simkin, 1976:227; Van de Riet et al, 1980:36). In order to know their own balance and to find and obtain what they need to meet imbalances, individuals must be aware of themselves (Latner, 1973:14). Seeking the means to gratify needs as they arise requires awareness. Organismic self-regulation does not ensure the satisfying of needs, it only implies that individuals will do their best to self-regulate, within their own capabilities and the resources of the environment. The process of self-regulation does not ensure that teachers can always satisfy their needs. Often the environment does not offer the needed element or quality at that specific moment. Closure can then be achieved by acknowledging the unfulfilled need and experiencing and expressing the emotions evoked by the impossibility of meeting the need. Such emotions might include frustration, grief and disappointment (Mackewn, 1997:17).

Perls (Mackewn, 1997:17) claimed that if the individual has a conflict of needs the dominant need would take preference. Mackewn, on the other hand, points out that due to the complexity of human needs in a complex field, individuals often don't have one dominant desire, but experience genuinely competing values and desires and are thus sometimes unable to resolve their desires, but may seek acceptable and sometimes painful substitutes.

Even healthy individuals who are usually in touch with the reality of the world, may under specialised conditions, lose touch with the world, other people, the world and themselves, which will lead to a loss of flexibility and a falling back on fixed or habitual patterns of behaviour, which were creative solutions to past difficulties, but which are not applicable to the new situation. These are fixed patterns of behaviour which is the result of an accumulation of unresolved situations from the past (unfinished business) and of premature solutions to problems which have become habitual and unaware, called fixed gestalts (Mackewn, 1997:23).

The main source of discomfort for individuals is what Gestalt therapy calls unfinished business. The dominant need arises, the individual does not do what needs to be done to fulfil the need, with the result that the unfinished situation will continue to emerge into awareness as an image or tension in some part of the body, or the individual will put up some kind of controls to accommodate the sense of incompleteness (Korb et al, 1989:63; Mackewn, 1997:23). Unfinished business blocks awareness and interferes with the completion of need cycles (O'Leary, 1992:16). This may lead to chronic tension of which the individual is unaware. Unfinished business consists primarily of past relationships or intrapsychic conflicts that have not been resolved. The incomplete directions do seek completion and when they get powerful enough, the individual may become preoccupied, show compulsive behaviour, wariness, and oppressive energy (O'Leary, 1992:14). Sometimes the tension is covert and sometimes it finds expression in the body through psychosomatic complaints such as lower back ache, tension head aches, arthritis or asthma. Korb, Gorrel and Van de Riet (1989:64) refer to conversations in absentia – either rehearsing a conversation in the future or repeating a conversation in the past over and over, as unfinished business. Although this is therapeutic in a therapy setting, it is not when individuals are trying on their own to reduce anxiety.

Teachers, who use their energy, aware or unaware, to ignore the urgency of some unresolved issues, cannot focus all their attention on the current situation (O'Leary, 1992:15; Mackewn, 1997:24). They are unwilling to feel the pain and move forward, which leads to avoidance. When unfinished situations are barred from awareness,

neurotic symptoms and neurotic character formation will be the result. Perls (O'Leary, 1992:16) states that resentments figure prominently in unfinished business. These resentments relate to demands which have not been made explicit.

A fixed gestalt occurs when an individual's needs are consistently ignored or misinterpreted. Because individuals are holistic beings, the fixing of the gestalt involves the whole being: their physical, emotional and cognitive processes. When a natural need is not met, but becomes fixed, the need may be distorted, exaggerated, denied or displaced (Mackewn, 1997:25). Although the fixed gestalt may have originated in the past, it is perpetuated in the present and can thus be studied and undone in the present.

3.6.3.2.4 Psychological homeostasis

Gestalt theory assumes that individuals reach psychological balance or homeostasis in their 'being'. Individuals strive to be in balance. If they lose something and they get it again, they are in balance. This balance is achieved by being aware of what is needed to be in balance again (Perls, 1976:31). Given the holistic approach, constant changes in external events and emerging needs make it impossible to stay in a balance point for long. Individuals do not want to remain balanced because of their new emerging needs, which become figure from moment to moment (Van de Riet et al, 1980:11-13). Individuals like a sense of completion and fulfilment, because it is comforting, but that which is completed cannot change, be altered and is thus functionally dead. By stating "this is who I am" and "I will never change", you stop the process and there can be no growth. Individuals also direct their attention to the balance of the world around them, because self-perception and the perception of the other (persons and environment) are synchronous.

3.6.3.3 Singularity or uniqueness of the individual

All individuals are unique and each individual's experience is unique (Sills et al, 1996:80). You will make your own relevance of things, apply them to your experience

and make connections with them which are your own. Your individual environment, of which you are a part, will influence your experience. Your emotional, mental, and physical states and the context of when, where, why and how are all part of the individual's experience in the present moment. The Gestalt therapist does not treat any form of ill-health in general terms, but tends to whole individuals who, in the present moment may be experiencing it in their own way. This places emphasis on the individual's present experience of what is figure in the current field, thus the individual's process. Fagan and Shepard (O'Leary, 1992:14) believe that for healing to occur, individuals must comprehend their uniqueness and find ways of expressing it.

3.6.3.3.1 Self-concept

The self-concept is portrayed as a collection of beliefs about oneself, arranged in a hierarchical structure. The conditions under which self-concepts change have been described as being based on evaluations from culture and family, influential feedback and encouragement from significant others, comparison with others, and success experiences. The most important, however, is the individual's assessment of feedback and experiences in terms of self. If the individual does not experience the self as successful, there will be no change in self-concept because individuals construct their own beliefs about themselves. An individual is thus the ultimate source of self-concept change. Self-as-process orientations emphasises the on-going, organismic interactions of the individual with the environment as it is. Self-as-process may be observed in the individual's verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The self-concept monitors the appropriateness of decisions made at the point of contact with the environment. Self-concept has been formed over years and although it may be changed through therapeutic intervention, it will be slow (Korb et al, 1989:30-32).

Zinker (1977:202) is of the opinion that the self-concept needs stretching. In order to grow as a person, you need to stretch your self-concept. You have to come in contact with that part of the self of which you do not approve. Individuals need to get in contact with their disowned part or parts and through therapy come to appreciate it. Zinker

(1977:203) is of the opinion that once you feel 'kinder' to your disowned part, you can relate better to another person who tries to penetrate that part of your self. Zinker calls this "*stretching the self-concept*", thus creating more room for the self.

3.6.3.3.2 *Polarisation versus dichotomy*

Polarisation is the process through which an individual organises and symbolises beliefs about self or about the world. This entails establishing either/or categories. These classifications are often made according to evaluative criteria such as good-bad. Such classification may polarise emotions such as love-hate, or perceived attributes about the self, such as me – not me, or perceived attributes of others such as friend-enemy. Such designations establish boundaries that often become rigid, uncompromising and unchanging. (Van de Riet et al, 1980:46). Polarisation of feelings, attitudes or values enables the individual to establish definitive bases for relating to the world. It provides a simple structure for experience by reducing the complexity of phenomena to discrete, predictable elements. This helps an individual to interpret events and to determine appropriate responses to those events.

The motive for rigid polarisations in the individual is to maintain or establish control over aspects of the environment of the self. Individuals use a two value system to create labels regarding life, and respond to the labels as if they are the same as the events categorised by them. Individuals may start to expect that all things fit into neat categories and when they don't fit, extreme discomfort is experienced by the individual (Van de Riet et al, 1980:46-47).

One of the most famous polarised parts of the Gestalt is that of the 'top-dog' and 'under-dog' (Korb et al, 1989:63). The top-dog part is often those introjected voices in one's head that are critical, admonishing, moralistic, prescriptive and prejudicial. They can bombard one with rules, regulations and injunctions and prohibitions. The under-dog is

the recipient of these messages and is the part of one yearning for spontaneity and natural expression and then rebels in the face of the top-dog. The under-dog is cunning and often gets the better of the top-dog. This leads to inner conflict which is never resolved (Perls, 1976:34). Creating a dialogue between these parts brings them into awareness and the individual becomes aware of the point of impasse. This may bring about the shift of energy necessary to break the impasse (Sills et al, 1996:162).

Gestalt therapy perceives the counterparts of the personality as balanced poles, although both may not be in conscious awareness. Any part of the self has a counterpart that is available for knowing and understanding (Zinker, 1977:33). Gestalt therapy aims to bring the polarities into awareness. For every negative emotion or personality trait there is a positive counterpart. Both aspects of any polarisation exist and are valid. Homeostasis in the personality is only achieved by affirming both poles and by owning the thoughts or feelings at the pole that may have been disclaimed or disowned (Van de Riet et al, 1980:14).

Individuals are constantly in the process of improving their lot and modifying their future. Much of one's energy is used up by the tension between these two forces. Zinker (1977:36) sees this as the foreground of behaviour which must be dealt with in therapy. Whether the therapist is dealing with the co-operative, or the resisting side within the self there is a tendency to move towards the motivational centre. All parts of the individual are interconnected and each aspect leads to a fuller sense of the whole person.

3.6.3.4 The here-and-now

Whatever the situation, everything that is happening, is happening simultaneously, *now*. The here-and-now is the location in time in an individual's awareness (Yontef, 1993:116). Gestalt therapy rests on two pillars. The *now* and the *how*. "*Now covers all that exists. The past is no more and the future is not yet. Now includes the balance of being here, is experience, involvement, phenomenon, awareness. How covers everything that is structure, behaviour, the ongoing process*" (Perls et al, 1976:56). Only from the

present influence of the environmental field, can we make sense of our present experience (Sills et al, 1996:79). The now is what you are aware of, the phenomenon. This is also the moment in which you carry your memories (past) and your anticipations (future) (Perls et al, 1976:53).

3.6.3.5 The change process

Human beings are, for the first time in history, in the position where, rather than adapting to an existing order, they must be able to adapt themselves to a series of changing social and cultural orders, due to the prolonged lifespan of human kind (Beisser, 1970:79). This historical reference indicates the period when the watershed between past and present ways of adapting occurred. Individuals must therefore determine where they stand in relation to a shifting society. Because individuals are faced with a pluralistic, multifaceted, changing system, they are left to their own devices to find stability. The approach needs to be dynamic and flexible, to move with the times, while still maintaining some central gyroscope to guide them. This can only be done with a change theory, whether implicit or explicit. The goal of therapy is thus not to develop a good fixed character, but to be able to move with the times, while retaining some individual stability. Beisser (1970:80) points out that the crucial present issue, is to develop a society that supports individuals in their individuality. Beisser states further that the same change theory applies to social systems and that individual change is only a microcosm of the social change process. The compartmentalising of people based, for example, on race, social standing and age is a threat to the survival of mankind. Nothing is static or permanent, because life is always in process, and change is occurring all the time (Sills et al, 1996:81). The Gestalt approach emphasises constant change, thus perceiving and describing experience in process, avoiding language and definitions which imply permanence. The individual's experience is not fixed for all time, but is a flowing and ever moving process and the current experience needs to be emphasised.

The heart of the Gestalt therapy, according to Yontef (1993:12), is in the paradoxical theory of change. In the paradoxical change process, resistance is recognised, acknowledged and understood. Through awareness the poles of impulses and resistance are integrated. Resistance is not broken down or ignored, and the therapist doesn't focus on getting the individual to take the next step. The paradox of the paradoxical theory of change, is that the more one tries to be what one is not, the more one stays the same (Beisser, 1970:77). Change does not take place through a coercive attempt by individuals or by another person to change them, it takes place if individuals take the time and effort to be who they are and being fully invested in their current position. This leads to meaningful and orderly change (Beisser, *ibid*). Individuals can only change when they are firmly imbedded in where and what they are. This gives them a foothold to move on.

The Gestalt therapist believes that the top-dog/under-dog dichotomy already exists in the individual, with the one part trying to change the other. The therapist's aim is the individual's acceptance of both these poles, because the individual is a holistic being and not fragmented into different parts (Beisser, 1970:78). Many individuals focus on what they should be on the one hand, and resist those 'shoulds' on the other hand (top-dog/under-dog). In Gestalt therapy individuals are asked to identify with each of their conflicting roles. When teachers are aware of both roles, integrating techniques are used to transcend the dichotomy (Yontef, 1993:162). Awareness of what is, leads to spontaneous change. Contact between a therapist and an individual, who can see new possibilities and an individual who wants to learn, leads to change. Beisser (1970:78) states that only when structures are transformed into processes, due to the process of change, individuals are open to interchange with their environment.

3.6.3.5.1 Re-owning parts of the self

The individual is a conglomerate of polar forces. An individual does not only have one opposite feeling, but several related opposites. Zinker (1977:197) gives the example of kindness, where cruelty is not the only opposite, but insensitivity and callousness toward another person's feelings, may be part of it. Polarised feelings are complex and interlaced

and are related to individuals' backgrounds and perceptions of their inner realities. This inner reality is either acceptable or unacceptable to the self. The self-concept may sometimes exclude painful awareness of the polar forces inside the self and would think of the self as bright rather than dull, or graceful rather than clumsy. The opposite of this is also true though, and individuals may identify with only their negative characteristics.

Individuals with healthy self-concepts are aware of the many opposing forces within themselves, and are willing to see themselves in a variety of 'contradictory' ways, and experience a relationship between these forces. Zinker (1977:201) states that, although individuals with healthy self-concepts may have voids in their awareness, and may not want to acknowledge all their polarities, they are prepared to be aware of them. Disturbed individuals, on the other hand, have massive voids in their awareness and deny their so called negative polarities. Becoming aware of these polarities makes them nervous and results in the emergence of neurotic symptoms. When an individual is fully aware of choices on the other hand, self-regulation will take place, because unfinished situations will emerge. The figure will thus emerge, reach out for what it wants, come back and assimilate what has been gained (Perls et al, 1976:37).

Through therapeutic intervention, the therapist attempts to make individuals aware of these disowned parts of their personality, so that the disowned parts can be re-owned in awareness. This will be done with *experiments designed both to explore the avoidance of a particular polarity and to achieve a central position of indifference, which corresponds with the reaching of homeostasis (Perls, 1976:33-34; Sills et al, 1996:162). The disowned parts of the self must be re-owned, because holes in the personality always lead to avoidance (Perls, 1976:51). Yontef (1976: 218) says the individual must be re-sensitised. In order to grow the individual must take risks. If the individual is scared and sees the taking of risks as hazardous and as inviting danger, there will be no growth, because balance between the poles leads to growth (Perls, 1976:58).

*For the purpose of clarity, the researcher defines the term 'experiment' in the Gestalt therapeutic context: An experiment is modifying an individual's behaviour in the therapy

situation itself. If this systematic behaviour modification grows out of the experience of the individual, it is called an experiment (Zinker, 1977:123).

3.6.3.5.2 Impasse as the point where growth occurs

The impasse is the crucial point in therapy. This is the point where individuals stop playing games and roles, which may result in a feeling of not knowing what to do next. They thus become stuck in their own maturation process. Individuals do not use their resources out of fear of catastrophic expectations (O'Leary, 1992:19). The impasse is also the point where environmental support and inner support are obsolete, or not forthcoming any more, and authentic self-support has not yet been achieved (Perls, 1976:43; Yontef, 1993:149). This is the point where growth takes place (Perls, 1976:43).

The goal of Gestalt therapy is growth, thus movement away from what an individual no longer wants and a movement in new directions, and the exploration of new behaviour. The growth process is awareness and the willingness to experiment with different self-initiated awareness (Greenwald, 1976:270). There are no preconceived ideas regarding growth or maturity. It is a self-regulatory process through self-discovery in order to become aware of what fits and what does not fit. The therapist does not take responsibility for the growth process, because each individual knows best what (s)he needs and even when an individual is stuck (s)he is more capable of finding solutions than anybody else. Growth is assimilating awareness in small steps (Greenwald, 1976:278).

The core of an individual's growth problem is restricted awareness. Individuals must once again be re-sensitised to become aware of the mechanisms by which they reject awareness and the expression of impulses. Control of these senses leads to the successful coping with their own sensory-motor behaviour, they learn and become integrated thus

self-accepting. Individuals must take responsibility and their attempts to manipulate must be frustrated (Perls, 1976:218).

3.6.3.5.3 Maturity: The choice of self-responsibility

According to Gestalt therapy, individuals are responsible and are therefore the primary agents in determining their own behaviour. Perls (1976:70) states that taking responsibility for your life and being rich in experience and ability are identical according to Gestalt therapy. The individual gains much by taking responsibility for every emotion, every movement and thought and shed responsibility for other people's thoughts, feelings and actions. The avoidance of taking reasonable risks and imaginary hurts interfere with the maturation process. The language used by individuals often reflect their intra-psychic experience or passive attitude towards life, as well as their believed powerlessness over what is happening to them, in other words not being in charge of their lives. It is thus important for individuals to own their reactions and choices by using the language of self-responsibility (Joyce & Sills, 2001:85) for example: 'I am the negative force' instead of 'There are negative forces working against me'. People are thus mature when they are able to cope with their environment. O'Leary (1992:93) names three stages in the growth process namely; individuals assimilate their reality, actualise their potential, and co-ordinate all that they are, to be self-supportive.

There is a distinction between what is given, what one chooses to do and the choice of who one is (Sills et al, 1996:9). Individuals are responsible for what they choose to do, including moral choices. Others cannot be blamed for your choices (Yontef, 1993:146). John Harris (Sills et al, 1992:126-128) presented a simple model of change based on three stages of increasing awareness and self-responsibility with the emphasis on choice. Stage one is '*How I am*', which is the acceptance of all your feelings, thoughts and behaviour, even those you previously preferred not to notice. Stage two is '*I am this way*

because I choose to be' which is recognising that you choose from moment to moment how you are going to respond to the world. Stage three is *'If I choose, I can be different'*. During stage three one takes control of one's life. Just being aware of who one is and how one keeps oneself that way, can sometimes be enough to facilitate change within oneself. Although individuals cannot be responsible for everything that happens to them, they are a hundred percent responsible for their reactions and the meaning they make (Sills et al, 1996:128).

According to Yontef (1993:195), maturity is an indication that individuals are able to regulate themselves with a process of Gestalt formation and destruction, which can be observed in their behaviour and awareness which is organised and energised by their dominant needs (Yontef, 1993:195). Maturity is thus a continual process of creative adjustment and not arrival at an ideal state. Yontef (1993:195) defines creative adjustment as: *"a relationship between person and environment in which the person responsibly contacts, acknowledges and copes with his life space, and takes responsibility for creating conditions conducive to his own well being"*.

Mature individuals are able to take existential responsibility for themselves, for many aspects of their lives and above all for the meaning they give their life. Full awareness of events in one's life leads to responsibility (Mackewn, 1997:124). Existential responsibility does not mean that people are responsible for all situations they find themselves in though, for example a war situation. Maturation cannot be reached through external sources. Individuals must go through the painful process of growing up themselves. Individuals can deal adequately with their own life problems, if they know who they are, and can bring all their abilities together to solve them.

The Gestalt therapists refuse to allow individuals to thrust the responsibility for their behaviour onto them. For the purpose of this research the following statement made by Enright (Yontef, 1978:168) is not only applicable, but also a guideline to facilitators of the proposed process model: *"The basic assumption of this therapeutic approach is that people can deal adequately with their own life problems, if they know what they are, and*

can bring all their abilities together to solve them.” The therapist’s goal is therefore not to solve the problem for the individual (Yontef, 1978:167). Individuals are active and responsible participants who learn to experiment and observe in order to discover and realise their own goals through their own efforts. The responsibility for the individual’s behaviour, changes in behaviour, and the work to achieve such change, is left to the individual. Maturation can thus not be done for an individual. The therapist can do nothing but provide the opportunity for growth and to be there as catalyst and projection screen (Perls, 1947:4). Individuals learn in the safety of the therapeutic situation, but continue to accept the natural consequences of their behaviour in and out of the therapeutic situation. Increased awareness is intended to confront individuals with the full responsibility for all their behaviour, to increase authentic self-expression and to minimise self-deceptive, evasive, self-frustrating and meaningless behaviour (Greenwald, 1976:269).

Maturity is the transition from environmental support to self-support (Perls, 1976:43). Self-support does imply contact with other people, but not continually, because that is confluence, neither must they withdraw from contact completely (Perls, 1976:220).

3.6.3.5.4 Self-support versus environmental support

As individuals become more aware of themselves and of others, dissatisfaction may occur, and what used to be fulfilling may now be unrewarding. Frustration in the situation or with the status quo, leads to the mobilisation of one’s resources which is the discovering that one can do something on one’s own.

Some individuals do not mobilise their resources and manipulate others, or the environment, to support them (Korb et al, 1989:61). This is characteristic of individuals who do not generate the necessary psychological self-support and experience anxiety in dealing with environmental impact. They thus create dependencies, through acting helpless. You make yourself a slave, especially when your dependency is one of self-esteem (Perls, 1976:47). Perls continues, stating that if you always need praise and

encouragement you make everybody your judge (Perls, 1976:47). Simkin (1976:230) states further that people who lack self-support become shattered when the other to whom they gave this power, does not live up to their expectations. It must be understood though that self-support must not be confused with self-sufficiency, because interdependence and co-operation exists in tandem with self-support (O'Leary, 1992:122). Individuals, who manipulate themselves, pay attention to only some aspects of the self and ignore, or avoid, others. This form of manipulation leads to over-identification with certain characteristics and create rigid, uncompromising, prejudicial attitudes toward the self (Korb et al, 1989:62). An example of the latter is the top-dog/under-dog dichotomy.

Joyce and Sills (2001:84) are of the opinion that the most fundamental area of self-support is the physical. It is difficult for us to feel supported if we are tired, hungry or experiencing physical discomfort. The ways in which individuals relate to their body processes in the here-and-now, strongly influences their self-supportive ability.

3.7 SYNTHESIS AND APPLICATION TO THE STUDY

Regaining homeostasis is very challenging, because a large number of teachers have lost touch with large areas of awareness, because of the blocking out of naturally arising awareness and self-other relationships, and replaced it with a sense of how they think they ought to be, feel or act, therefore having created fixed gestalts within themselves.

If teachers are aware in the present, interactions that became semi-ritualised through habit will take on a newness and immediacy, which implies being in contact with oneself and the world around one. **Awareness** leads to the reclaiming of qualities or aspects of the self, which were lost due to disuse. This disowning of parts of the self is an 'unconscious' process which was not made in awareness. Teachers must become aware of the way they operate in the present. This will lead to the taking of responsibility for what is being done, the awareness of needs and the restoring of choice. This will, in turn, lead to the effective dealing with situations as they come their way, instead of according to old habits. Teachers' awareness of obsolete attitudes and behaviour patterns, which were

learned in the past, must be increased. Awareness of these archaic responses may lead to discovering new, more effective attitudes and behaviours. Awareness itself can be curative, because with full awareness one becomes aware of self-regulation. The lack of energy and vitality is often caused by blockages, and when the individual teacher's behaviour or attitude is brought to awareness and re-experienced directly, the healthy self-process can be restored, resulting in the regaining of homeostasis.

In the present education dispensation, teachers must be grounded and aware of the **present**. Too often, reference is longingly made of the previous educational dispensation. Teachers have to realise that the past is just past and that they do not know, for example, that the administration involved in teaching the New National Curriculum will increase further in the future. Being aware of their behaviour in the present, they may furthermore become aware of inconsistencies, not only regarding the implementation of discipline, but also regarding their emotions which may have an effect on their classroom management and the enthusiasm with which they present their lessons.

Teachers must be their own observers and they must not only focus on the negative elements in their methodology, but also on the positive contribution they make towards the growth of the children, through the contact made with them. Awareness of their actions will thus lead to them experiencing teaching as more rewarding.

Teachers are interconnected to and imbedded in the **environment**. This includes interaction with other individuals, as well as the local and global community. Contact with others and the environment leads to creativity. Although there are areas where teachers do have a choice regarding the environment, many of the areas related to socio-economic issues, policy and the organisation within the school are not of their choosing. What they have to re-own is the fact that they will always have a choice in how they react to these environmental factors.

Awareness leads to being in **contact** with, not only your motor activities, but also your senses. Teachers should be aware of everything in their environment, not only will this

lead to homeostasis when they experience the beauty of the world around them, but they will also be more aware of the processes of the learners and their colleagues. Teachers, who are aware of the functions of their middle zone of awareness, will realise that the quality of their experiences is determined by this function. The thought processes of the middle zone is based on individuals' value and belief systems and if unaware it will have a profound influence on their contact with the partners concerned in education. Conflict often arises because of assumptions made regarding the other person's thought processes, instead of communicating verbally and active listening.

Teachers have to be aware that the present changes from moment to moment, and, that by being in contact with the changing present and environment, there will be growth, resulting in maturity. Authentic contact results in a **dialogic relationship** and indicates something that is done and not only talked about. In the dialogic relationship teachers bring their own emotional, cognitive and physical resources to the contact boundary, where they are met by the 'otherness' bringing their resources.

Dialogue is not only the spoken word, but also what is not spoken, such as tone of voice, facial expressions and body language. As soon as the teacher is more aware of these non-verbal forms of communication and listens actively, conflict between the teacher, learners and other partners in education will diminish. In the dialogic relationship the teacher recognises the legitimacy of the learner and vice versa. This is based on respect, resulting in improved classroom management.

Buber (1947:117-119) indicates that teaching is a one-sided inclusion in the **I-Thou relationship**, because the teacher educates the learner, but the learner cannot educate the teacher. To a large extent this is true and if teachers can accept this, they will not feel as if they have failed as teachers. On the other hand, in the twenty-first century it often happens that learners do teach their teachers, for example regarding modern technology. Of importance here are the ego-boundaries. When the teacher's ego-boundary is defuse, the learner will be able to move right through it, and the teacher/learner relationship will

turn into friendship. This will result in teachers losing their healthy control over the learners and experiencing classroom management difficulties.

In the dialogic relationship the I-Thou relationship is the ideal. Teachers who become businesslike or habitual in their teaching, because they fear involvement, possibly because of past hurt and disappointment, or because they have lost interest, will never achieve more than an I-It relationship with the learners. An I-It relationship, in contrast with an I-Thou relationship, is not conducive to growth. In the relationship co-creation takes place and teachers should see this as such. The teacher must be aware of the uniqueness of each partner in education. This uniqueness includes the diversity of the people of South Africa and, therefore, learners must be understood and confirmed against their various backgrounds. A further confirmation of the learner is that (s)he must feel loved in spite of, for example, behaviour, race and intelligence. This does not mean that teachers must condone bad behaviour, though.

At the **contact boundary**, modifications to contact are made, which either lead to growth or impede it. Awareness will lead to teachers taking ownership for their thoughts, feelings and actions instead of blaming it on others. Ownership must not be taken to such an extreme that a good teacher blames himself for the poor results of learners who are disinterested in learning. Withdrawal, not only to experience rest, but also to prevent negative influences, is a necessity for teacher health. Although teachers must have empathy with learners where applicable, the teacher must have well defined boundaries, because if their boundaries are defused, they get too involved in issues, which should be addressed by other helping professions. Self-discipline is a form of retroflection, and constitutes teacher ill-health, when their redirected impulses lead to bodily tensions, somatic illnesses, depression and harm to their own bodies. Introjections are also modifications at the contact boundary, which effect teachers. Teachers are, for example, seen as super humans without feelings and a private life. Due to this perception, teachers actually try and live up to this reputation. On the other hand they are despised by parents and many learners and teachers start to believe they are worthless and not part of the professional community of the country. Teachers also live with introjections, of which

some are cultural. The opposite pole of introjections is rejection, which can manifest in a teacher habitually opposing every decision made by either the school management team or the Department of Education. All teachers have problems and avoiding this is deflection, thus preventing the stimulus reaching the middle zone of experience. Desensitisation is a shutting down at the level of the inner zone, with the result that no internal or external stimuli can reach this zone. Teachers must be re-sensitised to counter-act the cognitive decision not to care about anything any longer.

Awareness and contact, leading to a dialogic relationship, is a prerequisite for the Gestalt process, but also an integral part of the process.

It is important for teachers to see the whole **environmental field** of which an event is part. This will ensure fewer misunderstandings, because the uniqueness of each individual will be respected. Teachers organise their environmental fields, which include the learners. Taking the five layers of functioning into account, school managers of secondary schools should consider letting teachers take grade groups through from Grade 8-12 so that they can experience the learner's explosive layer of functioning, because too often teachers feel that they are not achieving success because they only teach juniors and do not experience the growth of the learners over a five-year period. On the other hand, teachers should become aware of the day-to-day growth of learners in their subjects. This can be achieved through heightened awareness.

Teachers are imbedded in their environment, and to strain against it causes stress and many then leave the profession. Teachers should accept education as a calling to take care of children in the place of their parents (*in loco parentis*). Often teachers indicate that they would rather work in the private sector, but even these teachers need to relate to their environment, because you cannot choose not to relate at all. Healthy **environmental support** is required if teachers want to realise their full potential. Teachers thus require the resources needed to teach, as well as the support from the partners concerned to continue the education process, for example, at home.

Teachers are **holistic** beings and personal problems will have an influence on them because it will be in their foreground, and not the teaching. Teachers' ego-boundaries must be of such a nature, though, that they can focus their awareness on the task at hand instead of making it the problem of the school and learners and of blaming the situation at school for their unhappiness, where it is, in actual fact, their personal problems causing the stress at school.

There is constantly new information regarding subject content or methodology, and teachers must accept this as a part of growth instead of rebelling against it. As soon as teachers realise the importance of **growth** for healthy functioning and being alive, this attitude may change and with it stress will be reduced.

Gestalt formation is a total organismic act and teachers must be aware of and use all their faculties, not only the cognitive. They must also be aware that they choose that which will be the **controlling figure** in the field. When teachers are forced to teach subjects they are not trained for, energy will be lost because their natural impulses will be strained. Here again the school management team will have to do some creative timetabling if possible, to support teachers in their growth towards maturity. It is thus clear that a therapeutic model should involve all four school-based post levels.

Teachers want to reach a stage of **homeostasis**. Homeostasis does not mean that a need has been met and the teacher is going to experience permanent balance. Homeostasis is what is aimed for in the self-regulatory process, but this is a process where homeostasis is continually disturbed by another aware-need which requires gratification. If a need cannot be met immediately, closure can be achieved by acknowledging the unfulfilled need and expressing the emotions evoked by the impossibility of satisfying such a need.

Teachers often ignore their own **needs**. Awareness of these needs will allow teachers to withdraw from marking at night to spend time with the family, to eat or to relax. It is also important that teachers take time to eat with awareness, instead of eating on the run. Contact with the environment is important, but it is important for the teacher to withdraw

into the other zones of awareness to ensure optimal functioning. This withdrawal must also include a physical retreat from a challenging and stimulating environment to a restful one.

Incomplete self-regulation results in **unfinished business** and **fixed gestalts**. Unfinished business consists primarily of past relationships or intra-psychic conflicts. A teacher, who had a bad experience during a previous parents' evening, will experience tension before and during parents' evenings because of the incompleteness of the gestalt. A fixed gestalt develops when the same need of a person is continually denied, resulting in physical, emotional and cognitive consequences, because the teacher is a holistic being.

The **uniqueness** of every person in the relationship must be recognised. This goes hand in hand with the development of a healthy **self-concept**. When teachers hear constantly, for example, that they are not good enough and do not deserve professional salaries, they will develop poor self-concepts. Confirmation and validation of the teacher is thus of prime importance. It is further important for teachers to recognise and move between the polar opposites of their personalities and feelings. In this way they will grow as individuals. Teachers who do not re-own the polar opposites of their personalities, may become rigid and expect that all things fall into neat categories. As far as **polar opposites** are concerned, teachers should be made aware of the top-dog/under-dog dichotomy within themselves. In this dichotomy the 'top-dog' represents what 'should' be done, and the 'under-dog' what you want to do. These poles need to be brought into awareness to prevent unresolved inner conflict.

South African teachers are faced with a pluralistic, multifaceted, changing education system in a country with apparent socio-economic and political dynamics. Teachers' approach should thus be flexible and they must move with the times, whilst retaining some individual stability. It is therefore important to develop the school management teams to support teachers in their individuality.

Teachers who are dependent on environmental support should, through therapy, grow to maturity and self-support in order to realise that they determine their own behaviour and that they must take responsibility for their choices.

Homeostasis can be regained through awareness and contact in the Gestalt process. This approach to therapy, and ultimately to life, has a profound effect on the teacher suffering from career-related stress. Although teachers wish to be in a state of homeostasis at all times, because of the feeling of completion and fulfilment, they have to realise that what is complete cannot change or grow and without growth an individual is functionally dead.

3.8 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 3 the Gestalt therapeutic process was discussed and applied to the study. Through the collecting of information on the Gestalt therapeutic process, the process model in the making has been substantiated with a theoretical paradigm. Although the researcher is unaware of any stress intervention models or programmes aimed at the teacher's quest to regain homeostasis from a Gestalt therapeutic perspective, there are other existing coping strategies and programmes. Chapter 4 will be a discussion and an evaluation, from a Gestalt therapeutic perspective, of other existing coping strategies and programmes for teachers suffering from career-related stress.

CHAPTER 4

PHASE TWO: INFORMATION GATHERING AND SYNTHESIS

EXISTING COPING STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS -- USING EXISTING INFORMATION RESOURCES INCLUDING AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

From Chapter 3 it was evident that a Gestalt theoretical paradigm gives structure to the literature and information collected. Within the context of an intervention research study, as stated in Chapter 2, it is important to determine what other researchers have done to address and understand the problem (De Vos, 2002(d):405). Relevant knowledge and sources of knowledge, including that of the researcher involved in teaching for the past thirty years, were thus identified, collected and integrated.

Through the information identified and collected, the researcher came to the conclusion that although factors causing teacher stress, and the consequences thereof, have been extensively researched a limited number of empirical evaluations of the effectiveness of stress management programmes was conducted.

Most research on stress prevention has been conducted in the health and human services areas, since work-related stress is very prevalent in these assistance professions (Brown &

Uehara, 1999:10). What will be presented in this chapter are those strategies discussed in connection with the stress experienced by teachers. It is important to realise that the purpose of coping with stress is broader than protecting the individual from threat. Coping means those responses which deal with a problem, reduce psychological distress or change the meaning of a situation.

According to Phillips (1993:195), teachers use both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused strategies are aimed at modifying or eliminating the problem while emotion-focused strategies are those which manage the emotional consequences of the stressor (Ross & Altmaier, 1994:30). Teachers' coping strategies are associated with their appraisal of a stressful situation. Teachers use more problem-focused strategies in encounters they appraise as changeable, and more emotion-focused forms of coping in situations they consider to be unchangeable. There is, however, no clear-cut consensus about which coping strategies are most effective.

In this chapter the researcher will discuss problem- and emotion-focused strategies, stress-management programmes implemented internationally and ultimately stress management programmes or approaches implemented in South Africa. In spite of existing strategies and programmes, teachers still suffer from stress. The researcher will therefore evaluate existing strategies and programmes from a Gestalt therapeutic perspective based on the principles awareness, dialogue and process.

4.2 PROBLEM- AND EMOTION-FOCUSED STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES.

Problem-focused stress management strategies involve direct actions aimed at changing or preventing negative emotions. This is achieved through either coping with the situation, reducing the problem or situation, or avoiding or changing the situation. Emotion-focused stress management strategies are also referred to as palliative strategies. The aim of these strategies is to provide stress relief and to indirectly treat burnout (Van den Berg, 2003:34 & 35).

4.2.1 PROBLEM- FOCUSED STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Problem-focused stress management strategies, involving direct actions aimed at changing or preventing negative emotions, include attitude adjustment, assertiveness training, an awareness of stress, cognitive and problem solving strategies, nutrition, various programmes for teachers at all levels, meaningful work and organisational changes.

4.2.1.1 Awareness of stress

Many successful stress intervention programmes begin with a knowledge and awareness of stress and burnout. This awareness includes information about the nature, signs, causes and symptoms of stress even a definition of stress (Beard, 1990:112; Brown & Uehara, 1999:11; Berkson, 2006:1). Awareness sessions should be provided in a non-threatening environment and should include updated information about the nature, signs, causes and symptoms of stress. This may include a definition of stress, the factors causing stress in schools, the frequency of stress and the consequences of stress for both teachers and learners (Hall, Wooster & Woodhouse, 1989:135; Dunham, 1992:123; Carson & Kuipers, 1998:160; Brown & Uehara, 1999:11; Bindhu & Sudheeshkumar, 2006:7). To this is added the need for teachers to deal with the reality of the situation and to take responsibility for their lives (Hall et al, 1989:136).

Part of the awareness process is thus the acknowledgement that stress exists. It is important that teachers are further aware of the possibility of the existence of stress in their colleagues (Dunham, 1992:124; Bindhu & Sudheeshkumar, 2006:7). The acknowledgement that stress is experienced either by the teacher in question, or by a colleague, may be difficult for teachers who associate stress with personal weakness and professional incompetence. Teachers should not only be aware of stress, but should

increase their self-awareness and admit to feelings of vulnerability and inadequacy. It is further important for teachers to check their self-perception against the perception of others (Hall et al, 1989:143). In the experience of the researcher, this lack of awareness is detrimental to teachers, because it is very often the competent teacher who lacks a positive awareness of the self, due to incidents which had occurred in their childhood.

In the experience of the researcher, teachers are unaware of the positive aspects of their work due to the multitude of factors causing stress. Dunham (1992:112) thus justly states that teachers should become aware of the following positive aspects of teaching:

- the general busyness of the day and the variety of tasks involved
- interaction with learners in a teaching situation
- the challenge of researching and presenting new topics
- the teacher's autonomy while presenting the lessons
- the constantly changing environment counter acting boredom
- problem solving opportunities
- leading learners to peak performance
- lessons which go well

Dunham (1992:116) also recommends that teachers become aware of priorities and therefore leave low priority school tasks. The teacher must also be aware that there must be a balance between work and personal life (McCann & Johannessen, 2004:5).

4.2.1.2 Attitude adjustment

Becoming aware of the existence of stress will lead to an attitude adjustment. A positive attitude towards life in general is an essential prerequisite in any kind of stress-management programme. A positive attitude can lead to coping with stress. It is thus important to accept that many pressures are characteristic of teaching. Teachers should realise that they have a varied and interesting job. They have to accept that some things will not get done and should decide on their own work standards instead of the standards set by management, thus they develop an internal locus of control. Teachers should

discipline themselves to do only one thing at a time and should come to realise that multi-tasking is stressful and leads to getting less done. It is further important not to take yourself or the day-to-day challenges too seriously and to accept that many pressures are an inevitable part of the profession (Dunham, 1992:116-117).

Stress should be seen as a test of maturity, which should be taken as a challenge. Greenberg (1984:98) is of the opinion that mental attitude alone can make a difference as to how a teacher reacts to stressors. In the same vein commitment is seen as a coping strategy because it becomes an indicator of a sense of pride in the professionalism of a teacher (Day et al, 2005:4; Hakenen et al, 2006:14).

Even the most stressed teacher should make a commitment to reducing stress. According to Greenberg (1984:99) a positive attitude towards stress-reduction is only second to recognising that stress exists and is taking its toll. This may result in positive change.

4.2.1.3 Assertiveness-training

Assertiveness is using effective communication to uphold your own rights and self-interest, without trampling on the rights and self-interest of others (Papworth, 2003:77). Assertiveness-training should be implemented to reduce the use of aggression (Hall et al, 1989:142). It is important to keep the two words “respect” and “integrity” in mind. To communicate effectively you need to be, and be perceived as, a person with integrity, knowledge and a degree of passion.

An important aspect of assertiveness is anger control. When teachers vent their anger, they risk losing respect and standing. When anger meets anger it escalates out of proportion; if it meets timidity it results in a false feeling of victory and when it meets assertiveness the angry person looks like a fool. Over and above the fact that anger is socially unacceptable, it is also bad for the health. Papworth (2003:88) suggests that keeping an “anger log” and moderating your language are simple techniques which can be used to reduce angry reactions.

4.2.1.4 Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies can be seen as problem-focused strategies, which may decrease emotional distress. These strategies are contrary to the inactive cognitive strategies, where teachers perceive themselves as helpless and conform to the managerial demands and wishes (Arikewuyo, 2003:198). Phillips (1993:195) extends this by stating that more problem-focused coping has a direct effect on reducing psychosocial health dysfunction. Problem solving strategies are seen to be effective because it decreases depersonalisation and increases personal accomplishment (Phillips, 1993:195). Problem-solving strategies include problem appraisal, talking about and identifying the source of stress and seeking more information about the problem (Arikewuyo, 2003: 198), which may lead to the restructuring of priorities, seeking clarification with the view to finding methods for managing and reducing stress (Arikewuyo, 2003:200). According to the outcome of a questionnaire involving 4000 Nigerian teachers 90% of teachers apply problem-solving strategies to cope with stress (Arikewuyo, 2003:202).

Professional development also resorts to active cognitive strategies counteracting the rut in which many teachers find themselves. There are various ways in which a teacher can develop professionally, from action research to self-study or distance education (Dunham, 1992:115; Holmes, 2005:134-135). In order to help teachers deal with new developments and changes that they face in their work, it is essential that professional development activities are organised on a regular basis (Kyriacou, 2000:117; Black, 2004:4). Holmes (2005:138) further indicates key factors in nurturing the mindset of development, namely flexibility, a positive attitude, ambition, honesty, receptivity, realism, communication, collaboration, patience and balance.

Professional development includes workshops for the whole staff within a school, as well as training for smaller groups on more specific subject related issues. Meetings away from the school and in a comfortable setting are also recommended. These meetings must be

well organised and of good content. It is important though that teachers see any form of professional development as answering their needs, otherwise they may feel that it is infringing on what little time they have to do other work. It is thus important that when arranging staff development the staff should have an influence on the choice of activities (Kyriacou, 2000:120). In an informal interview with a head of department of a primary school in Mpumalanga province, where the staff were exposed to various compulsory Saturday motivational and developmental programmes initiated by the principal, it became clear that the staff was very negative towards any form of intervention, due to the fact that they did not perceive these programmes as beneficial and thus caused even more stress. Teachers should thus perceive in-service training as enhancing their careers and self-efficacy, because professional development in itself can be a stress reliever.

The problem-solving approach bases the stress intervention on a holistic and comprehensive approach (Phillips, 1992:116). The aim is the learning of more effective coping skills. According to Phillips the problem-solving approach must be generic, transcending organisational and person-centred approaches. The model can be applied separately to each identified aspect of stress, the process itself should increase self-efficacy which can indirectly counter stress, and should include a feed-back loop which allows for monitoring, evaluation, and modification of the intervention, if necessary.

4.2.1.5 Human resource management

It is of the utmost importance that school managers have sound human-resource strategies in place. Performance issues should be addressed by revisiting job design, staff-enrichment and rotation, performance appraisal, feedback and staff evaluation (Beard, 1990:113; Ross & Altmaier, 1994:120; Holmes, 2005:102), role ambiguity and work over- and under-load (Carsons & Kuiper, 1998:159), as well as the elimination of tasks which have little value, especially when they interfere with time and energy, which could be used in the classroom (Black, 2004:4).

A very important human resource strategy, in the experience of the researcher, is recruitment and selection policies. Due to the unique character of each school it is vital to employ staff who will fit in with the existing staff and staff appraisal systems. When new staff members do not feel comfortable in a school, due to different value systems and work ethic, it is, in the experience of the researcher, who has been a principal of a secondary school, guaranteed that they will experience stress and ultimately leave the school.

Staff should receive training in people skills such as communication (Black, 2004:4), motivation, listening, negotiation and assertiveness (Ross & Altmaier, 1994:120). Ross and Altmaier (1994:120), Kyriacou (2000:101-104) as well as Holmes (2005:81 & 103) further recommend the development of group dynamics to improve group cohesion, social support, conflict management, dealing with diversity and leadership.

4.2.1.6 Induction programmes for teachers

The induction of new entrants to the teaching profession has long been an issue and has been recognised as patchy and of inconsistent quality. Professional development starts when a new teacher first enters schools. According to Kyriacou (2000:105) the induction needs of new teachers fall into two categories. First, there is the coming to grips with a knowledge and understanding of the school and how it operates. This can take the form of briefings and being given a copy of relevant documentation. Second, there are those needs involved in dealing with the demands facing the teachers in their new roles, which relate to the quality of their teaching, administration and managerial tasks.

The establishment of an induction tutor, whose primary role will be to assist in the professional development of newly qualified teachers during their induction period and in particular to build on their performance needs. Novice teachers reported that positive mentor and peer relationships had a great impact on the novice phase of their careers (Skovholt, 1994:173). An effective mentor should give support to novice teachers in the following ways: teaching, encouraging, counselling and befriending (Schlichte et al, 2005:36). Mentoring is a critical factor in eliminating feelings of isolation. McCann and

Johannessen (2004:7) recommend counselling programmes for novice teachers, as an extension of this practice.

Taking the above into consideration the British Parliament published a Green Paper called '*Green Paper Teachers – Meeting the Challenge of Change*' in 1998. One of the aims of the Green Paper was the institution of a statutory induction year for first year teachers as from 1999. The starting point of the induction was aimed at the identification of the strengths of newly trained teacher and their priorities for further professional development. The Government pledged funding to guarantee all new teachers a reduced teaching load, exclusion from pastoral duties such as a homeroom class and a structured programme of support to ensure that they have the time to consolidate and improve their performance (Prestage & Williams, 1999:35). The impact of the Green Paper was evaluated after a year of implementation, through questionnaires and informal interviews with novice teachers. There was little evidence of mentoring, mentors did not receive the promised training, the funding was not forthcoming and the quality of the induction programmes varied from school to school. This, in the researcher's opinion, is a universal problem, which causes novice teachers to either return to university to study in a new direction or to find a less stressful job.

Kyriacou (2000:105) justly states that induction processes will impact differently upon, and be interpreted differently by, individual novice teachers, because each will bring their own prior knowledge, experience and beliefs into their first teaching post. The mentor's knowledge, experience and values, on the other hand will, also have a profound affect upon the nature of the novice teacher's induction year. Novice teachers will experience their first year of teaching differently, based on the various school cultures which cannot be resolved by regulation of legislation.

Although one must agree with the induction programmes for novice teachers, it is important that preventative strategies should be part of teacher training (Esteve, 1989:147). Esteve expands on this by stating that the selection of teachers should be based more on their personalities than on their academic outcomes. Prospective teachers should receive

more organisational and relationship training than academic training. Systematic desensitising and stress-inoculation are preventative measures which should be part of teacher training.

With regard to more experienced teachers who are new to a school, an appropriate member of staff must get the responsibility for their development. This overlaps with teacher appraisal and with the principal's monitoring of staff performance. Kyriacou (2000:106) also mentions the needs of newly appointed principals. They are likely to need particular help, as they will be dealing with many types of situations for the first time, and induction programmes should pay particular attention to those problem situations where such help is important.

4.2.1.7 Meaningful work

Teaching must fulfil the teacher's altruistic, intellectual and spiritual needs. Teachers need to see the challenges at school as an indication that they are needed and not as an excuse to leave education (McCann & Johannessen, 2004:6). Even when the situation is ideal, a teacher will become restless if there is no change over a period of time because the teacher continues to grow (Cherniss, 1995:125). Even teachers, who have ambivalent feelings regarding change, should realise that change is an antidote for burnout. Teachers therefore need work which is intellectually challenging. The core of teaching is the planning and delivering of lessons and non-professional duties such as substituting for an absent teacher, compulsory extra-curricular and administrative duties.

Cary Cherniss (1995:121-134), after longitudinal research on teacher burnout, came to the conclusion that meaningful work could counter-act stress. Twelve years later they were two of the few who managed to regain the excitement and dedication they had when they began their careers. For teachers to sustain their caring and commitment over a long period of time there must be some balance between giving and getting. The more they give, the more rewarding the work must be for them, and meaningful work is seen as intrinsically rewarding. Teachers who were able to combat burnout, were those who discovered a way

to make their work intrinsically rewarding by cultivating a special interest such as getting involved in union matters or by starting a special curriculum interest. According to Cherniss (1995:129) it is important for a teacher to start a project from scratch and it must stretch over a period of time. It is interesting to note that Chris Kyriacou, who has been actively involved in the issue of teachers and career-related stress since 1985, underwrites and highly appraises the work done by Cherniss (Kyriacou, 2000:42-44).

Teachers want to feel that they make a difference in learners' lives, but often it is not enough to just make an impact, they need to be able to see the results of the impact they made. It must thus be tangible and unambiguous. Teaching a specific skill may answer to this need for the teachers, because a skill is measurable (Cherniss, 1995:123).

Although the researcher agrees with this and experienced the importance of meaningful work for the self-fulfilment of teachers, some schools will more readily allow the development of special interests and projects than others, and the teachers need some degree of autonomy and must have the support from the school management to realise the above.

4.2.1.8 Nutrition

The researcher found that all the stress intervention programmes emphasised the importance of nutrition. In her experience teachers are notorious for drinking coffee and eating on the run. According to Greenberg (1984:105) teachers must be aware of the fact that they eat fast foods at a fast pace due to time constraints. He has observed that the intake of coffee amongst teachers is high and should be limited. One cup of coffee contains 108 milligrams of caffeine and at 250 milligrams the body begins to experience adverse effects in the form of stress reaction symptoms. Caffeine is also present in chocolate and colas and should thus also be avoided.

Teachers should try to maintain a healthy diet of plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, high fibre and freshly cooked food. They should avoid too much sugar, salt and saturated fats

(Greenberg, 1984:103-104; Kyriacou, 2000:97; Papworth, 2003:26), and they have to eat small amounts of food on a regular basis to maintain their blood sugar levels (Holmes, 2005:125).

The most common stress disease related to dietary habits is obesity because it creates physical and emotional difficulties. An obese person is, by the stern standards of the western society, unattractive, and this simple fact hampers not only the relations with people, but also the individual's self-image (Greenberg, 1984:104). This is not the case in the South African black cultures though, where obese women are, in the experience of the researcher, more attractive to black men than skinny ones. A different approach should thus be applied in South Africa.

Papworth (2003:36) states that if teachers go on a slimming diet, weight must be lost slowly. The keys to maintaining a sound nutritional programme are moderation and common sense. Add to this a diet containing a variety of foods and less junk food and you are on your way to a less stressful life. The taking of vitamins C, B2 and B6 are also believed to make teachers less prone to stress (Klos, 2003:233).

4.2.1.9 School management

There is much that school managements can do to ensure that the level of stress experienced by staff is kept as low as possible. A survey done by the British Health and Education Authority in 1988 (Kyriacou, 2000:104) indicated that leadership skills, practical skills and inter-personal skills of principals and deputy principals may create stress for teachers. The lack of leadership, inconsistent aims, policies and expectations, as well as autocratic leadership must be addressed. It is therefore important that school managers create a balance between ordering and assisting on the one hand, and persuading and advising on the other. Important information must be communicated timeously, especially in a country such as South Africa where so many changes to policy, procedure and curriculum are evident. Feedback to staff is very important and recognition of and

feedback to both new and seasoned teachers will lead to even more dedication (Cherniss, 1995:144).

Trust is of particular importance (Cherniss, 1995:140, Skovholt, 1994:174). Cherniss develops this indicating that many factors affect the quality of support received from the principal. From the principal's point of view it depends primarily on the teacher's performance. The teacher, on the other hand, is likely to attribute any problems to the principal's unrealistic expectations or prejudices. To a third party it may be a clash of personalities. Principals, on the other hand, experience considerable stress themselves due to a lack of support from the community and the education departments and both these groups need to be educated on how to support school management. Cherniss (1995:144) also points out that teachers, who experience understanding from school management regarding their need for flexibility, due to the conflicts between work demands and family responsibilities, experience less stress.

Kyriacou (2000:100) goes on to recommend the implementation of group problem solving, the development of a supportive school culture, the accessibility of occupational health services and the employment of assistance schemes. Focusing on participatory decision-making may increase organisational competence and give teachers a greater sense of control. Teachers must feel part of, if not in control of the improvement process. Teachers must thus not be seen as "something" to be managed. Although there seems to be a general consensus that teachers' participation in the decision-making process decreases stress levels, research done by Van Veen and Slegers (2006:103) indicated that some teachers perceive this participation as interfering with their primary task, namely teaching.

The importance of improving the community's perception of teachers is identified and emphasised by Kyriacou (2000:104). The researcher agrees with this, because in her experience the lack of respect for teachers from parents and learners alike are an important stress factor. As part of the auto-ethnographic description the researcher is also of the opinion that the public's perception of schools must also be improved. This is a very

important factor in South Africa where the neighbourhood characteristics surrounding schools have changed to the disadvantage of schools.

Hand-in-hand with the above statement goes the physical school environment. Due to the lack of resources and involvement of education authorities in the maintenance of the schools in South Africa, school managements, supported by the schools' governing bodies, should attempt to improve the school environment by providing larger class rooms, creating a green environment, controlling noise levels, and should see that there is an adequate level of technical and clerical resources (Kyriacou, 2000:108).

4.2.1.10 Task-orientated strategies

Task-oriented coping predicts the positive outcomes of most of the coping strategies of teachers, because of the alleviation of time pressures (Sann, 2003:498). Task-orientated coping strategies, combined with the meaningfulness of the work done, increase the level well-being of teachers. Dunham (1992:112) is of the opinion that planning ahead, working harder and the development of different teaching styles to counteract the monotony of presenting the same material, may raise a teacher's self-esteem and may remove the cause of a stressful situation.

Ross and Altmaier (1994:20) on the other hand recommend a higher sense of control to alleviate stress. They refer to research done by Frankenhaeuser and Johansson in 1986, which revealed that workers who can pace their own work and decide on their own tasks showed fewer stress symptoms than workers who did not have control over their work environment.

Time management is a universal problem experienced by teachers. Over and above training on how to management time effectively (Kyriacou, 2000:101), school managers should reduce time pressures. Strategies recommended to address time pressures are the providing of more non-contact time for teachers to do marking, preparation as well as the completion of administrative tasks and ensuring that demanding activities do not follow too close to each other (Kyriacou, 2000:108).

4.2.1.11 Whole school policies

School managers must ensure that there are whole-school policies in operation to ensure that problems which can cause stress are kept to the minimum and teachers are clear on what action to take when problems arise (Kyriacou, 2000:109; Black, 2004:4). The most important policy which can have an impact on reducing teacher stress is a whole-school policy on discipline. The main benefit of a whole-school policy on discipline is that it helps to ensure that teachers are acting in a consistent manner, and learners can thereby develop a clear view of which behaviour is acceptable and which not. A further advantage of a whole-school policy on discipline is that it generates a spirit of camaraderie and teamwork amongst staff, which can have positive benefits in contributing to an ethos of mutual support amongst colleagues in other aspects of their work.

Problem-focused stress management strategies are implemented when a teacher perceives a situation as changeable. Emotion-focused strategies, on the other hand, are implemented when a teacher perceives the situation as unchangeable.

4.2.2 EMOTION-FOCUSED STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Emotion-focused stress management strategies, also referred to as palliative strategies, aim to provide stress relief and to indirectly treat burnout. There are a large number of emotion-focused strategies and are usually implemented when a person perceives the stressful situation as unchangeable. Many of these strategies are also implemented along with problem-focused strategies resulting in an often more holistic approach to stress management. These strategies will also be discussed in alphabetical order and not in order of importance. The researcher will only make reference to the strategies mentioned in stress management approaches for teachers.

4.2.2.1 Alternative therapies

Alternative therapies, particularly those derived from Eastern traditions, such as acupuncture and the Japanese therapy called Reiki, are used to manage stress. Aroma therapy through massage, soaking and inhaling of oils with therapeutic properties are also used (Klos, 2003:231). Medicinal plants are used by teachers with their roots in traditional medicines (Klos, 2003:233).

4.2.2.2 Animal assisted therapy

Dunham (1992:113) indicates that cuddling your cat is an out-of-school activity that may release stress. Female teachers, according to Klos (2003:228) tend to own a pet, which serves as a buffer against stress.

4.2.2.3 Avoidance

Avoidance is an inactive behavioural coping strategy and implemented by teachers who try to avoid the sources of stress. Teachers often keep away from situations conceived as potentially stressful, or extricate themselves from the situation and separate them from people who cause stressful situations. Because the majority of stressors in education cannot be changed, coping strategies distracting from or ignoring the stressor are sometimes appropriate (Phillips, 1993:207). In a survey done by the teachers union of Chicago in 2005, 21% of teachers indicated that they use avoidance to cope with stressful events (Guwaldi, 2006:512).

According to Phillips (1993:195) male teachers find avoidance-coping to be more effective than solving the problem. It was found, though, that avoidance-coping tends to increase teachers' emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, resulting in passionless teaching, which leaves learners uninspired and unmotivated (Berkson, 2006:4). It also seems as if

teachers who use avoidance-coping are those who have less support from colleagues and people outside of the school environment.

Bindhu and Sudheeshkumar (2006:3) recommend another approach to avoidance, called 'monitoring', where one attends carefully to the stressful event and then avoids thinking about it. According to the researcher, this approach is healthier for the teacher, learners and the school at large.

4.2.2.4 Biblio-therapy

Holmes (2005:168) and Papworth (2003:69) recommend writing for health. It is never harmful to write your feelings down, provided that it is private. There are two types of communication namely intra- and inter-personal communication. Intra-personal communication is internal and therefore free. Inter-personal communication is external and you therefore have to acknowledge the other person's reality. Journaling is intra-personal. Whatever it is that you commit to paper ensure that there is at least one positive thing said about the person or situation.

Hall, Wooster and Woodhouse (1989:140) recommend that teachers who enrolled for a stress management programme should make diary entries for four weeks before the start of a stress management programme. This will indicate the degree of responsibility taken by teachers for what happens in class, whether they doubt their own effectiveness, and whether they over-react when dealing with learners.

4.2.2.5 Breathing

Breathing (Dunham, 1992:116) is perceived to be the starting point of all emotion-focused stress management strategies. Breathing exercises involve various techniques for infusing the body with oxygen and energy, for the purpose of improved health and relaxation (Adamson, 2002:306). It is important that good posture accompanies breathing.

4.2.2.6 Biofeedback

Biofeedback (Beard, 1990:112; Ross & Altmaier, 1994:73-74; Adamson, 2002: 307), derived from the words biological feedback, is a high-tech stress management technique which grew out of several fields, including psychology and physiology. It was found that receiving immediate feedback or information on physiological factors, could lead to individuals learning to control visceral parameters such as brain waves, heart rate, muscle tension, body temperature, stomach acidity and blood pressure. Since the bodily functions, which are the target of biofeedback, are not, in general, detectable, special equipment is used to alert the individual to physiological changes. To monitor these changes, electrical sensors are attached to the body to detect, for example, myocardial activity, muscle tension and brain wave activity. Transducers are used to measure blood flow and photoplethysmographs to measure pulse rate. There are two types of biofeedback namely **operant conditioning** biofeedback, using physiological information to bring about desired physiological changes and **augmented** biofeedback, which is more commonly used as a stress management technique and which provides the individual with continuous feedback about physiological functioning.

There is some controversy regarding the successfulness of biofeedback as a stress management technique. It is a time consuming and costly technique and not within the financial ability of the majority of teachers. Greenberg (1984:134) is of the opinion though, that a teacher can eventually proceed without the equipment, because he knows how to reduce high blood pressure or muscular tension.

4.2.2.7 Biomedicine

Biomedicine is used in combination with talk therapy. This model integrates the following models: biological, psychoanalytical, learning theory, cognitive, human existential and socio-cultural (Klos, 2003:231). The uniqueness of each individual is recognised in this approach.

4.2.2.8 Communication

Teachers must share their success stories with each other (Esteve, 1989:49). This should include methodological, personal and social aspects of teaching. Berkson (2006:2) states that teachers should not only communicate their successes, but also their frustrations, to prevent other teachers from feeling inadequate. In the experience of the researcher, starting the school day relating a success story motivates teachers and reinforces the fact that teaching and the teacher's efforts are not in vain. This is also a learning process and several staff members have made successful changes to their teaching strategies as a result of these sharing sessions during the briefing meetings before school starts in the morning.

4.2.2.9 Creative techniques

Exercises involving drawing, fantasy and touch, prove effective and help teachers to come in contact with personal matters as well. By avoiding the normal strong use of verbal activity, new forms are experienced and old habits are bypassed (Hall et al, 1989:138). The researcher has found that this was the only reference made to creative techniques being used as stress-release for teachers. Creative techniques are successful ways to express emotions, and may be a solution for teachers who find it difficult to verbalise their emotions.

4.2.2.10 Emotive insight

Teachers' emotions cannot be separated from their cognitions and provide valuable insight into what is at stake for the teachers. Although several studies of the emotions of teachers were done, it seems as if a systematic understanding of teachers' emotions in relation to all the changes in education still lacks (Van Veen & Slegers, 2006:86). Emotions are defined as the product of the appraisal of those environmental events that are perceived as most relevant to the individual's goals and well-being. It is thus both an emotional and cognitive appraisal. The appraisal process involves continual evaluation of the significance of what is happening with one's well-being in mind. These continual evaluations are a core element

in the emotion-process. The primary components of appraisal, according to Van Veen and Slegers (2006:90), pertain to whether and how an encounter is relevant to a person's well-being, namely goal relevance, goal congruence and goal content. Goal relevance is the extent to which an encounter touches on personal goals. Goal congruence is the extent to which an encounter is consistent or inconsistent with what the person wants. Goal congruence leads to positive emotions and goal incongruence to negative emotions.

Holmes (2005:108) emphasises the importance of emotional literacy and points out three important skills leading to emotional literacy, namely emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. Although she does not elaborate on emotional intelligence, she does recommend that teachers read self-help books on emotional intelligence. According to Papworth (2003:80) emotional literacy also refers to communication and developing effective body language

An important aspect of emotive insight is worry-control. Worry is corrosive and destructive of emotional resilience, because it is an ever-present dysfunction. Papworth (2003:90) suggests that teachers, who have many issues which are troublesome, should write them all down. Once they have written everything down and looked at it objectively, teachers will realise that they have no control over the majority of them. It is thus important for them to deal with those things that they can deal with, and forget those they cannot affect. There are two forces acting in one's life, namely one's concerns and one's influence. If one's influence is greater, one will be able to progress.

4.2.2.11 Hobbies and out-of-school activities

Recreational activities will promote total health, physical, emotional, mental and social well-being. It also creates avenues to achieve a more abundant family and social life. One day during the weekend should be devoted to non-school or family activities and the attending of an evening class is also recommended (Dunham, 1992:117).

Hobbies require attention and time and therefore take the mind, and often the body, away from the daily routine. Hobbies are by individual choice and can be pursued at the teacher's own pace and can fit any budget. A night at home listening to music is an affordable antidote for stress (Greenberg, 1984:137; Dunham, 1992:117; Papworth, 2003:62). Kloss (2003:226) states that women with traditional roots seek stress release in music, singing and dance.

In research done in Nigeria, Arikewuyo (2003:202) found that although strategies such as physical exercise or the watching of films are indicated as popular coping strategies, the majority of Nigerian teachers are not involved in either. This is important in the South African context, because the larger percentage of teachers is also either unaware how effective this coping strategy is, or do not have these recreational facilities. This correlates with Motseke's (1998:219) finding that township secondary school teachers relieve their stress by smoking and drinking alcohol instead.

Becoming involved in community projects (Dunham, 1992:115) is not only a way in which teachers can divert their stress, but due to their knowledge and experience they can take the lead and fulfil their need for meaningful work in this way.

4.2.2.12 Meditation

Meditation (Beard, 1990:112; Klos, 2003:231; Gulwadi, 2006:512), which is also related to self-hypnosis (Greenberg, 1984:134), is a mental escape from daily routine. It is a relaxation technique where in a person reduces blood pressure and the need for oxygen through a calm, restful thought- process. Meditation is a mental tool, the purpose of which is to strengthen the mind's ability to sustain attention (Winzelberg and Luskin, 1999:70). Meditation is a simple mental practice where the meditator is instructed to focus on one object, thought, part of the body, breathing or sound, to the exclusion of all else. The success of meditation lies in its physiological effects, which are a relaxation response due to reduced somatic arousal (Winzelberg & Luskin, 1999:70). Meditation can reduce the physical manifestations of stress, such as fatigue, gastronomic symptoms, emotion and

behaviour, as well as a reduction in the state of anxiety and an increase in self-efficacy. Research done by Dr Tiaan Kirsten of the University of the North West (Potchefstroom campus) indicated a dramatic decrease in the perception of stress, physical symptoms, obsessive-compulsive symptoms and symptoms of depression, hostility and phobic anxiety among teachers who practise meditation (Arikewuyo, 2003:203).

Although there is more than one meditation approach which will not be discussed for the purpose of this research, it is recommended that a teacher should start with a twenty-minute meditation exercise. After mastering the technique, the same benefits can be realised in a shorter period of time (Dunham, 1992:119). Papworth (2003:66) emphasises the importance of breathing and the relaxation of the muscles as part of the meditation technique, and Winzelberg and Luskin (1999:71) are of the opinion that meditation cannot merely be taught as a relaxation technique without the subjects understanding stress and what they can expect from stress management training.

4.2.2.13 Neuro-associative programming

Neuro-associative programming was developed by Tony Robins (Papworth, 2003:52). In this technique a simple action is associated with a specific reaction or feeling. Once the association has been made, deliberately repeating the simple action is enough to generate the reaction or feeling which one wishes to create. This “calm switch” is an association between pressing the middle finger and thumb of one’s dominant hand together and a feeling of calm. Once the association has been made, the calm feeling can be recreated by deliberately touching one’s finger and thumb together. It will take approximately a week to internalise the technique.

4.2.2.14 Self-nurturing

Teachers, as with others in the helping-professions, focus on the difference or changes that they can bring about in the lives of others (Skovholt, 2001:127). Teachers thus often neglect themselves in the process of nurturing learners. Teachers can nurture themselves in

various ways, some of which have been discussed under different headings. Those not mentioned elsewhere are relishing small victories and the development of balanced interpersonal relationships, where the teacher is not only the giver, but also the receiver. Teachers need to learn how to set boundaries and say “No”, to unreasonable helping requests.

The emotional-self needs to be cared for. Therapists have supervision and ‘therapy for the therapist’ has been invented (Skovholt, 2001:146-162) and a similar approach should be invented for teachers. Holmes (2005:126) emphasises the need for professional counsellors. The key to nurturing the financial- self is to spend less and invest more. In the helping-professions the remuneration is mediocre and teachers must be financially assertive. Maintaining a sense of humour will sustain the teacher who is faced with serious human problems on a daily basis (Holmes, 2005:126). Nurturing the loving-self, which will also be discussed under “relationships outside of the school environment”, is a powerful source of professional vitality, and enables teachers to withstand significant professional stress. This form of nurturing often takes on the form of a close relationship with one person or with the teacher’s children. Teachers are surrounded by learners and colleagues throughout the day. It is thus important to nurture the solitary-self. Solitude is an antidote for people in the caring professions where they have intense interaction with people. Solitude must not be confused with loneliness though (Greenberg, 1984:136; Skovholt, 1994:162; Papworth, 2003:56).

Vacations also offer teachers a chance to remove themselves from their daily routines, and the people involved, and to become refreshed. Long vacations are often expensive and require planning. Short vacations should be taken whenever needed or desired, and several short vacations throughout the year can be very relaxing (Greenberg, 1984:138) and nurturing. A large number of teachers indicate sleep as a form of stress-relief (Berkson, 2006:7). A person needs between six and eight hours of sleep every day. If one’s pattern has been one of a night-owl causing one to sleep less than the required number of hours, one’s body can and should be tuned to change this. Dunham (1992:117) also recommends a power-nap to revitalise one’s strengths. Holmes (2005:124) adds voice-care to the self-

nurturing of teachers because of threats, ranging from a dry atmosphere to board pen fumes and chalk dust, as well as raising the voice, to a teacher's voice throughout the school day.

In the researcher's experience, teachers do not nurture themselves, blaming it on the lack of time.

4.2.2.15 Physical activity

Research has consistently shown that routine vigorous activity is an effective strategy for preventing the negative effects of stress including depression (Beard, 1990:112; Dunham, 1992:113; Papworth, 2003:39; Holmes, 2005:170; Berkson, 2006:7 Gulwadi, 2006:512). Physical activity or exercise is a way to nurture the self (Skovholt 1994:155) and is a biological necessity. Research has shown that unused muscles, brains, and other organs lose their efficiency (Greenberg, 1984:116). To keep fit, teachers must exercise their bodies, as well as their minds. Inactivity deprives people of their ability and need to create and build, and this in turn, causes tension and insecurity, which stems from aimlessness. Type, frequency and duration of the exercise are important variables to consider for stress-prevention or reduction. The type of exercise producing the most positive effects, is aerobic exercise, using large muscles to move body weight against gravity or over a distance with rhythmic or dynamic movements. Examples of aerobic exercises are jogging, cycling and swimming (Ross & Altmaier, 1994:75) and walking (Greenberg, 1984:127; Papworth, 2003:41). Walking has minimal risks involved and can be done during school hours by walking around the school grounds away from the children.

Whatever the programme or form of exercise, it should be regular, though. A major problem with using exercise in helping teachers deal with stress is 'adherence'. It is difficult for adults to adhere to a regular schedule of exercise (Ross and Altmaier, 1994:76). Teachers should take into account that even household chores such, as gardening or cleaning the windows, are construed as exercise.

Although physical exercise is important in stress management, Brown and Uehara, (1999:12) indicate that it should be combined with other stress-management strategies to be really effective.

4.2.2.16 Relationships with and support from colleagues

The implementation of teamwork, and the knowledge that you can rely on your colleagues, are an important coping mechanisms. It is to a teacher's advantage to have a colleague with whom it is possible to let off steam (Gulwadi, 2006:512). Relationships should thus be nurtured (Dunham, 1992:117; Phillips, 1993:199; McCann & Johannessen, 2004:4; Day et al, 2005:13). Teachers with more supervisory support, report less emotional exhaustion, more positive attitudes toward learners and greater personal accomplishment (Phillips, 1993:199). Social support in the work place can reduce the impact of stressors on a variety of outcomes such as psychological wellbeing, job satisfaction, and the risk of physical illness. High burnout teachers reported lower social support than low burnout teachers (Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 1999:518). Research further indicated that support from colleagues is a better buffer against teacher stress than other forms of social support. Although there is a definite advantage for teachers to collaborate with colleagues, this must not be an administratively regulated "*contrived collegiality*" (Phillips, 1993:203; Van Veen & Slegers, 2006:103).

Teachers represent a fund of experience and knowledge that stress-interventionists should not undervalue (Phillips, 1993:197). It is thus a good idea to pool teachers' coping strategies and here again teamwork is very important. According to Phillips (1993:198) problem-focused support strategies are implemented by teachers who perceive a higher availability of social support and those who use more emotion-focused strategies and avoidance-coping. Emotional-support seems to be the most important of the various supports. According to the Job Demand-Control Model of Karasek (Sann, 2003:490), social support from colleagues can buffer the potential negative effects of high demands on well-being and health. This support will enhance motivation and the learning of new skills.

Teachers working with particularly stimulating and supportive colleagues are the most successful in sustaining their commitment and dedication (Cherniss, 1995:145). Teachers should thus be assisted in sustaining their enthusiasm and commitment to their work (Day et al, 2005:5). This view supports Dunham's (1992:116) statement that withdrawal from negative staff members has been identified as a coping strategy by teachers. The researcher agrees with this and therefore defuses situations which may lead to negativity and emphasises the avoidance of negative staff, every staff meeting. This has proved to be very successful and even staff members who tend to be negative, adjusted their attitudes.

It is interesting that research done by Motseke (1998:218) indicated that teachers who are involved in the training of extra-curricular activities indicated lower stress levels than those who were not involved. It seems as if their relationships with parents and learners were better, thus it is important to nurture relationships through extra-curricular activities, although this is one of the areas indicated as taking up valuable marking or preparation time.

Support as intervention should, however, be seen as only one facet of a stress-management programme and not as a free-standing intervention. The reciprocal characteristics of normal social relationships are the elements that should be captured in stress interventions emphasising social support in schools.

4.2.2.17 Relationships outside the school environment

The importance of social support in occupational stress is critical, according to Ross and Altmaier (1994:27-28). Social support can be viewed quantitatively or qualitatively. Quantitative social support indicates the number of individuals one can call friends and qualitative social support indicates individuals' perception of the degree to which the social support has met their need for support. Qualitative support can be seen as emotional support, social integration, tangible support, informational support, esteem support, as well as the nurturing of others. This social support can form a buffer to prevent or alleviate occupational stress (Dunham, 1992:114; Gulwadi, 2006:512). Social support derived from

friends, family and professionals in the community leads individuals to believe that they are cared for, loved, valued and esteemed, belong to a network of communication and mutual obligation and are trusted and respected (Greenberg, 1984:98; Moseke, 1998:114).

Supportive relationships with spouses in order to use them as a sounding board or as a source of advice are recommended as a coping method to reduce stress. Not only does this provide overt and tacit reassurance, but also because of the physical benefits of a loving and satisfying sexual life (Dunham, 1992:113). It is also important to assess how well you deal with problems in your home life. Sometimes the demands at home are more pressing than those at school and must then receive priority attention (Kyriacou, 2000:94).

A large number of teachers have dual-career relationships and it is important to deal with marital problems generated when one or more of the partners are showing signs of stress. Communication in a non-accusatory and relaxed way and careful listening to each other is very important. Teachers should tell their partners about problems at work and should not assume that they will automatically know when they have had a bad day. Although stress may cause teachers to feel depressed and they want to withdraw from people, Holmes (2005:170) emphasises that teachers must communicate what they feel and that they need to get involved in group activities. Partners should focus on the positive and should not take work-stress out on each other. Activities should be enjoyed together and house hold chores should be shared (Kyriacou, 2000:95).

4.2.2.18 Relaxation

Relaxation is a form of meditation or a state of concentration. It is vitally important for one to make time for deep physical relaxation (Gulwadi, 2006:512). Papworth (2003:47) justifiably states that the benefit lies in the fact that you cannot be stressed and relaxed at the same time. By using the mind to focus on an object, image or thought, all distractions associated with every day life are cancelled out. The purpose of the relaxation-response according to Ross and Altmaier (1994:72) is to counter balance the stress-response. Ten to fifteen minutes relaxation per day is recommended to achieve a restful state with a drop in

metabolism and heart rate, a marked decrease in oxygen consumption and a decrease in blood pressure and muscle tension. This state will lead to less anxiety, better coping abilities, a new found acceptance of self and a calm more philosophical attitude.

Greenberg (1984:132) lists relaxation techniques available to teachers. Although some relaxation techniques may require time, a great deal of relaxation can be achieved in a very short period of time. Greenberg (1984:132) mentions meditation, biofeedback, self-hypnosis, massage, a warm bath and pampering, physical exercise, time alone, music, hobbies, short vacations and time with friends, as relaxation techniques.

4.2.2.20 Religion

Spiritual well-being, including involvement in religious activities, is an important factor to eliminate stress (Holmes, 2005:165). Regular church attendance proves to be effective and teachers who are more religious suffer less from stress (Klos, 2003:232). An active spiritual or religious life can help teachers in their search for meaning and understanding of the painful human realities seen at school on a daily basis. In informal interviews the researcher determined that school principals who felt murderous towards children at the end of the week felt positive towards the same children after they had been to church on Sunday. These principals clearly mentioned church attendance and not the weekend away from school as the reason for the positive change.

4.2.2.21 Self-esteem enhancement

There should be an approach in terms of self- or identity preservation (Van Veen & Slegers, 2006:86). According to Holmes (2005:175) self-respect on the other hand, is a more useful concept for teachers than self-esteem, because if you do not respect yourself nobody else, including the learners, will respect you.

Over and above the recommendation of separate stress management strategies, there are researchers who have developed stress management programmes.

4.3 EXISTING STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS

The researcher will discuss selected existing stress-management programmes under two sub-sections, namely international and South African programmes. Neither international, nor South African researchers, suggest “quick fix” methods for coping with stress.

4.3.1 INTERNATIONAL STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES

Much has been written about by international researchers with regard to stress-management programmes for teachers. Although a number of programmes, with slight variations, have been developed by various researchers, not all the researchers and/or the variations will be discussed for the purpose of this research.

4.4.1.1 Claire Hayes’ coping triangle

According to Hayes (2006:4-15) it is important not to focus on proving stress, but to understand it and to do something constructive to cope with it. As a means of understanding stress she uses the following stress equation:

$$\textit{Stress} = \frac{\textit{stressor}}{\textit{perception} + \textit{sup port}}$$

The **stressor** indicates the source of stress, **perception** is how it is interpreted by the person and **support** is the internal and external sources used by the person to alleviate stress. When comparing the death of a loved one to a broken nail for example, it is normal to suffer stress and experience feelings of sadness, anxiety and fear when a loved one dies. When the same feelings are present when a person breaks a nail though, it must be seen as a small incident in a long line of insignificant stressors. The difference is that when a loved one dies, there is a lot of external support and the person is probably aware that the deceased is not suffering any longer. In the case of the nail there will not really be external

support and the person may see herself as stupid because she can't even keep her nails intact. The point is, that it is often the little things in life which overwhelm a teacher.

Teachers are certainly faced by big stressors all the time and need to balance the needs of learners and curriculum and organisational demands. On the other hand, there are the sometimes hardly recognised events that can accumulate rapidly in a teacher's day for example a knock on the door interrupting a lesson, rain keeping learners indoors, learners arriving late for class and the inevitable interruptions by the intercom. Teachers need to make sense of these stressors, instead of just falling into familiar coping patterns without realising that they have a choice as to how they want to perceive or interpret the situation. The importance is that they should raise their awareness and understanding of what is happening, to acknowledge their feelings and to explore alternative ways of thinking and behaving.

The first step in the 'Coping Triangle' is to write down, as clearly as possible, thoughts, feelings and actions in and about a specific situation. The second step is to understand what the feelings and thoughts are, how they impact on each other and how in turn they can be affected by or affect a teacher's actions.

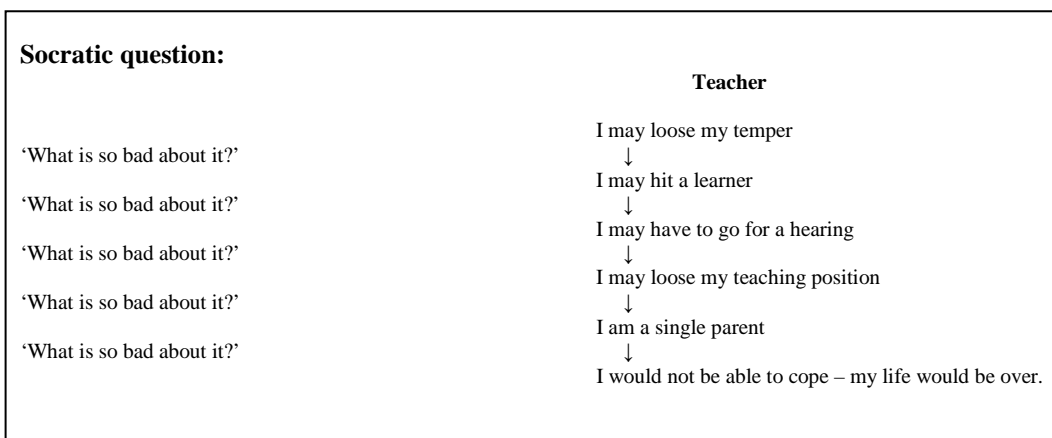
Hayes points out that people differ in their responses to their feelings. Some block out the feelings, other monitor each changing sensation in the body which may result in misinterpretation, anxiety or even terror. It is thus important to link a sick feeling in your stomach with parents' evening, instead of paying attention to thoughts such as 'My neighbour's cancer started with a sick feeling in the stomach'. Hayes (2006:10) indicates that "*if a feeling makes sense it is OK*" even if it is a bad feeling. Feelings which are buried too deeply may eventually surface in some form of illness.

Thoughts are automatic – it is thus almost impossible to consciously 'not think'. Thoughts are powerful and can evoke every type of feeling there is – from anger to sadness or from joy to resentment. It is thus important to become aware of your thoughts, and become

aware of how critical they can be of self and others. Hayes suggests that teachers should make a point of reading their thoughts without allowing these to become part of them.

Actions occur so quickly that people may think that they are automatic, which in fact they are not. Actions are in the majority of cases learned responses to stimuli in the form of internal or external thoughts, feelings or other actions. It is thus important to become aware of your behaviour and change it. This, according to Hayes is a cycle and although teachers should control their thoughts, feelings and actions, teachers should examine their core beliefs which control and direct their thoughts, feelings and actions.

Core beliefs are what we really believe and without awareness of them change would be very difficult. Trying to convince teachers to change their thoughts using logic is difficult and often unsuccessful. It is thus important to understand a person's feelings. Hayes (2006:12) suggests a technique known as 'Socratic Questioning' or as Burns calls it the 'Downward Arrow technique'. Through this technique, as illustrated below, teachers will become aware of the true reason for their fear. In this example the real reason for the teacher's fear of losing his/her temper is the fact that financially it will be detrimental to lose his/her job not because (s)he is scared of hitting a learner.



Core beliefs are thus very personal and it cannot assume that everyone's surface fear has the same underlying core belief. Several people may be scared to lose their tempers, but for

different reasons. Once teachers are aware of their underlying core beliefs, something can be done about it.

In conclusion Hayes (2006:15) points out that it is not easy to change a feeling. If you tell somebody not to worry about the upcoming teacher evaluation, it will actually trigger a worrying feeling. To counteract this feeling Hayes created the 'Coping Sentence' ***'I feel _____ because _____ but _____.'*** The 'Coping Sentence' helps to identify the feeling and link it to something which enables the person to acknowledge that the feeling in itself makes sense and is not wrong. The words which come after the 'but' are crucial, though. These words must be so obviously true that they give immediate relief, rather than encouraging the person to dismiss or challenge it. Thus: ***'I feel scared because my subject facilitator is coming to evaluate my work but all my work is according to the prescribed requirements'***

4.3.1.2 Elizabeth Holmes – The way to teacher well-being

In the final chapter of her book: *"Teacher well-being. Looking after yourself and your career in the classroom"* Elizabeth Holmes gives a quick-reference action guide intended to offer instant guidance when teachers feel under stress. Much of the guidance referred to in the quick reference guide, is explained and expanded on in the relevant chapters of her book. These guidelines are similar to those recommended by other researchers. Her action guide includes problem-focused strategies such as improved work strategies and time management and emotion-focused strategies such as being positive, awareness and meditation. Holmes also recommends building a positive self-esteem and the combating of negative self-talk.

4.3.1.3 Chris Kyriacou – Stress busting for teachers

Chris Kyriacou (2000) gives in his book *"Stress-busting for Teachers"* a detailed plan to combat or prevent career-related stress experienced by teachers. This approach is a combination of cognitive behavioural and emotional strategies. It is pre-emptive and can be

implemented to ensure that many stressful situations do not arise. These preventative strategies fall into five main categories, namely time management, assertiveness training, organisational skills, physical health and mental health.

Kyriacou (2000:62-63) mentions surveys done by Cockburn and Benmansour with both primary and secondary school teachers, to determine which coping strategies are used most frequently to deal with stress. These coping strategies fall in either cognitive-behavioural or emotional-strategies and include keeping a sound perspective, staying calm during confrontations as well as support structures in and out of school. Every teacher has a unique set of sources of stress, though, and needs to develop his/her own way of dealing with the experience of stress. The ability to cope effectively with stress will be enhanced by understanding what type of person you are and how this relates to your experience of stress (Kyriacou, 2000:83).

Mental techniques are anything teachers can do to alter their perception of a situation. Stress, according to Kyriacou (2000:85), is triggered by individuals' perception of a threat to their self-esteem or well-being. If a teacher can perceive a situation in a way that is less threatening, it will mitigate the experience of stress. Kyriacou suggests perspective, a sense of humour, a positive attitude and emotional control as antidotes for stress.

Physical techniques are things you can do that physically reduce the feelings of tension and frustration generated by the experience of stress. Physical techniques are very important in coping with stress because many of the signs of stress that will be conveyed to colleagues, learners and parents, stem from the physical consequences of being very tense and anxious, for example a shrill voice, clenched teeth and sweating. Five physical techniques to reduce stress are reducing bodily tension, taking breaks at school, relaxation after school, exercise and self-nurturing.

The value of Kyriacou's contribution to the reduction of the career-related stress experienced by teachers is the fact that his strategies had been tested within schools before it was published and that the existing strategies applied by teachers were also taken into

account. The researcher used the approach in this book, in 2003, as in-service training to help the teachers on her staff combat stress. Although she did experience it as successful at the time, reinforcement was necessary to sustain the results.

4.3.1.4 Lap and Attridge – worksite intervention

Lap and Attridge's (2000:229-231) worksite intervention conducted at a public inner city high school, stretched over one year. The intervention culminated from studies indicating that workshops can effectively reduce the stress experienced by secondary school teachers. The programme featured monthly multiple interventions of short duration, which focused largely on the teachers' ability to understand and cope with stress factors. Over and above the professionals who came in to implement the intervention programme, the principal, school nurse and staff advisory committee were also involved in the programme. Although the results of the study showed a remarkable reduction in the stress levels of the teachers of the experimental school, Lap and Attridge concluded by recommending interventions geared towards changing the organisational or system factor levels causing much of the stress.

4.3.1.5 Dennis Lawrence – Rational Emotive Therapy

Rational-Emotive therapy, from here on referred to as RET, owes its origins to Albert Ellis (1979) a New York psychologist who became disenchanted with Freudian psychoanalysis. In RET clients do most of the work and are actively involved in their own treatment instead of relying on the therapist, as is the case in more analytical methods. Dennis Lawrence (1999: 62-75) uses this approach to increase the teacher's capacity to cope with stress. The fundamental principal of RET is that emotions are usually caused by a person's thinking. A teacher being angered by a learner is thus actually, according to Lawrence, angry at himself because of his interpretation of the situation. Situations are further interpreted according to the personality of a teacher. Lawrence elaborates by stating that the positive interpretation of a situation will lead to positive emotions. The first step in this approach to address teacher stress, is thus to change the thinking of the teacher. Lawrence

recommends the reinforcement of the programme throughout the school year. The RET approach to stress reduction starts by determining the source of the stress followed by the teacher's thoughts and emotions about the stressor. This is followed by the second stage which is a rational appraisal followed by a rational solution to the problem. The pre-ultimate step in the RET programme is relaxation exercises and the last stage of this approach is self-hypnosis, or creative visualisation, to de-condition the unconscious which will ultimately result in the experiencing of positive emotions in spite of negative situations.

Lawrence (1999:71-75) goes on to recommend 'The Seven-Day Self-Esteem Enhancement Programme'. Teachers want to be happy, but happiness starts with liking oneself and therefore teachers' self-esteem should be developed. The seven day self-esteem enhancement programme is based on a number of positive affirmations selected as the essence of self-esteem enhancement. It is important to note that Lawrence does not advocate this as an approach on its own, but as the climax of his book *Teaching with Confidence. A guide to enhancing teacher self-esteem.* This self-esteem enhancement follows self-help methods in improving communication skills, which includes the development of assertiveness, the development of an internal locus of control and the RET stress management programme described above.

Although this is a programme for teachers it has not been implemented as such when the book went to press. It has been evaluated by headmasters in both England and Australia, though.

4.3.1.6 S.H. Mills – stress proofing through lifestyle

S.H. Mills (Kyriacou, 2000:97-98) highlights in her stress-management guide for teachers how a healthy lifestyle can reduce the teacher's vulnerability to stress. These stress-proofing activities focus on the teacher's physical, mental, and emotional condition. These general stress-proofing activities, which include problem- and emotion-focused strategies, as well as general tips on health, could serve as a check list for teachers in their quest to

reduce stress and regain homeostasis. Mills also offered advice for teachers suffering from insomnia.

3.3.1.7 Michael Papworth – The ARC-approach

The acronym ARC represents a hierarchy of approaches to eliminate stress and stands for:

- Avoid
- Reframe
- Cope (Papworth, 2003:14-22)

According to Papworth, teachers must look at their lives and analyse the major stressors, either external or internal. Teachers should then re-design their lives to avoid what they can. Stressors which cannot be avoided must be reframed and those which cannot be reframed must be coped with. Teachers should further assess the question of time available, their control over their own lives and whether their environment is supportive of stress-free teaching. Stressors can be avoided by time management and the way in which a teacher's administration is conducted. If a learner is further always causing you stress, ways should be implemented to defuse the situations before they arise.

Stressors can be reframed once teachers realise that they do not necessarily see things as they are, but coloured by their own perspective. Teachers should thus assess their perception of situations. Papworth (2003:21) suggests the teacher asks five questions to help him to reframe and to determine the real owner of the problem:

- Whose problem is it really?
- Who is out of balance with their reality?
- Who is behaving badly?
- Who is being destructive?
- Who is being weak?

If it really is the teacher's problem, (s)he should deal with it, if it isn't, (s)he should not be stressed.

There will always be stressors left which could not be avoided or reframed though. To make sure that teachers cope with the stress associated with teaching they need to become resilient. Papworth (2003:23-100) recommends the development of **physical resilience** (breathing, weight and nutrition, exercise, rest and relaxation), **mental resilience** (self-hypnosis, self-talk, music, mental imagery, meditation, journal keeping) and **emotional resilience** (pro-activity, assertiveness, anger management, worry control).

Papworth's programme has great value in the sense that it is holistic and acknowledges the fact that although some stressors can be avoided through improved work strategies, others should be reframed or be accepted as an integral part of the teaching profession.

4.3.1.8 Ross and Altmaier – cognitive behavioural techniques

Cognitive behavioural techniques focus on the thoughts and actions an individual has in relation to stress. According to Kendall and Bermis (Ross and Altmaier, 1994:67) cognitive behavioural techniques include four basic guiding principles:

- Individuals do not respond directly to their environment, but to their own cognitive interpretation of the environment.
- Cognitions (thoughts), emotions (feelings) and behaviours (actions) are causally interrelated.
- The prediction and understanding of negative cognitions and behaviours are enhanced by paying attention to a person's expectations, beliefs and attributions.
- It is possible and desirable to integrate cognitive approaches to correcting problems with performance-based and behavioural contingency management.

Ross and Altmaier (1994:7) are of the opinion that any model of stress intervention must start with the understanding of the stressful situation as a whole. Personality traits linked with successful coping should be developed. They emphasise a sense of coherence consisting of three themes, namely comprehensibility (teachers' believe in the ordered, structured and predictability of life experiences), manageability (teachers' believe that they

have adequate resources to meet the demands made upon them) and meaningfulness (the way in which teachers believe that life and their experiences make sense to them).

Ross and Altmaier (1994:60-61) state that stress management strategies can be grouped into two categories: preventative coping and combative coping. **Preventative coping strategies** aim at the monitoring of stressors and symptoms (stress diaries, muscle monitoring); the marshalling of resources and attacking of stressors (social skills, assertiveness and problem solving skills training); the tolerating of unavoidable stressors (cognitive appraisal, - restructuring and – rehearsal) and the lowering of stressful arousal (breathing, relaxation, various forms of meditation, self-hypnosis and physical exercise). **Combative coping strategies** aim at the avoiding of stressors through life adjustments or adjusting levels of demand (family/work balance, career planning), altering stress-inducing behaviour patterns (aimed at the behaviour adjustments of the type A personality behaviour pattern) and the development of coping resources (social support and time management).

4.3.2 SOUTH AFRICAN STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES

Very little South African research regarding coping strategies for teachers suffering from career-related stress has been published. For the purpose of this research, the researcher refers to completed post-graduate research, existing provincial programmes and individuals presenting stress management courses. The approaches will be discussed in alphabetical order and not in order of importance

4.3.2.1 A. Basson – A guidance programme for stress experienced in the classroom

The most important conclusion Basson (1999) came to in the research done through her MEd dissertation, titled “*A guidance programme for teachers who experience stress in the classroom situation – educational psychological research*” is that disruptive behaviour is the main stress factor for teachers in the classroom context. This study suggests that every school should implement a programme that can guide teachers in controlling their work

stress in the classroom. It is recommended by Basson that this programme should be implemented at the commencement of the new school year.

This guidance programme stretches over a period of eight weeks. One aspect should be addressed per week giving the teacher five school days to implement and practise the taught aspect. Fiscal aspects, communication, learner motivation, mutual respect, responsibilities of learners, subject methodology, multiculturalism and relaxation exercises should be addressed during the sessions.

Basson contributes nothing that could not be found in basic research done internationally. Basson suggests, though, that similar programmes should be developed on provincial levels for the different cultural and language groups. The limitations of this study are that it does not prepare teachers to deal with learners with behavioural deviations, or their own stress. To address this Basson recommends that teachers with a high level of stress should consult with a clinical psychologist.

4.3.2.2 Boshoff, Rigby and Bennett – Stress inoculation and coping skills intervention

Boshoff, A.B., of the Graduate School of Management of the University of Pretoria, in co-operation with Rigby, C.J. and Bennett, H.F. of the Massey University in the USA, did a comparative study between two holistic cognitive behavioural stress interventions, namely Teacher Stress Inoculation and Coping Skills Intervention (Rigby et al 1996:38 & 41). The two interventions were simultaneously conducted in two different venues by registered psychologists. The time-span involved was a weekend from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon. The Teacher Stress Inoculation programme focused on the cognitive appraisal of the potential stressors and the Coping Skills Intervention on the development of coping skills to deal with the stressors encountered in teaching.

Teacher Stress Inoculation focuses on the development of alternative cognitions of the potential stressors in teaching. The intervention consists of eight phases, namely relationship building and education, data collection and integration, cognitive concepts,

skills acquisition, palliative (emotional) coping, cognitive structure and process, self reward/efficacy statements, generalisation and maintenance. **Coping Skills Intervention** aims to facilitate the development and acquisition of coping skills and effective responses which could be used by teachers to deal with the actual stressors. Six components, each using different cognitive and behavioural techniques, were incorporated. They include an education phase, cognitive restructuring, assertiveness training and physical exercise. The teaching modes include didactic teaching, role-play, discussion groups, problem-solving exercises and self-monitoring (Rigby et al, 1996:41).

According to the outcomes of the research, the **Teacher Stress Inoculation** programme significantly reduced the teacher's anxiety levels i.e. their feelings of tension, nervousness, worry and apprehension. The **Coping Skills Intervention** reduced the level of stress attached to the actual task of teaching (Rigby et al, 1996:43).

Although this is a more holistic approach to reducing stress, it is less accessible to teachers, because it is not presented within the school environment and time as well as money, would be factors to be taken into consideration.

4.3.2.3 Gauteng Provincial Department of Education

GDE EMPLOYEE SUPPORT UNIT PLANNED TRAINING FOR 2007/2008.

The employee support unit of the Gauteng Department of Education developed an '*Employee Wellness Programme*' (GDE, 2007:1) dedicated to educating, motivating and empowering employees to make healthy lifestyle choices which will improve their overall quality of life. The planned training consists of:

- Financial Management to assist the employees in their financial planning and debt management.
- Work-life balance to empower employees with skills and strategies on how to balance the demands of work and that of family life.

- Executive health for managers to inform them about issues that have an impact on employee performance, handling disclosure, confidentiality and support.
- Monitoring and evaluation for co-ordinators in monitoring the programme implementation.
- Peer education training and forum meetings for teachers to inform them about available support services.
- Assertiveness training for women.
- HIV and AIDS legal training for employees.
- Workplace health and wellness policy training for employees.

A toll-free number, 080 061 1168, is provided.

By July 2008 this planned training had not yet realised. The programme itself does not offer growth opportunities, which would lead the teachers to maturity and self-support. In the opinion of the researcher only the suggested work-life balance training will assist in the reduction of stress. The assertiveness training for women, as well as the HIV and AIDS legal training, has its roots in the present political dispensation and will not alleviate career-related stress. There is mention made of support services which could be consulted, but no assistance for teachers suffering from career-related stress in schools in general is forthcoming. Teachers who need to consult a support service regarding their career-related stress are again faced with both getting to the support service and time management.

4.3.2.4 J.E. Jaye – A self management programme to cope effectively

Jaye bases her programme on four themes emerging from the analysis of a questionnaire completed by the teachers at four independent (private) South African schools. The four themes are low self-image, lack of time management techniques, goal setting techniques and communication skills.

Jaye uses the four elements of the of the “Layder research map” (2002:40) as her research framework. The four elements are:

- Self (the individual's sense of identity and perception of the social world)
- Situated activity (focus on the interaction that takes place between people in the school environment and away from the individual)
- Context (education system)
- Setting (school)

Jaye (2002:40) goes on to discuss these stress management strategies under the 'Five Building Blocks to Success' – the 5 P's (Timm 1993)

- Understanding **perspective**: The teacher must understand himself through reflective-thinking in order to assess his beliefs and assumptions about teaching, his competencies and relationships. This may lead to the development of an internal locus of control, thus an ability to determine the outcomes of his actions, including an awareness of his reactions in stressful situations.
- Understanding **purpose**: This will result in the gaining of focus, identifying a purpose, and determining direction and goals in life. The focus on value-based goals may lead to growth and the development of inner strength.
- Understanding **personality**: The teacher must be aware of psychological, physical and social characteristics which influence the individual's self-concept. This will assist the individual in accepting his weaknesses and his strengths. The teacher should determine whether he is a type-A or type-B personality and work on the strengths and weaknesses of each. He must further work on assertiveness and communication
- Understanding **planning**: Time and task management will reduce stress.
- Understanding **productivity**: A healthy diet, exercise, rest and relaxation will lead to higher productivity.

Jay's approach includes problem-and emotion-focused strategies and includes the development of a positive self-concept. This approach is holistic in the sense that it addresses teachers as holistic beings within an environment.

4.3.2.5 M. J. Motseke – Teacher stress in township schools.

Motseke, M.J. 1998. *Factors contributing to teacher stress in township secondary schools*. MEd dissertation. University of South Africa.

Motseke (1998:106) emphasises the need of self awareness in the successful dealing with stress. This may also lead to changing perceptions and the identification of the real cause of the stress experienced. He further recommends the use of a stress diary, because the monitoring of stress over a period of a month may lead to behavioural and perception adjustments.

Motseke (1998:107-111) advocates physical exercise, relaxation, meditation, breathing, nutrition, adequate sleep, self-nurturing, humour and time management training. He also recommends training in interpersonal coping skills - aimed at coping as a team; and organisational changes, as well as community-involvement at recreational and enrichment levels.

Motseke (1998:109) motivates the process of **desensitisation**, which is a process of systematically lessening a specific learned fear. Desensitisation involves presenting items from a list of anxiety-provoking stimuli, starting with the most unimportant item, proceeding gradually until the strongest anxiety-provoking stimulus fails to evoke any anxiety in the individual. A support system consisting of colleagues and psychologists can assist teachers to alter their initial perception of the potentially threatening events, which may lessen the effect of stressors.

In his dissertation Motseke (1998:219-220) makes the following noteworthy recommendations:

- Models for stress should consider the differences between the African and Western cultures.

- Teachers should be equipped with basic skills to identify and manage their own stress. It can be introduced in their training and as in-service-training.
- The Department of Education should employ psychologists who can visit the schools and monitor the stress and address it when needs be.
- The Principal or a head of department should be equipped with skills for monitoring teacher behaviour and to do referrals when the need arises.
- Teacher support groups or clubs should be established to address teacher stress. Time should be made available for these groups to meet.

The researcher is of the opinion that Motseke's research has made a contribution to the field of teachers suffering from career-related stress in South Africa, because of his knowledge of the schools and teachers in South African townships. As mentioned above the recommendations in Motseke's dissertation were noteworthy because the black cultures are collective, while the white and Indian cultures are individualistic and stress models should take these differences into consideration. The researcher is also of the opinion that members of the school management teams should be trained to monitor the stress of teachers and to offer the first-line of intervention, as well as to present in-service-training to be able to empower the teachers in monitoring their own stress.

4.3.2.6 Steve Whitelaw – An induction programme for novice teachers

The outcome of Whitelaw's (2007) research is an induction programme for novice teachers of both primary and secondary schools, whether public or independent. This programme proceeded in February 2008 and will stretch over twenty sessions of ninety minutes each. The programme, which will be conducted in Benoni, Gauteng, will be at no cost to the participants. The cost will be covered by St Dunstan's College, an Anglican independent school in Benoni. Whitelaw explained in an interview with the researcher, that this is part of the social commitment policy of the school. Funds from church groups are made available to St Dunstan's College and they are therefore responsible to plough it back into the community.

The programme content addresses issues on the macro, meso, micro and personal level. On **macro** level, teaching world wide and in South Africa in general receives attention. On **meso** level, the focus is on understanding the ethos of one's school, educational law, the professional development of teachers and the choice to become a role model. On **micro** level time management, the establishment and maintaining of effective class discipline, the professional identity, relations with parents, administrative responsibilities, and self-reflection on personal strengths and weaknesses is addressed. On **personal** level, professional interaction is discussed and the programme concludes with two sessions giving feedback on the course.

According to Whitelaw, the response from both the principals who attended the initial introduction of the course, as well as the management of the education department on district level, was excellent. Two months after the public introduction of the induction programme, forty teachers had already been enrolled for the 2008 programme.

In a later interview with Whitelaw, it was established that 85 novice teachers, of whom some were student teachers already employed, due to the shortage of teachers, had been enrolled for the 2008 school year. Another three centres were opened during the course of 2008 in the Gauteng province to answer to the needs of novice teachers. The researcher discussed the lack of stress-management in the existing course with Whitelaw and he indicated that she should become part of the programme empowering the novice teachers to cope with career-related stress.

4.3.2.7 Helgo Schomer – The psychology of human effectiveness

In a lecture delivered at the South African Principals Conference held in Cape Town in 2007, Dr Schomer, connected to the University of Cape Town, discussed teacher stress-management strategies. Schomer presents stress-management programmes to teachers in the Western Cape Province.

The programme involves an awareness of stress and its effect on the human mind and body. He made it clear that too little and too much stress lead to poor performance. To be efficient and to enjoy their skills, teachers do need a healthy amount of stress. He also pointed out that in some instances it can be the home life of the teacher which causes the overload and not the school situation. He emphasised emotion-focused strategies, family support, the importance of faith and prayer, delegation, physical health and a positive self-concept.

The lecture itself was worth attending based on the humorous tone of the presentation and the personality of the presenter. The coping strategies presented correlate with existing national and international strategies. It lacks stress-management techniques however. A valuable comment made by Schomer, and the first of this nature encountered by the researcher during the course of her research, is that in some instances it could be the home life of a teacher which causes the overload and not the school situation.

4.4 SYNTHESIS

The researcher is of the opinion that teachers suffering from career-related stress could regain homeostasis through the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process. Although there are no existing Gestalt therapeutic models addressing the regaining of homeostasis of teachers as such, the researcher will evaluate the existing stress management strategies and programmes addressing the career-related stress of teachers from the Gestalt therapeutic perspective.

4.4.1 EVALUATION OF EXISTING STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES ADDRESSING THE CAREER-RELATED STRESS OF TEACHERS FROM A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PERSPECTIVE, BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF AWARENESS, DIALOGUE AND PROCESS

Teachers are holistic beings and therefore any model, programme or strategy must address teachers as a whole, which includes their relationships with their environments. Environment, in Gestalt therapy, includes all relationships with the physical environment, as well as relationships with other people.

4.4.1.1 Problem-focused stress management strategies evaluated from a Gestalt therapeutic perspective

The separate strategies recommended by the various researchers have one universal shortcoming, namely their eclectic nature. This eclectic approach, ignoring the teacher as a holistic being, is proof that there is a need for the development of a holistic model assisting the teacher in regaining homeostasis. What is noteworthy is that the majority of these strategies start off with breathing exercises, followed by meditation. Although the discussion of Gestalt therapeutic techniques is not the aim or purpose of this research, it is important to be aware that the Gestalt approach includes both as supportive of achieving awareness. This approach, away from the holistic nature of human beings, does not mean that all the strategies as such are not worthy of implementation, should they be part of a holistic approach.

Teachers, who perceive a situation as changeable, use problem-focused strategies to alleviate their stress. Problem-focused strategies can be seen as active cognitive strategies. Problem-solving strategies include problem-appraisal, talking about and identifying the source of stress and seeking more information about the problem, which may lead to the restructuring of priorities, seeking clarification in order to find methods to manage and reduce stress. These strategies should be done in awareness, within a

dialogic relationship as part of the Gestalt process of change, where teachers are seen as holistic individuals.

Nutrition and a general healthy lifestyle, including enough sleep and the avoidance of stimulants, are recommended by all the researchers, whether as a single strategy or as part of a programme. The researcher agrees with this, but needs to add that whatever they do should be done in awareness and should keep the holistic nature of the teacher in mind. It is of very little use to eat the correct food, without being aware when you eat, because not sitting down and eating with awareness will not counteract the stress experienced by a teacher. The lack of sleep, either due to insomnia or too much work, can only be eliminated once teachers become aware of what they do that is wasting their time, or how they perceive and deal with worrying thoughts and unfinished situations. Healthy organismic self-regulation should thus be in their awareness. Teachers often ignore their own needs because of deadlines. They should thus become aware of which need is in their foreground, for example sleep or spending time with family, and which need is in their background (complete the marking). Sleeping or spending time with your family will result in satisfying the dominant need and the marking will then again come into their foreground.

A large number of researchers recommend the development of **awareness** as a strategy to combat stress. This awareness is limited to being aware of stress, a definition of stress, what is causing it and the consequences of the said stress. This is a very limited use of awareness and approached from the perception that awareness can be curative in itself, it should be holistic. What is also omitted is that the awareness should be in the present. This present awareness should involve observation of self and others, which will lead to new forms of behaviour. This new behaviour includes teachers' approach to subject methodology, non-verbal and verbal communication, relationships with the partners concerned, as well as relationships with significant others outside of the school environment and with themselves. Being aware of their actions and decisions will further lead to teachers being more assertive. Teachers will become aware of the boundaries which exist, or should exist, between them and the learners and how they react when

angry and frustrated. The researcher also agrees with Dunham (1992) that teachers should become aware of all the positive aspects of their chosen careers and that there must be a balance between work and personal life.

The researcher is of the opinion that the recommended **attitude adjustment** is a saving grace for many teachers. What the researchers have omitted, though, is the fact that attitude is a matter of choice. According to Gestalt therapy, people are responsible and are therefore the primary agents in determining their own behaviour. Teachers must take responsibility for their actions, thoughts and feelings. Teachers must realise that they have power over what is happening to them and that they are in charge of their own lives, through the choices they make. Teachers cannot change their environment, but they can choose how they are going to react to it, which is the result of achieving maturity. As soon as this level of maturity is reached, teachers will be able to cope with their environment, actualise their potential and be self-supportive.

A large number of the strategies which have been discussed put great emphasis on the **support** that the teacher should get from management and colleagues and indicated that teachers who work in a supportive environment experience lower stress levels. The aim of Gestalt therapy is for the teacher to become self-supportive. It is important to realise that teachers bring their own experiences, personalities and resources to the contact boundary, where they meet other people with their own experiences, personalities and resources. Teachers can thus not only rely on other people to support them, because at the contact boundary a co-creation takes place. When teachers become too reliant on other people, confluence is the result, leaving the teachers without defined self-concepts, immature and without means to support themselves. It is thus important to train all teachers in the act of withdrawal. This is not only to assist teachers in need of support in their growth towards self-responsibility and maturity, but also because the supporting teachers need to withdraw into their inner and middle zones, or to a place where they can recuperate.

It is thus clear that although there must be environmental support, it must grow into self-support. This places a responsibility on the school management teams to ensure that dialogue is a relationship characteristic of the staff. This will result in healthy contact leading to I-Thou relationships which are conducive to growth. This establishing of a dialogic relationship must be individualised and must not be contrived. The environment must be created so that the development of contact can be a natural process. School managers should also be part of the Gestalt training programme to become aware of their actions and attitudes which may lead to stress. Observing their teachers in awareness, resulting in contact, will make school managers aware of the teachers' growth and possible readiness to assume greater decision-making powers within the school.

According to Esteve (1989) new teachers should be **desensitised** to stress-inducing situations. This must be a balanced desensitising, however, because this modification at the contact boundary can result in total avoidance of contact with the stimulus. This may result in passionless teaching and unhealthy contact with learners. What novice and student teachers should be desensitised to is the fact that teaching is to a large extent a one-way relationship. Teachers give of themselves and their knowledge all the time, while the majority of learners do not contribute to the positive feed back loop. Part of the teacher's growth towards maturity and self-support should thus be a development of their internal locus of control. They should not be dependent on compliments and positive feedback from the learners, but should observe themselves and thus assess their teaching according to the standards they set for themselves.

Researchers recommend **time-management strategies** to alleviate the stress resulting from time pressures. Although they recommend less contact time to do administrative work such as marking and preparation, it is not possible in the South African public school context, as a result of the small number of teachers employed at each school. Teachers should thus become aware of the small timewasters in their lives and because this problem cannot be changed from the side of school management, teachers should grow to the level of maturity where they can choose their reaction towards the demands made upon their time.

The researcher, who is a principal of a secondary school, agrees with many of the **problem-focused stress management strategies**, because she has implemented many of them over the years and it has alleviated the stress experienced by the teachers on her staff, to some extent. What is important though is that the school management must first become aware of the need to change and then through dialogue determine the needs of the teachers before starting the change process. This is, therefore, also organismic self-regulation where a need moves to the foreground till the need is met and another need arises. When **whole-school policies** are designed for a school the unique culture of the school must be taken into account. The researcher is, therefore, convinced that a school policy cannot be shared by schools. In the research done regarding whole school policies, special mention is made of whole-school policies regarding discipline. In the experience of the researcher, who implemented the Boys Town Approach to discipline at the school where she is employed, teachers must be made aware of the fact that they still carry the responsibility for the discipline in their classrooms, although there is administrative support available on various levels. Teachers who are unwilling to take responsibility for discipline, usually because they have poor classroom management skills, must receive the necessary support from management, but, as part of the growth process, this support must be systematically withdrawn.

Although teachers do perceive a number of stressful situations as changeable, quite a number cannot be changed by the teacher. To cope with these situations teachers use emotion- focused strategies.

4.4.1.2 Emotion-focused stress management strategies evaluated from the Gestalt therapeutic perspective

Although many of the emotion-focused stress-management strategies recommended by the different researchers could also be implemented as techniques within the Gestalt approach, the strategies will, for the purpose of this research, be evaluated from a Gestalt therapeutic perspective.

Sensory awareness plays an important role in **alternative therapies, animal assisted therapy, and creative techniques**, such as painting. What is important from a Gestalt perspective is that these therapies must not be implemented in a mindless fashion, but the teachers must be aware with all their senses whilst involved in these stress-relieving strategies. In animal-assisted therapy, the teacher must also be involved in the I-It relationship with the animal. **Breathing, relaxation and meditation** are popular stress relieving techniques recommended by researchers, either as part of a programme or as a strategy on its own. **Awareness** is a prerequisite when these techniques are implemented as part of the Gestalt therapeutic approach. The emphasis in Gestalt therapy is that these techniques form part of the holistic approach and are not independent means to reach homeostasis.

Avoidance as a strategy cannot be condoned from a Gestalt perspective. Avoidance or deflection, as it is known in Gestalt therapy, is a modification at the contact boundary, which indicates a turning away from either an internal or environmental stimulus to prevent full recognition or awareness. Contact at the contact boundary is thus defuse or weak, reducing contact and increasing isolation. Teachers are already isolated in their classrooms and avoidance will increase their isolation. It may also lead to them pushing away any intervention touching on the subject they are avoiding. What is healthy, when situations cannot be changed, is to acknowledge that the need is there, but could not be met at that moment, and then let it go.

Writing down ones thoughts and actions can be healthy especially when teachers find it difficult to verbalise their needs. Writing down their thoughts, feelings, needs and actions can lead to aware observation, which will lead to action. What should be avoided, though, is constant intra-personal communication which can be seen as introspection. Self-awareness and introspection are not the same. In self-awareness the teacher observes himself in action. Introspection is over-analysing the self, where the self becomes both subject (observer) and object (the observed), which may lead to a split self.

Biofeedback and biomedicine are both outside the reference frame of the Gestalt therapy. Over and above the fact that they are more biological than therapeutic on emotional level, they are expensive and sophisticated technology is needed. They do not address the holistic nature of the teacher and cannot be implemented within the school environment, which is an objective of this research.

Emotive insight is a worthy strategy when applied holistically. What is important is the acknowledgement that teachers' emotions cannot be separated from their cognitions. This correlates with the three zones of awareness of the Gestalt therapeutic approach. Teachers should be aware of their inner (awareness of what goes on inside the body including biological and emotional), outer (immediate environment as experienced through senses) and middle (how the teacher make sense of internal and external stimuli) zones of awareness. Emotive insight also correlates with the emotional needs of teachers as part of their organismic self-regulation, which is a natural tendency to maintain homeostasis. Teachers must decide what they need emotionally from the environment and then it must be assimilated or rejected. Organismic self-regulation also applies to teachers nurturing themselves. Teachers must become aware of their cognitive (mental), emotional (feeling), physical (bodily) and spiritual (religious) needs. Once a need became figure (moved to the foreground) the teacher must satisfy the need, which will leave room for the next dominant need to become figure.

An important aspect of emotive insight is **emotional literacy**, resulting in emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. This correlates with the Gestalt perception of self-concept, which portrays a collection of beliefs about oneself. These beliefs are formed by the evaluations of significant others, as well as evaluation from a cultural perspective. The Gestalt approach perceives self-concept as changeable, although it is a lengthy process. Self-concept should further be stretched in order to grow. What is not addressed by emotive therapy is the re-owning of disowned parts of the personality or emotions. The disowned parts are the result of polarisation and teachers should also be aware of and recognise what they perceive to be negative polarities of their personalities. If only one personality or emotional polarity is recognised, teachers may become rigid,

uncompromising and unchanging. Both polarities are valid and homeostasis can only be achieved by affirming both poles, and by owning the thoughts or feelings at the disowned pole.

Healthy relationships at school and outside of the school environment are recommended by various researchers as stress-busting strategies. Out of school relationships can be achieved within the family or friendships and can also be achieved through recreational activities. The Gestalt therapy places great emphasis on the dialogic relationships and the achievement of I-Thou relationships. What must be kept in mind is self-support versus environmental-support which has been discussed earlier. Teachers bring their knowledge and resources to the contact boundary where they meet other people and together they co-create, which will lead to meaningful work, for example, as part of community projects. Teachers can get involved in these projects as part of their out-of-school activities. Teachers must not feel that they should be part of community projects though. The top-dog/under-dog dichotomy must be kept in mind. Teachers too often do things because they should do it (top-dog), while the under-dog rebels against it. These two poles should be brought into awareness so that the teacher can become aware of the impasse created by the dichotomy. Awareness of the impasse may lead to growth, because the impasse in Gestalt therapy indicates the point from where growth takes place.

Physical activities prevent the negative effects of stress and counteract depression due to the secretion of serotonin when exercising. Physical activities should be a part of a stress-management programme and awareness of the here-and-now should be emphasised as part of the programme. Teachers should also be aware of their own attitude towards physical activities, because that will determine the type of activity. It is not always easy to adhere to a programme, which may in the end leave the teacher with feelings of guilt.

Over and above separate strategies addressing the career-related stress of teachers, there are also international, as well as South African stress management programmes addressing the career-related stress experienced by teachers.

4.4.1.3 International stress-management programmes evaluated from a Gestalt therapeutic perspective

The researcher discussed selected existing stress-management programmes addressing the career-related stress experienced by teachers. This first section gives a brief discussion of some existing international programmes which will be evaluated against the background of the Gestalt therapeutic approach.

Claire Hayes' coping triangle emphasises the impact of thoughts, based on the teacher's core beliefs, on feelings and ultimately on actions. Environmental- and self-support also determines how a teacher will perceive the stressor. Hayes differentiates between major and seemingly insignificant stressors. Sometimes it is the insignificant stressors that cause the teacher to break down, and because they are insignificant, teachers suffering them, do not receive the same support from others. It is therefore important that the teacher makes sense of these stressors instead of using familiar, probably outdated coping-strategies. This approach also emphasises awareness, leading to the understanding of the stressor. Noteworthy is her emphasis of the effect thoughts have on feelings and, eventually, on actions. This correlates with Gestalt's middle zone of awareness. Although this programme is not holistic and does not address dialogue or the process of growth, there are elements which are similar to the Gestalt approach to regaining homeostasis.

Elizabeth Holmes' approach to teacher well-being is an action guide to offer instant guidance to teachers suffering from career-related stress. Although she gives various 'tips' on stress reducing habits and approaches, it is very eclectic, without a solid theory as foundation.

Chris Kyriacou's stress busting for teachers is a worthwhile approach to combating stress from a general perspective. The researcher used the approach in his book "*Stress Busting for Teachers*" as in-service-training to help the teachers of her staff to combat stress. Emphasis is placed on awareness to keep problems in perspective, awareness of antecedents, anger-management through awareness, awareness of the emotional

colouring of perceptions and attitudes and the role of support. The researcher experienced it as successful at the time, but constant reinforcement was required. The researcher is therefore in favour of a stress management approach which will become a way of life, leading to maturity and self-support and, therefore, the choice of a Gestalt therapeutic approach.

Lap and Attridge's worksite intervention over-simplifies stress-management. Their seemingly fragmented workshop culminated in approximately five hours of stress management intervention. This over-simplification touches issues only peripherally and the root causes are not addressed. The approach may lead to short term success, but will not lead to self-support which is the ultimate aim in the Gestalt therapeutic approach to stress. It needs to be mentioned that Lap and Attridge did involve the school principal, school nurse and school advisory committee in the workshops. It can be presumed that they would support teachers where need be.

Dennis Lawrence's rational emotive therapy is based on the fundamental principal that emotions are usually caused by a person's thinking. Although this approach correlates with Gestalt therapy's middle-zone of awareness, too much emphasis is placed on the cognitive functions, which are counter to a holistic approach. Lawrence also emphasises the ultimate development of a positive self-esteem. He advocates the use of positive affirmations about the self as the preferred method, which is human conditioning, and not a holistic approach. Ross and Altmaier are also advocates of cognitive behavioural techniques, which do not recognise the teacher as a holistic being within an environment field.

A more holistic approach to stress management is evident in **S.H. Mills'** stress proofing through lifestyle. Although she recommends 27 stress-proofing activities or qualities to strive towards, she does not address the problems at the core. Addressing the root causes of the stress experienced by teachers, will result in a healing process with a profound influence on the life of the teacher.

The researcher also used **Michael Papworth's ARC approach** as in-service-training with the staff where she is employed. This is a realistic approach if there is a need to address stressors or even attitudes of staff *post haste*. Stressors which cannot be avoided must be reframed. Reframing correlates with the middle zone of awareness, the teacher thus perceives things as (s)he is and not necessarily as they are. If avoidance and reframing are not applicable, the teacher has to cope with the situation. This correlates with the Gestalt choice of an individual's reaction to those things that cannot be changed. Although there are correlations with the Gestalt approach it is over-simplified and does not address teachers holistically and as part of their environment.

Very little South African research regarding coping-strategies for teachers suffering from career-related stress has been published. Those available will be evaluated from a Gestalt therapeutic perspective.

4.4.1.5 South African stress management programmes evaluated from a Gestalt therapeutic perspective

Although there are very few published South African stress-management programmes addressing the career-related stress experienced by teachers, there are some unpublished approaches which also came to the attention of the researcher, which were evaluated along with other South African approaches.

Basson's guidance programme for stress experienced in the classroom, as well as **Schomer's** psychology of human effectiveness, offers nothing that could not be found in international research and will thus have the same shortcomings from a Gestalt therapeutic perspective as those programmes which were discussed earlier.

Boshoff, Rigby and Bennett's stress inoculation and coping-skills intervention are cognitive behavioural stress intervention approaches and thus not holistic. It focuses on the cognitive appraisal of potential stressors and the development of coping skills to deal with the stressors encountered.

The Gauteng Department of Education's employee wellness programme is aimed at educating teachers to make healthy lifestyle choices. This programme's emphasis is on management aspects and not on coping strategies or addressing the root causes of the career-related stress experienced by the teachers. This programme also seems to be politically founded (assertiveness training for women, policy training, HIV and AIDS legal training), as well as management-focused (managing confidentiality and financial management) rather than focusing on the well-being of the teachers. From a Gestalt therapeutic perspective this programme has nothing which would assist the teacher in regaining homeostasis.

Jaye's self-management programme to cope proactively correlates with some aspects of the Gestalt therapeutic approach in regaining homeostasis. She uses the four elements of the Layder research map as her framework concentrating on self-concept, relationships, the education system and the school as environment. She further advocates awareness, the concept of growth and contact as part of Timm's five building blocks to success. (The Gestalt terminology used is the researchers and not Jaye's.) This is also a simplified approach to the complex issue of teacher-stress, which does not address the complexities of being human.

Motseke's teacher stress in township schools mentions the same coping strategies discussed as eclectic strategies or as part of international programmes. A solid theoretical foundation from which he approaches his intervention programme is lacking. Motseke also mentions desensitisation which is described as a modification at the contact boundary in Gestalt therapy. The researcher reiterates that being completely desensitised will lead to teaching becoming automatic and without dialogic contact. A worthwhile statement made by Motseke is that models for stress should consider the differences between the African and the Western cultures. He is also of the opinion that principals and heads of department should be equipped with skills to monitor the stress levels of teachers and to do referrals. A further recommendation, which deserves mentioning, is the establishment of support groups, or clubs, where stress can be addressed.

While **Whitelaw's** induction programme for novice teachers does address the administrative or management problems of novice teachers, on macro, meso, micro and personal levels, as stated, there is no room for stress management. Although addressing the problems of novice teachers on a personal level leaves the impression that stress-management may be addressed, this is only addressing their professional interaction.

In tables 4:1 and 4:2 existing emotion-and problem-focused coping strategies (table 4.1), as well as international and South-African stress management programmes (table 4.2) will be evaluated from a Gestalt paradigm based on awareness, dialogue and process.

TABLE 4:1 EVALUATING EXISTING STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS FROM A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PERSPECTIVE

Strategy	Awareness	Dialogue	Process
PROBLEM-AND EMOTION-FOCUSED STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES			
4.1.1 Problem-focused stress management strategies			
4.1.1.1 Awareness of stress	Yes	No	No
4.1.1.2 Attitude adjustment	Yes	No	Yes
4.1.1.3 Assertiveness training	No	Yes	No
4.1.1.4 Cognitive strategies	No	Yes	No
4.1.1.5 Human resource management	Yes	Yes	No
4.1.1.6 Induction programmes for teachers	Yes	Yes	No
4.1.1.7 Meaningful work	No	No	Yes
4.1.1.8 Nutrition	No	No	Yes
4.1.1.9 School management	No	Yes	No
4.1.1.10 Task-orientated strategies	No	No	Yes

4.1.1.11 Whole school policies	No	Yes	No
4.1.2 Emotion-focused stress management strategies			
4.1.2.1 Alternative therapies	Yes	No	No
4.1.2.2 Animal assisted therapy	Yes	Yes	No
4.1.2.3 Avoidance	No	No	No
4.1.2.4 Biblio-therapy	Yes	Yes	No
4.1.2.5 Breathing	Yes	No	No
4.1.2.6 Biofeedback	No	No	No
4.1.2.7 Biomedicine	Yes	Yes	No
4.1.2.8 Communication	No	Yes	No
4.1.2.9 Creative techniques	Yes	Yes	No
4.1.2.10 Emotive insight	Yes	No	Yes
4.1.2.11 Hobbies and out-of-school activities	No	No	Yes
4.1.2.12 Meditation	Yes	No	No
4.1.2.13 Neuro-associative programming	Yes	No	No
4.1.2.14 Self-nurturing	No	Yes	Yes
4.1.2.15 Physical activity	No	No	Yes
4.1.2.16 Relationships with and support from Colleagues	No	Yes	No
4.1.2.17 Relationships outside the school Environment	No	Yes	Yes
4.1.2.18 Relaxation	Yes	No	Yes
4.1.2.19 Religion	No	Yes	Yes
4.1.2.20 Self-esteem enhancement	Yes	No	Yes

TABLE 4:2 EVALUATING EXISTING STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS FROM A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PERSPECTIVE

Stress management programme	Awareness	Dialogue	Process
INTERNATIONAL AND SOUTH AFRICAN STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES			
4.2.1 International stress management programmes			
4.2.1 Claire Hayes’ coping triangle	Yes	No	No
4.2.2 Elizabeth Holmes – The way to teacher well-being	Yes	No	No
4.2.3 Chris Kyriacou – Stress busting for teachers	Yes	No	No
4.2.4 Lap and Attridge – Worksite intervention	Yes	Yes	No
4.2.5 Dennis Lawrence – Rational Emotive Therapy	Yes	No	No
4.2.6 S.H. Mills – Stress proofing through lifestyle	Yes	Yes	No
4.2.7 Michael Papworth – The ARC approach	Yes	No	Yes
4.2.8 Ross and Altmaier – Cognitive behavioural techniques	Yes	Yes	No
4.2.2 South African stress management programmes			
4.2.2.1 A. Basson – A guidance programme for stress experienced in the classroom	Yes	Yes	No
4.2.2.2 Boshoff, Rigby and Bennett – Stress inoculation and coping skills intervention	No	Yes	No

4.2.2.3 Gauteng Provincial Department of Education	No	Yes	No
4.2.2.4 J.E. Jaye – A self-management programme to cope effectively	No	Yes	Yes
4.2.2.5 M.J. Motseke – Teacher stress in township schools	Yes	Yes	No
4.2.2.6 Steve Whitelaw – An induction programme for novice teachers	No	Yes	No
4.2.2.7 Helgo Schomer – The psychology of human effectiveness	Yes	No	Yes

From tables 4:1 and 4:2 can be deduced that none of the existing coping strategies and/or stress management programmes answers to the requirements for a holistic stress management approach, which will eradicate or lower the career-related stress levels experienced by teachers.

4.4.2 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 4 it is apparent that much of the literature on teacher stress concentrates on the stress-producing aspects inherent in the bureaucratic structure under which teachers work. Most stress management programmes do not address this domain, but focus on reducing the reactivity of teachers to environmental stressors. This form of intervention is cheaper than restructuring the work environment, much easier to teach, and is available to teachers for use at any time.

A useful stress management model would be one that could help teachers to manage the stress of their jobs. The model should have a firm theoretical base, which seems to be lacking in most of the present stress management coping strategies and programmes as discussed in this chapter. It must be low-cost and easily administered largely due to the paucity of resources available to school districts and most teacher training programmes,

and it must take the multicultural character of the South African teaching corps into consideration. Teachers would also benefit from a stress management model with a self-help component because they work in relative isolation, are under significant time constraints and, due to the demands of their job, require techniques which are simple and easy to use.

In Chapter 5 the researcher designed a Gestalt therapeutic model, based on the principles of awareness, dialogue and process, to assist teachers suffering from career-related stress in their quest to regain homeostasis.

CHAPTER 5

PHASE 3: DESIGN

THE GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS MODEL FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS IN ORDER TO REGAIN HOMEOSTASIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the context of intervention research, design means the formulation of intervention constructs (Mullen, 1993:163), and is planned change. The aim of this research and of Intervention Design and Development is that the research findings can be converted systematically into social interventions. There are relevant steps which lead up to the design of the intervention model and there will also be some follow up requirements which will be addressed in Chapter 6 as Phase 4: Early Development and Pilot Study. The preceding phases were Phase 1: Problem analysis and project planning (Chapter 1) and Phase 2: Information gathering and synthesis (Chapters 2, 3 and 4).

The social problem addressed in the research is the factors causing the career-related stress suffered by teachers. The researcher further investigated the existence and content of existing coping-strategies and stress management programmes and found them wanting. In researching the Gestalt therapeutic approach the researcher came to the conclusion that due to the holistic nature of Gestalt therapy, as well as its emphasis on the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process, a Gestalt therapeutic process model will address the career-related stress experienced by teachers.

The research question was thus:

Which components of a Gestalt therapeutic process model will be most applicable in assisting the teacher suffering from career-related stress to regain homeostasis?

5.2 CORE ELEMENTS OF THE DESIGN

The core elements of the research were teachers experiencing career-related stress and investigating how they could regain homeostasis through a Gestalt therapeutic process model. From the data collected in Chapters 3 and 4 it was clear that through the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process teachers would be empowered to become aware of themselves and their environment, to develop dialogic relationships with self and the environment, resulting in personal growth and the awareness of dominant needs resulting in organismic self-regulation. The ultimate aim of the Gestalt therapy and thus, this Gestalt therapeutic process model, is to achieve maturity, self-responsibility and self-support. Teachers are suffering from career-related stress resulting in disinterested teachers, teacher absenteeism and attrition, which does not only have a negative influence on the individual teacher, but also on the learners and education at large. Due to time and financial limitations the model was designed to be implemented within the school environment by a trained member of the school management team. A basic training programme based on the designed Gestalt therapeutic process model, was developed for school management team members, not versed in the Gestalt therapy, to implement as a first line of intervention. The aim of this research was not the development of a functional Gestalt therapeutic programme and was thus not included as part of the research report. Teachers in need of further therapeutic intervention due to, for example, unfinished business or unhealthy modifications at the contact boundary, identified during the first line of intervention, should be referred to a qualified therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist. The researcher is also of the opinion that the model must not only apply when the teacher is at school, but must become an enriching and empowering way of life.

Based on the observations made by the researcher, who has been involved in teaching for thirty years, all teachers suffer from career-related stress to a larger or lesser degree. For the first work shop thirteen secondary school teachers were identified to participate in the workshop and ten consented. Three of the ten participants were members of the school's management team with the additional aim to determine the feasibility of school management team members implementing the model at the various schools. A self-constructed index as measuring instrument was developed to determine their stress-related symptoms, as well as previous intervention acquired and coping strategies applied (Annexure I & Q). An open-ended questionnaire was developed to determine the degree to which the intervention had proved to be successful (Annexure K), followed by group and semi-structured structured interviews with the participants. The outcome of the questionnaire and the group and semi-structured interviews was a checklist based on the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process (Annexure N). To verify the outcomes of the first workshop and to study only specific matters to obtain more precise information, which made the outcome of the research definitive and useful, a second workshop was conducted involving five teachers. As part of the termination process of the research programme structured interviews were conducted with the participants. They were also requested to complete the a self-constructed index, with the same career-related stress symptoms measured in Annexure I, to determine the stress-related symptoms and the degree to which they were experienced at that present moment (Annexure Q).

Informal and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the school management team members to determine the feasibility of training school management team members implementing the model as a first line of intervention in schools.

These elements formed the basis for the design of the Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress in their quest to regain homeostasis.

5.3 THE DESIGN OBJECTIVE

A design objective refers to a task to be achieved in the design work (Mullen, 1994:167). Mullen goes on to state that the objective of intervention research is the development of a social technology to ameliorate a social problem. The social technology in this research study is abstract, thus not tangible. The innovations of this research could thus only be demonstrated in practice. The design objective for this research was:

To develop an effective school-based Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, in order to regain homeostasis, which could be implemented by a trained member of a school management team.

The abstract technology is thus the Gestalt therapeutic process model, which could be used to help teachers who suffer from career-related stress in regaining homeostasis.

More specific objectives were formed though to focus design activities, which are the objectives regarding change (Mullen 1993:169). Thomas (Mullen, 1993:167) suggests a domain of design in which some intervention elements are assumed to be fixed and therefore do not need to be designed, while other elements are singled out to be designed. The fixed element in this intervention design was the context within which the intervention took place, namely a school.

The design elements which were not fixed were:

- The Gestalt therapeutic intervention model,
- A programme and techniques to be used by the researcher for the purpose of the pilot study involving post level 1 (teachers), post level 2 (heads of department) and post level 3 (deputy principals) teachers. Please note that although the researcher developed a functional programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model, and techniques to implement during the pilot study, it was not the purpose of this research study and would thus not be included in the research report.

- The target of the intervention was the degree to which the post level 1, 2 and 3 teachers suffering from career-related stress regained homeostasis.
- The two workshops held served as the pilot study. The workshops were presented as a functional Gestalt therapeutic intervention programme and not as the model, which is too academic for this purpose. Post level 1 and 2 teachers, in the experience of the researcher, fall in the highest stress risk category and the model designed and developed was aimed at empowering them to the extent where they can achieve homeostasis.
- Post level 2 – 3 teachers (Heads of Department and Deputy Principals) participated in a two-day workshop as a further part of the pilot study. This is the group from whom a school-based facilitator should be nominated and trained and from whom referrals for further intervention should be received. They were introduced to the process model illustrated through Gestalt therapeutic intervention techniques, which were discussed for the purpose of this research study.
- The following ethical aspects were covered administratively: a) Written consent from the teacher participants in the workshops, as well as the independent observer (Annexure E) b) Declarations of confidentiality from the researcher (Annexure H), the independent observer and the teachers who participated in the workshops (Annexure F).
- Assessment methods, including measuring instruments and questionnaires, used during and after the two workshops were developed as part of the pilot study and refining process.
- A reinforcement and self-monitoring instrument was developed after the group interviews to assist the participants in internalising the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process (Annexure N).
- An independent observer was trained to assist in the monitoring of the participants during the two workshops and the group interviews. The tasks of the independent observer were, as stated by De Vos (2002(d):409), the evaluation of the style of the presentation; the observation of the non-verbal behaviour (body language,

facial expressions, gestures) of the participants and the writing of an evaluation on each of the group sessions.

The intervention system in this research included the therapist, the independent observer, teachers, heads of department and deputy principal, as well as the Gestalt therapeutic process model.

Design requirements further determined the conditions which needed to be satisfied through the intervention (Mullen, 1993:170). The model designed:

- must benefit teachers at all post levels although the main at risk group is the post level 1 and 2 teachers,
- it must indirectly benefit the learners who will have a teacher with regained homeostasis teaching them,
- it must be of such a simplistic nature, although firmly based on the Gestalt theory of awareness, dialogue and process, that school management team members could, after receiving basic training, implement it at their schools and
- it must be attractive as a solution to teacher absenteeism and teacher attrition and therefore a solution in which school principals and the Department of Education would like to invest.

To further focus the design activities, unresolved issues or problems regarding the elements of the intervention under development were identified (Mullen, 1993:170).

Possible problems for this research which had to be reckoned with were...

- The limited time available to teachers. This was stated as a stress factor in Chapter 2, as well as a reason why certain coping strategies are not viable for teachers, as discussed in Chapter 4.
- Resistance from the teachers in need of intervention, because they were convinced that they do not need it.
- Resistance from teachers in need of intervention, because of the perceived stigma attached to it.

5.4 INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

The information retrieved was from existing literature, the personal experience of the researcher - also reflected as auto-ethnographic data, published empirical research findings and experts in the area. The literature served as the primary data source, however. The researcher thus withdrew her information from whatever sources of information appeared relevant to the causes and consequences of stress experienced by teachers; existing coping strategies and programmes for teachers suffering from career-related stress; as well as the theory of Gestalt therapy to use in the design and development of a Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress. The most important aspects deduced from the literature and information gathering process are as follows:

- Teachers in South African schools experience strain and tension, unique to their specific work description. Although many career-related stressors are universal across all careers, and are addressed as such, specific strategies addressing the unique character of the stress experienced in education are inadequate or borrowed from other helping professions (Brown & Uehara, 1999:10). Due to these inadequate support strategies stress manifests itself in the behaviour (Phillips, 1993:194; Everaert & Van der Wolf, 2003:122), emotions (Adamson, 2002:25; Davidson, 2003:17; Ho & Au, 2006:175), cognitions (Basson, 1994:58; Schlichte et al, 2005:10) and physical conditions (Dunham, 1992:97; Klos, 2003:191) of teachers. Teacher-stress has a negative impact on the learners (Jaye, 2002:117; Holt, 2005:97) and on education in general (Kizeltepe, 2003:148; Day et al, 2005:3).
- Teacher-stress is caused by factors directly related to the day-to-day activities in the classroom and school referred to as primary factors, factors brought on by forces in the society about which the teacher can do little, which are referred to as secondary factors, as well as factors related to the personality of the individual

teacher. *Primary factors* include for example poor working conditions with ill equipped classrooms (Lieberman & Miller, 2005:151; Grant & Hill, 2006:21), violence (Botha, 2006:x; Mithileni, 2006:x1) and poor discipline in the school (Motseke, 1998:91; Berkson, 2006:10), workload (Berkson, 2006:6; Hakanen et al, 2006:12), departmental policies (Basson, 1999:64), and school organisation. Examples of *secondary factors* are socio-economic factors (Day et al, 2005:3; Motsheka, 2006:1), the multicultural diversity of schools (Basson, 1999:64), and inadequate teacher remuneration (Motseka, 1998:47; Berkson, 2006:6), which resulted in the national industrial action of government employees in June 2007 (Basson, 1999:64). Although all teachers are exposed to stress, not all teachers experience the same degree of stress, and the susceptibility to stress thus lies within the *personality* of the individual teachers (Otto, 1986:129; Basson, 1999:59). Teachers who suffer a low self-esteem, who tend to be depressed and those lacking commitment are, for example, more prone to stress.

- An important stress factor, which distinguishes education from any other career, is the teacher's role of *in loco parentis* (in the place of the parent). The teacher's role as *in loco parentis* has been exacerbated by the lack of involvement of parents in their children's education and social integration. Children go through many physical and emotional changes and thus need the support from their parents, which is not forthcoming. This lack of involvement is due to factors such as one parent families, dual income families, children raised by family members or siblings, (Webb, 2006:10) and uneducated or semi-educated parents, who cannot assist their children in research for school assignments or in passing the exams. The responsibility of the holistic education of the majority of South African children therefore rests, to a large extent, with the teachers, who take their role of *in loco parentis* to heart. It is therefore teachers' dedication to this role that justifies and calls for a different and holistic approach to stress management.
- According to Balt (2007) teachers are leaving the profession at an increasing rate. In research done by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE 2006:30) it has

been found that young teachers leave the field during the first five years of their teaching career due to career-related stress. On the other hand, older teachers are retiring earlier although an extended career would result in a substantial increase in retirement income. Teachers who do not leave the profession or retire prematurely are often absent due to stress related illnesses (Esteve, 1989:21; Adamson, 2002:9).

With this research, the researcher thus argued that there are many reasons why the providing of stress awareness and management information to teachers at every level of the educational system, could benefit the system in the long run. There is an even greater need for a healthy approach to work and life. An approach focusing on empowerment needs to be holistic and inclusive, addressing personal, interpersonal and environmental factors. According to Tobin (1992:41) no individual can function without a holistic support system.

Gestalt therapy is a holistic therapeutic approach with awareness, dialogue and process at the heart of the approach (Perls et al, 1951; Beisser, 1970; O'Leary, 1992; Clarkson & McKewn, 1993; Yontef, 1993; Sills et al, 1995; Hamilton, 1997; Crocker, 2001; Feldhause, 2001; Joyce & Sills, 2003). Gestalt therapeutic intervention becomes an approach to life, thus resulting in long term results, and may therefore be a strong empowerment tool in the process of dealing with stress and stress-related issues.

5.5 INTERVENTION DESIGN

Based on the information gathered in Phase 2 of the research, namely information gathering and synthesis and specifically the information gathered on the Gestalt therapeutic approach of awareness, dialogue and process, Chapter 3, and with reference to Chapter 2, an intervention model was designed. Rothman (Mullin, 1993:172) states *“having acquired information from the knowledge base, it is now necessary to manipulate that information in some meaningful fashion, to convert it into a form that will yield workable design concepts”*. The information collected, which was descriptive generalisation, thus became prescriptive intervention. There must not be too much of a

deviation between the general description and the prescriptive intervention, however, (Mullen, 1993:182). The information was thus reworked into action constructs which, through design, was formulated into more specific situational intervention concepts. The goal requirements were thus kept in mind during the design process.

The information retrieved was contextually converted, due to the fact that the researcher was not aware of any Gestalt therapeutic process models to assist teachers suffering from career-related stress in regaining homeostasis. The design was innovative, because, although the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process do exist, it had to be adapted to suit the context within which the model was developed. The Gestalt therapeutic process model, aimed at the regaining of homeostasis for teachers, is thus an innovative model as described by Rossi and Freeman (Mullin, 1993:174).

Intervention research is a form of applied research. The researcher therefore adapted the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process to design a model addressing the stress experienced by teachers. Because applied research is practical, the researcher conducted the research with the intention that it be useful. From the information gathering phase the following important aspects were identified regarding an intervention process:

- Gestalt therapy regards psychotherapy as a means of increasing human potential, attempting the non-manipulative observation of the *here-and-now* and stressing the importance of *awareness* (Simken, 1978:4&5; Yontef, 1978:163). The criterion for success is, according to Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951:15), “*the patient’s own awareness of heightened vitality and more effective functioning*”. Gestalt therapy is further a theory of behaviour based on the holistic epistemology. It is descriptive, integrative and structural, emphasising phenomenology, ontology (Walker, 1971:75 & 76) and the present (Walker, 1971:16; Latner, 1992:61; Korb et al, 1989:5). Gestalt therapy regards the individual as holistic (Latner, 1973:5; Yontef, 1978:167). The holistic understanding of human beings brings the functioning of their physical body, their

emotions, thoughts, culture and their social expressions into a unified picture. This leads to the Gestalt principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Latner, 1973:6). The Gestaltist looks for ways in which things come together and is therefore more attuned to the processes and principles that reoccur in behaviour than to the temporary forms these processes take.

- The Gestalt process with field theory emphasises that nothing exists in isolation. Everything has a context or field within which it exists. To understand something we must look at the situation holistically (Sills et al, 1996:77). In the healthy individual, a configuration or gestalt is formed with the organising figure being the dominant need, thus being on the foreground. The individual meets this need by contacting the environment with some sensory-motor behaviour. The contact is organised by the figure of interest against the background of the individual/environment. As soon as the need is met the “gestalten” it formed become complete, cease to exert an influence and the individual is free to form new “gestalten”. This developing and destroying of “gestalten” is called *organismic self-regulation* (Perls et al, 1951:275). It is important to note that in Gestalt Therapy, both sensing the environment and motor movement in the environment are active contacting functions. For the purpose of this research it is important to note that when this gestalt formation and destruction is blocked or rigidified, due to lack of awareness and needs are not recognised or expressed, the flexible harmony and flow of the individual/environment field is disturbed (Yontef, 1978:164).
- With awareness, individuals can mobilise their aggression (action) (Latner, 1978:31), so that the environmental stimulus can be contacted and either be rejected or assimilated. When awareness does not develop into a clear gestalt with a figure and a background, or when impulses are not expressed, incomplete “gestalten” are formed and psychopathology may develop (Yontef, 1978:164). When individuals lose their awareness, they lose the sense that it is they who are thinking, sensing, feeling and doing. Gestaltists speak of awareness and lack of

awareness. Things are out of our awareness because they are either irrelevant to the present course of our living, or because we actively keep aspects of ourselves out of our awareness (Latner, 1973:65). The intention of increased awareness is to confront individuals with the full responsibility for all their behaviour, to increase authentic self-expression and to minimise self-deceptive, evasive, self-frustrating and meaningless behaviour (Greenwald, 1976:269).

- Along with awareness, dialogue is seen as the primary therapeutic tool in Gestalt therapy (Yontef, 1993:221; Sills et al, 1996:110). Dialogue refers to contact between the individual and another person or the environment. Gestalt therapy proposes a dialogical relationship between therapist and client, resulting in, what Buber called, the I-Thou relationship (Sills et al, 1996:110; Joyce & Sills, 2001:43). An I-Thou relationship between two individuals means that they are fully in the present, willing to meet each other honestly and to be aware of thoughts, feelings and behaviours which are developing in response.
- Gestalt therapeutic techniques have been used by a wide range of professional helpers. In South Africa it is studied on an interdisciplinary level in the human and social sciences, and specific limitations were specified. Therapists are required to play an active role during the intervention, without doing the work for the client. The relationship between the therapist and the clients is of the utmost importance in the client's goal to reach self-support through awareness, dialogue and the Gestalt process. The Gestalt techniques and approach has been used with a wide range of clients from Gestalt play-therapy to adults suffering emotional problems. Gestalt therapy can be used in either a group or individual context.
- The researcher, who has also been a secondary school principal, completed her Masters Degree in 2003 based on Gestalt therapy. During the period 2002 to 2008 she successfully used this therapeutic approach as a form of intervention with teachers suffering from career-related stress. She thus has the necessary knowledge and experience in both the field of education and Gestalt therapy to

perceive the Gestalt therapeutic approach as a way to eradicate or limit the stress experienced by teachers.

The researcher converted the general Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process into prescriptive statements to help teachers suffering from career-related stress to regain homeostasis. At the end of each section the researcher gave a summary of the intervention expected from the therapist, called *intervention strategy*, and the skills towards regaining homeostasis, which should be achieved by the teacher, called *skills learned*.

5.5.1 DIAGRAMMATICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE GESTALT PROCESS

The regaining of homeostasis through a Gestalt therapeutic approach is an interrelated process. To clarify this concept the researcher created a diagram (Fig. 5.1) illustrating the interrelatedness of awareness, dialogue and process. Through awareness and dialogue healthy intra- and interpersonal contact occurs, leading to growth and co-creation, resulting in an I-Thou relationship as part of the Gestalt process of organismic self-regulation. The interrelatedness of the three core aspects of the Gestalt therapeutic process model, namely, awareness, dialogue and process, will lead teachers to self-responsibility, maturity and ultimately self-support.

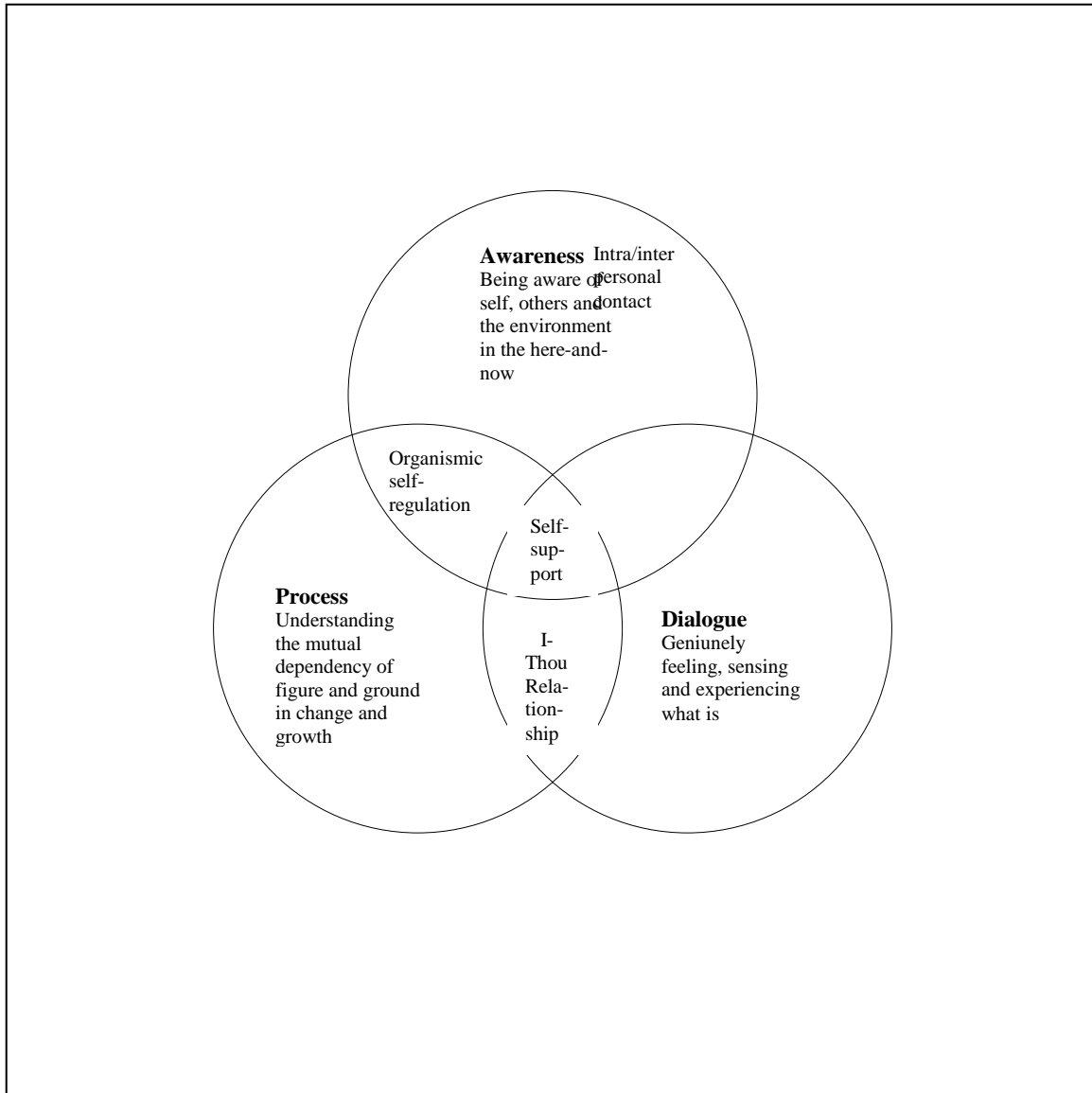


Figure 5.1 The Gestalt process as intervention strategy for teachers suffering from career-related stress

Based on the data gathered during the literature study (Chapters 3 and 4) an approach, addressing the career-related stress experienced by teachers, was developed. This process or approach, as an integrated concept, was formulated as an intervention strategy, with the skills learned from the intervention strategy, as the result.

Intervention strategy: Clarify the interrelatedness illustrated in the diagram and explain the terms awareness, dialogue and process, the aim of Gestalt therapy, as well as the concept of environment.

Skills learned: Terminology, the holistic, interrelated approach and ultimate aim of Gestalt therapy.

5.5.2 FIRST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE PROCESS MODEL: REGAINING AWARENESS

Joyce and Sills (2003:27) defines awareness as “...*a fundamentally positive, essential quality of all healthy living. It is the energy or assimilation for growth at the contact boundary, for self-knowledge, choice and creativity*”. Awareness can, according to Yontef (1993:144), be defined as being in touch with one’s own existence and with *what is*. It is a form of making meaning of our experiences (Mackewn, 1997:113). Full awareness is the process of being in full contact with the most important events in the individual/environment field with full sensory-motor, emotional, cognitive and energetic support. Insight, which is a form of awareness, is the immediate understanding of the unity of disparate elements in the environment field. Awareness is always accompanied by gestalt formation (Perls et al, 1951:viii) and through aware contact new, meaningful wholes are created. Sills, Fish and Lapworth (1996:22) thus justly state that awareness is at the heart of Gestalt therapy.

Teachers can never be aware of nothing. They are always aware of something even if it is of nothingness. Teachers must be awareness of content as well as structure to energise their contact with the environment. Gestalt therapy starts a process, but the exact reaction is determined by teachers and their environments. Through this awareness teachers must learn to solve their own problems. Raising the awareness of teachers is thus the first task in Gestalt therapy, and thus of the therapist, in addressing the stress experienced by the

teachers. Teachers need to focus on the obvious, such as their own, as well as the other person's movements, postures, language patterns, voice, gestures and interactions.

Teachers must be brought to the realisation that awareness is grounded in their dominant present need within the reality of a situation, which will lead to contact with the environment including other people, which will result in their growth.

Intervention strategy: Awareness of sensory- and motor functions within the environment.

Skills learned: Awareness of physical, emotional and cognitive experience within the environment.

5.5.2.1 First important aspect of awareness: Awareness is grounded in the present need

Awareness must lead to the regulating of teachers' internal needs. Without full awareness teachers will be unaware whether what they experience is nourishing or toxic. Teachers must thus become aware of the obvious and not of the subconscious. This will lead to a more objective evaluation of the situation. Teachers must not distance themselves from their awareness because for the figure to emerge fully and the dominant need to be satisfied, teachers must invest energy and excitement in their emotions.

Intervention strategy: Make teachers aware of the difference between nourishing and toxic experiences and influences from their environment in the here-and-now, and that they have a choice to either assimilate or reject it.

Skills learned: Teachers can identify what is nourishing and what is toxic, and how it is nourishing and toxic, and learn to choose what is nourishing at that moment

5.5.2.2 Second important aspect of awareness: Awareness and the reality of how the teacher is in the situation

Teachers must be in full contact with the reality. Teachers, who are only partially aware of their behaviour, but do not feel in a physical way what they do and how they do it, and that they may choose different ways of behaving, are unaware. Teachers must know that they are in control of their own behaviour in the sense that they choose how to behave and that they must take responsibility for their behaviour. Mere awareness of dissatisfaction with a situation is not enough, teachers must be brought to be aware of what they do to create or perpetuate the situation. Because of the Gestalt emphasis on what individuals do and how they do it, there must be a relation between teachers' actions and awareness of the actions to prevent lack of involvement due to the absence of action and mechanical and purposeless action, which is a result of being unaware.

Intervention strategy: Heighten teachers' awareness of their actions

Skills learned: Teachers become aware of what they do to perpetuate or create situations, which will lead to different behaviour.

5.5.2.3. Third important aspect of awareness: Awareness and present centredness

Teachers must be aware in the present and of the present moment. The content of their thoughts may be located in the past or in the future, but the awareness must be of how it is experienced in the present. Teachers must be aware of the now and the how, because now covers all that exists. Teachers must be aware of what they are experiencing, how they are involved, of the phenomenon and of awareness as such. "How" covers everything that is structure, behaviour and the ongoing process. Teachers must be aware of the present, because the past seldom leads to change and change is necessary for growth. Teachers must be aware of gestalt formation, thus their dominant needs and the satisfaction thereof in the present moment, in order to make room for the next dominant need. In psychological health, teachers' awareness is of the present moment of gestalt formation.

The therapist must assist teachers, as a point of departure, in what they are doing and not with what they want to do or what have been done. Behaviour held over from the past or anticipations of the future, diminishes the amount of attention and energy teachers can apply to the future. Being aware at that moment that they are thinking about the past, the situation has subtly changed for the better. This does not mean that teachers must never remember the past nor plan for the future. It means that they must be aware that the remembering and planning happens in the present.

Only from the present influence of the environment field can teachers make sense of their present experience. If, for example, learners angered teachers a week ago, their present anger is because of their present field of thoughts. The experience of remembering is thus important, rather than what is remembered. Instead of reliving a past experience perpetually, it can become a memory. Teachers must realise that what happened in the past is either assimilated and became part of them, or they carry it around in the form of an unfinished situation, thus an incomplete gestalt, leading to regret and bodily tension. It is thus important how the past or future is experienced in the present in the current environmental field. Change occurs due to personal choices, but will not occur until teachers accept what is in the present and should therefore develop the self-discipline to understand and live the now and the how and confront the actual situation in the present moment.

Intervention strategy: The experience is in the present, whether it is remembered or anticipated. The teacher must be fully in the present.

Skills learned: Past experiences are in the past and it must not direct teachers' present behaviour. Teachers' focus on the present will increase the quality of their interactions and relationships, because all their energy is focused on the present situation.

5.2.2.4 Fourth important aspect of awareness: Awareness results in growth and transcendence

The present or now changes every moment. Awareness excludes an unchanging way of seeing the world. Awareness can never be static and must be trusted by teachers as being constantly in a process of evolving. Through being aware of themselves and their environments teachers will enhance their experience of life through regulating their internal needs. Teachers' organismic experiencing must be balanced to be in full contact with nature, or in support of the self. A balanced organismic experiencing will lead to growth and healthy functioning.

Intervention strategy: Awareness is of the present moment, which changes from moment to moment.

Skills learned: Because of awareness and being in the present and the changing of the present from moment to moment, teachers realise that they need to grow with the moment.

5.2.2.5 Fifth important aspect of awareness: Awareness and contact

Awareness is characterised by contact, sensing, excitement (acting) and gestalt formation. Although contact is possible without awareness, awareness is not possible without contact. Teachers must become aware of the resistances which prevent them from being fully aware. Teachers can even become aware by pointing out that they lack awareness. Teachers must be aware of their cognitive, emotional, physical and spiritual self because they are holistic beings.

Intervention strategy: Full awareness leads to contact.

Skills learned: Full awareness is holistic and leads to contact with the environment and the people in it.

Individuals, and therefore teachers, have three zones of awareness which are interrelated.

5.2.2.6 Sixth important aspect of awareness: Zones of awareness

There are three zones of awareness namely the inner, outer and middle zones. Although teachers must be made aware of them as separate zones they must realise that they function holistically.

The inner zone includes teachers' experience of everything that occurs in their bodies for example, moods, emotions, proprioceptive stimuli, hunger and adrenalin surges. This does not include awareness of the quality of the experience though. Awareness of the inner zone must be heightened by drawing teachers' attention to their bodies, their feelings and sensations.

The outer zone, thus the immediate environment, is experienced through the senses and awareness must emerge through teachers' eyes, ears, nose, throat and skin, as well as their personal association with the phenomena that are being experienced. The outer zone further includes teachers' behaviour, speech and actions. Awareness of the outer zone, which includes awareness of the environment and the people in that environment, will lead to a richer and more vibrant experience of the world and to teachers becoming aware of their actions and the effect they have on other people.

Teachers must be made aware of their middle zone of awareness, because that includes all the ways in which teachers make sense of both their internal and external stimuli. Thought is the controlling function of the middle zone and may be realised for example as memory, fantasy, imagery, dreams and/or wishes. Teachers, who are constantly in contact with other people, must be made aware that the middle zone mediates, improves, destroys biases, organises and influences the quality of the experiences of the interior and exterior zones, because teachers must not become confused by believing that how they process or think about an interior or exterior experience is the experience itself. Teachers must be brought to the understanding that where the interior and exterior experience is immediate, spontaneous sensation or contact, the middle zone is neither. An experience

either of the inner or outer zones is interpreted by the middle zone according to the teachers' belief systems, and the emotions experienced are caused by their own belief system or frame of reference. Raising awareness of the middle zone is the most subtle and also the most important. Teachers must not assume what another person is thinking or imagining and their awareness of their own middle zone must be heightened to determine what is true and what is coloured by either their belief systems or previous experiences. This will assist teachers to be objective and to regain perspective.

Intervention strategy: There are three interrelated zones of awareness. The inner zone (moods, emotions, proprioceptive stimuli, hunger, pain), the outer zone (experienced by the senses, action and speech) and the middle zone (cognitive function of making sense of what has been experienced in the inner and outer zones).

Skills learned: Teachers' awareness of the middle zone of awareness because what they perceive as true has been coloured by their own belief system and frame of reference.

The heightening of the middle zone of awareness will lead teachers to self-awareness.

5.5.2.7 Seventh important aspect of awareness: Self- awareness

When teachers are brought to self-awareness they will be able to live their lives in a richer way, because of being in full contact with themselves. Teachers must become aware of what they do that is their *authentic self* and what they do that is phoney and manipulative, or how they avoid being their own persons. Teachers must be brought to the realisation that self-rejection and full self-awareness are mutually exclusive. Self-rejection is a distortion of awareness, because it denies who an individual is.

Intervention strategy: Awareness of the authentic self. Self-rejection versus self-awareness

Skills learned: Full awareness and contact with the self, leads to teachers being their true selves and not phoney and manipulative. Self-awareness leads to teachers rejecting self-rejection and accepting themselves as they are.

Full self-awareness, indicating full contact with the self, will lead to awareness and contact with the environment.

5.5.2.8 Eighth important aspect of awareness: Awareness of the environmental field

Awareness is always the subject of experience, which is the apprehending, with the full scope of our senses, the phenomenal world inside and outside us as it occurs. Awareness is thus clearly not just of teachers, but of the environmental field within which they exist, and without which they cannot exist. Teachers must therefore be made aware of the interconnectedness between them and their surroundings. Awareness of context (the teacher's environment) and responsibility within that context are as much part of the healthy ideal as a teacher's own intra-psychic processes. This includes relationships with other individuals and the local and global community. Teachers must grow to realise that a life of limited exposure to the world and its potential experiences leaves little possibility for creativity, because creativity is impatient with stasis of experience and can, thus, not flourish. Through the use of their senses teachers must become aware of how they avoid the obvious and must open themselves up to what is here and now.

Because the environmental field is experienced through cognitive, sensory and affective awareness, the therapist must catalyse teachers' awareness until they awaken to their responsibility for thinking, feeling, and acting. Through being re-sensitised teachers will become aware of their rejection of awareness and the expression of impulses. When teachers are able to control their awareness (censor), they will be able to fight for survival with their own sensory-motor behaviour and will thus learn, become integrated and self-accepting and, eventually, self-supportive. Awareness thus leads to the creative integration of a problem and to change.

Intervention strategy: Teachers must not only be aware of themselves, but of the environment, which includes the people in the environment, within which they exist. This awareness will lead to creative growth.

Skills learned: Teachers realise that they are part of the environment and that they must not limit or avoid their environment, because it will restrict their growth. Having control over their awareness, teachers can grow and become self-supportive.

Awareness in the here-and-now is a prerequisite for contact in a dialogic relationship.

5.5.3 SECOND IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE PROCESS MODEL: DIALOGUE

The dialogic relationship is an attitude of genuinely feeling/sensing/experiencing the other person as a person, and a willingness to listen and to hear the other person's experience without prejudgement. Dialogue is something done rather than something talked about. Yontef (1993:132) therefore refers to dialogue as being lived.

Dialogue, in Gestalt therapy, means a relationship based on engagement (Yontef, 1993:34). This hearing includes not only the spoken word, but also what is not spoken (Joyce and Sills, 2001:43), such as body language, gestures, tone of voice and facial expressions. Dialogue involves the willingness to meet the other person honestly, to be aware of your thoughts, feelings and behaviours in response to them and to the relationship you are developing (Sills et al, 1996:110). A real connection can only take place when you are fully in the present and are willing to give yourself unreservedly to the meeting, in that moment. This is a move towards each other in genuine and open exploration (Yontef, 1993:39). This is called the I-Thou moment (Buber, 1947:xii), and in and outside a therapeutic session there is a constant movement between the I-It and the I-Thou relationship (Sills et al, 1996:111).

It is important for teachers, within the educational environment, to be aware of Buber's (1947: 117-119) three main forms of the dialogical relation. The first rests on an abstract,

but mutual experience of inclusion. This happens when two strangers meet who are thoroughly different in outlook, nature and calling, but experience, in an instant, the other's full legitimacy and recognise each other as such. The second form is a one-sided experience of inclusion. This is the dialogic relation between learners and teachers. Teachers influence the life of learners with their own lives. No matter how intense the mutuality of giving and taking with which the teacher is bound to the learner, inclusion cannot be mutual in this case. The teacher experiences the learner being educated, but the learner cannot experience the teacher as being educated. This one-sidedness is the essence of teaching. The moment learners can throw themselves across and experience from the other side, the education relation will be destroyed, or it will change into friendship. Friendship is the third form of dialogic relation, because it is based on a concrete and mutual experience of inclusion. This is true inclusion of one another through human souls. Within the educational environment teachers experience all three of these forms of relationship and must realise that there is a place for each one.

Teachers being brought to the realisation that the relationship with a learner is to a large extent a one-sided inclusion, will realise that not receiving back from the learner does not mean they are failures, but that it is the characteristic of the relationship between teacher and learner. In spite of this the relation in education is a pure dialogic one, because trust is the most inward achievement in education. Teachers exist therefore they must be really there, really facing the learners, not merely there in spirit. In order to be and to remain truly present to the learners, teachers must experience this as one of the focuses of their responsibility for the world. Teachers must realise that they cannot, and ought not, be continually concerned with the learners, either in thought or in deed.

Dialogic contact isn't 'made' it 'happens'. Individuals can bring their will to the contact boundary, but the rest requires response from the other person. Teachers should thus be brought to understand and apply the various elements of a dialogic relationship.

Intervention strategy: Teachers must become aware that the dialogic relationship is an attitude of genuinely feeling/sensing/experiencing the other person as a person and a willingness to listen and to hear the other person's experience without prejudgement. This hearing is not only of the spoken word, but also of non-spoken communication. A true dialogic relationship is based on engagement, honesty and trust. The dialogic relation between teacher and learner is one of one-sided inclusion of giving and teaching from the side of the teacher and when it becomes mutual inclusion it becomes friendship.

Skills learned: Communication is talking and listening to hear what the other person says, without prejudgement. Teachers must be really present when working with the learners, but they must not be continually concerned with the learners. Teachers must not perceive themselves as failures when the relationship is one of one-sided inclusion, because that is the nature of the dialogic relationship with a learner. Teachers must not attempt to change this to a relationship of mutual inclusion, because the teacher-learner relationship is not one of friendship.

5.5.3.1 First important aspect of the dialogic relationship: Identifying elements of the relationship

Teachers require faith not only in their own resources, but also in the resources in the rest of the environment field. Martin Buber (Yontef, 1993:131) states that the individual (I) has meaning only in relation to others. This relation can only be an I-Thou or I-It relationship. The I-It is manipulative contact where the I-Thou is dialogic. A true I-Thou encounter necessarily involves discovery and leads to change

In Gestalt therapy the contacts which are important are both intrapersonal (contact between teachers and aspects of themselves) and interpersonal (contact between the teacher and perceived aspects of interactions with individuals, or events from the past, present or future). This inter-functioning between teachers and their environments and the spontaneous concentration on any aspect of their environments carries with it the energy for movement or change. The teacher must be aware that there are two types of contact. Casual contact between people as an I-It association, because although contact beyond

the contact boundary has been achieved, the contact is businesslike or habitual. When two or more persons are, on the other hand, completely present (in the here-and-now) completely real and aware of each other in their interactions, the I-Thou relationship flourishes. It is only in the contact of the I and Thou that the uniqueness of each individual develops. This is very important for teachers to remember to work in an I-Thou relationship with learners to prevent mechanical teaching, which will prevent growth.

Intervention strategy: A truly dialogic relationship (I-Thou relationship) leads to contact, discovery and ultimately change or growth. Teachers must interrelate with themselves and their environment with energy. Teachers must be completely present in their encounters with the partners concerned with education. Every person is unique.

Skills learned: Only when teachers truly engage with learners in the present situation and with energy will growth take place, not only for learners in their uniqueness, but also for the teachers in theirs.

A dialogic relationship is composed of four elements namely presence, confirmation, inclusion and willingness to open communication. The implementation of these four qualities of a relationship, results in an I-Thou or dialogic relationship.

5.5.3.1.1 Element 1: Presence

To be in the present, teachers must bring all their senses and awareness to bear and be fully present in the encounter. Teachers should meet the other person while holding their ground in a way that is contactful. This means bringing oneself to the boundary with the other person, but not breaking through the boundary to control the other person. Teachers must let go of their concerns and ideals in order to be completely present and real, thus not pretending.

Intervention strategy: Teachers must arrive at the contact boundary with their environments in the present moment.

Skills learned: The teacher must come to the contact boundary and meet the other person there. The teacher must not break through the boundary to control the other person. This must take place with full awareness of the present moment.

5.5.3.1.2 Element 2: Confirmation

Confirmation is more than acceptance. It is an affirmation of what you can become and indicate an intrinsic respect for diversity and differences. The therapist needs to accept the teacher unconditionally, just as the teacher must accept the learner and other people unconditionally. The teacher and others will be loved and valued however badly they behaved or how difficult they are. In an accepting environment the teacher can come to self-knowledge, self-appreciation and self-love. The teacher must realise that this confirmation does not mean that the therapist condones everything said and done must be condoned.

Intervention strategy: Teachers need to accept the other unconditionally although it does not mean that they must condone everything the other does.

Skills learned: Learners and colleagues must be unconditionally accepted and loved. What is unacceptable an inappropriate must not be accepted. Teachers affirm not only what they can become, but also what the learners can become.

5.5.3.1.3 Element 3: Inclusion

Inclusion is the highest form of confirmation. Teachers must attempt to enter the phenomenological world of learners, to see it through their eyes and then to offer confirmation. Inclusion must take place on all levels of functioning, namely thinking, feeling and body processes. Cognitive inclusion involves resonating with the thinking and reasoning of the other person, bodily inclusion attends to the physical process of the other

person and emotional inclusion resonates the emotions of the other person and being aware of the response it invokes in you as the teacher. This is not total immersion or confluence, it is empathy with the other person, because some experiences are universal and the teacher can relate to them. It goes even further in the sense that it encompasses teachers' awareness of their own feelings, reactions and experiences. Inclusion exists out of the teachers in their totality, the other persons in their totality and the relationship between them. Within this relationship of inclusion co-creation takes place.

Intervention strategy: The teacher must attempt to enter the world of the other individuals and see it through their eyes. This is inclusion and must take place on cognitive, emotional and physical levels, thus empathy. The difference between confluence and empathy must be understood.

Skills learned: Teachers see the world of other individuals not only through their own eyes, but through the eyes of the said individuals, which will lead to greater understanding. This must be done in full awareness. Teachers must, in spite of this empathy and understanding, not become confluent with the other individuals, but must stay separate.

5.5.3.1.4 Element 4: Willingness to open communication

Genuine and unreserved communication is a characteristic of dialogic presence. Fully present individuals share meaning with each other, including despair, love, spirituality, anger, joy, humour and sensuality. This unreserved communication does not mean that teachers give themselves over to the dialogue without discrimination. It is important that learners, for example, feel free to communicate any of their experiences to teachers, and that those teachers are willing to openly communicate their responses to the learners. Teachers must share or communicate honestly what will be useful or helpful to the other individual, and should at times communicate what is getting in the way of honest communication. The characteristics of true and open communication, namely honesty, respect, direct sending and receiving and active listening must be implemented in service of a true dialogic relationship.

Intervention strategy: Communication must be unreserved, but with discrimination. What is useful or conducive to growth and self-support must be communicated honestly.

Skills learned: Communicate with others in all honesty, but with learners especially there must be boundaries, because it is a teacher/learner relationship and not one of friendship.

5.5.3.2 Second important aspect of the dialogic relationship: Contact

Contact is constituted by awareness. Teachers must be brought to the awareness that the contact between them and the environment defines their identity and that good psychological health means having good contact with self and others. It defines the “ego-boundary”, that which the teacher experiences as ‘me’ and those which are ‘not me’. If boundaries do not meet they cannot interrelate and without them interrelating there is no contact, and without contact there is no growth. The teacher must realise that how contact is made will be determined by the environmental conditions of every unique situation, and behaviour must be adjusted or modified on an ongoing basis to meet each new situation appropriately. Teachers tend to give all the time, and to feel guilty when they spend time away from their work, it is therefore important that they realise that the polar opposite of contact, namely withdrawal, is important for healthy functioning. Contact with the environment is important, but clear and distinct withdrawals into the other zones are also important for optimal functioning. Withdrawal from contact must also include the physical retreat from a challenging and stimulating environment, to a restful environment (Korb et al, 1989:39).

Intervention strategy: The teacher must have contact with self (me) and environment (not me) because the environment is part of what identifies the teacher and through the interrelationship with the environment there is growth. Every unique situation requires different contact. Teachers also need to withdraw from contact at times.

Skills learned: The self and the environment must be in contact to promote growth, but there is a boundary between the self and the environment. Contact can't be made in the same way every time, because every situation is unique. Teachers can't give all the time. They sometimes need to withdraw into a stimulating and restful environment.

5.5.3.3 Third important aspect of the dialogic relationship: The contact boundary

The ego or contact boundary is the differentiation between the self and the otherness. The self is identified by the otherness. If there is a disruption at the contact boundary, such as confluence, an individual may feel there is nothing left if the otherness is taken away. Teachers who identify too strongly with their profession and the profession is taken away, will feel that there is nothing left of the self and may prefer death. When there is a boundary issue, conflict will develop. When too much emphasis is placed on the boundary it will lead to hostility. The contact boundary is not static, however, and should be kept permeable to allow exchanges, yet firm enough for autonomy.

Defining the self and connecting with the other are the two functions of the contact boundary. For teachers to make good contact with their world, it is necessary to reach out and discover their own boundaries. Effective self-regulation is the assessment of what should be assimilated or rejected by the teacher, which can only occur during contact with the environment.

During contact with the environment the teacher can make aware or unaware modifications at the contact boundary, which can be good or bad, helpful or unhelpful to organismic self-regulation. The teacher must, therefore, be made aware that a modification must be seen in the context of each unique situation. Here again the teacher

must be in full awareness of the total situation, so that the modification can be in relation to the field conditions and the person himself.

If the natural functions at the contact boundary are interrupted, impeded or distorted, it characterises ill-health or disequilibrium. Teachers must be aware of this imbalance within themselves. Where these negative interruptions or modifications became habitual, the teacher must be made aware of it, and work on them to regain healthy self-regulation leading to homeostasis.

Healthy functioning involves good contact with self and others, but it is unrealistic to assume that the teacher can make full contact with every emerging figure or need at all times. Every situation requires a unique response and even an adjustment or modification of contact. Teachers must thus develop the ability to choose and apply the full range of contact options and adapt their contact style to different and new situations.

As a result of teachers being in contact with their environments, and especially the people in their environment all the time, they are in danger of losing homeostasis due to the modifications made at their contact boundaries, although it may seem to them that these modifications are there for self-preservation.

Therapist's intervention: At the contact boundary the self is defined as well as the other. The teacher must be in full awareness to be aware of the uniqueness of each situation. Modifications can be made at the contact boundary. Awareness of helpful modifications and modifications leading to ill-health must be made

Skills learned: There is a difference between the self and the other. Every situation is unique and must be assessed as such. Unhealthy modifications must not be made, because it seems as if they can protect the teacher.

5.5.3.4 Fourth important aspect of the dialogic relationship: Modifications at the contact boundary

Although modifications are not necessarily made during each contact, teachers need to be aware of them, should the situation require it. In the experience of the researcher, teachers tend to make modifications at the contact boundary and must therefore be sensitised to both toxic and nourishing modifications.

(a) Projection

With projection, teachers take some attitude, belief, perception or feeling from inside the self and impose it on the world. All creative teachers use projection to create something, or to do something, but projection can also be used to deny experience, to distort, or deny a part of the self, believing it resides in someone else. It is not only negative qualities which are projected on others, but also positive ones if the teacher has not yet internalised the quality, such as always pointing out what a great teacher a colleague is, while the teacher self is just as great, but does not acknowledge the fact. Projection without awareness, responsibility and receptivity to new information leads to the denial of important sensory information, replacing that information with one's own ideas or fantasies. The polarity of projection is ownership. Ownership has always been a corner stone of Gestalt therapy, indicating taking responsibility for all aspects of the self. Teachers are particularly vulnerable to this modification and must be made aware that they cannot feel guilty or blame themselves for the failure of learners to achieve when they did everything that has been accepted of them as teachers.

(b) Confluence

In the state of confluence teachers do not experience themselves as being distinct from their environment. Confluence is thus an inability to distinguish personal boundaries, and teachers merge with the beliefs, attitudes, and feelings that surround them. Teachers must be supported to establish clear awareness of self and what is not self. From time to time

confluence is needed to empathise with another person, but it is important to become separate again. The polarity of confluence is withdrawal. The healthy teacher can move fluently and appropriately along the continuum of confluence and withdrawal. Teachers must be aware that a fixation in withdrawal will lead to an impeded dialogical relationship, though.

(c) Retroflection

Retroflection involves the redirection of energy which, in healthy functioning, would be directed outward into the environment to establish contact. The new direction is inward and teachers do to the self what would spontaneously be done to objects or individuals in the environment. Teachers must be aware that in unhealthy retroflection, anger or aggression is turned back on themselves, which may result in physical and emotional symptoms. In healthy retroflection teachers' conscious adaptation to social norms, through, for example, self-discipline has functional value, because it protects them from external threat. The other pole of this continuum is impulsiveness, which is the spontaneous vibrancy of action and contact. Teachers must realise that it can, however, also be an inappropriate expression of feelings and they could, in fact, be acting impulsively in a way which is dangerous for self and others.

(d) Introjection

To introject is a process whereby an opinion, an attitude or an instruction is unquestioningly taken in from the environment without properly analysing, digesting or assimilating it, without awareness. Teachers, who are under the influence of introjections, feel a strong pressure to conform to it and feel uncomfortable if they attempt to go against it. Teachers should be aware that, although the majority of introjections come from their parents and significant others, they are also culturally determined. Through full awareness the teacher must come to determine which introjections are healthy and which are in conflict with themselves, and organismic self-regulation. Healthy introjections must be assimilated and the others rejected.

(e) Deflection

Deflection is turning away from either an internal or environmental stimulus, to prevent full recognition or awareness and contact. Teachers must be aware of their own deflecting behaviour such as avoiding eye contact, verbal circumlocutions, being excessively polite or using stereotypical language, disallowing intense emotion, talking about the past or the future instead of the present experience and changing the subject. Deflection as an unconscious avoidance mechanism tends to reduce the contact and to increase the isolation of teachers from others and from their own experiences. The teachers must be receptive towards the stimuli inside the self and the environment, but must do this in full awareness.

(f) Desensitisation

Desensitisation is a process similar to deflection, because it is another way of avoiding contact with the stimulus. Deflection prevents a stimulus to reach the middle zone of awareness, while desensitisation is a shutting down at the level of the inner zone, thus the internal and external stimuli. Teachers must be in full awareness of their cognitions, feelings and bodily processes. Over-sensitisation, on the other hand, may lead to avoidance and the abuse of substances such as nicotine, alcohol, drugs and caffeine to numb these feelings.

(g) Egotism

Egotism, as a form of habitual modification, is characterised by a preoccupation with one's own feelings, thoughts, behaviours and effect on others. Whether the preoccupation is positive or negative, this self-reflection or consciousness of the self is avoidance of real relational contact. The polar opposite of egotism is spontaneity which, when appropriate, is the characteristic of full vibrant living, but a lack of necessary reflection and self-monitoring may lead to impulse disorders such as mania and anti-social behaviour.

Intervention strategy: Teachers are made aware of the modifications that can occur at the contact boundary. Teachers must also be made aware of the polar opposites of each modification.

Skills learned: Teachers evaluate their own aggression (action) at the contact boundary, in awareness, to determine whether the modifications made, if made, were healthy or leading to ill-health and detrimental to a dialogic relationship. They will then be able to adapt the modification.

Teachers must be aware that awareness and contact leading to a dialogic relationship is not only a prerequisite for the Gestalt process, but is an integral part of the process.

5.5.4 THIRD IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE PROCESS MODEL: THE GESTALT PROCESS

From the information gathered the following important aspects were included in the process model:

- The word “process”, implies a change in the individual in which a consistent quality or direction can be discerned. A process is active because something is happening. Everything exists within a context or a field and to understand something or someone the whole situation should be taken into account. Teachers in their life-space constitute the environment and the whole environment within which an event takes place is described and not only the event, because in the environment the parts are in immediate relation to each other and respond to each other. Nothing thus exists in isolation. Attention is paid to the physical, emotional, psychological, social, historical and cultural environment of teachers, from which they cannot be disconnected.
- Teachers must understand that they organise the totality of the environment according to different situations and different needs, with figure and ground, and

different figures alternating on a constant basis. These concepts need to be explained to teachers so that they can be aware of the fields of their awareness, thus how they organise their experience, as well as the larger environmental field within which they exist. The larger environment field includes both what is in teachers' immediate awareness, and all the latent possibilities and potentials of their growing self-concept.

- Teachers need to understand that they are always actively organising the field, both in terms of their current needs and their fixed gestalts, or unfinished business from the past. In the process of growing awareness, which is part of change or growth, teachers progress through five layers of functioning. The first layer is the *cliché or phoney layer*, which consists of shallow or token contact, followed by the *role playing or phobic layer* where individuals play roles rather than contacting their true selves. The third layer is the *impasse* which is the point from where growth occurs. In the impasse teachers reach a stage where they avoid working beyond a certain point, and growth or maturation can't take place. The fourth layer, the *implosive layer* is characterised by fear, which is the result of two existing, equally strong forces residing in the teacher. The *fifth layer* is called the explosive layer and is the prelude to authentic living. This is the moment of insight where the deadness of the impasse is replaced by a feeling of aliveness.

Intervention strategy: Teachers in their life space constitute an environment field, and everything that happens must be seen in the context of the environment field and not as a single event. Teachers must be aware of their needs and that they organise their environmental fields on an ongoing basis in order to satisfy their needs. The environmental field constitutes also those things that are not immediate and obvious, but for example latent, such as the teacher's abilities. Teachers need to understand that there are five phases through which their growth goes to reach a stage of authentic living.

Skills learned: Teachers understand the concept of themselves within the context of their environment and that they are constantly organising their environment according to their needs. They therefore learned that there is not really permanent homeostasis because there is always a new need. Teachers are now aware that latent aspects, such as their potential, are also part of their environment field, and will have an impact on their growth towards maturity. Teachers are thus able to assess each phase towards authentic living. They became particularly aware of the impasse, knowing that this is from where they will grow, and that it is not a point of no growth.

5.5.4.1 First important aspect of process: The cycle of experience

A psychological cycle goes on in every person. It is related to the satisfying of needs and is also referred to as the cycle of organismic self-regulation, or the cycle of awareness because the cycle of experience is the flow of awareness. This is an uncomplicated way of tracking the formation, interruption and completion of "gestalten". It identifies stages from the moment of experiencing a sensation to withdrawal.

The cycle begins with a sensation (I feel contractions in my stomach), which become awareness (I am hungry) which is the understanding of bodily needs at that time. The awareness leads to mobilisation (planning to get up to go to the refrigerator and mobilising muscles), which leads to action (walking). The next step is contact (eating the food and realising enjoyment, and the food and the individual become one). The individual experiences satisfaction (becomes aware of fullness) and enter a stage of withdrawal. There is a space between stage seven (withdrawal) and stage one (sensation)

where the individual is at rest (Fig. 5.2). This can be used as an illustration to assist teachers to become aware of where they get stuck in the cycle of experience, which impedes their growth. Teachers who are perfectionists' cycles of experience are interrupted between contact and satisfaction (Fig.5.3), and teachers, prone to avoidance's cycle of experience are interrupted between mobilisation and action (Fig 5.4)

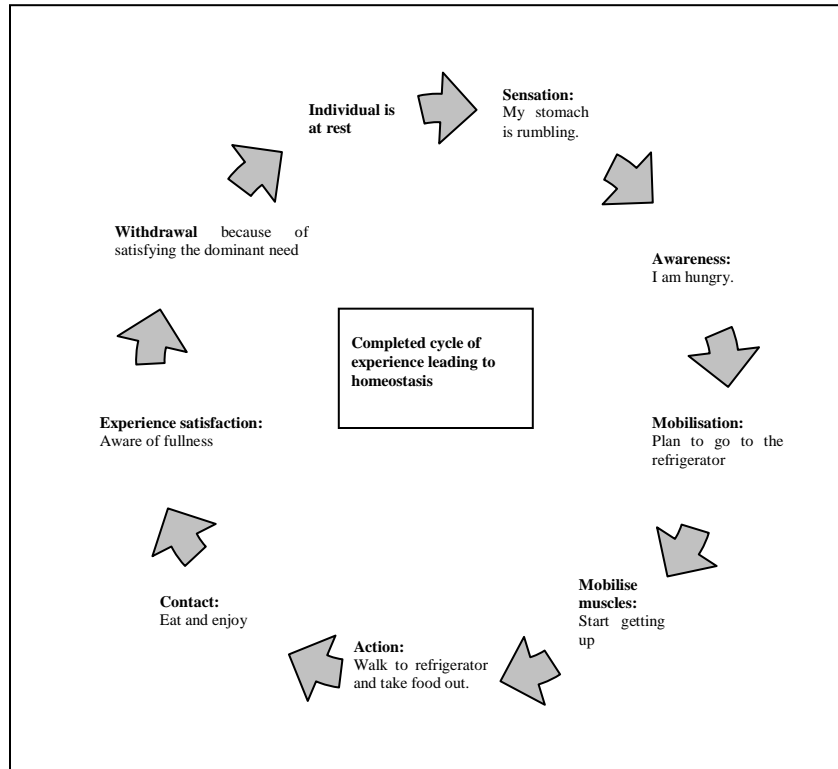


Figure 5.2: Diagram of a teacher with a completed cycle of experience

Diagrams of teachers with incomplete cycles of experience

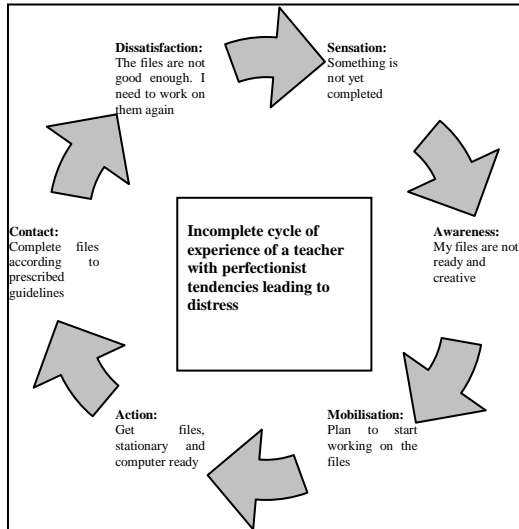


Figure 5.3: The perfectionist

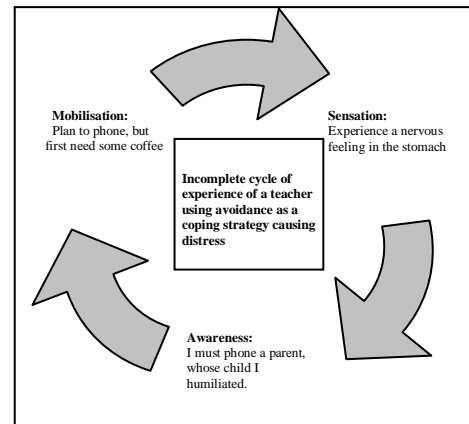


Figure 5.4: The avoider

Intervention strategy: The complete cycle of experience compared to incomplete cycles of experience are illustrated.

Skills learned: Teachers realise that healthy functioning and homeostasis depend on the completion of the cycle of experience

5.5.4.2 Second important aspect of process: Gestalt process principles

Teachers organise their total environment according to different situations and different needs, sometimes making one particular aspect figure and sometimes another. Environment fields are constellated around teachers, so that they, in effect, create it. In any meeting an environmental field is co-created. There are different principles on which the process is based.

(a) The individual/environment relationship

The relationship between teachers and their environments is critical, because they comprise an interdependent unity in which teachers strive to regulate themselves. The teacher does not only need the environment, but is imbedded in the environment. Everything in the environment has possible meaning or relevance and therefore nothing in the environment can be ignored. In order to understand the existence and the functioning of teachers, their relationship and functioning in the environment must be understood. It is important for the teacher to realise that although they can choose their environment, they cannot choose not to relate to it at all, because the life of individuals depends on their environment.

Teachers have two systems that assist in their interaction with the environment, namely the *sensory or orientation system* and the *motor system*. The sensory or orientation system is the organisation of faculties which receive information about the environment, namely the eyes, ears, skin, mouth and nose, as well as the receptors in the body. The motor system is the organisation of manipulative faculties, which allows teachers to make changes in their environment, or to their relationships. It is vitally important that teachers are assisted to develop a functional sensory-motor system. While teachers' sensory and motor systems can reach out to the environment, the reverse is also true on condition that teachers are aware and attentive to what is occurring in the environment. The teacher and the environment are thus in contact and interact in the process of mutual accommodation, which is called creative adjustment. For the healthy functioning and realisation of their full potential, teachers require environmental support. Without environmental support teachers cannot maintain themselves. If the environment can thus not maintain itself, with the teacher as part of it, the teacher will be destroyed by the field.

Intervention strategy: Teachers need and are part of their environment. They cannot exist without their environment and they are thus mutually dependent. Teachers can choose their environment, but if they do not choose their environment they still have to relate to it.

Skills learned: Teachers cannot exist without support from the environment and they must relate to it whether the environment is of their choosing or not.

(b) Organisation

The teacher derives meaning from perceiving the whole or the total situation. Within the developed environmental field the teacher can be understood, because a field is constellated differently according to the teacher's needs and circumstances. The teacher must be clear on the concept of a whole or total situation, the figure and ground relationship and its function as part of organismic self-regulation, in order to reach psychological homeostasis.

(c) Holism

Teachers, as holistic beings with internal physiological, psychological, cognitive, social, historical, spiritual and cultural aspects, exist in the context of their *total* environment. These aspects of the self are thus each a different manifestation of the self. Teachers experience by feeling, sensing and thinking and if they reject one of these modes of experience, the formation of new "gestalten" becomes blocked by unmet needs, which forms incomplete "gestalten". In total you are yourself, and the fundamental characteristic of the self is gestalt-formation and destruction.

The existence of the human being is the ongoing and changing nature of this collection of processes. Although teachers may vary within themselves, they are bound to the environment through the maintenance of further interrelationships. Teachers, therefore, require nourishment from the environment in various forms and from their side contribute

to their environment through their relatedness to their environment as a whole organism. Every person is a complex arrangement of figure-ground relationships, and because teachers are holistic, any change to any sphere of their lives or environments, will result in a change in every other aspect.

Due to individuals being holistic attention must not only be paid to their words, but also to their non-verbal communication, such as body language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice. Teachers must therefore not only be aware of the non-verbal communication of others, but must also listen to their own non-verbal cues.

Intervention strategy: Teachers must understand that they are holistic beings who exist in their total environment. They are nourished by the environment and through their interrelation with their environment they maintain it. A change will affect not only the teacher, but everything in the teacher's environment, and *vice versa*. As a result of individuals being holistic their verbal and non-verbal communication must be observed.

Learned skills: Teachers become aware of themselves as physiological, psychological, cognitive, social, historical, spiritual and cultural beings within their total environment and not only in selected parts of their environment. All their processes are of an ongoing nature leading to change according to their needs. Teachers become aware of their own and other individual's verbal and non-verbal communication, resulting in a dialogic relationship.

(d)Figure-ground

Gestalt starts with what *is*. In this the figure or foreground experience is related to the background which leads to meaning. In Gestalt therapy the undifferentiated environmental field, which is the unity of individual and environment, is called the background or ground and the emerging focus of attention and activity is called the figure or gestalt. Teachers must be led to understand that the background or ground contains what is irrelevant, unimportant and immaterial to the present moment and that which does not become part of the focus remains background. Figure and ground are mutually

dependent. It is thus necessary for teachers to perceive both, because everything has importance and relevance because there is a connectedness within the whole. Although the field may recede in importance, or even seems to disappear momentarily, gestalt formation always occurs in the context of an environment field. The healthy formation of “gestalten” is a continuous process of emerging figures and receding grounds. Because contact requires difference, figure/ground is a function of contact. When there is no contact, the field is not differentiated and there is no figure and no background. Learning takes place through the formation of new “gestalten” which leads to insight. Figure and ground thus explains the process by which teachers organise their perceptions to form wholes to create meaning.

In Gestalt therapy, gestalt formation is considered a primary characteristic of organismic functioning. Teachers must organise their environments so that they make sense to them, and this making sense means making gestalts. Gestalts are strong, graceful, clear and lively, or weak, forced, diffuse and dull. The development of a clear meaningful gestalt produces a solution, while the latter four characteristics indicate impaired gestalts.

As teachers interact in their environment, the different aspects of teachers as holistic beings, respond in ways characteristic to them. The cognitive faculties think, the senses feel, the motor system acts and the affective level responds with emotions. Teachers must be aware of their own needs, which will dominate spontaneously. This spontaneous dominance is a necessary aspect of good figure (gestalt) formation. Good gestalt formation is spontaneous, because it is composed of whatever concentration is brought to the situation, plus the excitement (action) produced in the merging of attention and the situation. Gestalt formation is thus a total organismic act, instead of a solely cognitive decision. Teachers thus use all their faculties to choose what will be the controlling figure-ground relationship of situations, although they may not always be aware of the choice. Teachers function in healthy ways when they are aware in the present moment of the process of noticing, forming a figure and taking action, as well as taking responsibility for the choices they make, both in the selection of figure and in their response to it.

Further into the background are a host of assimilated and partly assimilated experiences and undeveloped capabilities. This part of the background includes ideas, conclusions, memories, attitudes, feelings and beliefs. Although some of it may be false or inaccurate the therapist must realise that they constitute a substantial part of the teacher's background at any given time. The background is thus always present as the foundation of contact, framing and supporting teachers' present experience. Teachers must identify with their needs, desires and experiences which are on their foreground, because this indicates their present need. Teachers must identify with all their needs to prevent ego-boundaries which may lead to rigidity, which are not healthy and counter to homeostasis.

Teachers must be aware that one is never disgusted with a person, but with a behaviour or part of the person. Sometimes one may hate and at other times love the person. This is a matter of foreground and background or figure and ground.

Intervention strategy: The concept of figure or foreground and background is explained. They are mutually dependent. The figure is the emerging need which is seen against the background of what, at that moment, is not the dominant need. Once the dominant need is satisfied, it will fade into the background and another need will become figure. In the background are also assimilated and partly assimilated experiences, as well as the teacher's feelings, beliefs, knowledge and talents.

Learned skills: In reference to the cycle of experience the teacher realises that for healthy functioning a need cannot be ignored. A need must be met so that another need can become foreground to ensure change and growth. Teacher realises that all their latent potential, as well as assimilated and partly assimilated experiences are part of the background.

(e) Organismic self-regulation

Self-regulation is the natural tendency of humans to maintain homeostasis. Healthy teachers are self-regulating individuals who are able to respond flexibly to changing

circumstances and to support themselves in many respects, while accepting mutual interdependence with other people and the environment. Teachers must realise that health is thus not only personal and intrapsychic, but is also contextual and inter-relational. Teachers have specific needs that must be met if they are to live. Without experiencing, and being aware of needs and impulses, organismic self-regulation is impaired. Without balanced organismic experience, teachers cannot be in full contact with nature or self-supportive and cannot learn from their environmental transactions. Teachers therefore need to mobilise themselves and their environments for support, to achieve organismic self-regulation. Teachers must decide with full awareness, what they need from the environment and then it must be assimilated or rejected. When deficiencies exist, they move to the foreground and the organic system remedies them and when excesses are present, the system rids itself of them. The behaviour of teachers will thus be directed toward the satisfaction of the dominant need. If the need is genuinely met, the situation changes, allowing the teacher to rest until a new need emerges and the cycle starts over again. In Gestalt therapy this general principle is called “organismic self-regulation” or also referred to as the cycle of experience. The teacher is thus striving towards the maintenance of homeostasis, which is continuously disturbed by new needs and gratified by satisfying it. Organismic self-regulation is thus how Gestalt therapy refers to the process of attaining, losing and regaining physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual balance.

Organismic self-regulation does not ensure the satisfying of needs, however, it only implies that teachers will do their best to regulate themselves, within their own capabilities and the resources of the environment. The process of self-regulation does not ensure that teachers can always satisfy their needs. Often the environment does not offer the needed element or quality at that specific moment. Closure can then be achieved by acknowledging the unfulfilled need and experiencing and expressing the emotions evoked by the impossibility of meeting the need. Such emotions might include frustration, grief and disappointment. When teachers have conflicting needs, the dominant need would take preference, but due to the complexity of human needs in a complex environmental field teachers often don't have one dominant, desire but

experience genuinely competing values and desires and are thus sometimes unable to resolve their desires, but may seek acceptable and sometimes painful substitutes.

Teachers who have lost their flexibility and falls back on fixed or habitual patterns of behaviour, which had been creative solutions to a past difficulty, but which are not applicable to the new situation, must come into awareness of the environment in order to choose new applicable behaviours to fulfil their needs. Teachers must further become aware of the accumulation of past unresolved situations and of premature solutions to problems which have become habitual and therefore block their creativity and flexibility. This results in unfinished business and fixed gestalts.

Unfinished business blocks awareness and interferes with the completion of need cycles. This may lead to chronic tension, compulsive behaviour, wariness and oppressive energy or psychosomatic complaints such as lower back ache, tension head aches, arthritis or asthma. Teachers must become aware of possible conversations in absentia, which include rehearsing of future conversations or repeating past conversations over and over. Although this is therapeutic in a therapy session, it is not when this is done to reduce anxiety. Teachers must muster all their energy in the current situation.

A fixed gestalt occurs when an individual's needs are consistently ignored or misinterpreted. Because teachers are holistic beings, the fixing of the gestalt involves the whole being, the physical, emotional and cognitive processes. Teachers must become aware that when a natural need is not met, but becomes fixed, the need may be distorted, exaggerated, denied or displaced. Although the fixed gestalt may have originated in the past, it is perpetuated in the present and can thus be studied and undone in the present.

Intervention strategy: The concept of organismic self-regulation as a prerequisite for healthy living is explained. A prerequisite for organismic self-regulation is full awareness to determine the present dominant need. A need must be seen in the present moment and within a unique situation resulting in new ways of satisfying the need. This will prevent unfinished business and fixed gestalts. Teachers must be aware that at times there may be more than one dominant need present and compromises will have to be reached. In the educational environment not all needs can be met due to secondary or primary factors discussed in Chapter 2, teachers must thus be wary of not developing fixed gestalt because of unanswered needs.

Skills learned: Teachers are able to determine and recognise their needs and are aware that every new need must be satisfied in a new way. Teachers are often faced with conflicting dominant needs and must with full awareness prioritise or compromise. Teachers are capable of identifying their own unfinished business to prevent it from having an influence on present needs. Teachers are also able to acknowledge a need that cannot be met and then let it go

(f) Psychological homeostasis

Gestalt theory assumes that the individuals reach psychological balance or homeostasis in their 'being'. Teachers strive to be in balance. If you lose something and you get it again, you are in balance. This balance is achieved through the teacher being aware of what is needed to be in balance again. Given the holistic approach, constant changes in external events and emerging needs, make it impossible to stay in a balance point for long. Teachers must thus realise that they do not want to remain in balance, because of their new emerging needs, which become figure from moment to moment. Teachers like a sense of completion and fulfilment because it is comforting, but they need to realise that which is completed cannot change, be altered and is thus functionally dead. By stating that 'this is who I am and I will never change', the teacher stops the process and there can be no growth.

Intervention strategy: Teachers must be able to identify their present need in awareness. They must realise that the regaining or gaining of homeostasis is not a once-off occurrence.

Skills learned: Homeostasis is gained on a moment to moment basis according to the needs and the satisfying of the needs of the teacher. The satisfying of needs will not only have an influence on teachers but on their total environmental field.

5.5.4.3 Third important aspect of process: Uniqueness of the individual

All individuals are unique and each individual's experience is unique. Teachers will make their own relevance of things, apply it to their experience and make connections with it in ways which are unique to each teacher. The different environments, of which the teachers are a part, will influence their experience. Teachers' emotional, mental, and physical states and the context of when, where, why and how are all part of their experience in the present moment. Any form of ill-health must thus not be addressed in general terms, because every person is unique and will experience it as such. The emphasis is thus on the teacher's present experience of what is figure in the current environmental field, thus the teacher's process. For healing to occur, teachers must comprehend their uniqueness and find ways of expressing it.

(a)Self-concept

The self-concept is portrayed as a collection of beliefs about oneself which accumulated over years and are arranged in a hierarchical structure. The conditions under which self-concepts change have been described as based on evaluations from culture and family, influential feedback and encouragement from significant others, comparison with others, and success experiences. The most important, however, is the individual teacher's assessment of feedback and experiences in terms of self. If teachers do not experience themselves as successful, there will be no change in their self-concept, because the individuals construct their own beliefs about themselves, they themselves are thus the

ultimate source of self-concept change. The self-concept monitors the appropriateness of decisions made at the point of contact with the environment. Changing self-concept through therapy is a slow process, but it is further important for teachers with healthy self-concepts to stretch their self-concepts, which will allow more flexibility and creating room for the disowned parts of their personalities. Teachers must come in contact with these parts and come to appreciate them.

Individuals with healthy self-concepts are aware of the many opposing forces within them, and are willing to see themselves in a variety of 'contradictory' ways, and experience a relationship between these forces. Although teachers with healthy self-concepts may have voids in their awareness, and although they may not want to acknowledge all their polarities, they are prepared to be aware of them. The disturbed teachers, on the other hand, have massive voids in their awareness and deny their so called negative polarities. Becoming aware of these polarities makes them nervous and results in the emergence of neurotic symptoms. When teachers are fully aware of choices, on the other hand, self-regulation will take place because unfinished situations will emerge.

Intervention strategy: What is self-concept and what influences the development of self-concept. Teachers are responsible for their own self-concept change. Teachers with healthy self-concepts must stretch their self-concepts to accept disowned parts of their personality back into their self-concept.

Skills taught: Teachers understand and may analyse the forces that contributed to their self-concept. They are prepared to identify the disowned parts of their personalities and re-own them.

(b)Polarisation versus dichotomy

The teacher is a conglomerate of polar forces. A teacher does not only have one opposite feeling or characteristic, but several related opposites. The disowning of parts of the self leads to polarisation. Polarisation is the process through which an individual or teacher

for that matter, organises and symbolises beliefs about self or about the world. This entails establishing either/or categories. These classifications are often made according to evaluative criteria such as good-bad. Such classification may polarise emotions such as love-hate, or perceived attributes about the self such as me – not me; good teacher – bad teacher, or perceived attributes of others – friend-enemy, helping-hindering, significant-insignificant. Such designations establish boundaries that often become rigid, uncompromising and unchanging. The motive for rigid polarisations in the teacher is to maintain or establish control over aspects of the environment and the self. Individuals use a two-value system to create labels regarding life, and respond to the labels as if they are the same as the events categorised by them. Teachers may thus start to expect that all things fit into neat categories and when they don't fit, extreme discomfort is experienced by the teacher. Through therapy the teachers must become aware of these polarisations and own them to stay flexible. Teachers, who are aware of the polarities in their own emotions or personalities, will also be aware of polarities in the individuals they relate to, leading to dialogic relationships.

One of the most famous polarised parts of the Gestalt is that of the 'top-dog' and 'under-dog'. The top-dog part is often those introjected voices in a teacher's head that are critical, admonishing, moralistic, prescriptive and prejudicial. They can bombard the teacher with rules, regulations, injunctions and prohibitions. The under-dog is the recipient of these messages and is the part of the teacher yearning for spontaneity and natural expression, which then rebels in the face of the top-dog. The under-dog is cunning and often gets the better of the top-dog. This may lead to inner conflict which is never resolved. The creation of a dialogue between these parts brings them into awareness and the teacher becomes aware of the point of impasse. This may bring about the shift of energy necessary to break the impasse.

Teachers need to see the counterparts of their personalities as balanced poles, although both may not be in conscious awareness. Gestalt therapy aims to bring the polarities into awareness. For every negative emotion or personality trait there is a positive counterpart. Both aspects of any polarisation exist and are valid. Homeostasis in the personality can

only be achieved if the teacher affirms both poles and by owning the thoughts or feelings at the pole that may have been disclaimed or disowned. The teacher must be aware that all parts of an individual are interconnected and each aspect leads to a fuller sense of the whole person.

Intervention strategy: Teachers must be brought to the awareness of the opposite poles of their feelings and personality. They must also come to the awareness that this polarisation has an influence on how they perceive the world. Teachers must be led to the awareness of the two conflicting poles, namely the top-dog and the under-dog, and how they may undermine their psychological health. The opposite poles must be seen as balanced and the owning of both poles by the teacher will thus lead to homeostasis.

Skills learned: Teachers are in equilibrium when they acknowledge the opposite poles of their feelings and personalities. Teachers are further aware how their decisions and reactions towards the environment are influenced by the opposite poles of their personalities and emotions. Through the awareness of the top-dog/under-dog dichotomy, teachers become aware of introjections which might have resulted in the belief that certain things should be done in spite of the fact that they would rather do them differently.

5.5.4.4 Fourth important aspect of process: The here-and-now

Teachers must be brought to the awareness that whatever the situation, everything that is happening is happening simultaneously *now*. The here-and-now is the location in time in an individual's awareness. Only from the present influence of the environment can teachers make sense of their present experience. The *now* is what teachers are aware of, thus the phenomenon. This is also the moment in which teachers carry their memories (past) and their anticipations (future).

5.5.4.5 Fifth important aspect of process: The change process

Human beings are for the first time in history in the position where, rather than adapting to an existing order, they must be able to adapt themselves to a series of changing social and cultural orders due to the prolonged lifespan of human kind. Teachers must therefore determine where they stand in relation to a shifting society. Because teachers are faced with a pluralistic, multifaceted, changing system, they are left to their own devices to find stability. The approach needs to be dynamic and flexible to move with the times, while still maintaining some central gyroscope to guide the teacher. This can only be done with a change theory, whether implicit or explicit. The goal of therapy is thus not to develop a good fixed character but an ability to move with the times, while retaining some individual stability. The teacher must be aware that the same change theory applies to social systems and that individual change is only a microcosm of the social change process. Nothing is static or permanent, because life is always in process, and change is occurring all the time. The teacher's experience therefore is not fixed for all time, but is a flowing and ever moving-process and the current experience needs to be emphasised as such.

The heart of the Gestalt therapy, according to Yontef (1993:12), is in the paradoxical theory of change. In the paradoxical change process resistance must be recognised, acknowledged and understood. Resistance is not broken down or ignored and the focus must not be on getting the teacher to take the next step. The paradox of the paradoxical theory of change is that the more one tries to be what one is not, the more one stays the same. Change does not take place through a coercive attempt by the teacher or by the therapist to change him. It takes place if teachers take the time and effort to be what they are, thus to be fully invested in their current position. This gives them a foothold to move on. The Gestalt therapist believes that the top-dog/under-dog dichotomy already exists in the teacher, with the one part trying to change the other. The therapist's aim must therefore be the teacher's acceptance of both these poles, because of the holistic nature of human beings. The teacher must be asked to identify with each conflicting role. When the teacher is aware of both roles and has accepted them, it will result in growth. Growth

leads to change not only in the teacher, but also everywhere in the teacher's environmental field.

Intervention strategy: Social change is inevitable and teachers will have to be able to change with the times without losing their central gyroscope. The therapist does not want a teacher to develop a nice fixed character because nothing is static, life is always in process. Change will only take place if teachers admit and accept what they really are, because that is the foundation for change.

Skills learned: Change is inevitable. To be able to change, teachers must accept who they really are and only then can change occur.

(c)Impasse as the point where growth occurs

Although mentioned earlier it is important to look at the role of the impasse as part of the growth process and the paradoxical process of change. The impasse is the crucial point in therapy. This is the point where people stop playing games and roles, which may result in a feeling of not knowing what to do next. They thus become stuck in their own maturation process. Resources are thus not used out of fear of catastrophic expectations. The therapist must be aware that the impasse is the point where environmental support and inner support are obsolete or not forthcoming, and authentic self-support has not yet been achieved. The impasse is thus the point from where growth takes place.

The growth process is awareness and the willingness to experiment with different self-initiated awareness. There are no preconceived ideas regarding growth or maturity. The therapist thus leads the teacher through a process in awareness to self-regulation through self-discovery in order to become aware of what fits and what does not fit. The therapist must not take responsibility for this growth process, because each teacher knows best what (s)he needs and even when a teacher is stuck, that teacher is more capable of finding solutions than anybody else.

Intervention strategy: This is the point where environmental support has become obsolete and self-support not forthcoming. Teachers must take responsibility for their own growth in order to become self-supportive.

Skills learned: Teachers realise that they are on their own in this growth process. There is no more environmental support and they will have to support themselves which is the ultimate aim of Gestalt therapy. Teachers accept the responsibility to find solutions resulting in their own growth.

(d)Maturity: The choice of self-responsibility

According to Gestalt therapy, individuals are responsible and are therefore the primary agents in determining their own behaviour. Taking responsibility for one's life and being rich in experience and ability are identical, according to Gestalt therapy. Teachers will gain much by taking responsibility for every emotion, every movement and thought and by shredding responsibility for other individuals' thoughts, feelings and actions. The avoidance of taking reasonable risks and imaginary hurts, interfere with the maturation process. Teachers must be made aware of the language they use, because it may reflect their intra-psychic experience and often it reflects a passive attitude towards life, reflecting that teachers have no power over what is happening to them and are not in charge of their lives. It is thus important for teachers to own their reactions and choices by using the language of self-responsibility for example: 'I am the negative force' instead of 'there are negative forces working against me'. Teachers are thus mature when they are able to cope with their environment.

There is a distinction between what is given and what one chooses to do and the choice of who you are. Teachers are responsible for what they choose to do, including moral choices. Others cannot be blamed for their choices. Teachers must be aware of the three stages of increasing awareness and self-responsibility with the emphasis on choice. Stage one is '*How I am*' which is the acceptance of all feelings, thoughts and behaviour even those previously preferred not to be noticed. Stage two is '*I am this way because I choose to be*', which is recognising that one chooses from moment to moment how (s)he is going

to respond to the world. Stage three is '*If I choose, I can be different*' and in this stage the teacher takes control of his/her life. Just being aware of who one is and how one keeps oneself that way, can sometimes be enough to facilitate change within oneself. Although teachers cannot be responsible for everything that happens to them, they are one hundred percent responsible for their reactions and the meaning they make of what happens to them.

According to Yontef (1993:195) maturity is an indication that individuals are able to regulate themselves with a process of Gestalt formation and destruction, which can be observed in their behaviour and awareness, which is organised and energised by the dominant need of the individuals. Maturity is thus a continual process of creative adjustment and not arrival at an ideal state. Mature teachers will thus be able to take existential responsibility for themselves, for many aspects of their lives and above all for the meaning they give their lives. Full awareness of events in ones life leads to responsibility. Existential responsibility does not mean that teachers are responsible for all situations they find themselves in, for example a war situation. Maturation cannot be reached through external sources. Teachers must go through the painful process of growing up themselves. Teachers can deal adequately with their own life problems if they know what those problems are, and can bring all their abilities together to solve them.

The therapist's goal is therefore not to solve the problem for the teacher. Teachers are active and responsible participants, who must learn to experiment and observe in order to discover and realise their own goals through their own efforts. The responsibility for their behaviour, change in behaviour and the work to achieve such change, is left to the teacher. Maturation can thus not be done for the teacher. The therapist can do nothing but provide the opportunity for growth and be there as catalyst and projection screen. Teachers learn in the safety of the therapeutic situation, but they continue to accept the natural consequences of their behaviour, in and out of the therapeutic situation. Supportive treatment may lead to temporary improvement, but the teacher will not be aided in moving beyond the *impasse* point.

Intervention strategy: The teacher always has a choice. To make a choice and take responsibility for the choice, and the behaviour which flowed from the decision, is being mature.

Skills learned: Teachers can make choices and self-regulate according to their dominant needs. They take responsibility for their choices and every aspect of their lives, including their reactions to those things that may not be of their choosing.

Maturity is the transition from environmental support to self-support. Self-support does imply contact with other individuals, but not continually, because that is confluence, neither must teachers withdraw from contact completely.

(e) Self-support versus environmental support

As teachers become more aware of themselves and of others, dissatisfaction may occur, and what used to be fulfilling may now be unrewarding. Frustration in the situation or with the status quo, leads to the mobilisation of your resources, thus the discovering that you can do something on your own.

Some teachers do not mobilise their resources and manipulate others or the environment to support them. This is characteristic of teachers who do not generate the necessary psychological self-support and experience anxiety in dealing with environmental impact. They thus create dependencies, through acting helpless. Teachers must be made aware that they enslave themselves especially when their dependencies are that of self-esteem. If teachers always need praise and encouragement they make everybody their judges. Teachers must realise that individuals who lack self-support, become shattered when the other whom they gave this power to, does not live up to their expectations. Teachers must not confuse self-support with self-sufficiency, though. Interdependence and co-operation exist in tandem with self-support.

Teachers must keep in mind that the most fundamental area of self-support is the physical. It is difficult for individuals to feel supported if they are tired, hungry or

physically uncomfortable. The ways in which teachers relate to their body processes in the here-and-now, strongly influences their ability to support the self.

Intervention strategy: Teachers must not manipulate others to support them, because it leads to dependencies. Teachers must realise that one of the most fundamental areas of self-support is the physical and must thus care for their bodies.

Skills learned: Self-support makes you independent. Good eating and sleeping habits are very important to sustain your body, which is part of your self-support.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher was able to integrate all relevant gathered data in the development of a theoretical process model. The researcher is of the opinion that through the implementation of this Gestalt therapeutic process model, teachers suffering from career-related stress could be assisted in regaining homeostasis. In Chapter 6 a pilot study will be conducted to evaluate the value of this Gestalt therapeutic process model. This pilot study forms part of the fourth phase in intervention research, namely, the early development and pilot testing phase.

CHAPTER 6

PHASE 4: EARLY DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT TESTING

EMPIRICAL STUDY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the context of intervention research, early development and pilot testing is the process by which an innovative intervention is implemented and used on a trial basis, developmentally tested for its adequacy, and refined and redesigned as necessary (De Vos, 2002 (d): 409).

An information base was established in Phase 2: Information gathering and synthesis, which consisted of Chapter 2: Career-related stress experienced by teachers, Chapter 3: The Gestalt therapeutic approach and Chapter 4: Existing coping strategies and stress management programmes for teachers suffering from career-related stress. This information base was established through the comprehensive retrieval and synthesis of relevant knowledge and sources of knowledge, including that of the researcher involved in teaching for the past thirty years. According to Rothman and Tumblin (1994:215) this information base guides the work done in the design and early development and pilot testing phases. Based on the information gathered in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 the researcher designed a theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model (Chapter 5) to assist teachers suffering from career-related stress in their quest to regain homeostasis. Due to the nature of intervention research the theoretical model was applicable and valid and reflected the intervention process as explained by Thomas and Rothman (1994:7 & 10). The steps followed by the researcher ensured validity, reliability and trustworthiness.

The next phase in the research was the pilot testing. The first aim of the pilot testing was to determine whether the process model, as an intervention design, could be implemented successfully within the school environment to eradicate or lower the career-related stress

experienced by teachers. The second aim was to determine the feasibility of school management team members implementing the therapeutic programme, based on the Gestalt therapeutic model, as a first line of intervention, after receiving basic training. In Chapter 6 the conclusions reached through the empirical study will be reported.

6.2 EARLY DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT TESTING

A programme based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, to assist them in regaining homeostasis was developed, implemented as a pilot test within a school environment, refined, implemented in one more workshop as verification of the outcome of the first pilot test and to obtain more information, and evaluated according to design criteria.

The researcher used the steps indicated by Rothman and Tumblin (1994:213) as the design criteria for the evaluation.

6.2.1 DEVELOPING A PROTOTYPE OR PRELIMINARY INTERVENTION

During the development of a prototype or preliminary intervention, a functional programme, based on the designed theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model, was developed and implemented. In this way a limited operational model for the intervention for trial use was developed (Fawcett et al, 1994: 47; Rothman and Tumblin, 1994:215; De Vos, 2002 (d): 409). The structural lay-out for the prototype intervention model, which was designed and developed in Chapter 5, will be presented in a more concrete and practical framework for implementation during the pilot testing phase.

6.2.1.1 Creation of a limited operational model of the intervention for trial use in the pilot testing

The aim of this programme or operational model was to assist teachers, suffering from career-related stress, in their quest to regain homeostasis. The outline of the prototype, based on the Gestalt therapeutic model, consisted of the following elements:

TABLE 6:1 THE ELEMENTS OF THE PROTOTYPE GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS MODEL

MODE OF REALITY	AIM
<p>LEVEL 1: INTRODUCTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim of Gestalt therapy in general and the therapeutic intervention in particular. • Gestalt terminology • The interrelatedness of the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To focus the intervention process and explain the ultimate aim • Familiarity with terminology to improve understanding • An improved understanding of the holistic nature of human beings, their relatedness to their environment, and the interrelatedness of all processes concerned
<p>LEVEL 2: AWARENESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present-centeredness • Sensory and motoric awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the present to increase the quality of interactions and relationships with the environment • Awareness of physical, emotional and cognitive experience within the environment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness and self-concept • Zones of awareness • Awareness of the environmental field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An improved contact with the self, leading to being and accepting the true self • An understanding that what is perceived as true has been coloured by one's belief system and frame of reference • Being part of the environment without limiting or avoiding it and thus restricting one's growth
<p>LEVEL 3: DIALOGUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The elements of a dialogic relationship • Verbal and non-verbal communication • I-Thou relationships • Inclusion • Contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • True energetic engagement with other individuals in the here-and-now will lead to growth • True communication is being aware of verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as listening in the present without preconceived ideas • Being completely present, real, and aware of each other's uniqueness during interactions • The relationship with a learner is one of one-sided inclusion, because the teacher can educate the learner, but the learner can't educate the learner. • Contact promotes growth, but there is a boundary between self and the environment. Every contact

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contact boundary • Modifications at the contact boundary 	<p>situation is unique.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a difference between the self and the environment. Co-creation takes place at the contact boundary • Awareness of actions at the contact boundary will determine whether the modifications made at the boundary are healthy
<p>LEVEL 4: PROCESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cycle of experience • Holism • Figure/ground • Organismic self-regulation • Polarisation • The change process • The choice of self-responsibility • Self-support versus environmental support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The realisation that healthy functioning and homeostasis depend on the completion of the full cycle of experience • Awareness of being a total human being within a total environmental field • A dominant need becomes figure until it is met and then moves to the background • Satisfying dominant needs will lead to the next dominant need emerging - if needs are not satisfied it may result in unfinished business or fixed gestalts • The dichotomy of personalities and emotions of self and others must be recognised and if disowned need to be re-owned • To be able to change individuals must accept who they really are • To take responsibility for choices and all aspects of one's life, including reactions to things not of one's choosing • This is the ultimate aim and leads to independence and ongoing homeostasis

Although the outline of the prototype indicates definite sections or levels and sub-sections, it is only true in theory. In practice the three Gestalt principles, awareness, dialogue and process, are interrelated and are addressed when they emerge during a workshop or therapy session. It is also important to be aware that the programme is not prescriptive and that the researcher was led by the responses of the participants in the workshops.

6.2.1.2 The developmental research medium and procedure

The researcher applied more than one research medium and procedure.

TABLE 6:2 THE DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH MEDIUMS AND PROCEDURES

RESEARCH MEDIUM AND PROCEDURE	RESEARCH APPROACH	PARTICIPANTS	WHERE AND WHEN	VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS
Two workshops	Qualitative	Researcher, independent observer, research participants	At the selected school Two two-day workshops	Triangulation was used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected and analysed
Group interview	Qualitative	Researcher, independent observer and research participants of first workshop	At the selected school Two weeks after the two-day workshop	Triangulation was used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected and analysed

Semi-structured interviews	Qualitative	Researcher and research participants	At the selected school One month after the workshop	To ensure trustworthiness the data was collected and analysed on site and working hypotheses were formed about the data collected
Semi-structured interviews	Qualitative	Researcher and school management team members	At the selected school Five weeks after the workshop	To ensure trustworthiness data was collected and analysed on site and working hypotheses were formed about the data collected
Structured interviews	Qualitative	Researcher and research participants	At the selected school Three months after the workshop as part of the termination process	To ensure trustworthiness data was collected and analysed on site and working hypotheses were formed about data collected
Informal interviews	Qualitative	Researcher and school management team members	At the selected school After the termination of the empirical research study	To ensure trustworthiness data was collected and analysed and working hypotheses were formed about data collected

The developmental research medium and procedure (Rothman & Tumblin, 1994:213) were thus workshops, a group interview, informal interviews, semi-structured interviews and structured interviews and a daily checklist as self-monitoring and reinforcement instrument.

6.2.1.3 The design and development of developmental and monitoring instruments

The researcher applied the following developmental and monitoring instruments:

TABLE 6:3 APPLIED DEVELOPMENTAL AND MONITORING INSTRUMENTS

DEVELOPMENTAL AND MONITORING INSTRUMENT	RESEARCH APPROACH	PARTICIPANTS	WHERE AND WHEN	VALIDITY RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS
Self-constructed index (Annexure I)	Quantitative	Research participants	At the selected school Before the commencement of the workshops	An instrument measuring the experienced stress-levels and the success of previous intervention was developed based on the information collected in Chapters 2 and 4 of the research study and was thus valid and reliable

Open-ended questionnaire (Annexure K)	Qualitative	Research participants	At the selected school One week after the workshop	To ensure trustworthiness the data collected was analysed and working hypotheses were formed
Daily checklist as self-monitoring and reinforcement instrument (Annexure N)	Combined qualitative and quantitative	Researcher and research participants	At the selected school and out-of school Week three – twelve of the research program	Confidentiality led to honesty and thus trustworthiness
Self-constructed index (Annexure Q)	Quantitative	Research participants	At the selected school Three months after the initial workshop as part of the termination process	The quantitative data collected supported the qualitative data collected and was thus valid and reliable

6.2.2 CONDUCTING A PILOT TEST

According to De Vos (2002 (d): 410-411) pilot tests are designed to determine whether the intervention would be successful. They must be implemented in settings convenient for the researcher and similar to the settings in which the intervention will take place. In the case of this research the setting was the school environment and the pilot test was

conducted within a school environment. The aim of the pilot test was to determine the effectiveness of the intervention and to identify whether or not the prototype should be refined.

6.2.2.1 Proceduralisation and implementation of the model

The implementation of the functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, to assist them in regaining homeostasis, was preceded by an information session and a session for the completion of forms, as well as a questionnaire which is a self-constructed index.

6.2.2.1.1 Implementation procedures

The aim of session one was to inform ten identified post-level one teachers (teachers), two post-level two (heads of department) and one post-level three (deputy principal) teachers, as well as the independent observer of the empirical research study, and to gain their consent to become participants in the empirical research study. Their role as part of the said research study was further explained to them. Each teacher received a pamphlet (Annexure B, C and D) informing them about the type and aim of the research, the confidentiality around the research, the procedures of the research, the possible dangers of the research, the advantages of being a research participant, the financial obligations, which would be carried by the researcher, the termination of the empirical research study and their right to withdraw from the project. A form (Annexure G) had to be completed, should they wish to withdraw from the empirical research study.

Included in the pamphlet, issued to the post-level two and three participants (Annexure C), was the added responsibility of evaluating the feasibility of school management team members executing the intervention programme based on the process model, after receiving the necessary training.

The pamphlet issued to the independent observer (Annexure D) explained, in addition, the role and responsibilities of an observer. The clause, granting the option to withdraw from the project, was omitted. The observations of the independent observer were only applied to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected during the workshops and group interview.

The identified teachers were asked to consider participation in the research and to attend a second session the following afternoon indicating their decisions to the researcher. Eight of the initial ten post-level 1 teachers, as well as the school management team members and the independent observer agreed to participate. All the participants, as well as the independent observer, completed the forms of consent (Annexure E) and confidentiality (Annexure F). Each of the research participants further received a confidentiality agreement from the researcher (Annexure H).

After the completion of the forms of consent and confidentiality the participants received a self-constructed index (Annexure I) to measure to what degree they experienced stress-related symptoms, as well as any therapeutic intervention acquired previously and coping strategies applied and the degree to which they were successful.

At the end of the session the dates for the two-day workshop were determined.

6.2.2.1.2 Implementation of the model

A functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, which was developed based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model was implemented in the form of a two-day workshop. A model is a copy or a replica of the real thing on smaller scale (De Vos, 2002(a): 37). In this research the process model is a theoretical replica of the Gestalt therapeutic approach on a smaller scale. The said process model was made functional through the development of a Gestalt therapeutic programme consisting of related activities with the regaining of homeostasis as objective. The programme was then

practically implemented during workshops where the participants actively participated in the discussions and activities.

The workshop started on a Friday afternoon at 14:30 and lasted until 16:30. It resumed on the Saturday at 9:00 and was terminated at 16:00. The workshop was conducted at the school where the participants were employed. The prototype programme, based on the said Gestalt therapeutic process model, was implemented during the workshop.

The focus of change intended by the research, thus the pilot test, was the eradication or lowering of the career-related stress levels of teachers. It was thus necessary to define and give examples of the behaviours associated with the problem, and to indicate the degree to which these behaviours were experienced by the participants (Annexure I) as stated by De Vos, (2002 (d): 408). Relevant behaviours were assessed, using direct observation by an independent observer and the researcher. Self-monitoring and self-reporting were used by the participants, because some events and emotions were difficult to observe directly.

According to De Vos (2002 (d):411) the observational system devised is instrumental during the pilot phase. The functions of the observational system are to assist in determining the effectiveness of the intervention and whether some elements should be revised. To ensure the trustworthiness, reliability and validity of the observations made by the independent observer, the observer received basic training in Gestalt therapy and in what the Gestalt therapeutic process model entails. The independent observer was also equipped with what is required of an independent observer according to Janse van Rensburg (De Vos, 2002 (d):409). The requirements include the evaluation of the presentation style of the researcher, observing the non-verbal behaviour of group members, taking notes of the verbal feedback of participants and the evaluation of the group sessions.

6.2.3 APPLYING DESIGN CRITERIA TO THE PRELIMINARY INTERVENTION CONCEPT

There are common guidelines and values for intervention research (Fawcett et al 1994:37). Based on the criteria required by Rothman and Tumblin (1994:217), the designed Gestalt therapeutic model was piloted in a real world context, under close surveillance, and tested based on design criteria applicable to the field within which it would be implemented. The data collected through the designed observational system were thus analysed and the preliminary intervention concept was tested against design criteria in order to develop a functional Gestalt therapeutic programme based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model.

During this trial period feedback from participants and the school management team members was *“obtained to help refine and simplify the prototype for the intervention”* (Fawcett et al, 1994:36). Based on the feedback from the participants, as well as the observations made by the researcher and the independent observer, during the first workshop, the programme was simplified and presented during a second workshop with five participants. The rationale behind the second workshop was the implementation of simplified concepts, as well as to verify the outcome of the first workshop and to obtain more information, which would make the outcome of the research definitive and useful.

6.2.3.1 THE PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The procedures and conditions for implementation would be determined by the need of the various teachers, schools and the Department of Education. These procedures and implementation reside under the dissemination phase of intervention research. Dissemination is the stage in intervention research where the intervention has been field tested and evaluated and is ready to be disseminated to community organisations and other target audiences (De Vos, 2002(d):414). Although the Gestalt therapeutic process model, assisting teachers suffering from career-related stress, in their attempt to regain

homeostasis, was field tested and evaluated, the dissemination phase was not included as an aim of this research study.

6.2.3.2 DEGREE OF COMPLEXITY

The programme presented during the first workshop had elements, which were too difficult for teachers, not versed in Gestalt therapy, to grasp and assimilate. The programme, although not the theory on which it was based, was simplified and implemented with a second group of teachers. The identified concepts are tabled below.

TABLE 6:4 UNREFINED AND REFINED CONCEPTS IMPLEMENTED DURING THE TWO WORKSHOPS

UNREFINED GESTALT CONCEPT WORKSHOP 1	REFINED GESTALT CONCEPT WORKSHOP 2
The I-Thou relationship	Honest communication acknowledging and accepting the other person with all his/her strengths and weaknesses
Deflection as a modification at the contact boundary	Avoiding the present through verbal and non-verbal communication.
Desensitisation as a modification at the contact boundary	Being in full awareness of internal and external stimuli, as well as the thoughts about it.

6.2.3.3 PRACTICALITY OF THE MODEL

As stated earlier the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model was developed into a functional Gestalt therapeutic programme. To enhance the practicality of the programme, based on the Gestalt therapeutic process model, a daily checklist, based on the Gestalt therapeutic principles of awareness, dialogue and process, was developed as a self-

monitoring and reinforcement instrument. The refined programme, based on the Gestalt therapeutic model, was practical and all aspects could be implemented as intervention. It was further practical in the sense that it could be implemented within the school environment where the participants were employed. Limited time is a factor causing teacher stress and the programme was therefore refined, shortened and presented to a second group of teachers, on two consecutive afternoons after school.

6.2.3.4 COMPATIBILITY WITH LOCAL CUSTOMS AND VALUES

The researcher conducted the pilot test with teachers who were, with the exclusion of Coloured females and Indian males, representative of the majority of the South African teaching fraternity, thus Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Indians. It was clear that the Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model, was compatible with the customs and values of all the participants. Coloured females and Indian males were not employed at the schools where the pilot tests were conducted, therefore the omission.

6.2.3.5 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERVENTION

Based on the structured interviews, as well as the results of the measuring instrument (Annexure Q), which were completed three months after the first therapeutic workshop, in order to determine the degree to which teachers experience career-related stress symptoms, it was clear that the Gestalt therapeutic intervention programme, based on the Gestalt therapeutic model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, in their quest to regain homeostasis, was successful.

6.2.3.6 POSSIBLE REPLICATION OF THE DESIGNED MODEL UNDER FIELD CONDITIONS

The pilot test was conducted under field conditions, namely a secondary school, and it would thus be possible to replicate the designed process model in any school. The teacher

participants had both primary and secondary school experience and the model was thus applicable to both primary and secondary school teachers. It was therefore clear that primary and secondary school teachers experience the same stress factors and consequences thereof.

6.2.3.7 DISSEMINATION FOR USE BY OTHER PRACTITIONERS

Although the dissemination phase was not an aim of this research, as discussed under point 6.2.3.1, a Gestalt therapist, with basic training in the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process, would be able to implement the Gestalt therapeutic model for teachers suffering from career-related stress to assist them in regaining homeostasis. School management team members, who received basic training in the model, would also be able to implement it as a first line of intervention. Teachers suffering from more serious issues, which cannot be addressed by a non-therapist, must be referred to a therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist.

The research value of this research study resides in the fact that the theoretical concepts were tested and refined in practice. The responses received from the research participants further contributed to the refining of certain concepts, and resulted in the emphasis of certain other concepts regarding the composition, duration, scope and frequency thereof.

6.3 ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT, REFINING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION MODEL

Based on the outcome of the evaluation of the Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, the functional therapeutic programme was further developed, refined and implemented. The outcome was reached through the designed observation system, which included the independent observer, the researcher, as well as the participants.

After the refining of the model it was implemented during a second workshop with five participants. A checklist (Annexure N), based on the Gestalt therapeutic principles of awareness, dialogue and process, as self-monitoring and reinforcement instrument of the Gestalt principles, was developed and implemented. The researcher decided on the full design and development model, implementing every element of the model as described in Chapter 5: Design.

6.4 COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND INTERPRETATING OF THE DATA FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY

The data collected through the observational system, as well as through the open-ended questionnaire (Annexure K) is reflected qualitatively in the research report. In support of selected qualitative data, quantitative representation of some data collected, was applied to convey the information gained as effectively and economically as possible.

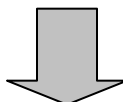
6.4.1 EARLY DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT TESTING

A prototype therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, in their quest to regain homeostasis, was developed and implemented on a trial basis. The aim of this implementation was the further development and refining of the functional therapeutic programme based on the said Gestalt model.

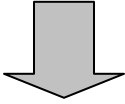
Steps followed during the early development and pilot testing phase of the functional Gestalt therapeutic programme based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model.

STEP 1

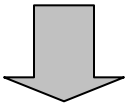
Identifying research participants and independent observer



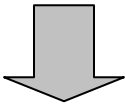
STEP 2
Session 1
Information session with identified research participants



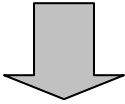
STEP 3
Session 2
Completion of consent forms and the confidentiality agreement
Completion of self-constructed index regarding stress symptoms and intervention acquired



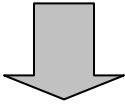
STEP 4
First two-day workshop



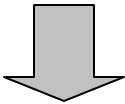
STEP 5
Completion of open-ended questionnaires

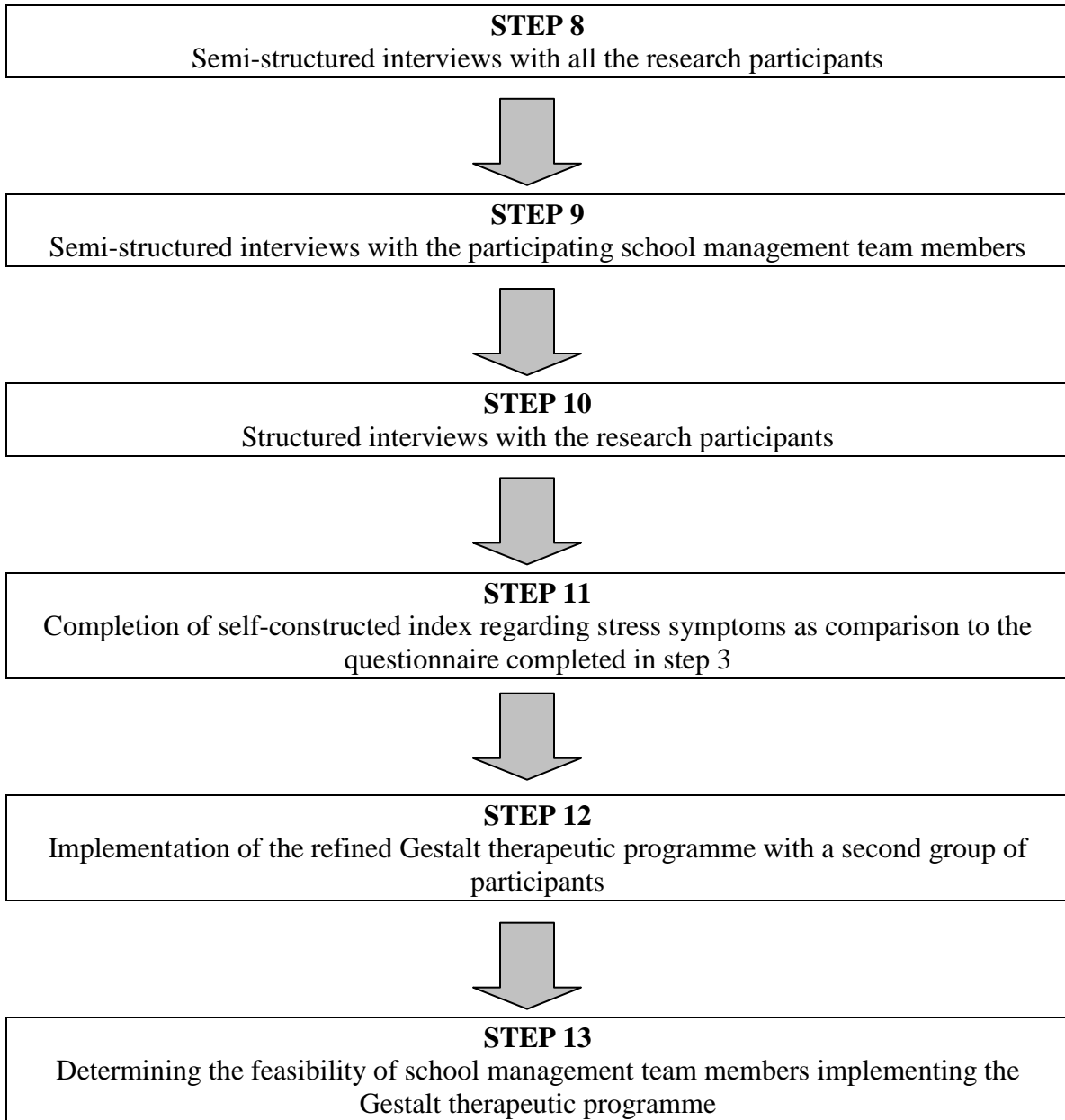


STEP 6
Group interview



STEP 7
Develop and issue checklist





6.4.1.1 Workshop 1

Workshop 1 extended over a Friday afternoon and a Saturday. Two initial sessions were conducted with the participants prior to the workshop. Over and above the post-level 1 teachers, three post-level 2 and 3 school management team members attended the workshop with the further aim of evaluating the feasibility of school management team

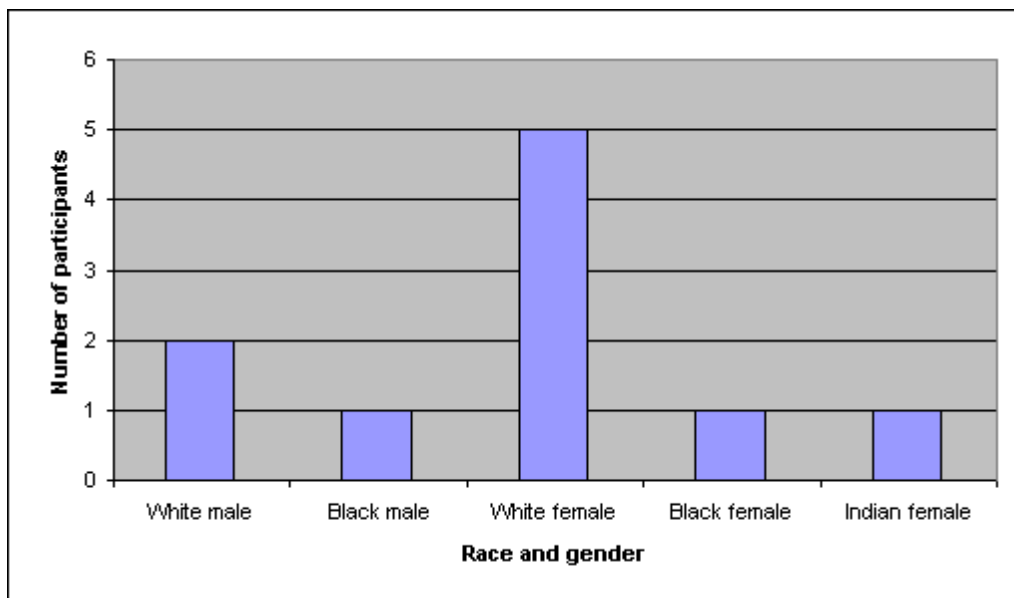
members presenting similar interventions in their respective schools, after receiving training in the Gestalt model.

6.4.1.1.1 Participants (Step1)

The final group of ten participants was representative regarding gender, race, age and years employed as a teacher. The group consisted of an Afrikaans, English and Sotho speaking male, two Afrikaans, three English, one Portuguese and one Zulu speaking female. Two of the participants were black, one Indian and eight white. The participants varied in ages from 22 to 52. Four of the participants had been in teaching for less than 5 years, one spent between 5 and 9 years in teaching and 5 between 20 and 29 years.

Although no Coloured teachers were part of the first pilot test, one Coloured male participated in the second workshop.

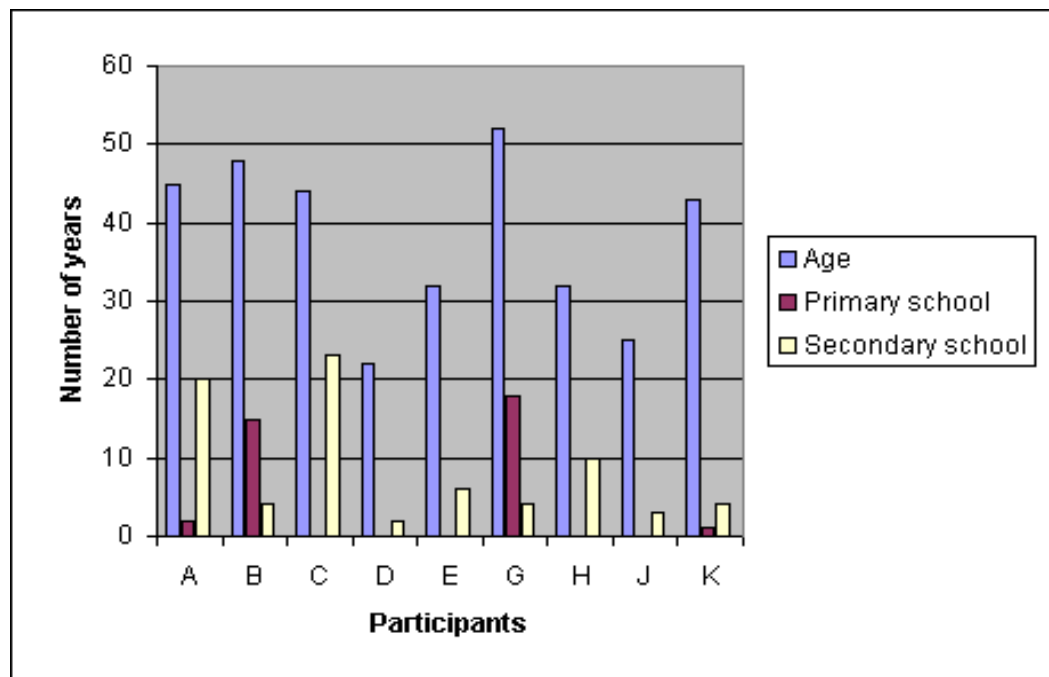
Figure 6:1 Representation across gender and race of the research participants



The research participants (from here on referred to as participants) were, with the exclusion of Coloureds, representative of three of the four main racial groups teaching in South Africa, namely: Black, White and Indian. The majority of participants were white

females. White female teachers constitute the largest gender and race group teaching at x-model C schools in South Africa. The research was conducted at an x-model C school with teachers employed at the school. White males were represented by two teachers, while black males, black females and Indian females were represented by one teacher respectively.

Figure 6:2 Age, years in primary and years in secondary school education of the research participants



The group of participants was representative of all age groups, excluding those above sixty years of age. Four of the ten participants had taught at primary schools before being appointed at secondary school level. The total number of years spent in teaching by the participants varied between the low twenties and two years.

In conclusion, the research participants, with the exclusion of Coloureds, who were part of the second workshop, were representative of the majority of the South African teaching fraternity regarding gender, race, age and years in primary and secondary education.

6.4.1.1.2 Session 1 (Step2)

The aim of session one was to inform the participants of the empirical research study and to gain their consent to become participants. Their role in the research study was also explained to them. Each teacher received a pamphlet (Annexure B, C and D) informing them of the type and aim of the research, the confidentiality around the research, the procedures of the research, the possible dangers of the research, the advantages of being a research participant, the financial obligations, which would be the responsibility of the researcher, the termination of the empirical research study and their right to withdraw from the project. A form, which should be completed on withdrawal from the empirical research study (Annexure G), had to be completed and handed to the researcher if a participant so wished.

To the pamphlet issued to the post-level 2 and 3 participants (Annexure C) was added under the research procedures for the research participants, their responsibility to evaluate the feasibility of a member of the school management team applying the intervention model, after receiving the necessary training.

The pamphlet issued to the independent observer (Annexure D) explained, in addition, the role and responsibilities of an observer. The clause granting the option to withdraw from the project was omitted, though.

The researcher briefly explained the Gestalt therapeutic principles of awareness, dialogue and process on which the model was based. The researcher pointed out that due to South Africa being a dynamic country, which implies many changes, the Gestalt therapeutic approach in South Africa emphasises the process principle along with awareness and dialogue.

Although the observer, as well as four other teachers, immediately indicated that they would participate in the empirical research study, the researcher indicated that there would be a meeting the following afternoon to finalise their participation, after they had had time to consider their participation in the empirical research study. At the end of this meeting one of the identified teachers indicated that she would not be able to be part of the empirical research study due to teaching obligations on Saturdays.

6.4.1.1.3 Session 2 (Step3)

The aim of this session was to get the consent from the identified teachers that they would participate in the empirical research study. Forms of consent (Annexure E) and forms regarding confidentiality (Annexure F) were completed by the independent observer and the participants. This was followed by the completion of a self-constructed index measuring the career-related stress symptoms, the acquiring of formal therapeutic intervention and the application of coping skills by the participants (Annexure I).

As a result of extra class obligations in the afternoons, two participants could not attend the afternoon session and had individual meetings with the researcher. One of the participants expressed concern regarding the issue of confidentiality. The researcher reassured the participant and spent some time explaining the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process to her, giving examples of each within the educational environment. Once satisfied, the said participant again emphasised her eagerness to be part of the empirical research study and specifically mentioned the adding of her participation in the empirical research study to her Curriculum Vitae.

During the afternoon session, the researcher explained the principles on which Gestalt therapy is based, in more detail, with applicable examples. At this point, two more identified teachers indicated that they did not see their way open to be part of the empirical research study due to time constraints. This left the number of participants at ten. After the completion of the forms of consent and confidentiality and receiving a confidentiality agreement from the researcher (Annexure H), each participant was

requested to complete the self-constructed index (Annexure I). The aim of the self-constructed index was to measure the degree to which the participants experienced career-related stress symptoms, whether they had acquired therapeutic intervention previously, their application of coping strategies and to what degree the intervention and/or application of coping strategies were successful.

After the completion of the self-constructed index, the researcher asked the participants how they felt regarding the completion thereof, because she could sense their need to share their feelings. Although the session was for administrative purposes only, it evolved into a therapeutic group session. This was a clear indication of the teacher participants' need to regain homeostasis.

The following typical responses were received during the session:

- *It is very difficult to evaluate yourself. I would rather carry on with my life without acknowledging my stress-related symptoms.*
- *I felt rather uneasy, but at the same time I experienced it as some kind of affirmation about what must not be overlooked.*
- *I am relieved that somebody realises the stress experienced by teachers. I felt guilty about myself whilst completing the questionnaire, thus admitting that I suffer from the stress-related symptoms in the questionnaire. Although I hated evaluating myself, I became aware to what degree I do things about which I am already aware. I know I am a perfectionist.*
- *I felt quite comfortable completing the form, because of its confidentiality.*
- *It was a waste of time. I found it difficult to concentrate and was scared to make a mistake. There were small things mentioned in the questionnaire which applied to me, of which I was not aware.*
- *It felt as if I was sharing something personal and I experienced the 'talking' about it as positive.*

- *I am glad that I could, for once, honestly answer a questionnaire with the knowledge that I will be helped to achieve a more positive outlook on my career-needs. Some questions really shed light on what I had been ignoring.*
- *What I answered in the questionnaire was difficult to accept, but it is in black and white. It is set in stone. I feel the need to prioritise.*
- *My uncertainty let me to complete the questionnaire in pencil. None of the conventional (therapeutic) methods have helped me in the past and therefore I started to develop and apply my own coping strategies.*

Based on the qualitative data collected during this preliminary session, it was deduced that the ‘story’ behind the emotions shared by the participants should be discovered. This is the essence of qualitative research.

From the responses received it was apparent that the teachers found it difficult to acknowledge their stress-related symptoms and although they might have been aware of the symptoms, did not realise the degree to which they experienced them, which left them with feelings of guilt towards the self. There was a realisation that stress causes a lack of focus and impairs concentration. The participants were of the opinion that the research programme would lead to therapeutic support.

During the session the participants were further requested to complete a self-constructed index, as part of the quantitative research method (Annexure I), indicating the degree to which they experienced the career-related stress symptoms indicated in the questionnaire. The symptoms were grouped under *behavioural, emotional, cognitive* and *physical* symptoms (Section A). The teacher participants also had to indicate any formal therapeutic intervention received, as well as the degree to which it was beneficial (Section B) and in the third section (Section C) they had to indicate coping strategies they have applied, as well as the degree to which they experienced it as beneficial. The symptoms listed in the questionnaire (Section A) were based on the literature research conducted for Chapter 2 of the empirical research study. The therapeutic interventions

and coping strategies listed in sections B and C of the research questionnaire were based on the literature research conducted for Chapter 4.

Two of the participants had never acquired formal therapeutic intervention. The other eight participants had consulted either a psychiatrist or psychologist for group or individual therapy, one had been for experimental therapy and one participant had contacted “Lifeline” but indicated that it had not benefited her at all. Five participants had sought help from a medical practitioner and used prescription medication for their stress, which they found to be very beneficial. Two participants used non-prescription medication. None of the participants had consulted a traditional healer or a hypnotherapist.

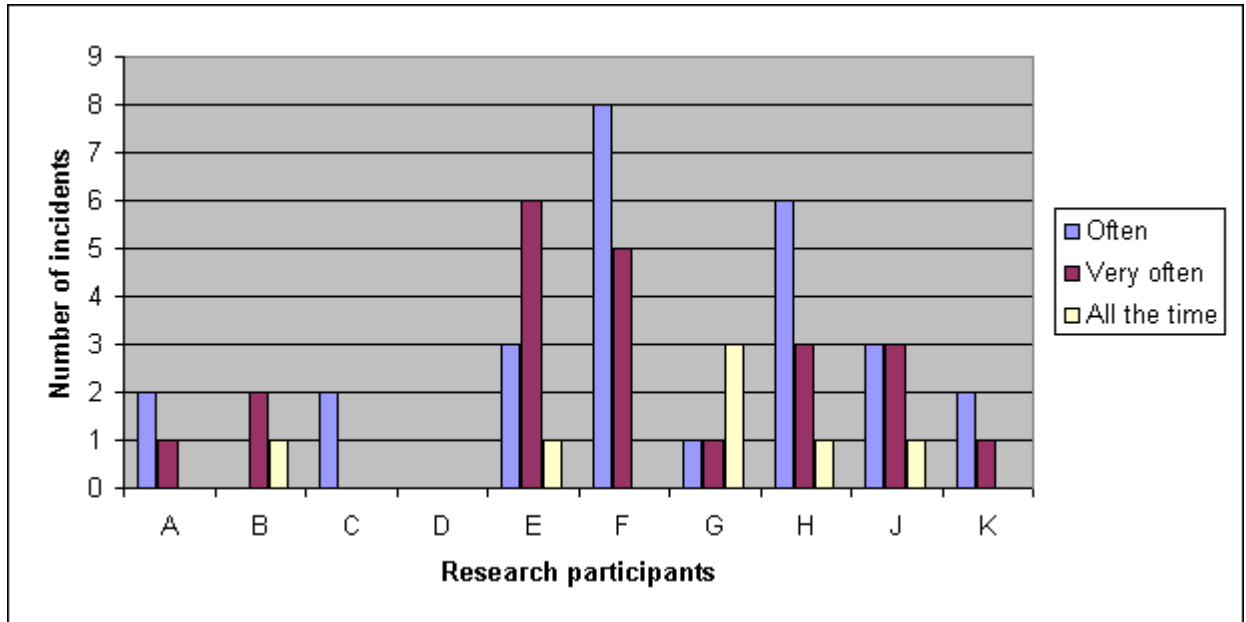
All the participants had applied coping strategies to alleviate their stress-related symptoms. The following coping strategies were implemented by five or more of the participants and were indicated as beneficial: improved work strategies, listening to music, physical exercise, problem-solving strategies, professional development, reading, religious activities, sleep, spending time with family and friends and support from colleagues.

Although all the participants had either acquired therapeutic intervention of some kind and/or had applied coping strategies, they were still in need of therapeutic intervention, which would alleviate or eradicate their experienced career-related stress symptoms, in order to regain homeostasis.

Histograms (De Vos, Fouché & Venter, 2002: 232) were developed to present the data regarding the degree to which the participants experienced career-related stress symptoms (Annexure I), as a group, as effectively and economically as possible. A further aim of the use of this quantitative research method was to compare the data collected before the commencement of the empirical research study with the data collected during the termination of the empirical research study, three months later.

For the purpose of the research report the researcher developed histograms (Fig 6:3-6:6:) indicating the behavioural, emotional, cognitive and physical career-related stress symptoms experienced by the research participants. Attention was only paid to those stress symptoms experienced ‘often’, ‘very often’ and ‘all the time’, because of the risk involved for the teacher participants experiencing such high incidences of career-related stress symptoms.

Figure 6:3 Behavioural career-related stress symptoms experienced ‘often’, ‘very often’ and ‘all the time’ by the research participants



According to the above histogram participants E, F and H experienced the highest incidence of behavioural career-related stress symptoms, while C experienced a low incidence and D none. Behavioural stress symptoms experienced ‘all the time’ were in the minority.

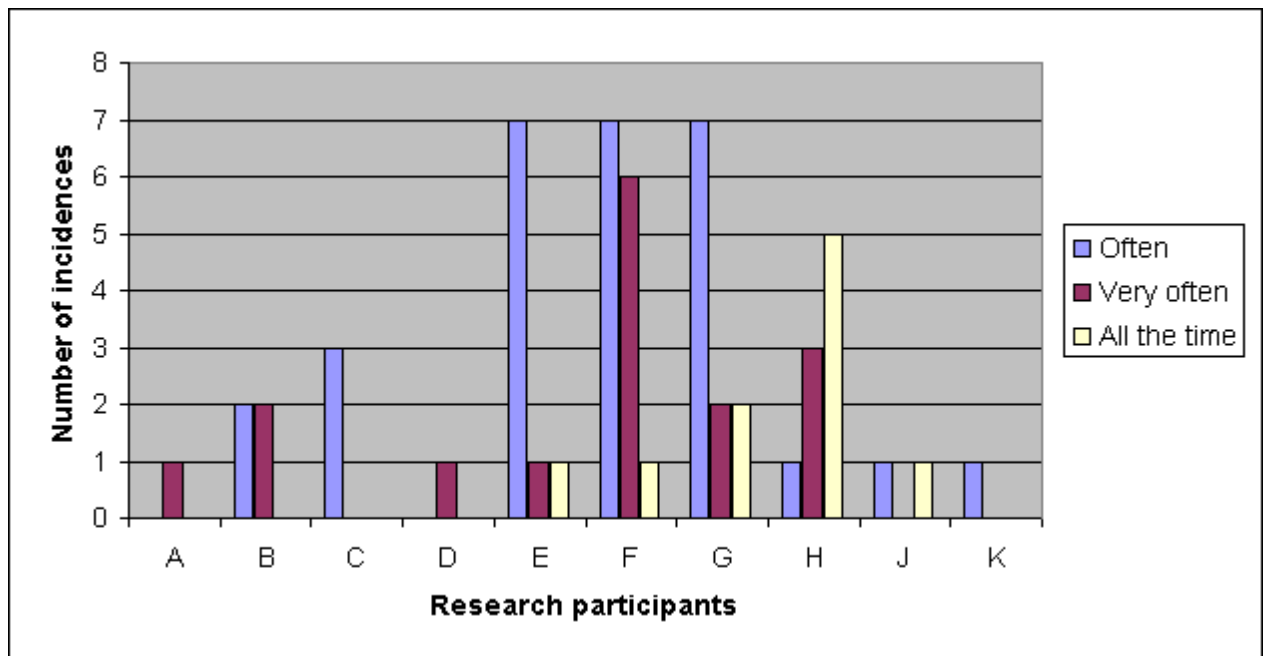
Participants E, F and H experienced high incidences of behavioural career-related stress symptoms due to learner indiscipline. Participant F, although not a novice teacher, was new to the selected school and was for the first time exposed school based secondary

education and to the new national curriculum, which contributed to her over-reacting when learners misbehaved or did not follow instructions. Of the ten participants F was the only one who indicated that she did not want to get up on a school day, and that she did not like her career. F further indicated that she avoided learners and parents and H also often avoided parents. Participants A, B, E, G, J and K smoked and B and G used painkillers at all times because of headaches, spastic colons and gastro intestinal problems.

Participants A, B and C experienced lower incidences of behavioural career-related stress levels, which can be contributed to their personalities. All three the participants were committed to teaching, motivated and self-critical, although the latter personality trait can be to a teacher's disadvantage.

The data collected regarding the behavioural career-related stress symptoms experienced by the ten participants and the causes thereof thus correlates with the information gathered in Chapter 2 of the research study.

Figure 6:4 Emotional career-related stress symptoms experienced ‘often’, ‘very often’ and ‘all the time’ by the research participants

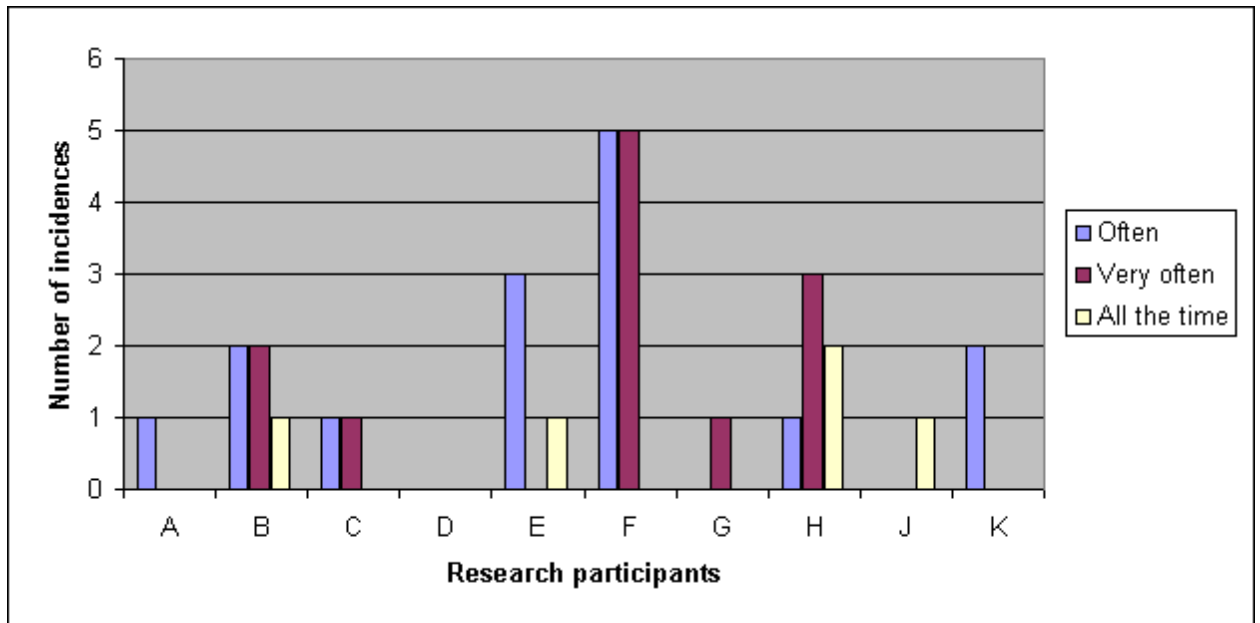


According to the above histogram participants E, F, G and H experienced a significantly higher incidence of emotional career-related stress symptoms than the other participants. Participants A, J and K did not experience dangerous levels of emotional stress.

The emotional career-related stress symptoms, indicated by the majority of the participants, were feelings of inadequacy as teachers, low self-images, frustration, anger, dissatisfaction and irritability. With the exclusion of low self-images, the emotions experienced by the participants were caused by primary factors, namely, learner indiscipline and lack of interest, the workload, the new national curriculum, inclusive education, changes to education and role ambiguity, as well as secondary factors, namely, the declining status of teachers, socio-economic and pedagogical factors. The low self-images suffered by the majority of the participants can be contributed to personality factors. All the participants indicated that they very often feel guilty when they do not do school related work, which is an indication that they do not lead balanced lives.

There is thus a correlation between the incidences of behavioural (Fig.6:3) and emotional (Fig. 6:4) career-related stress symptoms experienced by the participants as stated in the information gathered for Chapter 2 of the research study.

Figure 6:5 Cognitive career-related stress symptoms experienced ‘often’, ‘very often’ and ‘all the time’ by the research participants



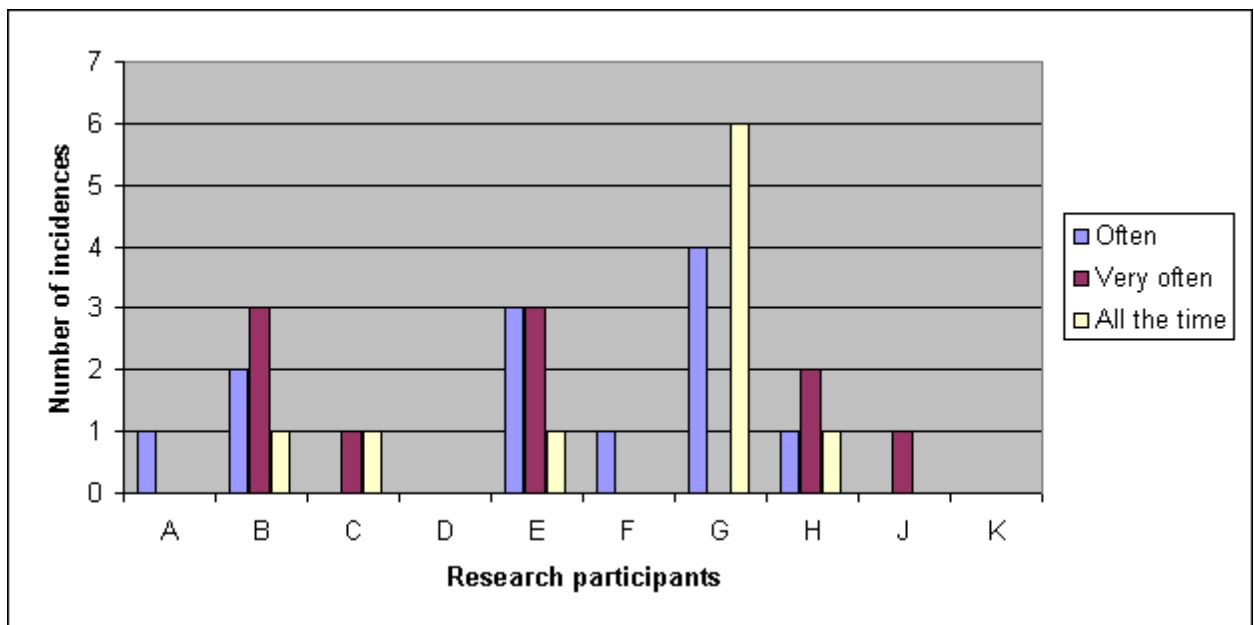
Participants E, F and H experienced a significantly higher incidence of cognitive career-related stress symptoms than the other participants, D experienced none, while A, G and J each experienced only one incidence.

Participants E, F and H experienced high incidences of cognitive career-related stress symptoms because of work overload and the constant changes to the new national curriculum. E’s workload was further augmented by role ambiguity and F was for the first time exposed to school based secondary school teaching and the new national curriculum. Participant B’s cognitive career-related stress symptoms were higher compared to her behavioural and emotional career-related stress levels because of the

new national curriculum, her administrative duties at the selected school, as well as her perfectionist tendencies.

Based on the data gathered and represented in histograms, there is a correlation between the incidences of behavioural (Fig.6:3), emotional (Fig. 6:4) and cognitive (Fig.6:5) career-related stress symptoms experienced by the participants as stated in the information gathered for Chapter 2 of the research study.

Figure 6:6 Physical career-related stress symptoms experienced ‘often’, ‘very often’ and ‘all the time’ by the research participants



Participant G experienced the highest incidence of physical career-related stress symptoms and B and E the second highest. D and K experienced no high incidences of physical stress symptoms and A, F and J experienced one incidence each.

Participant G experienced a very high incidence of physical career-related stress because of constant headaches and arthritis and B suffered from a spastic colon, gastro intestinal problems and headaches, which correlates with their use of painkillers. The participants,

with the exclusion of D, F, H and K, indicated that they had unhealthy eating habits and, compared to the data represented in the histogram, they suffered lower incidences of physical career-related stress levels than the other participants. All the participants, with the exception of D, indicated high levels of excessive tiredness, and seven of the participants suffered from a low libido both of which can be contributed to work overload and an unbalanced life style.

From the data gathered and represented in the histograms, there is a correlation between the incidences of behavioural (Fig.6:3), emotional (Fig. 6:4), cognitive (Fig.6:5) and physical (Fig.6:6) career-related stress symptoms experienced by the participants, as stated in the information gathered for Chapter 2 of the research study.

It was clear, at the onset of the empirical research study, that the research participants suffered career-related stress symptoms to varying degrees. Participants E, F, G and H experienced the highest over-all incidence of career-related stress symptoms experienced 'often', 'very often' and/or 'all the time'. Participant D experienced the lowest over-all incidence of career-related stress symptoms, which can be contributed to his positive approach to life. From the quantitative data collected it was clear that the research participants were in need of therapeutic intervention, which would address them holistically within their total environmental fields.

From the above data it can be concluded that the profiles of the research participants, before intervention, correlated with the profiles of teachers suffering from career-related stress, as stated in the information gathered for this research study.

6.4.1.1.4 Two-day workshop (Step 4)

The workshop started on a Friday afternoon at 14:30 and lasted until 16:30. It resumed on the Saturday at 09:00 and concluded at 16:00. It thus lasted a total number of 9 hours including two twenty-minute tea breaks and half-an-hour for lunch. The researcher was of the opinion that a follow-up session of an hour was needed to collect all the loose ends.

As indicated in the outline of the prototype Gestalt therapeutic model (6.2.1.1), the researcher commenced with the aim of Gestalt therapy, the aim of the workshop and an explanation of Gestalt therapy. This was followed by the awareness principle and, although that followed the set programme, the reflection session on the Saturday led to discussion and experimentation including all three Gestalt principles, namely awareness, dialogue and process. As a result of this inclusion, the process principle only had to be revised at the end of the workshop.

The participants reported on the Saturday that, although they were quite wary of the therapeutic workshop when they arrived for the therapeutic intervention on the Friday, they felt quite comfortable on the Saturday because, although very deep rooted personal issues had come to light during the Friday session, they found the Gestalt therapeutic approach to be non-threatening.

A descriptive summary of the workshop, including some of the verbal and non-verbal responses of the participants, which, according to Strydom (2002 (b):250), is the essence of the investigation, which would lead to the broadening of the knowledgebase and understanding of the phenomenon, is attached as Annexure J. The participants are referred to as letters of the alphabet.

From the verbal responses, as well as the non-verbal communication during the workshop a number of concepts arose. The said concepts, as well as the Gestalt therapeutic principles, with which the concepts had been addressed during the workshop and which had been applied as intervention throughout the duration of the empirical research study, are stated in the table (6:4) below.

TABLE 6:5 CONCEPTS WHICH AROSE DURING THE WORKSHOP AND THE GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PRINCIPLES

Concepts which arose during the workshop	Gestalt therapeutic principles
Unfinished business, such as childhood issues, blocked the growth of teachers.	Process: cycle of experience
Teachers with unresolved personal issues experienced the school environment as nurturing.	Awareness: Here-and-now Dialogue: Contact Process: Self-regulation
Teachers with unresolved personal issues experienced higher stress levels than other teachers and did not experience career-related issues as figure, thus on their foregrounds.	Process: figure/ground
Teachers suffered from unfounded, inadequate self-concepts .	Awareness: Self-awareness Dialogue: Validation Process: Polarisation
Teachers need to re-own disowned parts of their personalities to regain homeostasis.	Awareness: Self-awareness Process: Polarisation
A resistance to change is the result of the fear of facing unresolved issues.	Dialogue: Modifications at the contact boundary
Culture and value systems should be acknowledged in the school environment and in therapy.	Awareness Dialogue Process
Teachers with sound support from the principal, experienced lower career-related stress levels.	Dialogue: Co-creation at the contact boundary Process: Self-support

	versus environmental support
Avoidance , as a modification at the contact boundary, was experienced when teachers resisted facing unresolved issues.	Dialogue: Contact
Teachers with inadequate boundaries found it difficult to say 'No' to unreasonable demands	Dialogue: The contact boundary; the individual/environmental field
As a result of previous experiences, teachers have been nervous when district officials visited the school, although their work has been of a high standard and according to Departmental guidelines.	Awareness: The zones of awareness
Teachers had inadequate time to relax .	Process: Top-dog/under-dog dichotomy; dominant needs; organismic self-regulation
Teachers felt the need to spend time alone .	Dialogue: Withdrawal Process: Organismic self-regulation
Teachers experienced schoolwork as their dominant need .	Process: Organismic self-regulation; top-dog/under-dog dichotomy
Teachers were wary of therapeutic intervention.	Awareness
New teachers felt lonely at school.	Dialogue: Contact
Teachers with sound classroom management, and in leadership positions, were perceived by other teachers as without any problems or personal issues. This made the teachers who were less capable, feel even more inadequate.	Awareness: Zones of awareness Dialogue: Contact

Teachers with unresolved personal issues recognised this and requested further individual therapy.	Awareness Dialogue Process

The above concepts reached saturation, thus repeating itself, during the workshop and became the focus for the duration of the empirical research study.

In order to determine whether the interventions during the workshop had an impact on the career-related stress experienced by the participants, they had to complete an open-ended questionnaire seven days after the workshop.

*6.4.1.1.5 Completion of an open-ended questionnaire seven days after the workshop
(Step 5)*

Seven days after the two-day workshop the participants were requested to complete an open-ended questionnaire (Annexure K) to determine how and to what extent they applied the Gestalt therapeutic principles, taught during the workshop, in the school and their personal environments, in support of their growth towards maturity and self-support. Because of the time constraints experienced by the teachers, they were requested to complete the questionnaire in their own time and to return it to the researcher within the next two days. The questions in the questionnaire were grouped under the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process. In conclusion, the participants were asked to share their feelings after the completion of the questionnaire. The questions and some of the typical responses received on the answers are reported below. The responses of the participants to each of the questions are attached as Annexure L.

Questions asked and typical responses received

FOCUS ON AWARENESS AS CONCEPT

The questions printed in bold indicate the specific awareness elements emphasised during the workshop.

Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations? Please elaborate.

- *I lost my temper with learners and deep breathing helped me to calm down.*
- *I could not think any further than survival. I feel as if I first have to come to a stand-still before I can come in contact with myself.*
- *Deep breathing during break helped me to relax while juggling various activities and departmental responsibilities*
- *Yes. I have even made it a bit religious in the morning. I do some deep breathing before each lesson whilst the learners line-up for class.*
- *I tried in the beginning, but I tend to loose my temper with the grade10's and 12's. The last two days I tried again. It helped a little, but I became aware that I am soon worked up again.*
- *Deep breathing helped me not to cry.*
- *Yes. I had a grade 10 class who were continuously talking. After a while I became stressed and annoyed. Instead of getting angry, I stopped, started deep breathing and it helped me to calm down.*
- *The learners were challenging and caused chaos. I stood back and stayed calm and breathed deeply. They saw a difference and calmed down after twenty minutes and we could complete the work.*

Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate.

- *No. I can only think about survival and can't calm down and come in contact with myself.*

- *Yes, although not often enough. It helps to put things into perspective. Once I have visualised my safe place I even make decisions for the better.*
- *I had no time to do this yet. When I arrive home in the afternoons, I just want to sleep so that I can start working again.*
- *Yes. Before starting to work on exam papers or preparation I did relaxation exercises. It did seem to help me to get going and to approach the task more calmly.*
- *Yes, it helped a lot. After relaxation I felt relaxed and came up with solutions to problems.*

Were you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

- *I have always been very aware of any one of my senses.*
- *I only tried to listen more intently.*
- *I was more aware of smelling, hearing and tasting.*
- *I have improved vision and hearing and am lately aware of my feet touching the ground.*
- *I tried to notice all the beautiful things particularly in the morning. I am in too much of a hurry to taste anything.*
- *I am noticing the environment more and started to hear small sounds again. I have slowed down my eating and have tasted different flavours and am more aware of different textures.*
- *I look at my learners differently and take more time to listen to what I am told.*

Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

- *Yes. It has felt good when I realised that people see me in a positive light.*
- *Yes. I have accepted that I too can emotionally depend on somebody and let of steam. This has helped me to think more clearly and to feel better about myself.*
- *I am a little more self-assured. I am very embarrassed when I am complimented. I am not used to being appreciated.*
- *Yes, I have realised that there are so many other things which moved to the surface that I can't even get to the stress.*

- *Yes, it has changed a lot. It feels as if I can start from scratch in life so that I can correct all the mistakes I have made.*
- *Yes. I always had a bit of a negative self-concept, but after the workshop and hearing what the other participants said, I have stopped being so hard on myself.*
- *I received a compliment. At first I was not sure that it was the truth, but then realised what the learners saw must be true.*

Was awareness of your own and other individuals' non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact?

Please explain.

- *A well presented posture is second nature to me. I became aware of a colleague's folded arms and what it communicated, of expressions of amazement, the rolling of eyes and some beautiful smiles amongst my learners. Speaking slower and softer had a calming effect on the parents, learners and colleagues with whom I dealt.*
- *I am usually very enthusiastic. My non-verbal and verbal responses varied between being calm and excited.*
- *Assertive body language from the side of a parent helped in clarifying what the person was saying and in understanding the person himself.*
- *I had a very stress full encounter with a colleague who is clinging to me. I feel I just want to run away! I tried to convey the message, through my body language that she must leave me alone, but it did not work. I tend to rub my hands together and my fore head when I am frustrated.*
- *My body language portrayed tension and irritation. The learner came over strongly and was adamant that I was wrong. My awareness of this made me realise that I must stay calm and not over-react. We were both waving our arms around. I was screaming like a fish wife and the learner's voice was strong and loud.*
- *Awareness of body language has helped me to understand the other person's feelings quicker. The tone of voice of a colleague left no room for doubt.*

- *I have sat up straight. Being aware of my body made me feel more in control. I realised that I had to keep my voice calm in order for the parent to calm down.*
- *Learners have been more relaxed when they saw my body language, my calmness thus rubbed off.*

Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions? Please elaborate.

- *I am usually wary of subject visits from the district officials because they always find fault, no matter. This time I do not mind their visit, although I wish all my work was 100%.*
- *I honestly do not see what is going on around me. I am too involved in my own little world and with my own things.*
- *Yes. I often speak to people and think they are highly strung or stressed which reminds me of myself.*
- *Yes. I experience the same pain and sadness as others, but I never admitted it.*
- *I remembered when I was in the same situation and was more relaxed.*

From these typical responses it became evident that the participants developed a heightened sense of awareness. They became aware of, applied and benefited from deep breathing, relaxation and sensory awareness. They experienced a growing sense of self and improved self-concepts, the power of both verbal and non-verbal communication and the effect of the middle zone of awareness on their inner and outer zones of awareness.

FOCUS ON DIALOGUE AS CONCEPT

The questions printed in bold indicate the specific awareness elements emphasised during the workshop.

Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you? Please elaborate.

- *Yes. The person did not want to hear what I said. I felt frustrated.*
- *The person often interrupted me, not to improve his understanding, but to end the talk. It left me feeling unimportant, left out and stupid.*
- *I tried to explain my feelings, but it seemed as if the other person heard but did not appreciate the seriousness of, or understood my feelings.*
- *Yes. I was explaining important activities to my learners but they did not want to listen, which insulted my intelligence.*
- *Yes, with my mother. I stopped, however, told her how I felt and she finally listened.*

Did you experience honest communication, with another individual, where the acknowledging of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate.

- *I did experience it and it left me with a feeling of satisfaction.*
- *I am aware that people (family members) or learners sometimes speak to me and I respond before they have completed their sentences. I am trying to change this.*
- *I did not give my full attention to a learner although I rectified this later on in the lesson.*
- *Yes, it led to me being able to indicate that I disagreed.*

Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate.

- *No. While I was explaining some scientific concepts to a colleague, I became aware that he was moving closer and closer to me. I eventually moved in behind my desk.*
- *I did not feel invaded, but connected and it was a comforting feeling.*
- *I don't really have personal space.*
- *I did not allow anybody to invade my space. It was a busy week and I needed to be alone and complete my work.*

Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

- *No, even though I had lots of empathy.*
- *I learned to keep my boundaries, although I acknowledged the learner's feelings with empathy.*
- *No. I attempt not to get too involved in the learners' lives and I do succeed in it. I did become even tougher on the learners than before.*
- *Yes. I did not deal with it personally and felt that I have dropped the child. I wanted to type a personal letter, but eventually did not.*

Were you able to say 'no' to unreasonable demands made upon you? Please elaborate.

- *I always say yes. I am trying to change this, but it is difficult.*
- *No. I can't say 'no' to people. I will rather just keep quiet and do it. Nothing is ever too much effort for me.*
- *No, but they were probably not too unreasonable. My husband sent me on a long errand in the afternoon when he knew I was loaded with schoolwork. I did not say 'no' because he is always very supportive.*
- *Yes, although I felt very bad after saying 'no'.*
- *Yes. A friend, who only uses me, requested my help and I decided not to help her. It was a positive experience.*
- *Yes. The estate agent wanted to put my house on show on a Sunday and I said I am too tired.*

Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation or did you apply a new approach? Please elaborate.

- *Yes, sometimes learners must realise that it is my way or no way, because some situations are just not debatable.*
- *Yes. I just kept quiet and went ahead with what I was doing, as usual.*
- *I am in a way rude to the learners and it still works.*
- *Yes, I still lose my temper in class when learners do not behave, although I know it does not help.*
- *Yes. I did not say anything and went to listen to music.*
- *No, when I was wrong I admitted it instead of finding ways to defend myself.*

Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

- *Yes, I do it sometimes by telling a joke or a story.*
- *I tried it, but it did not work. I thus kept quiet.*
- *Yes. Every time somebody had asked how I felt after the operation and when someone was sympathetic.*

From the typical responses received it was evident that the participants were developing improved dialogical relationships. They became aware of the break in communication when people do not listen to what they were saying, which also contributed to their improved I-Thou relationships. The participants became aware of their own and other's boundaries and started to maintain their own boundaries. They experienced an increased awareness of the uniqueness of every situation and environmental contact, which resulted in new approaches to address situations. The participants further became aware of their behaviour, when they feel the need to avoid a situation or subject under discussion.

FOCUS ON PROCESS AS CONCEPT

The questions printed in bold indicate the specific awareness elements emphasised during the workshop.

Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and / or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

- *I did not keep the dual character of people in mind.*
- *I always keep in mind that there are two sides to my personality.*
- *Yes. I have tried not to have too many expectations from people. I also experience feelings of being comfortable and then suddenly a feeling of irritation due to a small thing that has happened.*
- *I watch people and keep my distance from difficult and negative people. I did not give any thought to the fact that a person experiences emotions on both sides of the polar continuum.*
- *It made me realise how easily I can change and after lashing out I made myself aware that I can remain calm.*
- *I kept calm when talking to people, especially my parents. It also helped me not to jump to conclusions regarding the situation.*
- *There is a situation I am working through where this therapy is coming in handy – people take advantages of weaknesses I have.*

How and to what extent did you re-own you own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

- *I have not made peace with the fact that I am also good at things. I do not know why I 'refuse' to accept it.*
- *I definitely know I become depressed under pressure, but I can overcome it.*
- *I still find it difficult to talk about my feelings, but I do try.*
- *There are personal aspects with which I have not yet come to terms.*
- *At first not at all, then due to my principal 100%. But I feel guilty and weak.*
- *I accept things the way they are.*

- *I realised that I am unique and complimented myself on tasks completed.*
- *I am gullible.*

How and to what extent have you satisfied your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate.

- *I did not satisfy my dominant needs and it contributed to my stress.*
- *To a very limited degree. Circumstances did not allow for it. This led to stress because it left me with the feeling that I do not have control over my life any longer.*
- *I got my filing done for the departmental official's visit and I went to see a stage production. The filing was a 'pain' but necessary. The show was very relaxing.*
- *I made a priority list and it worked to some extent.*
- *I have made no time for myself. I feel too guilty when I do not work. This did cause my stress-levels to rise.*
- *I spent one evening reading a couple of chapters in my book which I seem to have very little time for. My need was not really fulfilled because at the back of my mind there was always the thought of what I should be doing.*
- *I have stopped to satisfy other people's needs, forgetting about my own. This made me feel guilty, though.*
- *I did take care of myself and was concerned about what I wanted. I was not as stressed this week.*
- *I needed eight hours sleep on Sunday and did. Afterwards my thinking was quicker and clearer.*

Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate

- *Yes. I went to a stage production.*
- *Yes. I complimented myself.*
- *Yes, I completed my marking and filing on time.*
- *Yes. I had chocolate and 'me time' without feeling guilty.*
- *Yes. I bought myself chocolates.*

To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial?

Please motivate.

- *I only eat an evening meal.*
- *I am very bad at this. I usually do not eat under pressure. I just keep going never the less.*
- *I did not even try.*
- *I followed no form of a diet. I just want to eat all the time. I am tired and very listless.*
- *I ate regularly and was more aware of what my body needed and I felt more alive.*

How, and to what extent, did you come to terms with your work environment?

Please explain.

- *My work environment is a comfort zone. I enjoy what I do everyday no matter how taxing or difficult the day is.*
- *I am still very satisfied with my work environment.*
- *I enjoy coming to school. I did feel a little bad admitting that my filing was not up to date.*
- *As often as it is challenging, I still appreciate it. It is like home.*
- *Very well. I feel positive and motivated.*
- *I am comfortable in my work environment.*

How, and to what extent, did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

- *I always get enthusiastic about the situation I am in whether it is good or bad.*
- *I avoided it and prayed.*
- *I reacted impulsively and instinctively to every incident.*
- *I did not choose them well at all. I overreacted and was quite unpleasant at times when it was not necessary.*
- *I usually turn it into something positive.*

- *I first lost my temper then chose to calm down and to take a deep breath.*
- *I chose to remain calm and ‘moved’ over the situation.*
- *I decided to accept an apology after I have heard my friend’s reasoning.*

How, and to what extent, did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate.

- *I am usually the one having to lend the support.*
- *I probably needed it as much as before, but did not ask for it as you eventually have to cope on your own (self-support).*
- *I did everything without asking for help. I needed less support than in the past.*
- *Only once. My head of department assisted me only by standing in the door way.*

From the typical responses received, it was clear that the participants became aware of, if not yet accepting, their own and others’ dichotomy of character and emotions. The participants were more aware of their dominant needs, with self-nurturing as the consequence. The participants were developing a growing awareness of choice and self-support.

The responses received on the questions in the questionnaire therefore indicated that the participants were experiencing a growing awareness of self and contact with the environment, improved self-concepts, personal growth and an acknowledgment that unresolved issues must be addressed in order to regain homeostasis.

Participants could apply deep breathing to regain calmness, seven days after the workshop. The application of the relaxation techniques was more challenging and there was a need to first assimilate it. The awareness of self-concept resulted in improved self-concepts and self-assuredness, and acceptance that other individuals perceived one in a positive light. The awareness and implementation of non-verbal communication resulted in participants being more sensitive to situations, actions and reactions. An increased awareness of the influence of the middle zone of awareness on the inner and outer zones of awareness impacted on thoughts, emotions and actions.

The participants had become increasingly aware of the frustrations caused by poor listening skills and the impact thereof on the I-Thou relationship. Participants had experienced an increased awareness of boundaries and the need of a personal space resulting in the ability to say 'no' to unreasonable demands. Participants still needed more time to assimilate the skill of addressing situations in different ways than they had done in the past to lower their stress.

Although some of the participants still experienced the achievement of organismic self-regulation as challenging, they were more aware of their dominant needs. Participants recognised the issue of polarities although some of them needed more time to assimilate the concept, which would result in the re-owning of their disowned parts, which would allow growth to occur.

Time to internalise the skills taught during the Gestalt therapeutic workshop was of the essence. The unresolved issues of some of the participants should be addressed further to allow growth to occur.

*6.4.1.1.6 Group interview and reinforcement session two weeks after the workshop
(Step 6)*

Some of the research participants indicated a need to address certain issues in a further therapeutic group session. During this session the researcher made it clear that there were no right and wrong answers to questions asked during the sessions, and even though they thought their answers to the questions, in the questionnaire (Annexure K), were negative or indicated no growth, every answer had value and increased their awareness.

The researcher had no set agenda for the session and the participants were given the opportunity to express their feelings and experiences of the past two weeks in a relaxed atmosphere. It is important to mention that during the two weeks since the workshop, the participants had not only been responsible for the preparation and teaching of lessons, but

due to the upcoming mid-year exams had had to set exam papers, finalise their continuous assessment marks and two participants had been involved in school productions. A descriptive summary of the session and the responses received from the participants appears as Annexure M.

6.4.1.1.7 A checklist as self-monitoring and reinforcement instrument (Step 7)

Based on the outcome of the open-ended questionnaire (Annexure K and L), completed seven days after the workshop, as well as the reinforcement session two weeks after the workshop, the researcher developed a checklist as a self-monitoring and reinforcement instrument based on the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process (Annexure N). The aim of the checklist was that of self-monitoring and to reinforce the Gestalt principles until it was assimilated by the participants. It was clear, at that stage, that the participants were still in need of environmental support to regain homeostasis. Although growth was evident one week after the workshop, the majority of the participants had, two weeks later, reached the point of impasse from where growth could begin to take place.

6.4.1.1.8 Semi-structured interviews with the participants (Step 8)

After the completion of the first checklist, spanning fourteen days, the researcher held individual semi-structured interviews with each of the participants. The semi-structured interviews were thus conducted one month after the initial two-day workshop. The descriptive summaries, including verbatim responses, of the semi-structured interviews are attached as Annexure O. The objectives of the semi-structured interviews were to...

- determine the growth towards maturity and self-support experienced by the participants one month after the therapeutic workshop.
- provide therapeutic intervention and to reinforce the Gestalt therapeutic principles should the need arise
- determine the functionality of the checklist (Annexure N) as self-monitoring and reinforcement instrument

All the participants experienced some growth towards maturity and self-support. The researcher deduced from the semi-structured interviews that the participants required a longer period than one month to assimilate the Gestalt therapeutic concepts addressed during the workshop. The participants experienced the checklist as a self-regulating instrument which served to focus their awareness and application of the Gestalt principles.

6.4.1.1.9 Semi-structured interviews with the members of the school management team (Step 9)

Semi-structured interviews were further conducted with the three members of the school management team who attended the workshop with the added responsibility of evaluating the feasibility of a member of a school management team implementing the functional Gestalt therapeutic programme based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model, after receiving basic training. For the purpose of the research report the outcome of these interviews are reported under 6.4.2.

6.4.1.1.10 Structured interviews as part of the feedback and termination process (Step 10)

Three months after the initial two-day workshop, structured interviews were conducted with the participants, to determine to what degree the functional Gestalt therapeutic programme based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model were beneficial in reducing or eradicating the degree to which they experienced career-related stress symptoms. The participants were further requested to complete a measuring instrument (Annexure Q), as quantitative support of the qualitative data collected through the open-ended questionnaire, the group interviews, as well as the semi-structured and structured interviews. The aim of the completion of the above measuring instrument, which was the same as section A of the first questionnaire (Annexure I), was to determine the degree to which the participants' career-related stress levels were lowered or eradicated.

Two weeks before the feedback and termination phase of the empirical research study, the researcher terminated the use of the checklists to determine to what degree the participants have become either self-supportive or still needed environmental support in the application of the Gestalt therapeutic principles of awareness, dialogue and process. The checklists were collected to be used as qualitative data for the purpose of the research report.

Each participant was asked the same questions during the structured interviews, and had to respond briefly upon each. The responses to the structured interviews are attached as Annexure P.

The questions structured for these interviews were based on the concepts which emerged during the workshop, the open-ended questionnaire (Annexure K), the group interview and the semi-structured interviews.

Questions asked during the structured interviews:

Sense of awareness:

- How, and to what extent, has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?

Sense of field:

- How, and to what extent, have your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?

Awareness of the dialogical relationship:

- How, and to what extent, have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion, where teachers give all the time and learners do not give back in return?

Awareness of needs:

- How, and to what extent, have you answered to your dominant needs and how has it improved your quality of life as a teacher?

Awareness of polarities:

- How, and to what extent, have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every personality and emotions?

Sense of balance:

- How, and to what extent have you achieved homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?

Applying the “here and now”:

- You indicated that you had previously received formal therapeutic intervention, which was less successful. How does the Gestalt therapeutic intervention, which you have been exposed to over the past three months, compare to the previous intervention you received? (If applicable)

Awareness of balance:

- Which aspect of the Gestalt therapeutic intervention did you find to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?

Awareness of needs:

- Please indicate your needs, which were not addressed through the therapeutic intervention.

Awareness of new skills:

- To what extent could you apply the skills taught during the intervention, without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?

6.4.1.1.11 Growth towards maturity and self-support at the end of the three month intervention period deducted from collected qualitative data

Based on the responses to the questions in the open-ended questionnaire completed seven days after the workshop, the group interview two weeks after the workshop, the semi-structured interviews one month after the workshop and the final structured interviews, as well as the checklist as self-monitoring instrument, growth towards maturity and self-support, which would support the regaining of homeostasis, was evident in all the participants. The researcher thus used triangulation to collect and report the qualitative data. The growth experienced by each of the participants over the three month period is tabled below. The experienced growth is grouped under the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process.

TABLE 6:6 EMPIRICAL RESULTS OF EACH PARTICIPANT BASED ON THE ENTIRE GESTALT PROCESS

Participant	Gestalt principles	Prominent levels of growth towards maturity and self-support in the participant’s quest to regain homeostasis
Participant A	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory awareness • Breathing and relaxation techniques • Present-awareness • Effect of the middle zone of awareness on feelings and action
	Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal and non-verbal communication • Confirmation and validation • The ability to deny unreasonable demands • Co-creation at the contact boundary • Re-owned disowned characteristics and emotions

	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of strengths • Self-nurturing, thus organismic self-regulation • The dichotomy of personality and emotion • Awareness of dominant needs • Exercise
Participant B	Awareness Dialogue Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the fact that she has been out of awareness or unaware and that it was hampering her contact with self and others and her growth • Awareness of lack of individual/environmental contact • Growing awareness of the I-Thou relationship • Acceptance of relationship of one-sided inclusion with learners • Awareness of avoidance of conflict • Awareness of low self-concept and has begun to question the reasons for it • Growing awareness of her perfectionist tendencies, which prevented her from completing the cycle of experience • Answering to her dominant needs and applying self-nurturing, thus improved organismic self-regulation
Participant C	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced deep breathing as calming • Focused her energy in the here-and-now

	<p>Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory-awareness • Awareness of the influence of the middle zone of awareness on emotions and actions <p>Dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rectifying non-verbal responses improved the I-Thou relationship <p>Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of the relationship of one-sided inclusion with learners • An improved self-concept • Awareness of the dichotomy of personality and emotions of learners • Organismic self-regulation: answering to dominant needs and self-nurturing • Awareness that unresolved issues were being resolved • Feeling of control and experiencing the regaining of homeostasis
Participant D	<p>Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Became aware of his approach to life • Deep breathing and relaxation techniques • Enriching sensory-awareness • Present awareness • Awareness of the effect of the middle zone of awareness on his perceptions and actions <p>Dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the contact boundary and boundary issues • Co-creation at the contact boundary

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the absence of unresolved personal issues the career-related stress could be addressed immediately
Participant G	<p>Awareness</p> <p>Dialogue</p> <p>Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of sensory stimuli • Present-awareness • Achieved some degree of relaxation • Achieved, after three months, the visualising of a safe place as part of the relaxation technique • Awareness of the influence of the middle zone of awareness on feelings and actions • Awareness of verbal and non-verbal communication • Awareness of a tendency to go into confluence with others and answering to unreasonable demands • After three months less resistance was evident and the participant could apply an increasing number of skills • Awareness and acceptance of the polarities within her emotions • Awareness of the polarities within her personality • Awareness of the dichotomy within the personalities and emotions of others led to improved judgement
Participant H	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxation led to calmness, clear thought processes and sound decisions • Present-awareness

	<p>Awareness</p> <p>Dialogue</p> <p>Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory-awareness • Awareness of the influence of the middle zone of awareness on feelings and actions • The benefits of non-verbal communication in achieving a dialogic relationship • I-Thou relationships • Accepted the relationship of one-sided inclusion with learners • Improved boundaries resulted in being able to deny unreasonable demands • Awareness of other teachers' experience of career-related stress • Awareness of the toxic effect of negative self-talk • An improved self-concept • Awareness and acceptance of the dichotomy within the personalities and emotions of self and others • Applied self-nurturing • Re-owned disowned characteristics • Acknowledged strengths • Awareness of and answered to dominant needs • Achieved self-support and has succeeded in regaining homeostasis • Exercised and followed a balanced diet
Participant J	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing and applying a relaxation technique is calming • Awareness of sensory stimuli

	<p>Awareness</p> <p>Dialogue</p> <p>Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present-awareness • Awareness of the influence of the middle zone of awareness, and its possible negative effect on experiences in the here-and now • A growing ability to say ‘no’ to unreasonable demands • Aware of non-verbal communication • Improved dialogic relationships • Awareness of the dichotomy in the personality and emotions of self and others resulted in improved communication • Re-owned disowned characteristics • Achieved closure on unresolved past issues • Exercise • Awareness of her growth as a person
Participant K	<p>Awareness</p> <p>Dialogue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing had a calming effect which in the end calmed the learners • Present centredness • Sensory awareness • Calm non-verbal communication contributed to improved classroom management • Improved dialogic relationship resulted in growth • Improved boundaries resulted in denying an unreasonable demand

	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and application of relaxation techniques, self-nurturing and the following of a balanced diet as organismic self-regulation • Awareness of dominant needs • Awareness of the dichotomy of personality and emotions of self and others • Re-owned a disowned characteristic • Exercised and followed a balanced diet
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Based on the deduction made from the qualitative data collected, it was clear that the functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, in their quest to regain homeostasis, had been successful. All the participants had regained the ability to achieve homeostasis to varying degrees. The concepts which had arisen from the initial therapeutic workshop and which had received focused attention for the remainder of the research period had successfully been addressed contributing to the growth towards maturity and self-support of the participants.

In support of the qualitative data collected during the structured interviews, three months after the first workshop, the researcher had developed a quantitative measuring instrument (Annexure Q).

6.4.1.1.12 Growth towards maturity and self-support at the end of the three month intervention period, deduced from collected quantitative data (Step 11)

A self-constructed instrument, based on the existing literature and gathered information, was developed to measure the degree to which teachers experience career-related stress symptoms (Annexure I and Q). The career-related stress symptoms indicated in this measuring instrument, were based on the symptoms mentioned in national and international research, as discussed in Chapter 2 of the research report and supported content and construct validity.

For the purpose of this study the **content validity** of this self-constructed index as measuring instrument was applicable in the sense that the questions were a straight forward and measured what it “appeared” to measure, namely, the components of awareness, dialogue and process. It was further important to include questions accurately measuring the attributes under consideration. The **construct validity** of this self-constructed index as measuring instrument appeared to be the most difficult aspect, because it involved the determining of the degree to which the instrument would successfully measure the theoretical constructs at stake. The process to ensure construct validity was a lengthy procedure based on a process of theory construction in Chapter 2. Because the procedure is not part of the aim and objectives of this study, but part of the research process, no further detail will be given. Important is the fact that each aspect of the measuring instrument is grounded in the literature in Chapter 2.

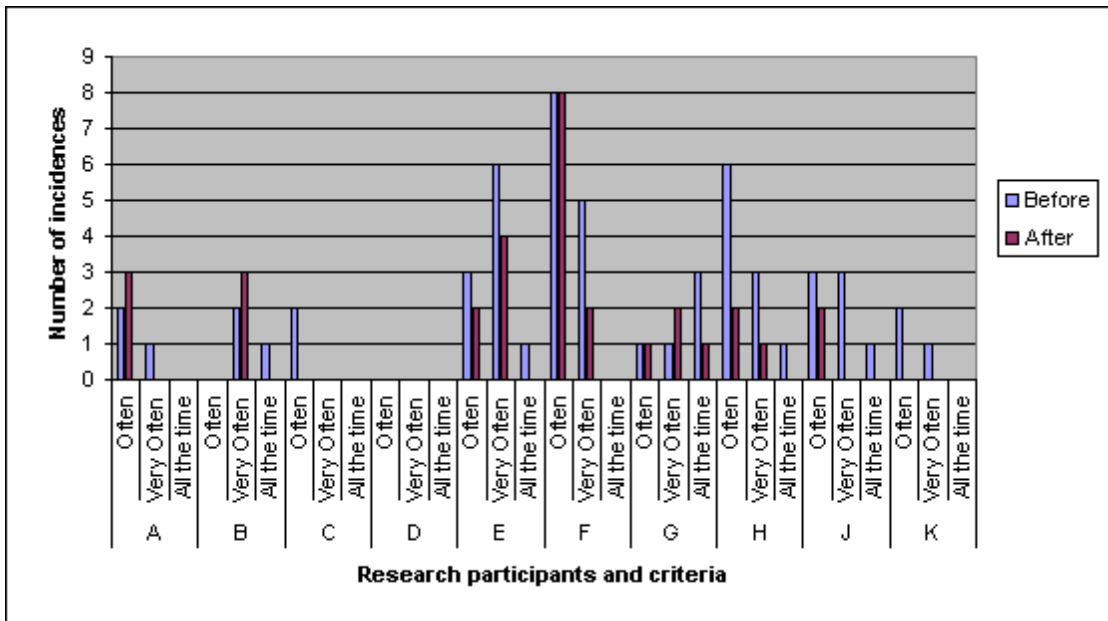
The research participants had been requested to complete the measuring instrument before the Gestalt therapeutic intervention commenced, and again three months later, when the therapeutic empirical research study was terminated. The two sets of results were compared and the researcher came to the conclusion that the Gestalt therapeutic intervention had contributed to the reduction of the degree to which the participants experienced career-related stress-symptoms.

In support of the qualitative data collected and reported, the researcher compared the quantitative data collected from each of the research participants diagrammatically in histograms (De Vos et al, 2002:232). For the purpose of the research report, the researcher had developed histograms (Fig. 6.7-6.10), comparing the behavioural, emotional, cognitive and physical career-related stress symptoms experienced by the research participants before the commencement of the therapeutic intervention, and three months, later when the empirical research study terminated. Attention was paid only to those stress symptoms experienced ‘often’, ‘very often’ and ‘all the time’, because of the risk involved for the participants experiencing such high levels of stress.

Results of the self-constructed index

The following histograms represent a summary of the results of the “before” and “after” comparison as determined by the self-constructed index as measuring instrument. As part of the quantitative nature of the study, the pretest- posttest design was used. A group was studied and the dependent variable O_1 was measured in the absence of the independent variable X . Subsequently the independent variable (the Gestalt therapeutic process model) was introduced, followed by a repeated measurement of the dependent variable O_2 , at a later stage. Measures of the dependent variable O_1 and O_2 , were compared for two different states of the independent variable, but within the same group – thus a “before” and “after” measurement.

Figure 6:7 Comparison between the behavioural career-related stress symptoms experienced by the research participants before the commencement of the therapeutic intervention, and three months later

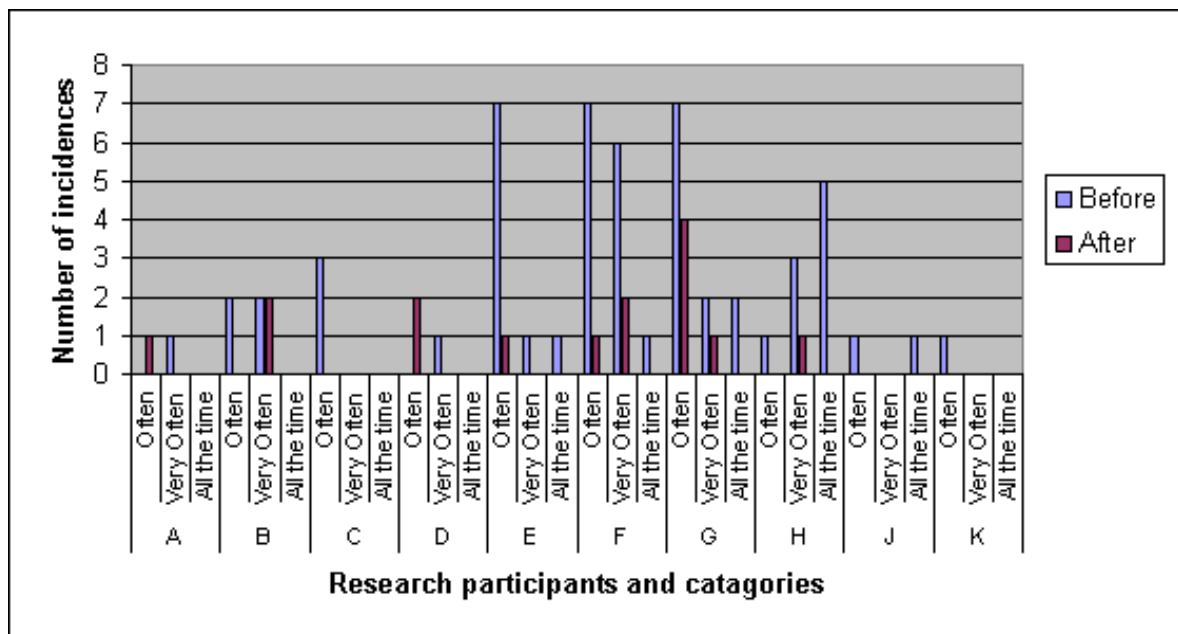


Participants C, D and K experienced no high incidences of behavioural career-related stress symptoms at the end of the intervention period. A experienced a higher incidence

of stress symptoms ‘often’, but none ‘very often’. Participants E, F and G who displayed a very high incidence of behavioural career-related stress symptoms before the workshop, showed a lower incidence of behavioural career-related stress symptoms after three months.

The functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress (Chapter 5), with the principles of awareness, dialogue and process at the core (Chapter 3) was thus successful in lowering the incidence of behavioural career-related stress symptoms experienced by the participants, which would ultimately result in the regaining of homeostasis.

Figure 6:8 Comparison between the emotional career-related stress symptoms experienced by the research participants before the commencement of the therapeutic intervention, and three months later

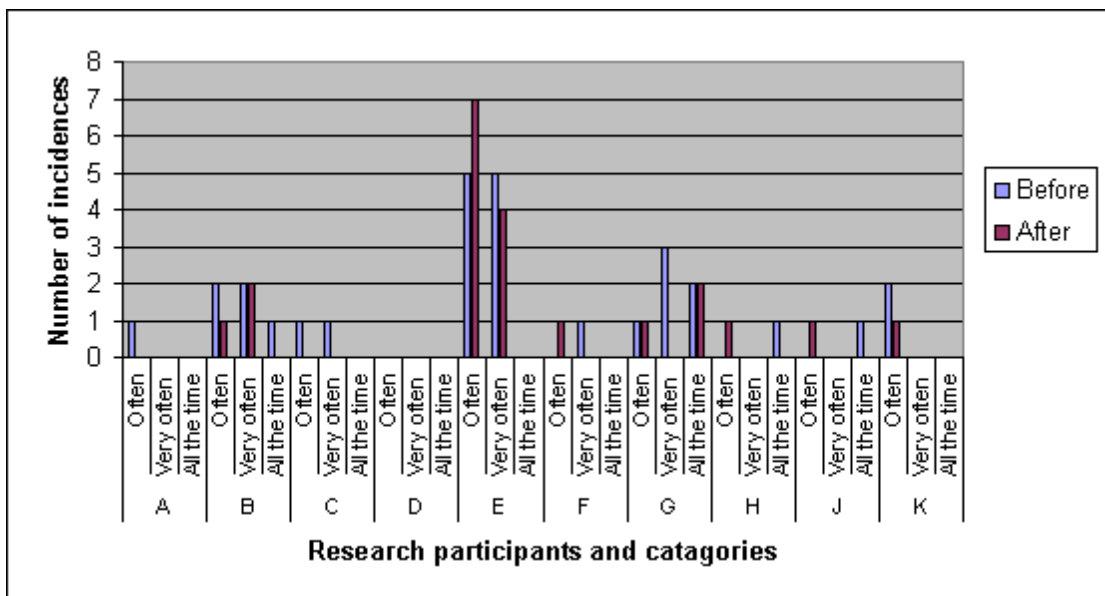


Participants C, J and K experienced no high incidences of emotional career-related stress symptoms at the end of the intervention period. D experienced a higher incidence of

stress symptoms ‘often’, but none ‘very often’. Participants E, F and G, who displayed very high incidences of emotional career-related stress symptoms before the workshop, showed a significantly lower incidence of emotional career-related stress symptoms after three months. All the participants showed a lower incidence of emotional career-related stress symptoms.

The functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress (Chapter 5), with the principles of awareness, dialogue and process at the core (Chapter 3) has had a large impact on the incidence of emotional career-related stress symptoms experienced by the participants. The impact of the Gestalt therapeutic programme on the incidence of emotional stress symptoms experienced by the participants was greater than the impact thereof on their experienced incidence of behavioural career-related stress symptoms. Improved self-concepts, the assimilation of organismic self-regulation and the resolving of past issues had a great impact on the lowering of the emotional career-related stress levels experienced by the participants.

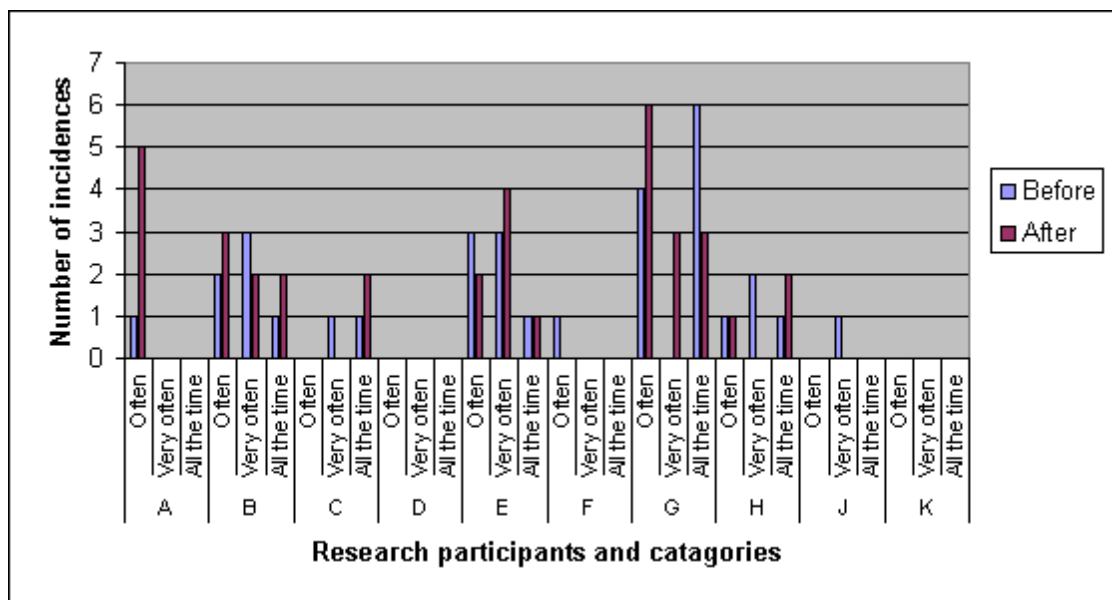
Fig.6:9 Comparison between the cognitive career-related stress symptoms experienced by the research participants before the commencement of the therapeutic intervention, and three months later



Participants A, C and D experienced no high incidences of cognitive career-related stress symptoms at the end of the intervention period. E experienced a higher incidence of stress symptoms ‘often’ and one less experienced ‘very often’. ‘Often’ was after three months the highest incidence experienced by F and J and although G still experienced the same number of cognitive career-related incidences of stress symptoms ‘often’ and ‘very often’ after three months, no stress symptoms were experienced ‘very often’. All the participants, with the exclusion of E, showed a lower incidence of cognitive career-related stress symptoms.

The functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model (Chapter 5), with the principles of awareness, dialogue and process at the core (Chapter 3) was thus successful in lowering the incidence of cognitive career-related stress symptoms of the participants.

Figure 6:10 Comparison between the physical career-related stress symptoms experienced by the research participants before the commencement of the therapeutic intervention and three months later



Participants D, F, J and K experienced no high incidences of physical career-related stress symptoms at the end of the intervention period. Participant G experienced a lower incidence of physical career-related stress symptoms, whereas participants A, B, C, E and H experienced a higher incidence of physical career-related stress symptoms after three months. F, J and H thus experienced a lower incidence of physical career-related stress symptoms after three months.

The functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model (Chapter 5), with the principles of awareness, dialogue and process at the core (Chapter 3), was thus successful in lowering the incidence of physical career-related stress symptoms experienced by the participants.

In comparing the four histograms (Fig. 6:7- 6:10) the conclusion can be reached that, although, the incidence of all career-related stress symptoms were, in general, either lowered or eradicated, the Gestalt therapeutic programme has had the greatest impact on the incidence of emotional and behavioural career-related stress symptoms experienced by the participants.

6.4.1.1.9 Evaluation

Based on the structured interviews with the research participants, as well as the results of the measuring instrument determining the degree to which they experienced career-related stress symptoms, it was clear that the functional Gestalt therapeutic intervention programme based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress in their quest to regain homeostasis, had been successful.

All participants had experienced an increased awareness of self, the environment and the people in the environment, which had lead to the regaining of homeostasis and an improved quality of life. This regained awareness had had a positive effect on their communication and contact with the environment, which reduced the stress they had

experienced. The participants reached self-regulation to a large degree, acknowledging and answering to their dominant needs.

The researcher is of the opinion that a low or negative self-concept had played a decisive role in the stress levels experienced by teachers. Through the therapeutic intervention the participants came to the realisation that there were two poles to the personality and emotions of people and they re-owned the disowned parts of the self to a large extent. The awareness of polarities had made them aware of the polarities in others' personalities and emotions, which changed their approach towards learners and lowered their stress.

The participants, who, prior to the Gestalt therapeutic intervention, had received other formal therapeutic intervention approaches, indicated that they experienced the Gestalt therapeutic approach as more successful, because of the experimental nature of the Gestalt therapeutic approach in the here-and-now.

The checklist, which the participants had received as a self-monitoring and reinforcement instrument, had proved to be successful and a requirement for the sustained implementation and eventual assimilation of the Gestalt therapeutic skills, based on the Gestalt therapeutic principles of awareness, dialogue and process.

The quantitative data collected supported the results obtained through the qualitative data collected. From the histograms it was deducted that the functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model had been successful. Although there was less evidence of a lower incidence of physical career-related stress symptoms experienced by the participants, they had experienced a significantly lower incidence of behavioural and cognitive and especially emotional career-related stress symptoms after three months.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data therefore indicated that the functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model had

been successful in addressing the career-related stress experienced by teachers, resulting in the ongoing regaining of homeostasis.

After the implementation of the first workshop the researcher conducted a second workshop with five more participants. The rationale for the second workshop will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

6.4.1.2 Workshop 2 (*Step 12*)

6.4.1.2.1 Rationale for second workshop

The researcher had refined the original prototype programme based on the Gestalt therapeutic model, designed in Chapter 5, before it was presented to the second group. The researcher implemented the second workshop to determine the following:

- The outcome of the research with teacher participants who did not suffer from major and obvious unresolved issues, thus unfinished business, impeding their growth and their regaining of homeostasis.
- The outcome of the research with the workshop conducted over two weekday afternoons instead of a Friday and Saturday.
- The outcome of the research, without the reinforcement of a reinforcement session and group interviews, as well as semi-structured interviews, to assist the participants to focus on the implementation and assimilation of the Gestalt principles.
- The outcome of the research with the participants receiving the checklist as a self-monitoring and reinforcement instrument immediately after the workshop, instead of a reinforcement session and semi-structured interviews with each.

The participants had received the applicable information pamphlet (Annexure B) and completed the forms of consent (Annexure E) and the confidentiality agreement (Annexure F) beforehand. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the empirical research study on completion of the required withdrawal form (Annexure G).

They received a confidentiality agreement from the researcher (Annexure H). On completion of the necessary documentation they received and completed the self-constructed index measuring their experienced stress-related symptoms and therapeutic intervention required and coping strategies applied (Annexure I).

The same observational system used with the first group was applied, and the same independent observer was part of the observational system.

Because of the time constraints experienced by teachers, the second workshop was conducted over two weekday afternoons, after school, instead of over a weekend. The same programme used during the first workshop was followed.

6.4.1.2.2 Participants

The therapeutic group consisted of one black Xhosa-speaking male 39 years old, one black Zulu-speaking female 31 years old, one English-speaking Coloured male 28 years old and two white Afrikaans-speaking females, 31 and 50 years old respectively. Three of the participants were teaching between 6 and 10 years, and two between 11 and 20 years. All teaching was experienced at secondary school level.

The participants experienced similar stress-related symptoms as those in the first group. Of the five participants only one had acquired formal therapeutic intervention and all of them applied coping strategies which were successful to a greater or lesser degree.

6.4.1.2.3 Evaluation of the second workshop

Although the second workshop, conducted over two weekday afternoons, proved to be beneficial to the participants, the researcher was of the opinion that the relaxed atmosphere over a Friday and Saturday was more conducive to the therapeutic relationship and thus the therapeutic outcome of the workshop as such.

Based on the answers received on the open-ended questionnaire completed seven days after the workshop, it became clear that the brevity of the second workshop left two of the participants in further need of therapeutic intervention, because of personal issues which had not been addressed during the workshop. It is the opinion of the researcher that these issues could have been addressed within a longer workshop, without the participants acquiring further therapeutic intervention. What was clear, though, was that the personal issues were not as much on the two participants' foreground as the career-related stress experienced. The career-related stress could thus be addressed without first addressing the unresolved personal issues of the participants.

The structured interviews held with the participants of the second workshop, as well as the outcome of the self-constructed index (Annexure Q) indicated that the absence of the semi-structured interviews and the reinforcement group interview session, as part of the therapeutic intervention, did not impact negatively on the outcome of the therapeutic intervention because of the reinforcement received through the checklist.

6.4.2 THE FEASIBILITY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS IMPLEMENTING THE GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMME (*Step 13*)

Three school management team members participated in the first workshop. Their participation had a dual purpose. The first purpose was to receive therapeutic intervention as part of the empirical research study, and the second purpose was to evaluate the feasibility of a school management team member conducting the Gestalt therapeutic programme as a first line of intervention. It is important to note that the school management team members did not possess prior knowledge of Gestalt therapy in general or the therapeutic process model in particular. Semi-structured and informal interviews were conducted to determine the above.

The three participants, referred to in the research report as participants A, B and C, included one male deputy principal and two female heads of department. The three participants indicated that they would be able to conduct the Gestalt therapeutic

intervention as a first line of intervention after having received a little more training. Two of the participants were very eager to present the programme, and one of them indicated that she would feel more comfortable when a person with a psychology background was present at the workshop.

The two school management team members who indicated they were ready to present the programme, without having received any further training, would do so with the understanding that they could refer teachers to psychiatrists, psychologists or therapists should the need arise.

The school management team member who did not indicate eagerness to present the programme indicated that the approach was, because of the experimental nature of the Gestalt therapeutic approach, too physical and required more energy than what she could muster. This participant was also the assistant school counsellor with an honours degree in psychology. The researcher needed to point out, though, that in spite of the participant's reluctance to attempt such a, in her opinion, high energy approach, she favoured the outcomes of the Gestalt approach.

Based on the outcome of the semi-structured and informal interviews with the school management team members, the feasibility of training school management team members to present the Gestalt therapeutic programme, as first line of intervention, was clear.

6.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In Chapter 6 the empirical process, as part of the early development and pilot testing phase, was described and discussed.

The literature research regarding the primary and secondary factors causing teacher stress and the consequences thereof (Chapter 2), national and international stress management strategies and stress management programmes (Chapter 4) and the Gestalt therapeutic approach (Chapter 3), formed the foundation for the design and development of the

theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress in their quest to regain homeostasis (Chapter 5). The functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the said process model, was presented as a pilot study and after refining, presented during a second workshop. Developmental, measuring and monitoring instruments were developed and implemented. The programme was evaluated for its effectiveness. The process of intervention research was followed. A combined dominant less dominant qualitative and quantitative research approach was implemented, with quantitative data supporting selected qualitative data.

The programme based on the Gestalt therapeutic model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, in their quest to regain homeostasis, proved to be successful. All participants experienced growth towards maturity and self-support, which is the ultimate aim of Gestalt therapy and which would result in the ongoing process of regaining homeostasis.

The Gestalt therapeutic programme based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model will be prepared for dissemination, after the completion of this empirical research study.

In the evaluation phase, Phase 5, of the research study, a general summary, conclusions and recommendations will be presented as Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

PHASE 5: EVALUATION

GENERAL SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The content of the research report is as follows: In Chapter 1 (phase 1) the research process was explained using the process of intervention research. Included in Chapter 1 were the motivation for the choice of the research subject, the formulation of the research problem, the aims and objectives of the research, as well as the research question and hypothesis for the research.

In Chapter 2 (phase 2) the factors causing the career-related stress experienced by teachers, as well as the consequences thereof, were discussed. This discussion was necessitated by the large number of South African teachers suffering from career-related stress, detrimental to the teachers themselves, the learners and education at large.

In Chapter 3 (phase 2) the Gestalt therapeutic approach, based on the principles of awareness, dialogue and process, was discussed. The aim of this chapter was to investigate the Gestalt therapeutic approach, as a therapeutic approach to empower teachers suffering from career-related stress, to regain homeostasis.

In Chapter 4 (phase 2) existing international and South African stress-management programmes and coping strategies, for teachers suffering from career-related stress, were attended to.

In Chapter 5 (phase 3) a theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model, based on the Gestalt therapeutic principles of awareness, dialogue and process, was designed.

Chapter 6 (phase 4) contains the empirical research. During the empirical research the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model was developed, presented as a functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, evaluated and discussed. Both the qualitative and the quantitative data collected during the research were discussed in full.

Chapter 7 (phase 5) includes a general summary and conclusions of the previous chapters, as well as the testing of the achievement of the aims and objectives, the research question and the hypothesis of the research. This is followed by recommendations based on the literature research, the research process and recommendations to the Department of Education. In conclusion recommendations for further research are made.

7.2 CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

7.2.1 SUMMARY

The need for a therapeutic programme addressing the career-related stress of teachers was discussed. Teachers in South Africa experience strain and tension unique to their specific work description. The problem was formulated in terms of the high incidence of career-related stress symptoms experienced by South African teachers, the inadequate results of existing programmes and coping strategies, as well as the inaccessibility of these programmes and coping strategies for the majority of the South African teaching corps.

The aim and objectives of the research was the design and development of a Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, to regain homeostasis, the implementation and evaluation of the process model, and determining the feasibility of school management team members implementing the said process model, in their respective schools.

The research question was stated as: Which components of a Gestalt therapeutic process model will be most applicable in assisting the teacher suffering from career-related stress to regain homeostasis?

The hypotheses formulated for this study was: Teachers suffering from career-related stress, who were exposed to a Gestalt therapeutic process model, will experience lower stress levels

A combined dominant less dominant qualitative and quantitative approach was implemented. The implementation of the quantitative approach was minimal and only supportive of the qualitative approach. Intervention research, as a form of applied research, was used for the research. Intervention research includes the design, development and implementation of an intervention model, as well as the evaluation of the effectiveness thereof.

The process model was designed based on relevant knowledge and sources of knowledge, including those of the researcher who has been involved in education for the past thirty years. A functional programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model, was developed and presented as a pilot test. Data was collected on a continuous basis, through an observational system, which included the researcher, an independent observer and the research participants. The programme was refined accordingly.

The research participants were selected according to non-probability sampling. The first group of ten participants was selected through purposive sampling and after the refining of the process model a second group of five participants was selected through theoretical sampling to gain more precise information about specific matters. The participants were representative of the majority of the South African teaching fraternity, namely Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Indians.

Data was collected from the research participants throughout the empirical research. Quantitative data was collected before the commencement of the therapeutic intervention

and again three months after the initial intervention workshop. A measuring instrument based on the literature study in Chapters 2 and 4 was developed for this purpose.

Qualitative data was collected:

- during the intervention workshop,
- seven days after the therapeutic intervention through an open-ended questionnaire based on the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process,
- two weeks after the intervention workshop during group interviews which served as a reinforcement session,
- one month after the workshop during semi-structured interviews
- at the end of the three month research programme in the form of structured interviews and the checklist, which served as self-monitoring instrument, and
- through informal and semi-formal interviews with the members of the school management team, who participated in the research programme, to determine the feasibility of a member of a school management team implementing the Gestalt therapeutic process model at their respective schools.

7.2.1 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the general orientation and background of the research study the following conclusions were reached:

- The use of both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches contributed to the different ways in which the research results could be confirmed. These confirmed research results could thus ultimately be integrated and were reflected as such. The combined approach increased the trustworthiness, reliability and validity of the research results.
- Non-probability sampling was ideal for the empirical research study, because of the emphasis on the qualitative research approach. Purposive sampling was used because the cases chosen illustrated features of interest for the particular empirical research study. In the refining process the researcher used theoretical sampling to

study specific matters in order to obtain information which would cast further light on the developing theory.

- The sample group was small, but the intervention indicated significant positive results. Growth towards maturity and self-support, which would ultimately lead to the regaining of homeostasis, was evident throughout the research process. The total number of participants was fifteen.
- The process model is suitable for all cultural groups and generalisations, in the South African context, can thus be made.

7.3 CHAPTER 2: CAREER-RELATED STRESS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS

7.3.1 SUMMARY

All teachers experience stress to some degree, which should not be seen as an essential inadequacy of the teacher. The present nature of teaching, the changes currently occurring in education, as well as the changed attitude of society at large towards teachers, triggers the stress experienced by teachers. Not only the individual teacher suffers the negative consequences of stress, but also the learners, education at large and ultimately the country.

Teacher stress is caused by primary, secondary and personality factors. Primary factors are those directly related to the day-to-day activities in the classroom. Secondary factors are brought on by forces in the society about which the teacher can do little. Personality factors are added as stress factors because teachers who, for example, suffer a low self-esteem, who tend to be depressed and those lacking in commitment, are more susceptible to stress than others. Primary, secondary and personality factors are interrelated, although discussed separately.

Primary factors directly affect the day-to-day activities in the classroom, thus limit the success of teaching causing tension. Primary factors include learner indiscipline and classroom management, school violence, bullying, teacher workload, the role ambiguity of teachers, inclusive education, educational policies and change, the education department's relationship with teachers, school organisation and fiscal factors.

Secondary factors contributing to teacher stress are more disconcerting and give more rise to feelings of helplessness, because they are brought about by forces in the society about which teachers can do little. Secondary factors which bear an impact on teacher stress are socio-economic factors, including cultural and religious diversity, the declining status of teachers, the training received by prospective teachers, as well as the impact of the mass media on teaching and teachers.

All teachers are exposed to a large number of primary and secondary stressors, yet not all teachers experience the same high levels of stress. The answer to this is located in the resilience and the individual coping skills and processes of each individual teacher. Teachers' stress is determined by their perception of situations and the degree to which they feel they have control over their lives. Teachers with a higher self-esteem and who feel professionally adequate are, for example, less prone to stress than teachers who have a tendency to be depressed.

Teachers, learners and education at large suffer the deleterious consequences of teacher stress. Career-related stress has an effect on the teachers' physical, behavioural, emotional and cognitive well-being, resulting in teacher absenteeism and attrition or in unmotivated and disinterested teachers. Stressed teachers contribute little to the learners' growth and development, academic or otherwise. High teacher turn-over and teacher absenteeism lead to disruptions to the academic year. According to Balt, Chairperson of NAPTOSA there is a shortage of 20 000 teachers in South Africa (The News, 2006) and although difficult to quantify, teacher attrition, turn-over and absenteeism may have long term effects on the economy of the country and the quality of its citizens.

7.3.2 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were reached on account of the investigation of the factors causing the career-related stress of teachers and the consequences thereof:

- An intervention model to empower teachers to cope with career-related stress preventing teacher burnout, absenteeism and attrition must be developed.
- The large number and variety of stress factors necessitates an approach, which will contribute to the growth of the teacher towards maturity and self-support, ultimately resulting in the regaining of homeostasis.
- Learner indiscipline acquires a stress-management model for teachers, which will empower them to remain calm in the face of adversity.
- Learners who do not do their homework and/or study for tests and exams are indicated as a big stressor. A therapeutic model should lead the teacher to understand the one-sided relationship between teachers and learners, where the teacher gives all the time, without learners giving back in return.
- Primary factors causing teacher stress are, to a large extent, also caused by forces in the society, about which the teachers can do little, and therefore the need to empower teachers as individuals.
- With role ambiguity and inclusive education in mind, teachers should develop healthy boundaries to prevent confluence and answering to unreasonable demands made upon them.
- The workload of teachers will not diminish and teachers should, through a stress management model, be assisted to learn how to self-regulate, thus answering to their dominant needs.

- Teachers need to be brought to the realisation that they have a choice as to how they will react to certain situations and policies.
- Change leads to growth and teachers should embrace necessary change in order to grow as individuals.
- To achieve sound and less stressful relationships with colleagues and all other partners concerned in education, a model addressing teacher stress should include the characteristics and development of dialogic relationships.
- Teachers need to choose what is nourishing from their environments and should realise that although they might be in a school environment which is not of their choosing, because of, for example, its poor organisation, they cannot choose not to relate to it at all.
- Learners entering schools are from diverse ethnic groups, represent different languages, cultures and religions and are from different economic backgrounds. The above contributes to the career-related stress experienced by teachers. A therapeutic model should thus be developed which would empower teachers to see each individual as a unique and authentic human being. This will result in honest communication between teacher and learner.
- Teachers should re-own their disowned characteristics, thus developing a healthy self-concept, which would empower them to perceive themselves as a valuable part of the society where they have lost their status as academics.
- The mass media is a powerful stress factor and teachers should, through a therapeutic model, be brought to the awareness that some things in the environment are toxic and others nourishing, and that they should choose which they want to affect their lives.

- A low self-concept is detrimental to the stress-levels experienced by teachers. Through a therapeutic model, teachers should be made aware of the dichotomy in all personalities and emotions. They must be assisted to become aware of the different polarities in their personalities and re-own their disowned characteristics.
- Learners and education at large are suffering the negative consequences of teacher stress. A therapeutic model addressing the career-related stress experienced by teachers and assisting them to regain homeostasis, will be to the advantage of the learners, education at large and ultimately the country.

7.4 CHAPTER 3: THE GESTALT THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

7.4.1 SUMMARY

The ultimate aim of the Gestalt therapy is the growth of the individual, which will result in maturity and self-responsibility and ultimately in self-support, instead of environmental support. The achievement of the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process, will ultimately result in the regaining of homeostasis.

The German word ‘gestalt’ means a whole or a complete pattern, form or configuration, which cannot be broken without destroying its nature. We make patterns or wholes of our experience, we thus have a spontaneous urge to complete, or make meaning out of perceptual stimuli. Individuals organise their world, or environment, and their experiences, into meaningful wholes and they experience the need to complete or make meaning of their emotional life and see it against the background of the rest of their environment.

Gestalt therapy regards psychotherapy as a means of increasing human potential, attempts the non-manipulative observation of the *here-and-now* and stresses the importance of *awareness*. The criterion for success is thus the individual’s own awareness of heightened

vitality and more effective functioning. Gestalt therapy is further a theory of behaviour, based on the holistic epistemology and the present. The holistic understanding of human beings brings the functioning of their physical body, emotions, thoughts, culture and social expressions into a unified picture. This leads to the Gestalt principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

With awareness, individuals can mobilise their action so that the environmental stimulus can be contacted and either be rejected or assimilated. When awareness does not develop into a clear gestalt with a figure and a background, or when impulses are not expressed, incomplete “gestalten” are formed and psychopathology may develop. When individuals lose their awareness they lose the sense that it is they who are thinking, sensing, feeling and doing. The intention of increased awareness is to confront people with the full responsibility for their behaviour, to increase authentic self-expression and to minimise self-deceptive, evasive, self-frustrating and meaningless behaviour.

Along with awareness, dialogue is seen as the primary therapeutic tool in Gestalt therapy. Dialogue refers to contact between the individual and another person or the environment. Gestalt therapy proposes a dialogical relationship between two individuals, resulting in an I-Thou relationship. An I-Thou relationship between two individuals means that they are fully in the present, willing to meet each other honestly and to be aware of thoughts, feelings and behaviours which are developing in response.

The Gestalt process with field theory emphasises that nothing exists in isolation. Everything has a context or field within which it exists. To understand something we must look at the situation holistically. In the healthy individual, a configuration or gestalt is formed with the organising figure being the dominant need, thus being in the foreground. The individual meets this need by contacting the environment with some sensory-motor behaviour. The contact is organised by the figure of interest against the background of the individual/environment. As soon as the need is met, the “gestalten” it formed become complete, cease to exert an influence and the individual is free to form new “gestalten”. This developing and destroying of “gestalten” is called *organismic self-*

regulation. In the dynamic South African culture the Gestalt principle of process is emphasised along with awareness and dialogue. The process principle includes the acknowledgement of, and answering to, dominant needs resulting in self-regulation. Process further extends to the acknowledgement of the dichotomy of personalities and emotions. The counterparts of the personality are balanced poles. The aim of Gestalt therapy is to bring these polarities into awareness. The re-owning of disowned characteristics is necessary before change, resulting in growth, can occur.

7.4.2 CONCLUSIONS

- Regaining homeostasis is challenging, because a large number of individuals have lost touch with large areas of awareness, as a result of the “blocking out” of naturally arising awareness and self-other relationships, and replaced it with a sense of how they think they ought to be, feel or act, therefore having created fixed gestalts within themselves. Individuals should thus be brought to awareness in the here-and-now, the zones of awareness and the influence of the middle zone of awareness on the inner and outer zones of awareness, self-awareness and an awareness of their environmental field. Regaining awareness can be curative in itself.
- Authentic contact results in a dialogic relationship and indicates something that is done and not only talked about. In the dialogic relationship individuals bring their own emotional, cognitive and physical resources to the contact boundary, where they are met by the “otherness”, bringing their resources, and a co-creation occurs. Dialogue is present-centred, confirms the legitimacy of the other person and indicates open communication resulting in an I-Thou relationship. The contact boundary between the self and the environment must be kept permeable, but not defuse and individuals must be aware that modifications can occur at the contact boundary which can be either nurturing or toxic.

- Gestalt formation is a total organismic act and individuals must be aware of and use all their faculties, namely cognitive, emotional and physical. They must also be aware that they choose what will be the controlling figure in their environmental field. This is organismic self-regulation where a need becomes figure, is satisfied, becomes ground, and another need becomes figure. Homeostasis is reached when the dominant need is met, but it does not mean that the individual is going to experience permanent balance. Homeostasis is what is aimed for in the self-regulatory process, but homeostasis is continually disturbed by another aware-need which requires gratification. If a need cannot be met immediately, closure can be achieved by acknowledging the unfulfilled need and expressing the emotions evoked by the impossibility of satisfying such a need.
- The uniqueness of every person in a relationship must be recognised. This goes hand-in-hand with the development of a healthy self-concept. Confirmation and validation of the individual is thus of prime importance. It is also important for individuals to recognise and move between the polar opposites of their personalities and feelings. In this way they will grow as individuals. Individuals must re-own the polar opposites of their personalities, before growth can occur. As far as polar opposites are concerned, individuals should be made aware of the top-dog/under-dog dichotomy within themselves. In this dichotomy the ‘top-dog’ represents what ‘should’ be done, and the ‘under-dog’ what you want to do. These poles need to be brought into awareness to prevent unresolved inner conflict.
- Individuals, who are dependent on environmental support, need to grow towards maturity and self-responsibility in order to realise that they determine their own behaviour and that they must take responsibility for their choices.
- South Africans live in a pluralistic, multifaceted, changing environment in a country with apparent socio-economic and political dynamics. This demands flexibility and movement with the times, thus experiencing in the present, whilst retaining some individual stability.

7.5 CHAPTER 4: PRESENT COPING STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS

7.5.1 SUMMARY

Teachers use both problem- and emotion-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused strategies are aimed at modifying or eliminating the problem, while emotion-focused strategies are those which manage the emotional consequences of the stressor and are used in situations they consider to be unchangeable. Over and above the coping strategies recommended by researchers, stress-management programmes are also developed internationally and nationally.

Problem-focused stress management strategies, involving direct actions aimed at changing or preventing negative emotions, include: attitude adjustment, assertiveness training, an awareness of stress, cognitive and problem-solving strategies, nutrition, various programmes for teachers at all levels, meaningful work and organisational changes.

Emotion-focused stress management strategies, also referred to as palliative strategies, aim to provide stress relief and indirectly to treat burnout. There are a large number of emotion focused strategies, which are usually implemented when a person perceives the stressful situation as unchangeable. Many of these strategies are also implemented along with problem-focused strategies often resulting in a more holistic approach to stress management. Emotion-focused strategies include strategies such as deep breathing, relaxation, hobbies, physical activities, meditation, self-nurturing, involvement in relationships in and out of school, support from significant others and colleagues, religious activities and self-esteem enhancement.

Much, with regard to stress management programmes for teachers has been written about, by international researchers. These programmes are either emotion- or problem-focused or a combination of the two. There are only slight variations between some of the

programmes, therefore only those which were obviously different to the others were discussed.

Very little South African research regarding coping strategies for teachers suffering from career-related stress has been published. Those published were similar international research and stress management approaches.

7.5.2 CONCLUSIONS

- Much of the literature on teacher stress concentrates on the stress-producing aspects inherent in the bureaucratic structure under which teachers work. Most stress management programmes do not address this domain, but focus on reducing the reactivity of teachers to environmental stressors. This form of intervention is cheaper than restructuring the work environment, much easier to teach and is available to teachers for use at any time.
- The separate strategies recommended by the various researchers have one universal shortcoming, namely their eclectic nature. This eclectic approach, ignoring the teacher as a holistic being, is proof that there is a need for the development of a holistic model assisting the teacher in regaining homeostasis.
- A large number of the coping strategies recommended, can be part of a Gestalt therapeutic process model, but must be part of a holistic approach, with a firm theoretical base. These coping strategies include breathing, physical activities, nutrition, adequate sleep and relaxation techniques, stress awareness, attitude adjustment, emotive insight, healthy environmental support and healthy relationships.
- International stress-management programmes, with approaches different to the general coping strategies recommended are: Claire Hayes' coping triangle emphasising the impact of thoughts, based on the teachers' core believes, feelings

and actions, Chris Kyriacou's stress busting for teachers from a general perspective, Dennis Lawrence's rational emotive therapy, S.H. Mill's stress proofing through lifestyle and Michael Papworth's ARC approach. Although these stress-management programmes are in tangent with some of the Gestalt principles, they are neither present-centred, nor holistic, and do not address awareness, dialogue and process as interrelated.

- There are very few South African stress-management approaches or coping strategies. South African stress-management programmes rely heavily on international research and programmes. Jay, Whitelaw and Motseke do contribute towards the addressing of teachers stress although they are not original in the international sense and lack a firm theoretical foundation. Noteworthy statements made by Motseke, different to the other researchers, are that models for stress should consider the differences between the African and the Western cultures, that principals and heads of department should be equipped with skills to monitor the stress levels of teachers and to do referrals and the establishment of support groups or clubs, where stress could be addressed.
- The Gauteng Department of Education's employee wellness programme is aimed at educating teachers to make healthy lifestyle choices. This programme's emphasis is on management aspects and not on coping strategies or addressing the root causes of the career-related stress experienced by the teachers.

7.6 CHAPTER 5: THE GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS MODEL FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS TO REGAIN HOMEOSTASIS

7.6.1 SUMMARY

The core elements of the research were teachers experiencing career-related stress and how they could regain homeostasis through a Gestalt therapeutic process model. Through the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process teachers would be empowered to become aware of themselves and their environment, to develop dialogic relationships with self and the environment, resulting in personal growth and the awareness of dominant needs leading to organismic self-regulation. The ultimate aim of the Gestalt therapy and thus this theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model is to achieve maturity, self-responsibility and self-support.

Because of time and financial constraints this Gestalt therapeutic process model has been designed to be implemented within the school environment by a trained member of the school management team. Over and above the functional Gestalt therapeutic programme developed, as part of the empirical research, a basic training programme, based on the designed theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model, has been developed for school management team members, not versed in the Gestalt therapy, to implement as a first line of intervention. The aim of this research was not the development of Gestalt programmes and the said programmes were therefore not included in the research report. Teachers in need of further therapeutic intervention as a result of, for example, unfinished business or unhealthy modifications at the contact boundary, identified during the first line of intervention, should be referred to a qualified therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist.

The information acquired from the knowledge base has been converted into workable design concepts. Descriptive generalisation, therefore, became prescriptive intervention. The information was reworked into action constructs which, through design, were formulated into more specific situational intervention concepts.

The general Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process has been reworked into prescriptive statements to help teachers suffering from career-related stress, in regaining homeostasis. At the end of each concept taught the researcher gave a summary of the intervention expected from the therapist, called *intervention strategy* and the skills towards regaining homeostasis achieved by the teacher, called *skills learned*.

7.6.2 CONCLUSIONS

- The researcher was not aware of any Gestalt therapeutic process models to assist teachers suffering from career-related stress in regaining homeostasis. The information retrieved was therefore contextually converted. The designed process model was innovative because, although, the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process do exist, it had to be adapted to suit the context within which the model has been developed. The theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model aimed at the regaining of homeostasis for teachers is thus innovative.
- Intervention research is a form of applied research. The researcher therefore adapted the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process to design a model addressing the stress experienced by teachers. Because applied research is practical the researcher conducted the research with the intention that of being useful.

7.7 CHAPTER 6: EMPIRICAL STUDY

7.7.1 SUMMARY

The information base for the development of the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model was the literature study done in phase two of the research process. Phase two included a literature study of the factors causing the career-related stress experienced by teachers and the consequences of the said stress, the Gestalt therapeutic approach and existing coping strategies and existing coping strategies and stress management programmes for teachers suffering from career-related stress. The theoretical process model was presented as a pilot study (phase 4), refined and presented to a second group of teachers. The effectiveness of the process model, as well as the feasibility of trained school management team members implementing the process model, was evaluated. The process of intervention research, and a combined qualitative/quantitative approach was followed. The quantitative approach was less dominant and only in support of the results of selected qualitative data.

Phase 4 of the research was the pilot testing. The first aim of the pilot testing was to determine whether the process model, as an intervention design, could be implemented successfully within the school environment to eradicate or lower the career-related stress experienced by teachers. The second aim was to determine the feasibility of school management team members implementing the therapeutic programme, based on the Gestalt therapeutic process model, as a first line of intervention, after receiving basic training.

A functional programme, based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, to assist them in regaining homeostasis, was developed, implemented as a pilot test within a school environment, refined, implemented in one more workshop as verification of the outcome of the first pilot test, and evaluated, according to design criteria. The prototype was based on the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process.

Workshops within the school environment were conducted with teacher participants. Group and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants of the first workshop to refine the programme and to determine their growth towards maturity and self-support. The research programme was concluded with structured interviews with the participants of both the first and second workshops.

Informal and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the school management team members, who attended the first workshop, to determine the feasibility of school management team members implementing the Gestalt therapeutic process model as a first line of intervention.

Participants were requested to complete a self-constructed index as measuring instrument, indicating age, years in teaching, the degree to which they experienced stress related symptoms, as well as previous therapeutic intervention received and coping strategies applied before the workshops commenced. Participants were requested to complete a questionnaire indicating to what degree they have benefited from the workshop, seven days after the initial workshop.

As a developmental instrument, the researcher developed a checklist, based on the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process. The need for such a reinforcement and self-monitoring instrument was evident from the outcome of the questionnaire, completed by the participants in the first workshop seven days after the initial two-day workshop, as well as the group interview as reinforcement.

As part of the termination process, the participants of both the workshops were requested to complete a self-constructed index, as a quantitative measuring instrument. This self-constructed index was the same as Section A of the measuring instrument completed before the therapeutic programme commenced. The data on the two self-constructed indexes was compared to determine whether and/or to what degree, the career-related stress-symptoms of the participants have been eradicated or lowered.

7.7.2 CONCLUSIONS

- The teacher participants wished to participate in the intervention programme because they experienced the need to regain homeostasis.
- The therapeutic intervention was accessible to them, because it was done within the school environment.
- The teacher participants were all from the same school and therefore felt comfortable within a group therapeutic context, because a relationship had already been established between them.
- The researcher was from the same school and, therefore, a relationship between the participants and the therapist already existed. It was, therefore, not necessary to first establish a relationship with the participants, which would have required extra time during the therapeutic intervention.
- A relationship already exists between a member of the school management team and the teachers at a particular school, and therapy could start without allowing time to build a relationship
- A therapeutic model implemented by a trained member of a school management team, at the school would make it financially viable for the teachers.
- Teachers would be more relaxed, and there would be fewer distractions, if the intervention programme was conducted during a Friday afternoon and a Saturday.
- The use of experiments involved the participants fully and they found it more beneficial than just talking about their stress.

- Although a functional programme does exist, the therapist must be led by the participants, which is part of the experimental nature of Gestalt therapy.
- Although the Gestalt therapeutic process model is based on the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process, all three principles are interrelated and must be addressed as such, during the therapeutic intervention.
- Participants were representative of the majority of the South African teaching corps, namely Black, White, Coloured and Indian. The Gestalt therapeutic process model could thus be implemented, without any changes to make it compatible to local customs and values. The participants were also representative regarding age and gender. Participants of different age groups, gender and race could successfully attend a therapeutic workshop together.
- Although all the participants were involved in secondary school teaching at the time of the intervention, four had been involved in primary school education before being employed at a secondary school. The process model is thus applicable to both primary and secondary school teachers.
- A large number of the participants had experienced formal therapeutic intervention before the Gestalt therapeutic intervention and found it wanting. All the participants had applied coping strategies which were successful to a more or lesser degree.
- The teacher participants had found it difficult to acknowledge their stress related symptoms, and although they might have been aware of being stressed, they did not realise the degree to which they had experienced the stress-related symptoms. It is thus important that teachers should become aware of their stress in order to address it.

- Although the participants were initially wary of the therapeutic intervention, they found the Gestalt approach to be non-threatening.
- The explanation of the Gestalt terminology, as well as the aim and interrelatedness of the Gestalt principles before the workshop commenced had made it easier for the participants to grasp the concepts.
- Teachers with unresolved issues (unfinished business) experienced higher stress levels than other teachers. These teachers first needed to address the unresolved issues, which were on their foreground, before they could address their career-related stress. Teachers without unresolved issues could address their career-related stress immediately. Teachers with unresolved issues, which were not figure, could first address the career-related stress and then requested the addressing of their unresolved personal issues.
- Resistance and avoidance could be experienced from teachers with unresolved issues.
- Teachers suffer from unfounded, inadequate self-concepts and had found it difficult to re-own the disowned polarities of their personalities. Through the therapeutic intervention, they have come to accept some of their disowned characteristics, although it would take longer than three months to change a self-concept.
- The participants have grown in awareness of the dichotomy in personalities and emotions of self and others, resulting in improved communication with learners and behaviour towards learners.
- Teachers do not satisfy their non-school-related dominant needs. They tend to perceive schoolwork as their dominant need. At the end of the three month intervention programme, the teachers became more aware of their non-school-

related dominant needs and answered these to a large extent. Awareness of their dominant needs resulted in more effective prioritising. The teacher participants were thus able to self-regulate to a much greater extent.

- Teachers neglect themselves physically and emotionally, because of the workload and the perception that they have to answer to the dominant need of schoolwork, although they may have a greater need to withdraw or to nurture themselves.
- Teachers with poor classroom management and who admit to being stressed, felt less inadequate once they realised that teachers in leadership positions and whom they perceived as being without problems or unresolved personal issues, also experience career-related stress.
- Deep breathing and relaxation techniques contribute to calmness, being more focussed and improved decision-making.
- Techniques and the Gestalt principles must be internalised over a period, before it can really take effect.
- Teachers with sound support from the school principal and the school management-team, experience lower stress levels than teachers without this support.
- Negative past experiences with non-school based departmental officials, caused teachers to be nervous of school visits, whether their work was of a high standard or not.
- Awareness of non-verbal communication resulted in improved communication, which included improved listening skills.

- Teachers were made aware of and accepted the relationship of one-sided inclusion with learners. That did not take away from their expectations from learners or their feelings of satisfaction when they were appreciated.
- Participants experienced an improved sensory awareness, which contributed to their quality of life and an improved contact with self and the environment in the here-and-now.
- Participants have grown towards being self-supportive, which is the ultimate aim of Gestalt therapy.
- Teacher participants had reached the point of impasse two weeks after the initial workshop. This is the point where self-support is not yet forthcoming and environmental support is being withheld. It is thus the point from which growth will occur. It is therefore important that a member of the school's management team is trained in the Gestalt therapeutic process model to render the necessary support, until the stressed teacher can reach the point of self-support.
- Environmental support in the form of a checklist had assisted the teacher participants in internalising the Gestalt principles and the skills taught. After the use of the checklist had been terminated, teacher participants were still able to apply the skills taught. It could therefore be concluded that the skills cannot be assimilated after just one workshop and that more environmental support is necessary before the stressed teacher could be self-supportive and regain homeostasis.
- Awareness of the influence of the middle zone of awareness on internal and external awareness, had improved the teacher participant's perception of learners and situations.

- Participants had experienced an increased awareness of the contact boundary and the co-creation that takes place at the contact boundary, as well as the modifications made at the contact boundary. They had become aware of the negative modifications of confluence and avoidance, as well as the importance of withdrawal from an over-stimulating environment as a self-nurturing and coping strategy.
- Improved contact, as well as less diffuse ego-boundaries had assisted the participants in saying 'no' to unreasonable demands made upon them.
- The participants had become aware that they have to choose between what is toxic and what is nurturing in the environment, which had mainly led them to withdraw from negative people and to eliminate negative self-talk
- All staff members, not only those with either obvious or acknowledged stress, should become skilled in the Gestalt therapeutic principles of awareness, dialogue and process.
- Receiving the checklist as self-monitoring and measuring instrument immediately after the workshop is adequate reinforcement, until the skills taught during the intervention are internalised.
- Based on informal and semi-structured interviews with the school management team members who attended the first two-day workshop, the feasibility of a member of a school management team implementing the Gestalt therapeutic process model has been established.
- Based on the structured interviews with the participants of both groups, as well as the quantitative measuring instrument completed before the intervention commenced and again three months after the initial workshop, it has been made clear that the functional Gestalt therapeutic programme based on the theoretical

Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress to help them to regain homeostasis, has been successful.

- Although the dissemination phase had not been an aim of this research, any Gestalt therapist would be able to implement the process model. School management team members, who received basic training in the above model, would also be able to implement it as a first line of intervention.

7.8 THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

7.8.1 THE AIM

The aim of this research was to systematically design and develop a theoretical Gestalt therapeutic intervention process model empowering teachers suffering from career-related stress, to regain homeostasis

The researcher has succeeded in the aim of this research:

- A theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress to assist them in regaining homeostasis has been designed and developed, based on the teachers' determined needs, a study of existing literature, the experience of the researcher, who has been involved in teaching for the past thirty years and observed aspects and the Gestalt therapeutic approach.
- A functional programme based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model has been developed and presented as a pilot study in a group therapeutic context,
- The functional programme based on the theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model has been refined and presented to a second group of participants.
- The process model has been evaluated based on the qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

7.8.2 THE OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the research study were achieved.

7.8.2.1 Objective 1

To investigate through a **literature review**: the factors causing the career-related stress experienced by teachers, the symptoms of the experienced career-related stress, existing coping strategies and stress management programmes, and the Gestalt therapeutic approach as an effective way to cope with stress

An extensive literature review of knowledge and sources of knowledge into the factors and consequences of the career-related stress experienced by teachers, existing international and South African therapeutic programmes and coping strategies, as well as the Gestalt therapeutic approach as an effective way to cope with stress, was executed

7.8.2.2 Objective 2

To investigate through an **empirical research**: teachers' experience of career-related stress, the career-related stress symptoms experienced by teachers, existing coping strategies and stress-management programmes, as well as the Gestalt therapeutic approach as an effective way to cope with stress

Thirty personal interviews with teachers experiencing career-related stress and six telephonic or personal interviews with people who have knowledge of the said stress, as well as existing coping strategies and stress management programmes were conducted. The experience of the researcher, who has been in education for the past thirty years, and who has applied the Gestalt therapeutic approach, as a stress management strategy for teachers suffering from career-related stress, for the past four years contributed to the empirical research.

7.8.2.3 Objective 3

To design, develop, implement and evaluate a school-based **Gestalt therapeutic process model** for teachers suffering from career-related stress, to assist them in regaining homeostasis, which could be implemented by a member of the school management team.

After the achievement of the first two objectives, a theoretical Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, to assist them in regaining homeostasis, has been designed, developed and presented as a pilot study with a group of ten teachers at the school where they have been employed. The said process model has been developed into a functional Gestalt therapeutic programme, which could be implemented by members of a school management team. A workshop, where the functional programme was presented to teachers suffering from career-related stress, was attended by three school management team members and during informal and semi-structured interviews the feasibility of a member of a school management team presenting the programme, has been confirmed.

The effect of the school-based Gestalt therapeutic intervention was qualitatively and quantitatively evaluated. Based on the outcomes of a questionnaire based on the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process, a group interview, informal interviews, semi-structured interviews, and structured interviews with the participants, it was qualitatively determined that the said participants did grow towards maturity and self-support, which is a prerequisite for the regaining of homeostasis. The effect of the school-based Gestalt therapeutic intervention was quantitatively determined through a comparison of the data collected through a self-constructed index as a quantitative measuring instrument, based on the symptoms of career-related stress and the degree to which it was experienced, before the therapeutic intervention commenced and again three months after the initial Gestalt therapeutic workshop. The quantitative data collected indicated that the degree to which the teacher participants experienced stress-related symptoms, were either eradicated or lowered. The Gestalt therapeutic process model thus

successfully eradicated or lowered the career-related stress symptoms experienced by teachers.

7.8.2.4 Objective 4

To **evaluate the research process** in order to reach conclusions and make recommendations regarding the literature and empirical study, as well as recommendations to other Gestalt practitioners and to education at large

Conclusions and recommendations, based on the literature studied, as well as the entire empirical research were made. The recommendations correlate with the nature of applied research where the aim is to improve the situation which has been researched, which in the research study was the career-related stress experienced by teachers.

7.9 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The question for the research study was:

Which components of a Gestalt therapeutic process model will be most applicable in assisting the teacher suffering from career-related stress, to regain homeostasis?

The research question was answered. The components of the Gestalt therapeutic process model most applicable in assisting the teacher suffering from career-related stress, to regain homeostasis have been awareness, dialogue and process with field theory. The career-related stress symptoms experienced by the teachers who participated in the Gestalt therapeutic intervention have either been eradicated or lowered. The teacher participants have experienced growth towards maturity and self-support, which is a prerequisite for the regaining of homeostasis.

7.10 TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis formulated for this research study was:

Teachers suffering from career-related stress, who have been exposed to a Gestalt therapeutic process model, will experience lower stress levels.

The hypothesis was supported by the research results. All the qualitative and quantitative data collected indicated that the career-related stress symptoms experienced by the teacher participants have either been eradicated or lowered and that they did grow towards maturity and self-support, which is a prerequisite for the regaining of homeostasis.

7.11 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

7.11.1 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE LITERATURE RESEARCH

The literature research not only yielded the stress factors and consequences experienced by teachers, but also various stress management programmes and strategies. Recommendations regarding the existing coping strategies have been drawn up based on the Gestalt therapeutic approach:

- Stress management programmes should have a firm theoretical base, which seems to be lacking in most of the present stress management coping strategies and programmes, as discussed in Chapter 4. The programme must be low cost and easily administered due, largely, to the paucity of resources available to school districts and most teacher training programmes. They must further take the multicultural character of the South African teaching corps into consideration. Teachers would also benefit from a stress management model with a self-help component because they work in relative isolation, are under significant time

constraints and because of the demands of their job, require techniques which are simple and easy to use.

- Teachers use emotion-and problem-focused strategies to cope with their career-related stress. These strategies should be done in awareness, within a dialogic relationship as part of the Gestalt process of change.
- Teachers are holistic beings and therefore any model, programme or strategy must address teachers as a whole, which includes their relationships with their environments. Environment, in Gestalt therapy, includes all relationships with the physical environment, as well as relationships with other people, in the here-and-now.
- A stress-management model should create an awareness of choice with the teacher. Individuals are responsible and are therefore the primary agents in determining their own behaviour. Teachers must take responsibility for their actions, thoughts and feelings. Teachers must realise that they have power over what is happening to them and that they are in charge of their own lives, through the choices they make.
- Teachers must be supported to grow to become self-supportive. It is important that teachers realise that they bring their own experiences, personalities and resources to the contact boundary, where they meet other people with their own experiences, personalities and resources.
- It is important for the school management to become aware of the need to change and, through dialogue, determine the needs of the teachers before starting the change process. This is therefore also organismic self-regulation where a need becomes figure till the need is met and another need arises.

7.11.2 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE RESEARCH PROCESS

During the research process the researcher became aware of a number of factors which should be taken into consideration regarding the implementation of the Gestalt therapeutic process model.

- Teachers should be informed about the advantages of the Gestalt therapeutic model and must be brought to the understanding that the experiencing of career-related stress is not an inherent inadequacy of the teacher, but a phenomenon experienced by all teachers.
- An explanation of the Gestalt terminology, the aim of Gestalt therapy and the interrelatedness of the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process must be explained to the teachers, before the actual intervention commences.
- A therapeutic model addressing the career-related stress of teachers, to assist them in the regaining of homeostasis, must view the teacher as a holistic, unique and authentic human being.
- A therapeutic model must address teachers as imbedded in their environment and must thus emphasise their awareness of dialogue with and process within their environment.
- A therapeutic model must lead to teachers being aware of their own sensory, motor and cognitive functions and actions.
- Through a heightened awareness of their functions, teachers must be brought to organismic self-regulation in order to regain homeostasis.

- A model addressing the career-related stress of teachers must emphasise the re-owning of disowned parts of the personality to ensure growth towards maturity and self-support.
- Teachers suffer from unfounded low self-concepts, which should receive focused attention during the therapeutic intervention, because low self-concepts influence the teachers' perception of situations perceived as stressful.
- A realisation of the ongoing process of regaining and losing homeostasis, because of the changes which occur from moment to moment, must be established. Teachers must also be brought to the realisation that being constantly in homeostasis is an indication that no changes or growth is occurring
- The Gestalt therapeutic process model should be presented supported by experiments, which will ensure the involvement and assimilation of Gestalt concepts.
- Teachers suffering from unresolved issues (unfinished business) should be lead to distinguish between the stress caused by the unresolved issue, and the stress caused by career-related factors.
- The implementation of the Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers, suffering from career-related stress to assist them in regaining homeostasis, in all South African schools, is highly recommended.
- A school management team member, with a recognised psychology qualification, should be trained in the Gestalt therapeutic process model to implement it at their respective schools as a first line of intervention. Teachers with emotional or psychological problems which the school management team member cannot address, must be referred to qualified therapists, psychologists or psychiatrists

- The Gestalt therapeutic process model should be implemented with all staff as in-service-training, but staff suffering severe career-related stress symptoms should attend a two-day workshop.
- The workshop should preferably be presented over a weekend, but at school, to eliminate interferences and to increase the relaxed atmosphere, which is conducive to growth.
- Teachers who have been exposed to the Gestalt therapeutic process model, either as in-service-training or as a therapeutic intervention, must receive the checklist as self-monitoring and reinforcement instrument to ensure the internalising of the skills taught.
- Once presented as in-service-training, reinforcement of the Gestalt therapeutic principles should be done on a quarterly basis.
- The Gestalt therapeutic process model should be implemented, not only as prevention against burnout, but as an approach to improve the quality of life of teachers, and should be marketed as such.
- Although the Gestalt therapeutic process model could be implemented as individual therapy, group therapy is recommended. Not only will group therapy improve the relationship between staff members and facilitate group cohesion, but the group members can learn from each other.
- The Gestalt therapeutic intervention process model can be presented again and the influence thereof on the career-related stress experienced by teachers can be tested with standardised measuring instruments. The influence of the process model can thus be confirmed quantitatively.

7.11.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EDUCATION AT LARGE

To ensure that the effectiveness of the Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress will be implemented to the full advantage of teachers and prospective teachers, the following recommendations are made:

- Teacher training programmes should include the Gestalt therapeutic process model, to empower prospective teachers in coping with career-related stress.
- The Department of Education should consider implementing the Gestalt therapeutic process model as part of their employee assistance programme.
- The Department of Education should consider undertaking the responsibility of having school management team members with recognised psychology qualifications, trained in the Gestalt therapeutic process model, as part of their employee assistance programme.
- As part of the Department of Education's implementation of the Gestalt therapeutic process model, the implementation and success thereof, in the different schools, should be monitored by an independent body.
- The Department of Education should implement training programmes for novice teachers, which include the Gestalt therapeutic process model addressing teacher stress.

7.12 USEFULNESS OF THE RESEARCH

The Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers has proved to be successful. The process model could be implemented within the school environment by a school management team member, who has received basic training in the process model. If the process model is implemented by a trained member of the school management team, it

would have no financial implications for the individual teachers. The process model could be implemented as in-service-training for the whole staff compliment of a school in general, and more specifically as an intervention programme for teachers suffering from career-related stress. The process model could be implemented within any school environment, without any adaptation. Because the Gestalt therapeutic approach could also be perceived as a way of life, it would improve the quality of teachers' lives in general.

The process model could further be applied pro-actively as a preventative measure, through the training programmes received by student teachers at tertiary institutions, or to novice teachers within their first year of teaching.

Not only would the teachers benefit from this process model, but, as indicated by the feedback of the research participants, so would the learners. Teachers who experience lower career-related stress levels would be absent less frequently and teacher attrition, because of career-related stress, would also decrease. There would ultimately be more stability within education, which would benefit the country at large.

7.13 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The Gestalt therapeutic process model had been implemented in a multi-cultural, ex-model C secondary school, and might need revising before implementation in a primary school, township school or independent school environment. Only after the adaptations, if necessary, have been made and the process model has been implemented would it be possible to make generalisations.

7.14 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Through the data gathered and analysed, the following hypotheses for further research are suggested:

- Teachers with unresolved personal issues, experience higher levels of career-related stress.
- Teachers who experience the school environment as their comfort zone have unfulfilling home environments.
- Township school teachers, suffering from career-related stress, have regained homeostasis through a Gestalt therapeutic process model.
- School principals are aware of the career-related stress experienced by teachers, and are open to the implementation of a therapeutic programme addressing the said stress.
- School governing bodies play a vital role in the implementation of therapeutic programmes, addressing the career-related stress experienced by teachers.
- The Gestalt therapeutic process model has been successfully implemented in all the South African provinces.
- The implementation of a Gestalt therapeutic process model addressing the career-related stress, by the National Department of Education, has solved the problem of teacher attrition.
- The Gestalt therapeutic process model, as part of the Department of Education's employee assistance programme, has benefited all partners in education.
- The implementation of the Gestalt therapeutic process model, as part of the curriculum studied by prospective teachers at tertiary institutions, has empowered them to cope with the career-related stressors in their first year of teaching.
- Teachers suffering from career-related stress in countries, other than South Africa, have benefited from the Gestalt therapeutic process model in their quest to regain homeostasis.

7.15 REFLECTIVE NOTE OF THE RESEARCHER

Researching the effect of a Gestalt therapeutic process model on teachers suffering from career-related stress, affected the researcher on cognitive, educational, emotional, social, cultural and behavioural levels.

The most profound cognitive impact made by the research, was the in-depth study of the Gestalt therapeutic approach. Not only did the study of the literature lead to a solid knowledgebase, but to an even more Gestalt based philosophy of life. This philosophy of life has been transcended, with positive results, to the staff of the school, of which the researcher is the principal.

On an educational level, the researcher has become aware and is convinced that a school principal could successfully be the school counsellor, as well as disciplinarian, academic head, leader and manager, without jeopardising any of these roles. Working from a Gestalt perspective, this had been achieved through awareness of self and the environment, a dialogic relationship with the environment, believing in the I-Thou relationship, co-creation at the contact boundary and a healthy ego-boundary.

On an emotional level, the research study has been the culmination of two passions, education and the Gestalt approach. On social and cultural levels the researcher has gained insight into the Indian and black cultures and the interaction between Black, White, Coloured and Indian within a therapeutic environment. Although there is a colour difference, the difference is only skin deep, where career-related stress is concerned. The different races experience the same stress, due to the same stress factors and have the same hopes and dreams for themselves and the people of South Africa.

You cannot be involved in the Gestalt approach in general and a research study aimed at the improvement of a situation or condition, in particular, without it having an effect on the way you perceive your role as a school leader. From this perception flows your behaviour, which will ultimately change and invigorate others to grow towards maturity and self-support – A. Horn 23 October 2008.

7.16 CONCLUSION

The career-related stress experienced by teachers has a detrimental effect on the individual teacher, the learners, education at large and ultimately the country. Teacher absenteeism and attrition is high and South Africa is experiencing a shortage of 20, 000 teachers across the board. Although there are employee assistance programmes, they have not been successful and teachers are disempowered by the stress experienced. There is thus a void to be filled regarding the assistance of teachers suffering from career-related stress. The Gestalt therapeutic process model designed and developed for this empirical research study, will fill this void. The Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress has been presented and evaluated as successful in assisting teachers to regain homeostasis.

LIST OF REFERENCES

SUMMARY

Total number of references: 152

References grouped according to date of publication

DATE OF PUBLICATION	PERCENTAGE %
Recent references	63,8
References older than ten years	25,0
References older than twenty years	09,2
Historical references (Gestalt)	01,9

References grouped according to type

TYPE OF REFERENCE	PERCENTAGE %
Reference books	64,0
Published articles	07,8
Electronic references	05,9
Government reports	05,2
Personal communication: Interviews	01,9
Unpublished conference papers	01,9
Dictionaries	02,6
Non-printed works: TV programmes	01,3
Newsletters	01,3
Unpublished thesis or dissertation	07,2

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ANNEXURE A

REQUEST TO USE SCHOOL FACILITIES FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

The Chairperson of the School Governing Body
Wordsworth High School
Benoni

Dear Me Boomgaard

RE: THE USE OF THE STAFFROOM OF WORDSWORTH HIGH SCHOOL

I, Annamarie Horn, hereby request permission to use the staffroom and amenities of Wordsworth High school, Benoni, as research venue for conducting empirical research as part fulfilment of the degree Doctor of Philosophy (Direction: Play therapy).

The effect of a Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, in their quest to achieve homeostasis, will be researched. The research will be conducted with two groups of teachers employed at the said school.

Dates and times of the research are stated in the table below.

DATES	TIMES
Friday 16 May 2008	15:00 - 17:00
Saturday 17 May 2008	08:30- 16:00
Wednesday 4 June 2008	14:00 - 16:00
Thursday 5 June 2008	14:00 - 16:00

Thank you for your co-operation

Annamarie Horn
RESEARCHER

Date

(To be completed by the Governing Body Chairperson of Wordsworth High School)

On behalf of the Governing Body of Wordsworth High School, Benoni, I, _____,
Chairperson of the said governing body, grant Annamarie Horn permission to use the staffroom and amenities of said school on the dates requested.

Governing Body Chairperson

Date

ANNEXURE B

RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR POST-LEVEL 1 RESEARCH **PARTICIPANTS**

NAME OF RESEARCHER:

ANNAMARIE HORN

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS. A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS MODEL
FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS

CREDIBILITY OF RESEARCHER

QUALIFICATIONS:

BA, HED (Post Graduate), B Ed (Hon), MDiac (Direction: Play therapy)

Certified competent to practise play therapy, a form of experimental therapy, with clients of all ages by Huguenot College in Wellington, the residential campus of the University of South Africa in 2005.

Registered by the Council for Counsellors as ‘Counsellor Specialist’ since 2004.

EXPERIENCE:

Thirty years in secondary school teaching.

Eight years as secondary school principal.

School counsellor since 2003

Involved in counselling teachers suffering from career-related stress since 2000

CONTACT DETAILS OF THE RESEARCHER:

Tel no (work) 011 425 0144

Cell phone: 082 443 9487

Fax no: 011 849 2871

E Mail address: wwhsprincipal@telkomsa.net or mrshorn1@gmail.com

TYPE OF RESEARCH

This is an overt intervention empirical research study.

THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research is the design and development of a Gestalt therapeutic model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, which can be implemented within the school environment by a member of the School Management Team or the guidance counsellor. The ultimate aim is the alleviating of career-related stress, which will result in the regaining of homeostasis. The Gestalt approach can become a way of life and is therefore the most applicable form of intervention to ensure that teachers achieve a quality of life.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. All participants will sign a consent form with a confidentiality clause.
2. No names or any other information by which the participant can be identified will be published or distributed in any way.
3. No information gained by the researcher during the course of the research will be used against the participant during the research or thereafter.
4. The researcher, as well as the trained observer, will sign a confidentiality agreement.
5. Although some of the sessions may be recorded for the purpose of writing the research report, it will be for the researcher's use only.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

1. The empirical research study will stretch over a period of three months. It will commence on 29 April 2008 and will be terminated on 8 August 2008.
2. The research participants will be required to report on the success, or not, of the therapeutic intervention during the course of the empirical research study. The feedback will take the form of written answers or semi-structured and structured interviews.

3. The research participants will be observed by the researcher, as well as a trained observer during the course of the research.

POSSIBLE DANGERS OF THE RESEARCH

The research participant will not be expected to do anything to endanger his/her physical well being or which could be construed as humiliating.

ADVANTAGES OF BEING A PARTICIPANT IN THE EMPIRRICAL EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY

1. The research participant will receive therapeutic intervention, from a trained therapist, at no cost.
2. The participant will be able to vent his/her emotions and frustrations in a safe environment.
3. The participant will acquire new skills to assist him/her in coping with the demands of his/her career.
4. The participant will grow towards maturity and self-support.
5. The intervention will enable the participant to regain homeostasis.
6. The participant will acquire a new, fulfilling approach to life in general.
7. Participation in this intervention will improve classroom management, as well as personal self-esteem.
8. The intervention will lead to a better quality of life.
9. The research participants will be informed of the conclusions reached through the empirical research.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The total cost involved in the research will be carried by the researcher. There will be no financial obligations on the part of the research participants.

TERMINATION

After termination of the research, the researcher will be available to assist those teachers in need of a more gradual termination process, and to address any research related problems which should arise.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY

1. The research participants may withdraw from the empirical research study at any given time.
2. On withdrawal the attached notice of withdrawal must be completed and handed to the researcher.

Annamarie Horn

RESEARCHER

ANNEXURE C

RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR POST-LEVEL 2 AND 3 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

NAME OF RESEARCHER:

ANNAMARIE HORN

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS. A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS MODEL
FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS

CREDIBILITY OF RESEARCHER

QUALIFICATIONS:

BA, HED (Post Graduate), BEd (Hon), MDiac (Direction: Play therapy)

Certified competent to practice play therapy, a form of experimental therapy, with clients of all ages by Huguenot College in Wellington, the residential campus of the University of South Africa in 2005.

Registered by the Council for Counsellors as 'Counsellor Specialist' since 2004.

EXPERIENCE:

Thirty years in secondary school teaching.

Eight years as secondary school principal.

School counsellor since 2003

Involved in counselling teachers suffering from career-related stress since 2000

CONTACT DETAILS OF THE RESEARCHER:

Tel no (work) 011 425 0144

Cell phone: 082 443 9487

Fax no: 011 849 2871

E Mail address: wwhsprincipal@telkomsa.net or mrshorn1@gmail.com

TYPE OF RESEARCH

This is an overt intervention empirical research study.

THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research is the design and development of a Gestalt therapeutic model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, which can be implemented within the school environment by a member of the School Management Team or the guidance counsellor. The ultimate aim is the alleviating of career-related stress, which will result in the regaining of homeostasis. The Gestalt approach can become a way of life and is therefore the most applicable form of intervention to ensure that teachers achieve a quality of life.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. All participants will sign a consent form with a confidentiality clause.
2. No names or any other information by which the participant can be identified will be published or distributed in any way.
3. No information gained by the researcher during the course of the research will be used against the participant during the research or thereafter.
4. The researcher, as well as the trained observer will sign a confidentiality agreement.
5. Although some of the sessions may be recorded for the purpose of writing the research report, it will be for the researcher's use only.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

1. The empirical research study will stretch over a period of three months. It will commence on 29 April 2008 and will be terminated on 8 August 2008.
2. The research participants will be required to report on the success, or not, of the therapeutic intervention during the course of the empirical research study. The feedback will take the form of written answers or semi-structured and structured interviews.

3. The research participants will be observed by the researcher, as well as a trained observer during the course of the research.
4. The School Management Team members will be part of the therapeutic programme as research participants.
5. The School Management Team members will, in addition, evaluate the feasibility of School Management Team members presenting the Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the said Gestalt therapeutic model, after receiving the necessary training, in their respective schools.

POSSIBLE DANGERS OF THE RESEARCH

The research participant will not be expected to do anything to endanger his/her physical well being or which could be construed as humiliating.

ADVANTAGES OF BEING A PARTICIPANT IN THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY

1. The research participant will receive therapeutic intervention, from a trained therapist, at no cost.
2. The participant will be able to vent his/her emotions and frustrations in a safe environment.
3. The participant will acquire new skills to assist him/her in coping with the demands of his/her career.
4. The participant will grow towards maturity and self-support.
5. The intervention will enable the participant to regain homeostasis.
6. The participant will acquire a new, fulfilling approach to life in general.
7. Participation in this intervention will improve classroom management, as well as personal self-esteem.
8. The intervention will lead to a better quality of life.
9. Participation in the empirical research study will serve as professional development, which could be included in the participant's Curriculum Vitae.
10. Research participants will be informed of the conclusions reached through the empirical research study.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The total cost involved in the research will be carried by the researcher. There will be no financial obligations on the part of the research participants.

TERMINATION

After termination of the research, the researcher will be available to assist those teachers in need of a more gradual termination process and to address any research related problems which should arise.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY

1. The research participants may withdraw from the empirical research study at any given time.
2. On withdrawal the attached notice of withdrawal must be completed and handed to the researcher.

Annamarie Horn

RESEARCHER

ANNEXURE D

RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR THE INDEPENDENT OBSERVER

NAME OF RESEARCHER:

ANNAMARIE HORN

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:

REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS. A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS MODEL
FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS

CREDIBILITY OF RESEARCHER

QUALIFICATIONS:

BA, HED (Post Graduate), BEd (Hon), MDiac (Direction: Play therapy)

Certified competent to practice play therapy, a form of experimental therapy, with clients of all ages by Huguenot College in Wellington, the residential campus of the University of South Africa in 2005.

Registered by the Council for Counsellors as 'Counsellor Specialist' since 2004.

EXPERIENCE:

Thirty years in secondary school teaching.

Eight years as secondary school principal.

School counsellor since 2003

Involved in counselling teachers suffering from career-related stress since 2000

CONTACT DETAILS OF THE RESEARCHER:

Tel no (work) 011 425 0144

Cell phone: 082 443 9487

Fax no: 011 849 2871

E Mail address: wwhsprincipal@telkomsa.net or mrshorn1@gmail.com

TYPE OF RESEARCH

This is an overt empirical research study.

THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research is the design and development of a Gestalt therapeutic model for teachers suffering from career-related stress, which can be implemented within the school environment by a member of the School Management Team or the guidance counsellor. The ultimate aim is the alleviating of career-related stress, which will result in the regaining of homeostasis. The Gestalt approach can become a way of life and is therefore the most applicable form of intervention to ensure that teachers achieve a quality of life.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. All participants will sign a consent form with a confidentiality clause.
2. No names or any other information by which the participant can be identified will be published or distributed in any way.
3. No information gained by the researcher during the course of the research will be used against the participant during the research or thereafter.
4. The researcher, as well as the independent observer will sign confidentiality agreements
5. Although some of the sessions may be recorded for the purpose of writing the research report, it will be for the researcher's use only.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO THE INDEPENDENT OBSERVER

1. The independent observer will be trained on Monday 5 May 2008 and Tuesday 6 May 2008.
2. The functions of the trained independent observer are:
 - Observing the researcher while implementing the intervention programme and to make suggestions, which would improve the therapeutic approach.
 - Observing the research participants' non-verbal and verbal communication during the therapeutic session/s

- Observing the research participants for the full duration of the empirical research study.
 - Reporting back on the participants' implementation of the skills taught during the therapeutic group sessions throughout the duration of the empirical research study.
3. The independent observer must be present during all the group sessions.
 4. The independent observer must be objective in her observations and feedback.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO ALL THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

1. The empirical research study will stretch over a period of three months. It will commence on 29 April 2008 and will be terminated on 8 August 2008.
2. The research participants will be required to report on the success, or not, of the therapeutic intervention during the course of the empirical research study. The feedback will take the form of written answers or semi-structured and structured interviews.
3. The research participants will be observed by the researcher, as well as a trained observer during the course of the research.
4. The School Management Team members will be part of the therapeutic programme as research participants.
5. The School Management Team members will, in addition, evaluate the feasibility of School Management Team members presenting the Gestalt therapeutic programme, based on the said Gestalt therapeutic model, after receiving the necessary training, in their respective schools.

POSSIBLE DANGERS OF THE RESEARCH

The research participant will not be expected to do anything to endanger his/her physical well being or which could be construed as humiliating.

ADVANTAGES OF BEING A PARTICIPANT IN THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY

The research participant will receive therapeutic intervention, from a trained therapist, at no cost.

1. The participant will be able to vent his/her emotions and frustrations in a safe environment.
2. The participant will acquire new skills to assist him/her in coping with the demands of his/her career.
3. The participant will grow towards maturity and self-support.
4. The intervention will enable the participant to regain homeostasis.
5. The participant will acquire a new, fulfilling approach to life in general.
6. Participation in this intervention will improve classroom management, as well as personal self-esteem.
7. The intervention will lead to a better quality of life.
8. The independent observer and all the research participants will be informed of the conclusions reached through the empirical research.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The total cost involved in the research will be carried by the researcher. There will be no financial obligations on the part of the research participants.

TERMINATION

After termination of the research, the researcher will be available to assist those teachers in need of a more gradual termination process and to address any research related problems which should arise.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY

The independent observer may not withdraw from the empirical research study.

Annamarie Horn

RESEARCHER

ANNEXURE E

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT AND INDEPENDENT OBSERVER CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

RESEARCH TITLE:

REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS. A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS MODEL FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS

I, _____, hereby consent to participate in the above mentioned empirical research study.

All relevant information has been discussed with me in detail and I do understand the content and application. All my answers have been answered clearly and in full. I do understand that all information gained during the research is confidential.

I understand that this empirical research study will commence on _____ and will be terminated on _____.

I understand that I have to attend all the therapeutic sessions.

I may withdraw from the empirical research study, in writing, at any given time. (*Not applicable to independent observer*)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

WITNESS: _____

DATE

ANNEXURE F

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION REGARDING RESEARCH
PARTICIPANT DURING THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY FOR THE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE**

RESEARCH TITLE:

**REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS. A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS
MODEL FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS**

I, _____, hereby undertake to treat the information gained about the other research participants in the above mentioned research, with confidentiality. I further undertake that no information gained about a participant during the therapeutic sessions will be held against him/her during the empirical research study or thereafter.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

WITNESS: _____

DATE

ANNEXURE G

**WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY FOR THE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE**

RESEARCH TITLE:

**REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS. A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS
MODEL FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS**

I _____ hereby wish to withdraw from the above mentioned empirical research study. I do understand that the confidentiality agreement is binding whether I am a participant in the empirical research study or not. I understand that my withdrawal from the empirical research study will not be held against me.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

ANNEXURE H

**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT BY THE RESEARCHER CONCERNING
THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDY FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEGREE**

RESEARCH TITLE:

**REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS. A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS
MODEL FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS**

I, **Annamarie Horn**, the researcher of the research study titled '*Regaining homeostasis. A Gestalt therapeutic process model for teachers suffering from career-related stress*', hereby states that all information gained regarding the research participants during the research, will be dealt with in confidentiality. Neither their names, nor any other means by which they could be identified will be published in the research report or divulged to anybody outside of the empirical research study. The information gained during the course of this research will not be used against any research participant at any given time during the research or thereafter.

Signed at **Benoni** on **10 June 2008**.

RESEARCHER: A. HORN

WITNESS:_____

ANNEXURE I
SELF-CONSTRUCTED INDEX MEASURING THE INCIDENCE OF STRESS
SYMPTOMS EXPERIENCED BY THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS, AS WELL
AS PREVIOUSLY ACQUIRED THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION AND
COPING STRATEGIES

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

TITLE OF RESEARCH:

REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS. A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS
MODEL FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER RELATED STRESS.

RESEARCHER: ANNAMARIE HORN

The information divulged in this questionnaire will be for the knowledge of the researcher only. Although the information gained through the questionnaire will be published in her research report, no names or any other information through which the research subject can be identified, will be published. The information gained through this questionnaire will not be used against the research subject at any given time.

Name of research subject (for empirical use only): _____

AGE: _____

NUMBER OF YEARS TEACHING AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL: _____

NUMBER OF YEARS TEACHING AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL: _____

Please complete sections A, B and C

SECTION A

**RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE TO DETERMINE THE INCIDENCE OF
CAREER-RELATED STRESS SYMPTOMS EXPERIENCED BY THE
RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

This section of the questionnaire is aimed at determining the degree to which you experience career-related stress symptoms as a teacher. You are requested to consider each statement and reflect your true reaction when doing so. Rate the degree to which you experience the statements listed below from 1-5, where '1' indicates the lowest and '5' the highest degree of experience. Indicate your choice by marking the appropriate block with an 'x'.

Rating scale:

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Very often
- 5 = All the time

Stress symptom	1	2	3	4	5
I am short tempered.					
I am aggressive.					
I overreact.					
I complain.					
I lack enthusiasm.					

I suffer from insomnia.					
I can't relax.					
I experience mood swings.					
I cry.					
I am impulsive.					
I suffer from panic attacks.					
I use alcohol.					
I smoke.					
I use painkillers.					
I use drugs.					
I dislike my career.					
I dislike the learners.					
I dislike my colleagues.					
I avoid the learners.					
I avoid the parents.					
I avoid my colleagues.					
I lose control.					
I don't want to get up on a school day.					
I hurt myself (nail biting/hair pulling/scratching/cutting)					
I feel inadequate and ineffective as a teacher.					
I don't live up to my own expectations.					
I lack self-confidence.					
I have a low self-image.					
I feel I will never be a good teacher.					
I feel anxious.					
I feel confused.					
I feel frustrated.					
I feel angry.					
I feel guilty when I do not work.					

I feel lonely.					
I feel dissatisfied.					
I am irritable.					
I am nervous.					
I feel depressed.					
I have suicidal thoughts.					
I feel listless.					
I suffer from poor judgement.					
I can't make decisions.					
I am forgetful.					
I can't concentrate.					
My lesson preparation is poor.					
I lack imagination.					
I work hard, but can't achieve my goals.					
I find teaching uninteresting.					
I lack focus					
I am not coping with the changes in teaching.					
I can't cope with the work load.					
I perform better under pressure.					
I suffer from colds and flue.					
I have a spastic colon.					
I suffer from gastro-intestinal symptoms (stomachache/diarrhoea/constipation/indigestion/haemorrhoids)					
I have unhealthy eating habits					
I am under weight/over weight.					
I suffer from some form of diabetes.					
I suffer from allergies.					
I suffer from a dermatological condition (skin					

irritations/acne/eczema/psoriasis/hair loss).					
I have a low libido.					
I am impotent. (males)					
I suffer from menstrual disorders. (females)					
I suffer from respiratory problems (asthma/breathlessness).					
I have dizzy or fainting spells					
I have cardio-vascular problems (heart attack/palpitations/chest pains/ angina).					
I get muscular twitches.					
I suffer from migraine.					
I get tension headaches/backache/neckache.					
I suffer from excessive tiredness					

SECTION B

QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING PREVIOUS THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS ACQUIRED BY THE RESEARCH SUBJECT

2.1 Please indicate the form/forms of *past* therapeutic interventions you applied to alleviate your career-related stress to regain homeostasis, in **Column A** with an ‘x’ under either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. (*More than one therapeutic intervention may be indicated*)

2.2 Rate the degree to which the acquired therapeutic intervention was successful from 1-3, where ‘1’ indicates the lowest and ‘3’ the highest degree experienced. Indicate the degree of success experienced with an ‘x’ in the appropriate block under **Column B**.

Rating scale for Column B:

1 = Not at all

2 = To some extent

3 = To a large extent

COLUMN A				COLUMN B		
Form of therapeutic intervention	Yes	No		1	2	3
Psychiatrist						
Psychologist						
Psychotherapist						
Counselling						
Experimental therapy						
Individual therapy						
Group therapy						
Life line						
General practitioner						
Traditional healer						

Hypnotherapist						
Prescription medicine						
Non-prescription medicine						
Other						

If **'Other'** was indicated, please specify _____

SECTION C

QUESTIONNAIRE DETERMINING PRESENT COPING STRATEGIES APPLIED BY THE RESEARCH SUBJECT

3.1 Please indicate the coping strategy/strategies you apply or applied to alleviate your career-related stress to regain homeostasis under **Column A** with an 'x' under either 'Yes' or 'No'. *(More than one strategy may be indicated.)*

3.2 Rate the degree to which the coping strategy was successful from 1-3, where '1' indicates the lowest and '3' the highest degree experienced. Indicate the degree of success with an 'x' in the appropriate block under **Column B**.

COLUMN A			COLUMN B			
Coping strategy	Yes	No		1	2	3
Assertiveness training						
Attitude adjustment						
Avoidance						
Awareness of stress						
Breathing						
Balancing work and play						

Dancing					
Hobbies					
Improved work strategies					
Meditation					
Movies and theatre					
Music					
Nurturing yourself					
Nutrition					
Physical exercise					
Problem-solving strategies					
Professional development					
Reading					
Relaxation exercises					
Religious activities					
Self-image enhancement					
Singing					
Sleep					
Spending time with family and friends					
Support from colleagues					
Television					
Yoga					
Other					

If ***Other*** was indicated please specify _____

Thank you for your co-operation. I look forward to the therapeutic sessions ahead!

 Annamarie Horn
RESEARCHER

ANNEXURE J

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF THE TWO-DAY WORKSHOP, INCLUDING VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL RESPONSES (GROUP 1)

The participants are referred to as letters of the alphabet.

AWARENESS

The researcher was of the opinion that limited awareness was the result of many issues and misconceptions which the participants had of the self. It became clear that one of the main problem areas was an inadequate self-concept. At this point the researcher needs to emphasise that all the teachers who attended this workshop, fell in the good to excellent category according to the departmental evaluation system IQMS (Institutional Quality Management System).

All the participants, but one, found it possible to relax and visualise an imaginary place where they could escape to, should the need arise. The researcher was of the opinion, though, that the above-mentioned participant (G) had many unresolved personal issues, thus unfinished business, blocking her growth.

All the participants' sensory awareness was well developed, although the associations made through their awareness were not always positive, again indicating unresolved issues. Interesting was the auditory association made by H, a black female living in a township, of a rattling chain with which a gate was being locked. On being questioned about it she indicated that although her house was very secure, the area in which she lived was not. G displayed unresolved childhood issues and indicated her hatred for the children's parties she had to attend as a girl. G said later that her present association with the smell of vanilla was different, though. J indicated that she had no birthday parties, which was at the time still an unresolved issue in her life.

The exercise involving self-concept, followed by validation, led the researcher to believe that an inadequate self-concept was the cause of much of the stress experienced by all, but two, of the participants. D, who was the youngest participant, had a very good self-concept and emphasised that he was still growing. His self-concept was validated by the group. H referred to herself as a dog needing care and then related it to her little girl who also needed care. C referred to her life in the house where they lived before her father passed away. Although all C's memories were positive there was an indication that she was less contented within her home environment at that time. (C suffered a nervous breakdown ten years earlier and uses anti-depressants. This nervous breakdown was caused by both family and school-related issues.) E saw himself as full of holes, some small, which could be filled, and big ones, about which he felt helpless. E found the relation between his projection and how he perceived himself as 'scary'. J indicated that the different colours of her projection were an indication of both her colourful character, as well as the chaotic nature of her life. K saw her projection as an indication of her own brokenness, but then indicated that she used to be broken, but was whole again. F, who perceived herself as an incompetent teacher, saw a whale in her projection. Throughout the therapeutic workshop F was puzzled by the fact that she saw something in the projection, which was contrary to her believed self-concept. G saw herself as very scared with a dark side and admitted that she '*refused*' to change.

During the experiment involving awareness of verbal and non-verbal communication, introjections, aggressive gestures, truth and honesty, the different approaches of black and white teachers and their different approaches towards black and white learners and parents, became figure and were addressed. An interesting outcome regarding race and culture was that the black teachers were far more aggressive towards the black learners than the white teachers, because of their knowledge of the black cultures, and would not hesitate to give a slap where a slap was needed. Contrary to research outcomes indicating that teacher's stress-levels were higher when there were parent's evenings, the research participants indicated that they did not feel nervous at all because they knew what they were doing was correct. F, D and K indicated that they knew they had the support of the principal and deputy principals and therefore did not experience stress.

On Saturday, all the participants indicated that they felt energised, with the exception of G, who said she was very tired, but would feel better after the painkillers had taken effect. She also indicated that she had not been able to sleep the previous night and that she had spent time walking around the house, because she thought she had heard something. She avoided an honest answer when the researcher asked her what her thoughts were during the period of insomnia. G did indicate in the research questionnaire that she suffered from insomnia. G was due to have operations in both her hands. During the introductory or greeting session, E, J and F immediately wanted to talk about the self-concept projection of the previous day, and could not wait for reflection time. This was an indication that self-concept issues were in their foreground and it was their dominant need to talk about it at the time.

During the reflection on the previous day, E described his projection as '*evil*' because it revealed such a lot about himself to him. K indicated that she felt exhausted after the self-concept projection. A very interesting remark from the independent observer was that K seemed too controlled, as if she was trying too hard not to be aggressive. K indicated that she had received therapeutic intervention previously, because of her divorce. F stayed in awe of the fact that she saw herself as a whale through the projection. G indicated that the researcher said that they were not following the programme as it was developed as a result of the emergence of various aspects of the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process. G stated that the group should return to the formal programme. This was an indication of her avoidance of the various issues in her past and present situation with which she was not prepared to deal, as well as her controlling tendencies. E felt that he was two different people at which point the researcher indicated the importance of re-owning the disowned parts of the self. E did not have a split personality, as he feared, but had to realise the importance of acknowledging the polarities or dichotomy in his personality and emotions in order to be a holistic being. D's family expected him to be completely self-supportive and in control of his emotions. Through an experiment he was brought to the realisation that he did need the emotional support from his mother, a divorcee, explaining the contradictory emotions he experienced.

The reactions during the reflection session lead to an explanation and illustration of the middle zone of awareness. It became clear that the meaning the participants made of inner and outer zone awareness were uniquely their own and reactions were often based on their own interpretations and not on what they saw in front of them. G came to the awareness, although not the acceptance, that she cannot say ‘no’ to her biological children or her mother, which drained her.

DIALOGUE

The researcher asked the participants for their reaction to the one-day notification that district officials would be visiting the school. With the exception of K, all indicated nervousness. Although their work was up to date, this still posed a threat. At this point the researcher worked with them with the Socratic question (see 4.3.1.1). Immediately after this exercise the researcher asked the participants to name the monster in their lives. Not one of the participants indicated that anything related to education took on monstrous proportions.

Through an experiment the participants became aware of the importance of healthy boundaries. The only participant whose boundary was too close to her was G, who also found it difficult to say ‘no’ to her biological children and mother. G had built up such a façade, though, that both her colleagues and the learners were wary of her. During the role play around boundaries and modifications at the contact boundary, it was also G who went into confluence with the ‘orphan children’, used in the experiment. To hide her true nature she immediately pointed out that she only wanted to take them into her home so that they could ‘*shut up*’.

The I-Thou relationship compared to an I-It relationship, as well as the co-creation at the contact boundary was dealt with through an experiment. This was understood and internalised by the participants without any resistance.

PROCESS

The process principle was revised, in conclusion, because of the successful integration of this concept during the course of the therapeutic workshop. The dominant needs experienced by the participants at the time were:

- A - schoolwork
- B – alone time
- C - to complete her filing
- D – understanding from his mother
- E - to explore his so-called ‘split personality’
- F – to set exam papers
- G - marking
- H – to be with her little girl
- J – time for herself
- K – to have a party (“*jol*”), while her children were with their father for a weekend

TERMINATION

The termination process included reflection on the therapeutic workshop and finally a relaxation exercise.

The feedback during the reflection time was as follows:

A recognised the similarities between his own and some other participants’ lives and experienced the workshop as a learning process. B stated that she refused to have issues, but came to the conclusion that it was a misconception and that she had to address it. She realised that she suppressed her own creativity by over-emphasising the theoretical. C realised that she is in denial, and that she found the administrative side of education tedious. D realised that he could open up and talk about himself. It was a ‘*huge*’ surprise to D that he could talk so openly about himself. E felt more in control than the previous

day. F was amazed that her colleagues, whom she thought to be in such control, had all those issues in their lives. G referred to the previous day as *'tough, very tough'*. And then said that the Saturday session was maybe even *'tougher'* and said she did not want to say any more. H was initially uncertain what to expect from the therapeutic workshop, but were very comfortable with it in the end. J experienced it as very emotional and felt she could relate to G and J who were crying the previous day. She is now also more aware of the people on the staff and their support. When J started at the school she felt very lonely. K felt that it answered her deep need for therapy and she also saw the participants as the special people in her life.

After the termination of the workshop the group was reluctant to leave. F indicated that she was very relaxed. E came to see the researcher, requesting a further individual session.

F sent the researcher the following SMS that evening: *'Thanks for a very beneficial weekend. The exam papers will have to wait till tomorrow'*. This was an indication that F had been successful in applying self-regulation at the time.

ANNEXURE K

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETED SEVEN DAYS AFTER THE
TWO-DAY WORKSHOP

REGAINING HOMEOSTASIS: A GESTALT THERAPEUTIC PROCESS
MODEL FOR TEACHERS SUFFERING FROM CAREER-RELATED STRESS

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of participant (*not for publication purposes*) _____

Date of completion: _____

*Please read the following questions carefully and answer them as completely and honestly as possible. **All questions apply to the past seven days only.***

Questions may be answered in either English or Afrikaans.

Please return the completed questionnaire to the researcher not later than Tuesday 22 June at 14:00.

AWARENESS

1. Did you successfully implement deep **breathing** during stressful situations?

Please elaborate

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2. Did you successfully apply a **relaxation** technique? Please elaborate.

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3. Were you more aware of the function of your **senses**? Please elaborate.

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4. Did your **self-concept** change after the therapeutic workshop? Please give examples.

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5. Was awareness of your own and other individual's non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/tone of voice/gestures) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

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6. Did your **thoughts** about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions? Please elaborate.

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DIALOGUE

1. Did you experience a situation where a person did not really **listen** to you? Please elaborate.

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2. Did you experience honest communication, with another individual, where the acknowledgement of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate.

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3. Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate.

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4. Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with an individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

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5. Were you able to say 'no' to unreasonable demands made upon you? Please elaborate.

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6. Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation, or did you apply a fresh approach? Please elaborate.

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7. Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

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PROCESS

1. Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

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2. How, and to what extent, did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

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3. How, and to what extent, did you satisfy your dominant needs? Please elaborate.

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4. Did you nurture yourself? Please elaborate.

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5. To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced **diet** as beneficial?
Please elaborate.

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6. How, and to what extent, did you come to terms with your work environment?
Please elaborate.

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7. How, and to what extent did you **choose** your reactions to unpleasant situations or
an unfavourable environment? Please elaborate.

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8. How and to what extent did you need the **support** of colleagues regarding discipline and preparation? Please elaborate.

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GENERAL

1. How do you feel, at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire?
Please explain.

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Thank you for your co-operation.

Annamarie Horn
RESEARCHER

ANNEXURE L

RESPONSES TO THE FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETED SEVEN DAYS AFTER THE TWO-DAY WORKSHOP (GROUP 1)

Responses to questionnaire – Participant A

AWARENESS

Question: Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations?

Please elaborate.

Response: Yes. Instead of losing my temper with grade 12 learners during a physical training lesson, I applied deep breathing and spoke to them calmly. Some of these learners have come a long way academically and emotionally and lashing out at them would have destroyed months of hard work.

Question: Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate

Response: Yes. It did not help me to cope better. I need to be more focused when applying the techniques. I also tried it, because I needed to sleep.

Question: Was you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

Response: I have always been very aware of all my senses.

Question: Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

Response: Yes. I felt good within myself when I realised that other people see me in a positive light.

Question: Were awareness of your own and other individuals' non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/ gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

Response: Presenting the correct body language has always been second nature to me. I am more assertive, though. Although I am not very aware of my own facial expressions I became aware of the expressions of amazement, the rolling of eyes and beautiful smiles amongst some of my learners. No facial expression can be an expression, in itself, indicating a lot of anger. I verbally told my daughter to calm down and then reinforced it positively with a hug. Through varying my tone of voice I hold the attention of the learners much longer.

Question: Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions. Please elaborate.

Response: No

DIALOGUE

Question: Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Did you experience honest communication with another individual where the acknowledgment of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate

Response: Not what I am aware of.

Question: Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate

Response: No. While explaining some scientific concepts to a colleague and he kept moving closer to me, I eventually moved to behind my desk and continued the explanation.

Question: Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

Response: No, although I had lots of empathy.

Question: Were you able to say ‘no’ to unreasonable demands made upon you?

Please elaborate.

Response: No unreasonable demands were made upon me.

Question: Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation?

Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, sometimes learners must realise it is my way or no way. Some situations are just not debatable.

Question: Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

Response: No

PROCESS

Question: Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

Response: I did not keep the dual nature of people in mind.

Question: How and to what extent did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

Response: I have never denied any of my characteristics.

Question: How and to what extent did you satisfy your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: I did not satisfy my dominant needs.

Question: Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial? Please motivate.

Response: I eat healthily, but do not stick to regular meals. I only eat supper.

Question: How and to what extent did you come to terms with your work environment? Please explain.

Response: My work environment is a comfort zone. I enjoy what I do every day, no matter how taxing or difficult the day is.

Question: How and to what extent did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

Response: Not applicable

Question: How and to what extent did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate

Response: I am normally the one lending the support.

GENERAL

Question: How do you feel at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire? Please explain.

Response: I feel happy.

Responses to questionnaire – Participant B

AWARENESS

Question: Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations? Please elaborate.

Response: No. I could only think of survival. I experience a hurriedness, which I cannot control. I am under the illusion that I have to come to a standstill before I can come in contact with myself. I just can't succeed in it.

Question: Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate

Response: No. The same as number 1

Question: Were you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

Response: To some extent. I try to listen more attentively.

Question: Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

Response: Yes. I started to consider why I perceive myself as not 'good enough'.

Question: Was awareness of your own and other individuals' non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/ gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

Response: No. I was not aware of any.

Question: Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions. Please elaborate.

Response: No

DIALOGUE

Question: Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes. The person did not want to hear what I was saying, which frustrated me.

Question: Did you experience honest communication with another individual where the acknowledgment of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate

Response: Yes, and experienced it as satisfying.

Question: Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate

Response: Not any of which I was consciously aware.

Question: Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

Response: Nothing different than in the past.

Question: Were you able to say ‘no’ to unreasonable demands made upon you? Please elaborate.

Response: The opportunity did not arise.

Question: Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes. I just kept quiet and carried on.

Question: Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

Response: No

PROCESS

Question: Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

Response: I always keep in mind that there are two sides to every person.

Question: How and to what extent did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

Response: I have not yet made peace with my disowned characteristics. For the first time I started to consider the reasons why I refuse to see myself as good enough.

Question: How and to what extent did you satisfy your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: Very, very little. Circumstances did not allow for it. This led to stress and I have a growing feeling that I do not have control over my life.

Question: Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial? Please motivate.

Response: It feels as if I do not eat correctly during the day.

Question: How and to what extent did you come to terms with your work environment? Please explain.

Response: I am very satisfied as always.

Question: How and to what extent did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

Response: Not applicable

Question: How and to what extent did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate

Response: Not applicable

GENERAL

Question: How do you feel at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire? Please explain.

Response: I am frustrated. I am not at all consciously in contact with myself or my environment and I find it upsetting.

Responses to questionnaire – Participant C

AWARENESS

Question: Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes. In the process of trying to juggle the departmental visit, the quiz, the staff in my department's queries, the setting of exam papers and teaching, I applied breathing during break and it helped me to relax.

Question: Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate

Response: No

Question: Were you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

Response: I am more aware of different smells, sounds and tastes.

Question: Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

Response: School is my life and I need a little more 'me-time'. I realised that I might have played some small part in the schools winning of the Rotary quiz, which is my responsibility. I still found it difficult to accept the appreciation of others though.

Question: Was awareness of your own and other individuals' non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/ gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

Response: I am aware that my non-verbal communication is usually very enthusiastic and that I pull a puzzled face at times. I am aware that I use expressive gestures and noticed a friend's expressive gestures of excitement because of our Rotary quiz win. I need to be more aware of tone of voice.

Question: Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions. Please elaborate.

Response: District has always been perceived as the 'enemy'. Nothing is ever right when they visit the school. Today I do not mind their visit, but I wish I could say that I was 100% ready for them.

DIALOGUE

Question: Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Did you experience honest communication with another individual where the acknowledgment of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate.

Response: Sometimes family members and learners speak to me and I respond before they have completed what they were saying. I am trying to change this.

Question: Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate

Response: No. My school life is about school and my home life is private.

Question: Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Were you able to say 'no' to unreasonable demands made upon you? Please elaborate.

Response: I always say 'yes'. I am trying to change this.

Question: Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

Response: No

PROCESS

Question: Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: How and to what extent did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

Response: I know that I do become depressed under pressure, but that I can overcome all.

Question: How and to what extent did you satisfy your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: I got my filing done for the departmental visit. I went to see a show. The filing was a pain, but necessary. The show was very relaxing.

Question: Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, I went to see a show.

Question: To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial? Please motivate.

Response: I am very bad at this. I usually do not eat under pressure. I just keep going.

Question: How and to what extent did you come to terms with your work environment? Please explain.

Response: I enjoy coming to school. I felt a little bad to admit that my filing was not up to date.

Question: How and to what extent did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

Response: I always get enthusiastic about the situation I am in, whether good or bad.

Question: How and to what extent did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate

Response: Not at all

GENERAL

Question: How do you feel at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire? Please explain.

Response: I feel wonderful. I am more aware of certain things I used to take for granted. I feel light hearted, although I do not know why.

Responses to questionnaire – Participant D

AWARENESS

Question: Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes. I have even made it a bit religious in the morning. At the beginning of a period when the learners ought to have lined-up, I do some deep breathing.

Question: Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate

Response: Yes, although not often enough. It tends to help me gain perspective. Once I have envisioned my 'safe place', I tend to make better decisions.

Question: Were you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

Response: My vision is clearer, I pay more attention to what people say and I am even aware of my feet touching the ground.

Question: Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

Response: Yes. I have accepted that I too can depend on others emotionally to let off steam. This helped me to think more clearly and to feel better about myself. I was always rather modest, but came to realise that some compliments may very well be the truth.

Question: Was awareness of your own and other individuals' non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/ gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

Response: Awareness of non-verbal communication improved the mutual understanding of issues and views. The limited use of gestures created the feeling of giving each other personal space.

Question: Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions. Please elaborate.

Response: Not applicable

DIALOGUE

Question: Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you? Please elaborate.

Response: A person was interrupting while we were talking, not to contribute, but to end the conversation. This made me feel unimportant, left out and stupid.

Question: Did you experience honest communication with another individual where the acknowledgment of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate

Response: This applied to a learner whom I did not listen to. Later on in the lesson I attended to her though.

Question: Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate

Response: I did not allow another person to invade my personal space, but I feel connected and in touch with the person. This was a very comforting feeling.

Question: Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

Response: I learned to keep my boundaries intact, although I sympathised with the learner.

Question: Were you able to say 'no' to unreasonable demands made upon you? Please elaborate.

Response: Not directly. I would explain myself to great lengths, which has become a habit by now.

Question: Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation? Please elaborate.

Response: The new ways attempted were challenging, but I managed.

Question: Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, often with a joke or a story.

PROCESS

Question: Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, I tried not to have too many expectations from people.

Question: How and to what extent did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

Response: In the class I can feel comfortable one moment and irritated by something small the next. I still find it difficult to talk about what I feel, but I am trying.

Question: How and to what extent did you satisfy your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: I made a priority list and it worked to a large extent.

Question: Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes. I complimented myself.

Question: To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial? Please motivate.

Response: I did not even try.

Question: How and to what extent did you come to terms with your work environment? Please explain.

Response: As much as it is challenging at times, it is what I appreciate and it still feels like home.

Question: How and to what extent did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

Response: At some point I would avoid it and pray.

Question: How and to what extent did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate

Response: None

GENERAL

Question: How do you feel at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire? Please explain.

Response: I am again amazed at what and how much I can say about myself. It is an achievement.

Responses to questionnaire – Participant E

AWARENESS

Question: Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations? Please elaborate.

Response: I tried at first, but I am prone to losing my temper too quickly with the grade 10's and 12's. The last two days went better, but I soon found that I was worked up again.

Question: Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate

Response: No, there was no real time to relax. When I get home in the afternoons I only want to sleep so that I can start working again.

Question: Were you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, I try to see all the beautiful things around me and am more aware of smells, especially in the class. I only hear important things, am in too much of a hurry to taste anything and have not yet had the time to practise touch.

Question: Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

Response: I am a little more self-confident and ignore what others, who are jealous of my work, say or do. I felt embarrassed when I was complimented. I did accept the compliment as true, though, because I know what I am capable of. To some extent I have stopped valuing compliments, possibly because of previous experiences.

Question: Was awareness of your own and other individuals' non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/ gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

Response: My body language indicated to another person that I did not want her following me around, but she did not read it as such. It thus served no purpose. She clung to me like a nit. I became aware that I felt more and more like a cat on a hot tin roof. I realised that the expression in my eyes gives me away, especially when I am angry. Learners then tend to see how far they can push me. I constantly rubbed my hand out of frustration. The briskness in my voice helps to terminate a conversation.

Question: Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions. Please elaborate.

Response: I honestly do not see what is happening around me. I am too busy with my own world and activities.

DIALOGUE

Question: Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Did you experience honest communication with another individual where the acknowledgment of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate

Response: I listen on the one hand, but on the other hand I do not really listen.

Question: Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate

Response: Yes, everybody does it subconsciously.

Question: Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

Response: I have attempted not to get personally involved. I succeeded, but became even tougher on the learners.

Question: Were you able to say 'no' to unreasonable demands made upon you? Please elaborate.

Response: No. I can't say 'no'. I would rather keep quiet and do it. Nothing is too much effort to me.

Question: Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, to be rude in a way. It worked especially with the learners.

Question: Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, but it did not work at all. I usually just keep quiet.

PROCESS

Question: Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, through observing people I learned to keep my distance from difficult and negative people.

Question: How and to what extent did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

Response: I have not yet attended to this at all. There are personal aspects which I have not yet come to terms with.

Question: How and to what extent did you satisfy your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: I have made no time for myself. I feel too guilty when I do not work. I feel more stressed because of the fact that I did not make time for myself.

Question: Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: Not at all

Question: To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial? Please motivate.

Response: There is no diet. I want to eat all the time. I am tired and listless.

Question: How and to what extent did you come to terms with your work environment? Please explain.

Response: I did not understand the question.

Question: How and to what extent did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

Response: I reacted instinctively and impulsively during each incident.

Question: How and to what extent did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate

Response: I did not require any help. I help others on the contrary.

GENERAL

Question: How do you feel at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire? Please explain.

Response: I have too much ‘unfinished business’ within myself with which I cannot come to terms.

Responses to questionnaire – Participant F

AWARENESS

Question: Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations? Please elaborate.

Response: No, because the stressful situations occur in the classroom and you cannot start deep breathing with a class in front of you.

Question: Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate

Response: Yes, before starting to work on exam papers or preparation I did the relaxation technique. It did seem to help me to get going and to approach the task more calmly.

Question: Were you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

Response: No, I cannot say that I am more aware of my senses.

Question: Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

Response: Very briefly. I was almost on a high I felt so good after the workshop. Unfortunately reality stepped in and the situation did not change.

Question: Was awareness of your own and other individuals’ non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/ gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

Response: My body language was very tense and irritated. A learner was adamant that I was wrong, which was apparent in his posture. It made me realise that I have to calm down and not overreact. I had a frown as deep as the Grand Canyon and the learner’s

facial expression was one of irritation and annoyance. When I waved my arms, so did he. I screamed like a fish wife.

Question: Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions. Please elaborate.

Response: Yes. I often speak to people and think they are highly strung and stressed like me, and I think they make me think of myself.

DIALOGUE

Question: Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Did you experience honest communication with another individual where the acknowledgment of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate

Response: Yes, I did. The person is a bit of a hypochondriac though, and I tend to switch off.

Question: Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate

Response: No

Question: Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Were you able to say ‘no’ to unreasonable demands made upon you? Please elaborate.

Response: No, but they were probably not that unreasonable. My husband sent me on a long errand in the afternoon when he knew I was loaded with school work. I did not say ‘no’ because he is always very supportive.

Question: Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, I still lose my temper in class when learners do not behave, although I know it does not help.

Question: Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

Response: No

PROCESS

Question: Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

Response: It made me realise how easily I can change and after lashing out, I made myself aware that I can remain calm.

Question: How, and to what extent, did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

Response: I don’t believe I have made peace with it.

Question: How, and to what extent, did you satisfy your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: I spent one evening reading a couple of chapters in my book, which I really seem to have very little time for. I did not find it satisfying because at the back of my mind is always the thought of what I should be doing.

Question: Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: No, because there is no time when you are setting six exam papers and still trying to fit in preparation.

Question: To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial? Please motivate.

Response: I normally follow a reasonably proper diet.

Question: How and to what extent did you come to terms with your work environment? Please explain.

Response: I haven't really come to terms with it as I have had an extremely bad week.

Question: How and to what extent did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

Response: I did not choose them well at all. I overreacted and was quite unpleasant at times, when it was not necessary.

Question: How and to what extent did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate

Response: I probably needed it as much as before, but did not ask for it as you eventually have to cope on your own. (self-support)

GENERAL

Question: How do you feel at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire? Please explain.

Response: There were some questions that I found difficult to answer. It was quite heavy going. I know this all seems so negative, but I did seem to have a bad week. You probably think I need therapy all over again.

Responses to questionnaire – Participant G

AWARENESS

Question: Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations?

Please elaborate.

Response: The pain is terrible. When I breathed deeply it at least prevented me from crying and in that way showing to the world what a weakling you are.

Question: Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate

Response: No, because I can't.

Question: Were you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

Response: I have always been very aware of my senses. The fact that I need to be fed after the operation to my right hand made me aware of how dependent I am.

Question: Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

Response: Yes. I realised that there are so many other things surfacing that I cannot even get to the stress.

Question: Was awareness of your own and other individuals' non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/ gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

Response: I am always aware that I may present myself poorly. I experienced the non-verbal communication of my colleagues as comforting. The non-verbal communication of family members does not make an impression on me. My tone of voice is calm and measured and can be well understood.

Question: Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions. Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, I always experienced the same pain and sadness as others, but never admitted to it.

DIALOGUE

Question: Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Did you experience honest communication with another individual where the acknowledgment of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate

Response: I tried to explain how I felt, but the other person heard but did not understand the seriousness of my feelings.

Question: Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate

Response: No. I do not really have a personal space.

Question: Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, although I did not deal with the situation personally. I felt that I have let the learner down, because I was not at school when she needed me. I wanted to type a personal letter to her, but then decided against it.

Question: Were you able to say 'no' to unreasonable demands made upon you? Please elaborate.

Response: No. I said to my head of department not to be concerned about the mark sheets, I would do it. My inability to say 'no' resulted in the marking of my exam papers with my left hand.

Question: Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation?

Please elaborate.

Response: Yes. I said nothing and went to listen to music.

Question: Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, every time a person asked me how I felt or showed sympathy.

PROCESS

Question: Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: How, and to what extent, did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

Response: I have not come to terms with anything. I hate being vulnerable. I hate it not to be at school during a departmental visit, but I also hate to be there and not being able to do anything.

Question: How and to what extent did you satisfy your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: At first not at all, then, due to my principal, 100%. I feel guilty and like a weakling. I feel like a burden and that increased my stress levels. I realise that I can't do anything about it though.

Question: Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial? Please motivate.

Response: I followed my normal diet.

Question: How and to what extent did you come to terms with your work environment? Please explain.

Response: I can't change the situation with my hand. I have to wait and let time heal it. I will make a difference again when my hand has healed.

Question: How and to what extent did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

Response: I usually make it positive.

Question: How and to what extent did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate

Response: Never with discipline. At this stage I need help with my schoolwork due to my operation.

GENERAL

Question: How do you feel at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire? Please explain.

Response: I am in an unusual stress situation and feel that my responses will be of no value. I am not at school at present and am only a burden.

Responses to questionnaire – Participant H

AWARENESS

Question: Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations? Please elaborate.

Response: Not really. I forget and it is not yet a part of me. I still react and answer according to the situation and only realise later how I should rather have reacted.

Question: Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate

Response: It helps a lot. After relaxation I think more clearly and make better decisions.

Question: Were you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

Response: I am more aware of my senses. I do not hear well, because I am deaf in my one ear. My touch sense is excellent.

Question: Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

Response: It improved a lot. It feels as if I could start from scratch and correct all the mistakes I have made in life. I accept compliments, because I am good.

Question: Was awareness of your own and other individuals' non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/ gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

Response: There was a correlation between my emotions and my non-verbal communication. I used gestures to emphasise my welcome. I looked at my facial expressions and thought that I did not recognise myself, but I just felt good. Awareness of the facial expressions of others made me realise what it is they actually mean. This awareness helped to create a clear picture of the situation.

Question: Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions. Please elaborate.

Response: I was more relaxed than before.

DIALOGUE

Question: Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you?

Please elaborate.

Response: I explained important activities to my learners, but they did not want to listen. This insulted my intelligence.

Question: Did you experience honest communication with another individual where the acknowledgment of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate

Response: No, I am trying my best to listen. I rather keep quiet than interrupt. This improved communication, gave me the courage to disagree appropriately.

Question: Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate

Response: No. It was a busy week. I did not allow anybody to invade my space. I needed to be alone and complete my work.

Question: Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Were you able to say 'no' to unreasonable demands made upon you?

Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, although I felt very bad after saying 'no'.

Question: Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation?

Please elaborate.

Response: No. When I am wrong I admit it instead of finding a way to defend myself.

Question: Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, by trying to change the subject.

PROCESS

Question: Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

Response: I do accept that people have two sides to their personalities.

Question: How, and to what extent, did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

Response: I accept things the way they are.

Question: How, and to what extent, did you satisfy your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: I stopped satisfying other people's needs and forgetting about myself in the process. I felt guilty though because I answered to my dominant need and that led to stress.

Question: Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, I completed my marking and filing on time.

Question: To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial? Please motivate.

Response: To the full and I feel good.

Question: How, and to what extent, did you come to terms with your work environment? Please explain.

Response: I feel very good, positive and motivated.

Question: How, and to what extent, did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

Response: When I lost my temper I took a deep breath and calmed down.

Question: How and to what extent did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate

Response: None

GENERAL

Question: How do you feel at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire? Please explain.

Response: Relieved, because it felt as if I owed something.

Responses to questionnaire – Participant J

AWARENESS

Question: Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations? Please elaborate.

Response: I had a class who were continuously talking. I was starting to get stressed and annoyed. Instead of getting angry, I stopped, and breathed deeply, which helped me to calm down.

Question: Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate

Response: It helped me to realise that I was stressing for no reason.

Question: Were you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

Response: I became more aware of the environment, small sounds, different flavours and textures.

Question: Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

Response: Yes. I have always had a bit of a negative self-concept. After the workshop and hearing what the other participants said about me, I have stopped being so hard on myself.

Question: Was awareness of your own and other individuals' non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/ gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

Response: Awareness of my posture made me aware that I was in control of a situation and stayed in control. I became aware of my gestures, which helped me to get my point across without getting upset. I kept my voice calm whilst dealing with a parent. The parent's tone of voice indicated frustration and I realised that I had to stay calm in order to calm the parent down.

Question: Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions. Please elaborate.

Response: No

DIALOGUE

Question: Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, with my mother. I stopped however, told her how I felt and she finally listened.

Question: Did you experience honest communication with another individual where the acknowledgment of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate

Response: No

Question: Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate

Response: No

Question: Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Were you able to say ‘no’ to unreasonable demands made upon you? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes. I was requested to help a friend who only uses me and I decided not to help her.

Question: Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

Response: No

PROCESS

Question: Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

Response: I have kept calm when talking to people, especially my parents. This knowledge helped me not to jump to conclusions about a situation.

Question: How, and to what extent, did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

Response: I realised that I am unique and complimented myself on tasks completed.

Question: How, and to what extent, did you satisfy your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate

Response: I took care of myself and was concerned with what I wanted. I was less stressed this week.

Question: Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: I had chocolate and me-time without feeling guilty.

Question: To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial? Please motivate.

Response: I ate regularly and am more aware of what my body needs. I feel more alive.

Question: How and to what extent did you come to terms with your work environment? Please explain.

Response: I am comfortable in my work environment.

Question: How and to what extent did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

Response: I chose to remain calm and 'moved' over the situation.

Question: How and to what extent did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate

Response: None

GENERAL

Question: How do you feel at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire? Please explain.

Response: Satisfied. I have grown, just a little, but I have grown.

Responses to questionnaire – Participant K

AWARENESS

Question: Did you successfully apply deep breathing during stressful situations?

Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, the learners were very challenging. I stood back and stayed calm. I breathed deeply. The learners saw the difference in me and eventually calmed down and we continued with the lesson.

Question: Did you successfully apply a relaxation technique? Please elaborate

Response: I did not have time.

Question: Were you more aware of the functioning of your senses? Please elaborate.

Response: I look at my learners differently and take more time to listen.

Question: Did your self-concept change after the workshop? Please explain.

Response: I realised how fortunate I was to attend the workshop. Learners observed that I was happy, even after a chaotic period.

Question: Was awareness of your own and other individuals' non-verbal communication (body language/facial expressions/ gestures/tone of voice) beneficial during contact? Please explain.

Response: I am not as tense as I used to be. Learners relaxed when they saw my relaxed body language. My calm facial expression had a calming effect on the learners. People read one's body language and take their cue from it.

Question: Did your thoughts about experiences and observations colour your perceptions and actions. Please elaborate.

Response: At first, but one must always try to avoid preconceived ideas.

DIALOGUE

Question: Did you experience a situation where a person did not really listen to you?

Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Did you experience honest communication with another individual where the acknowledgment of each individual's humanity and authenticity were prevalent? Please elaborate

Response: No, I misunderstood an instruction.

Question: Did another individual invade your personal space? Please elaborate

Response: No

Question: Did you allow your sympathy to get the better of you, whilst dealing with another individual experiencing emotional distress? Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Were you able to say 'no' to unreasonable demands made upon you?

Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, the estate agent wanted to put my house on show on Sunday and I told him I was too tired.

Question: Did you use old, redundant methods to address a problematic situation?

Please elaborate.

Response: No

Question: Did you change the subject to avoid addressing an uncomfortable situation? Please elaborate.

Response: No

PROCESS

Question: Did you successfully apply the gained knowledge of personality and/or emotional polarities? Please elaborate.

Response: There is a situation I am working through where this therapy is coming in handy, because people take advantage of my weaknesses. A learner was grateful that I detained him after school, because he needed the marks, but at the end he told me he hated me for it.

Question: How and to what extent did you re-own your own disowned characteristics and emotions? Please elaborate.

Response: I realised that I am gullible.

Question: How, and to what extent, did you satisfy your dominant needs during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: I needed eight hours sleep on Sunday and felt better afterwards. I could think quicker and more clearly.

Question: Did you nurture yourself during the past week? Please elaborate.

Response: Yes, I bought myself chocolates.

Question: To what extent did you experience the following of a balanced diet as beneficial? Please motivate.

Response: I always follow a balanced diet. One must eat correctly to cope physically.

Question: How, and to what extent, did you come to terms with your work environment? Please explain.

Response: I usually prioritise well, but I prioritised even more effectively this week. It is really the only way to cope in teaching.

Question: How and to what extent did you choose your reactions to unpleasant situations or an unfavourable environment? Please explain.

Response: I chose to accept my friend's apology after hearing her reasoning.

Question: How and to what extent did you need support from colleagues regarding discipline or preparation? Please elaborate

Response: I needed less support. My head of department only had to stand in the doorway of my class once, to assist in my classroom management.

GENERAL

Question: How do you feel at this moment, after the completion of the questionnaire? Please explain.

Response: I am glad it is done.

ANNEXURE M

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF THE GROUP INTERVIEW HELD WITH THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS TWO WEEKS AFTER THE TWO-DAY WORKSHOP (GROUP 1)

Responses in chronological order:

E wanted to start with the report back. His need for this session also seemed to be the greatest during the past two weeks. He indicated that he was still stressed, could not cope and cried for no reason. He could not control the crying and cried without an antecedent. He couldn't relax, and was forgetful. He had managed to keep control over all his emotions for the past four years, but since the workshop he had started to experience all these emotions and sensations, such as burning ears and heart palpitations. The researcher indicated that this is a clear sign that he had benefited from the workshop, because he was trying to come to terms with 'unfinished business'. Based on the answers to the questions in the questionnaire and his present emotions the researcher indicated that she would like to see him for an individual session the following Monday.

D indicated that his perspective about himself had changed. The Sunday after the workshop he had managed to speak to his mother about his need to be emotional also and less in control. His mother did not know what to do because she always saw him as the stronger, although youngest, sibling. He sobbed after that, and felt better, as if it was a cleansing process, and fell asleep. He felt that there had been a rift between him and his mother after his opening up to her, which left him feeling guilty. He came to the conclusion, after some questions from the researcher and the group, that his mother had never expected him to be the stronger one, he had assumed the role voluntarily. He never went to parties or to visit friends and only stayed at home. He did not have a girl friend either. To him that was how it should be. He explained that in their culture it is expected of children and young adults to live a confined life and not to have relationships before

they meet the man or woman they intended to marry. This is only the case, though, where the parents are firmly rooted in their culture. D mentioned a youth conference which the church would like him to attend in Durban, but that he had been trying his best to find an excuse not to go. The group indicated that he should go and that they would check on that.

H said that she was scared that she did not '*live her life*' fully. She only regretted that this workshop had not taken place earlier in her life, because the previous year had been a dreadful one. The relationship with her mother used to be very strained, but they had been getting along very well at that time. She had found that her sister had been picking fights with her, where they used to be very close. The mother and the sister had been very close in the past. She decided to speak to her sister the following Sunday to clarify the situation. H showed a lot of growth and also a very mature handling of a situation in dealing with a netball coach from a visiting school which occurred the previous day.

J mentioned that she had a lot of old wounds from the past three years and still found it difficult to find closure. She tended to snap at people. She did not know how to break down the barrier between her and people in order to tell them how she felt, with the result that she snapped at them. The researcher was of the opinion that the 'unfinished business', which had always surfaced during sessions, was her relationship with her parents. The researcher suggested that J asked her parents to come for a session, which would give the researcher an opportunity to facilitate communication between them. J indicated that there was a possibility that her parents would agree to such intervention.

B said immediately that she was a '*basket case*'. She felt like the '*biggest idiot*' and she did not know who was living her life. She realised that she had blocked things out and preferred to stay in her comfort zone. She still felt guilty when she was not working. The researcher asked her what the polarity of 'basket case' was, and with the help of the group it was determined that it was to be successful and sane. B found it very difficult to accept the positive poles of her character, although she is an outstanding teacher and computer genius.

F felt very good and on '*such a high*' after the workshop, but after her first class on the Monday she felt as if she was '*falling apart*'. She asked, a little exasperated, whether this meant that she needed therapy on a daily basis. The researcher asked her to compare where she was at that moment, compared with where she had been during the middle of the first term of the same year. F and the group indicated the tremendous growth experienced by F, who had resigned in the middle of the first term, but stayed on because no replacement could be found.

K indicated that she had a desperate need for therapy. Life had been hectic the past two weeks. She recognised a lot of things in herself, some of which surprised her. She had experienced some of these as positive, but she was fairly shocked to acknowledge some of the others. She indicated that she was embarrassed about her '*toy boy relationship*' of the previous two years (she is divorced). She cannot deal with rejection and doesn't want to be alone. She feared being old and alone one day. She had indicated that she needed male company and that she needed a '*jol*' (party). She had indicated the same during the workshop.

C found life exciting. She felt very revived. She was less snappy and bossy at home and her family had even commented on her '*change*'. She again mentioned the fact that her filing was up to date and indicated that she was both glad that it was done and embarrassed to have admitted that it was so far behind. She told the group that she was going for her learner's licence and that she would have her driver's licence by the time the empirical research study was terminated in August.

A indicated that he found the workshop very beneficial and indicated that he wished that he could have had the experience eight years earlier. He could have been stronger quicker and much earlier in his life. The observer also commented on his controlled tone of voice during his feedback.

The session took much longer than the researcher anticipated and after some light-hearted chatter the group dismissed. The researcher needs to point out that although it was then already 16:30 the group had wanted to stay and talk to each other. The group cohesion since the workshop had begun was very obvious. F, who did not usually communicate with staff members, and who was new to the staff, even initiated a conversation with B on the Monday after the workshop.

ANNEXURE N
CHECKLIST AS SELF-MONITORING AND REINFORCEMENT
INSTRUMENT

ANNEXURE O

QUESTIONS ASKED AND RESPONSES RECEIVED DURING SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED ONE MONTH AFTER THE TWO-DAY WORKSHOP (GROUP 1)

Semi-structured interview with A

A was a deputy principal and was asked to join the group with the additional purpose to determine the feasibility of a School Management Team member presenting the Gestalt therapeutic model as a first line of intervention. He indicated that with a last bit of training he would really like to conduct a therapeutic workshop.

Researcher: *Does the checklist help you to implement the Gestalt principles?*

A: *I complete it first thing in the morning when I arrive at school.*

Researcher: *How have you experienced the workshop and the intervention to date?*

A: *I am more aware of things. I find the deep breathing and relaxation and going to my 'safe place' as very beneficial. It makes a great impact on me when I feel that I cannot cope. It helps me to carry on again.*

Researcher: *Do you nurture yourself?*

A: *Self nurturing does not really feature, although at times I do just sit for an hour before I start preparing supper. I love cooking and my wife hates it. Due to major operations to my legs after a bomb explosion I need to go for pedicures to relieve the discomfort and I nurture myself in this way. I am neglecting my painting though.*

Researcher: *Do you acknowledge your strengths?*

A: *Yes, and I am even more aware of these because of the compliments I receive from colleagues. I am a strong person.*

Semi-structured interview with B

B was a head of department and was asked to join the group with the additional purpose to determine the feasibility of a school management team member presenting the Gestalt therapeutic model as a first line of intervention.

Researcher: *How do you feel at this moment?*

B: *I feel as if everything is not 100%. Everything is a mess. I am becoming more aware though, that if one of my subject files is not perfect I think that nothing is perfect, although the other files are 100%. This is unfinished business I am still dealing with.*

Researcher: *How do you feel about the unresolved issues in your life?*

B: *I may be in denial, but have decided that the things from my childhood are not having an effect on me any longer.*

Researcher: *To what extent are you able to say 'no' to unreasonable demands?*

B: *Although I can say 'no' to other people's unreasonable demands, I am not capable of saying 'no' to the unreasonable demands I make upon myself.*

Researcher: *Are you more aware that you need to scale down on what you do?*

B: *I am more aware that I need to scale down on some of the things I do.*

Researcher: *Give me some examples.*

B: *I can only give examples of work, because I always work. I work because I enjoy it. A lot of the 'work' is research for my subject, History, which is my passion.*

Researcher: *What do you like to do, excluding work?*

B: *I like to watch a good programme on TV. It is often the history channel because of my passion for History. My companion sees it as work, though.*

Researcher: *Watching the History channel is more like a hobby, because it is your passion and you must perceive it in that light.*

B: *I like to go to shows and visit places, but I have too much work and never attend these.*

Researcher: *What is your dominant need at this moment?*

B: *I would like to go and see a show presently being performed and to start with a BPsych degree next year.*

(B did have an honours degree in psychology, but wanted to do a BPsych degree in order to obtain registration with the medical board and a practice number.)

Her lack of time management was discussed and a way to prioritise based on what was of importance and urgent, less important and urgent, not important and not urgent. She should also learn to delegate the less important work to others although she thought they could not do it as well as she could.

Researcher: *How do you manage conflict at this stage?*

B: *I avoid conflict although it is sometimes necessary. When I am faced with a situation, I would rather turn around and walk away. The issues re-occur, because it is never addressed.*

Semi-structured interview with C

The researcher afforded C the opportunity to just give her views on the approach. She was also one of the School Management Team members selected to evaluate the feasibility of a School Management Team member presenting the programme as a first line of intervention. This was quite a lengthy interview and the researcher gives a descriptive summary of the highlights of the interview.

Because C's mother had broken her arm, she all of a sudden had responsibilities beyond school work. She had to keep house and started to realise how difficult it is for people who juggled career and demands at home. Suddenly she became aware of the whole issue of having a balance in your life. She became aware that other people have lives outside school.

C became aware of how often she does not listen properly due to the two-chair work done in the workshop where people had to say ' *I hear you say...* '?

Researcher: *How did you perceive the checklist?*

C: *I perceived the checklist as a self-regulating instrument. It really made me think.*

C was of the opinion that all schools should implement this therapeutic model. She had come into contact with a large number of teachers from different schools due to her position as a Gauteng examiner. She felt ready to present the programme with a little more training and when there was a person with a psychology background with her.

C averaged the scores on her checklist and was worried about the scores which were not the same. The researcher pointed out that there should not even be scores, but that it can serve as self-monitoring data.

C made a point of mentioning that although she indicated on the questionnaire completed seven days after the initial workshop, that she did not cry, she did, but not in front of the learners because that would give them the impression that they got the better of her.

C did nurture herself and went to the movies and to shows. She realised the importance of nurturing the inner child.

C was very excited about the programme and asked whether she could show the checklist to a psychiatrist whom she had consulted since her nervous breakdown ten years previously. She talked to him on a monthly basis and he gave her advice. A lot of the

things which he said corresponded with the checklist, but it did not have the same effect on her and she wished that she could have attended the Gestalt therapeutic intervention ten years ago, because it would have made her recovery much quicker.

Semi-structured interview with D

Researcher: *What is your perception of the workshop and the therapeutic intervention to date?*

D: *It has been a very good experience*

Researcher: *To what extent has your communication improved since the workshop?*

D: *I am more aware of looking into people's eyes when I talk to them or delegate work to them. I then observe that they really do understand me. I found the learners, after I had attended the workshop to be more receptive to my instructions in Physical Education and that I do not have to repeat my instructions. I contribute this to the skills learned during the workshop.*

Researcher: *Do you feel that you are more aware of the functioning of your senses?*

D: *I am very aware of my senses and made a point of noticing the different degrees of heat experienced in the Gym hall while I was walking up and down doing exam invigilation. I enjoyed the heat more than usual and even have a better awareness of taste.*

Researcher: *Do you spend time doing relaxation exercises?*

D: *When I do relaxation with visioning, my whole body responds and I am aware of smiling. I feel even more positive and make a point of seeing everything in a positive light. I am also more aware of negativity in others and do not open myself up to it.*

Researcher: *You have experienced a distance between yourself and your mother since you approached her about the fact that you also need support and sometimes are also vulnerable. Are there any changes in your relationship?*

D: *There is a different dimension to my relationship with my mother and find that after I opened up to her about the issue of awareness and that I also need support at times, my mother is more aware of what I am saying, I can see it in her eyes. I have positive thoughts about my mother and this gives me a comforting bodily sensation instead of the disturbing one I used to have.*

Researcher: *Do you nurture yourself?*

D: *I have started to build puzzles and enjoy it.*

Researcher: *have you said 'no' to any unreasonable demands lately?*

D: *I used to walk home with a lady teacher after school and in this way lost valuable studying time. This past week I said to her that I cannot do it again, and although I feel a little guilty, I can feel the difference it makes to the time spent in front of my books.*

Researcher: *Did you re-own any disowned characteristics?*

D: *I have become even more spiritual. I fasted for twenty four hours because of the problems experienced by one of my colleagues, as well as for my sister who started a new career.*

Researcher: *Have you experienced that your thoughts influence your perception of what you experience?*

D: *I am very aware of it and evaluate it before it can influence what I do. I feel empowered by the therapeutic intervention. I feel liked, because of remarks my mother made.*

Researcher: *Do you exercise?*

D: *Over and above walking to the taxi rank, I do stretching exercises in the morning.*

Semi-structured interview with E

Researcher: *Did you find the checklist helpful?*

E: *I was 'crazy' about the checklist' I started to look at my most dominant needs and decided to pay attention to my tutor work first, instead of attempting to do everything at the same time. I started to prioritise and decided that the less urgent work could wait and stopped worrying about it. I further decided to go to bed at ten o'clock, instead of carrying on with my work in spite of being tired. I became aware that I have to work smarter and not harder. My stress levels are lower, because I decided to work on only one thing at a time. I became aware of small things and determined what is important and what is not. This resulted in a 'to do' list.*

The researcher did not have to ask any questions because the answers were forthcoming without any prompting.

E: *I became aware of my perfectionist tendencies and realised that I can write a memo by hand instead of typing it on a computer. I do not fret when a line is skew any longer. This does not mean that I have not kept a little bit of my perfectionism.*

Researcher: *Did this cause your work to be less tidy than usual?*

E: *Not at all. My paper work is just as good, but I control my thoughts and do not worry about them any longer. Before the intervention I arrived home and started working immediately, now I have coffee and a conversation with my parents before I start to do school work. I sleep more and I feel much better.*

E (without prompting): *I am aware of the here-and-now. I am aware of my senses and I have even become aware of the smell of my after shave, which has never been the case before. I am more aware of detail and I am aware of things in myself. I have a complex about my body, but I have reached the stage where I can look the way I do and people who have a problem with it can go fly a kite.*

E further referred to his relationship with a man who told him that his body was nauseating. When people referred to his physique he made a joke to deflect the hurting remark.

E: I have become very aware of body-language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice and can read people and act accordingly. I have become aware of some of my mannerisms which indicated irritation and started to control these.

Researcher: *Are you able to say 'no' when unreasonable demands are made upon you?*

E: I have stopped jumping to attention every time a teacher asks me to intervene with a misbehaving class.

Researcher: *Are you more aware of your strengths?*

E: I am an excellent disciplinarian.

With the assistance of the researcher his other strengths were brought into his awareness. They were: his pleasant personality, leadership abilities, awareness that people working for him need a balance in their lives; his insight into people; his ability to influence people to get them to work with him; his ability to initiate team work; his excellent organisational abilities; his perseverance; his creative abilities; neatness and computer skills.

E thanked the researcher for the therapeutic intervention, because it had made him aware of the 'life' he has had 12 years before and that he was able to have it back. He had started to take himself, and not only other people, into consideration.

Researcher: *Have you nurtured yourself in any other way than going to bed much earlier?*

E: Yes, for the first time in years I got into a bath and soaked instead of just rushing through the shower to get back to work.

Semi-structured interview with F

F indicated that she had just had a very testing invigilation session with the Grade 11 learners and that they should re-schedule the interview. The researcher would not re-schedule.

***Researcher:** Are you aware of a difference when you compare the way you felt in term one to the way you feel now?*

***F:** A vast difference. After the April holidays I made the choice to make the best of the situation at school. I would not have done it, if it had not been for the tremendous support from the principal.*

***Researcher:** How do you feel about the checklist?*

***F:** It is like a prompt to be more aware and to observe more. I realise that I am so much more aware of certain circumstances.*

***Researcher:** Do you have a good relationship with your husband?*

***F:** Yes, very.*

***Researcher:** I became aware of this during the workshop. As a result you were able to address the work stress immediately, instead of first addressing your unfinished business.*

F mentioned that her mother-in-law had moved in with them during the first term. She had experienced school so negatively that the mother-in-law was a small issue. Although she helped her with small things, F needed some space at home.

***F:** Colleagues who, during the first term perceived me as looking stressed and washed out, indicated that I look better.*

Researcher: Do you implement relaxation techniques?

F: I use relaxation and meditation in my 'safe place' before preparation and that helps me to do it better.

Researcher: Have you had any thoughts that influenced your perception of and reaction to situations?

F: I made a choice not to let thoughts influence me. In the past a class which upset me ate at me the whole afternoon, but now I just let it go.

Researcher: Do you nurture yourself?

F: Yes, I love reading and I make a point of reading every evening.

Researcher: Have you become more aware of your strengths?

F: I see myself as very selfish. It is just me, me, me.

Researcher: What is the opposite of selfish?

F: Giving.

Researcher: Are you not giving?

F: Yes, but I have been complaining about school all the time.

Researcher: This is not the only environment you exist in.

F: Yes, I am giving at home.

We worked on a list of her strengths: reliable, responsible, perseverance, powerful mind, sticking to decisions made

Semi-structured interview with G

G's awareness and senses were sharpened due to the pain in her hand because of the operation. She was also aware of how limiting her hand which was operated on was. She indicated that she was very aware of non-verbal communication and gave examples.

A long discussion followed about how she felt, because she had not owned her own house after her divorce. The researcher pointed out that if it was not for the divorce she would never have become part of the staff. Every time she thinks about this divorce she must take the new route when thinking about it so that the little path of unfinished business can become overgrown. G then decided that she was going to start drawing again as soon as her hand healed because she loved to draw, write poems and play her guitar. She had not done any of these for the past six years.

She indicated that she has thought a lot about her 'safe place' and that it would be her and her guitar, but she did not play any longer. The researcher pointed out that this did not matter because she could imagine it.

Researcher: *Did you say no to any unreasonable demands?*

G: *No, but I am aware that I am not able to say 'no'. I admired a teacher who just indicated that she could not do a three-hour exam invigilation because of to her back problems.*

Researcher: *Have you become aware of your strengths?*

G: *I don't have any. The only strength that I have is my work.*

The researcher pointed out that she has become aware of resistance from G and that she prefers to avoid hurting memories. There has been growth since the workshop though, because of the finding of a safe place, which was the beginning of being able to relax.

The session had to be terminated and she was asked to make a list of all her characteristics, for the next day. If there were only bad ones, so be it, because every bad characteristic has a positive pole.

On the list presented to the researcher the next day, G indicated 24 positive characteristics and 20 negative characteristics or feelings. It became clear that G was very aware of the emotional pain and suffering experienced by people and the researcher then worked with her on projection due to the fact that she had experienced a lot of pain and therefore was too sympathetic to people, whom she perceived as experiencing pain. At the point where she had to elaborate on the negative feeling that she did not like herself, the researcher experienced resistance from G, because although she had written that she did not like herself, she found it very difficult to verbalise it.

Although the researcher experienced quite a bit of resistance from G, there was already growth in the sense that she had become aware of the fact that she deliberately forced some things, especially positive things out of awareness.

***Researcher:** Do you answer to your dominant needs?*

***G:** Yes, I need to lie down for the pain in my hand to subside.*

***Researcher:** Do you nurture yourself at all?*

***G:** NO!*

G avoided an answer to what she really liked to do.

On the list she repeated twice that she did not have the academic ability to study and referred to the fact that she did not have a degree but a teaching diploma. This was an issue because on honours evening she couldn't wear a hood but only the black academic gown.

Time was spent on her leadership abilities and she revealed that she had been on the student council at college, because when she saw the student council members in her first year with their white blazers and red braiding, she decided that she was also going to wear that white blazer in her final year.

Semi-structured interview with H

H was exceptionally tired because she had not slept the previous night because her marks had been due the following morning.

***Researcher:** Over and above the conscious decision you made at the end of last year to re-evaluate your life, did this therapeutic intervention benefit you at all?*

***H:** The greatest benefit was to see that other people also experience problems and not only I. I see these people are having problems and I know they are the same problems I experience. I told them I will not give them advice, because I did not listen to advice, I had to realise it myself and so must they. If they do not come to the realisation themselves, they will never change, or make a decision, to end what is bad in their lives.*

***Researcher:** Do you implement relaxation techniques?*

***H:** When I feel I am going to lose my temper I do relaxation and it calms me down. It also helps me to make better decisions.*

***Researcher:** What did you find the most beneficial regarding the therapeutic intervention?*

***H:** The breathing and relaxation. I do it daily.*

***Researcher:** Do you follow a healthy diet?*

***H:** Yes, I eat three meals a day. I know I was very thin last year, but I could not eat due to the stress. I have gained six kilograms.*

Semi-structured interview with J

J indicated, as she walked in, that the session should rather be postponed due to the fact that it is the anniversary of her grandmother's death. The researcher responded stating that they were going to work in the here-and-now, instead of focusing on the past. The researcher proceeded by explaining to her how the 'unfinished business' route should be changed. The grandmother had had Altsheimers disease and for her death was a relief. Every time J thinks about the death of her grandmother, she must look at the mercy death was for the grandmother.

Researcher: *Do your thoughts influence your emotions and actions negatively?*

J: *In the past I used to think about things that had happened in the past, and asked myself what good had come out of having my thoughts influence my emotions. A thought which causes apprehension is how my family will react when they meet my boyfriend.*

J (without prompting): *I am far more in awareness and keep my body relaxed and calm, especially when dealing with my parents. I also learned how to read my parents and in this way I avoid unnecessary conflict. I react differently when I feel provoked. Instead of causing conflict I now rather walk out to calm down. It makes me angry when my mother does not listen to what I say. The researcher translated this into the primary emotion which is actually experienced, namely hurt.*

Researcher: *Are you more aware of body language, facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures?*

J: *I am aware that my mother does not show emotions and is not very demonstrative. The reason is that her mother was the same, but I do show emotions.*

Researcher: *Do you nurture yourself?*

J: *I do little things for myself. I bought a new top and when I want to drink hot chocolate, I do that in spite of being overweight. I answer to my dominant need and eat chocolates*

and biscuits when I feel like it. I am in equilibrium and I have stopped worrying about what others say.

Researcher: *Have you experienced any authentic communication?*

J: *When I communicate with people, I do have authentic communication. Even the communication with my mother is getting better.*

Researcher: *You indicated in the questionnaire, that you succeeded in saying 'no' to unreasonable demands. Tell me more.*

J: *I even said 'no' to my dad when he asked me to pour him sherry, because he is always demanding that you do this and that for him. My mother even took my side and told him to get it himself, which was a first. There are friends who have used me in the past and I just do not abide by their wishes. I have grown beyond them in development.*

Regarding her strengths, the researcher addressed the issue of polarities. J had a habit of putting herself down, but has now learnt to practise to positive self-talk. She was capable of naming her strengths. J pointed out that she had been very hurt when she was not elected as a prefect in high school, while her friends had been. Thinking back, she realised that she was a follower and not a leader at school. She had become aware that she had achieved far more than those friends, including leadership positions at this school and at the video store, which she manages to supplement her salary.

Researcher: *Do you follow a balanced diet?*

J: *No. Because of sheer laziness I rather buy from the tuck shop, instead of packing a balanced lunch.*

Researcher: *Do you exercise?*

J: *I climb the stairs up to my class on the third floor six times a day.*

Researcher: *How did the workshop benefit you the most?*

J: It helped me to reach closure on a number of issues. I realise that you need to do things for yourself and not just for others.

Semi-structured interview with K

Researcher: *Did you find the checklist helpful?*

K: *Yes, it made me realise that there is more to life than only the routine things, which had become automatic. Before the workshop I forgot, for example, what freshly cut grass smells like. I am enjoying my two teenage children far more and we have spent time together doing schoolwork around the dining room table. We have had no TV since January and I limit the use of the cell phones for 'mix it' conversations.*

Researcher: *Are you more aware of body language, gestures, tone of voice and facial expressions?*

K: *Yes. Since the awareness sessions during the workshop, I make a point of being aware and do see far more things than in the past. I have lowered my shrill tone of voice and the learners are responding to it. The result is that I have fewer disciplinary problems in class.*

Researcher: *Do you apply the deep breathing and relaxation?*

K: *I do not find it easy and will have to internalise it first. I dealt with a sick Grade 8 learner and explained the benefits of breathing to him. He felt better after implementing it and could carry on with his exam.*

K nurtured herself in the sense that she satisfied her dominant needs. She also ate very well, and felt good.

Researcher: *Have you had any experiences of authentic communication?*

K: *Yes, with my own children, as well as the learners. I feel so calm and happy, that I can see a learner as just a learner, although he/she had annoyed me. I bear no grudges. I stopped shouting at the learners and my own calmness rubs off on them.*

Researcher: *Have you said 'no' to unreasonable demands?*

K: *Yes, and I was able to do that without being nasty.*

Researcher: *Did people accept your 'no'?*

K: *Yes, they actually felt good, because they knew that they were making unreasonable demands.*

Researcher: *Do you feel that you have re-owned some of your disowned characteristics?*

K: *Yes, I realise that I do not need a man to make me happy.*

K saw her strength as being that she knew her subject and her ability to prioritise.

Her dominant need was that she wanted to study further. The researcher then helped her with information on a BEd honours degree. She indicated that she had been stimulated for a while by the preparation she had to do for her subject, but then needed more stimulation. The researcher explained Maslow's pyramid of needs to K indicating how she had grown over the past three years, because she had fulfilled her basic needs and could move on to self-actualisation.

K was of the opinion that the Gestalt principles of awareness, dialogue and process should be discussed with all the staff members at school.

ANNEXURE P

QUESTIONS ASKED AND RESPONSES RECEIVED DURING STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED THREE MONTHS AFTER THE TWO-DAY WORKSHOP (GROUP 1)

Structured interview with A

***Researcher:** How and to what extent has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

***A:** I have always had a very good sense of awareness.*

***Researcher:** How and to what extent has your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

***A:** I have very good contact with the environment and the people in the environment. I have never had a problem with communication either.*

***Researcher:** How and to what extent did have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion where the teacher gives all the time but the learners do not give back in return?*

***A:** I do believe that your relationship with the learners determines how they will work in your subject, and it will also determine the feedback received from the learners. Your relationship with the learners also depends on how you treat them.*

***Researcher:** How and to what extent have you answered to your dominant needs and how has it improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

***A:** I hardly ever answer to my dominant needs. I do not, however, believe that this has a negative affect on my quality of life as a teacher.*

***Researcher:** How and to what extent have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion?*

A: I did not have to come to terms with it. I am always aware that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion.

Researcher: How and to what extent have you achieved homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?

A: The checklist reinforced my perception that I am in equilibrium.

Researcher: Which aspect of the intervention have you found to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?

A: The checklist served to reinforce my perception that I am in equilibrium.

Researcher: Please indicate your needs which were not addressed through the therapeutic intervention.

A: None

Researcher: To what extent could you apply the skills, taught during the intervention, without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?

A: I can still apply four out of the fifteen skills taught, without referring to the checklist.

Structured interview with B

Researcher: How and to what extent has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?

B: I always had a reasonable sense of awareness. The checklist constantly focused my awareness, but I doubt if there is any difference in the quality of my awareness.

Researcher: How and to what extent have your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?

B: I still have to work very hard on contact and communication. It does feel as if there is a small improvement in my quality of life though.

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion where teachers give all the time and learners do not give back in return?*

B: *I never consciously expected anything in return from learners. My relationship with the learners is of such a nature that I am satisfied with what I receive from them in return.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent do you answer to your dominant needs and how has it improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

B: *I definitely allow myself to acknowledge my dominant needs more often. The acknowledgement and satisfying of my dominant needs makes me feel good about myself.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion?*

B: *I am far more aware of the different poles of people's characters and emotions, although I could not really say that it improved my quality of life.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you achieved homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?*

B: *It helped me to realize that there are many things in my life which are not as they should be. It is still very hard work to regain homeostasis, but it feels as if there is more purpose to it.*

Researcher: *You indicated that you previously have acquired formal therapeutic intervention, which was less successful. How does the Gestalt therapeutic intervention you have been exposed to over the past three months compare to previous intervention?*

B: *This approach is far more effective, because the focus is on the here-and-now.*

Researcher: *Which aspect of the intervention have you found to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?*

B: *The group discussions. It made me think more.*

Researcher: Please indicate your needs which were not addressed through the therapeutic intervention.

B: None

Researcher: To what extent could you apply the skills taught during the intervention without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?

B: I focused more on the skills taught during the therapeutic workshop when completing the checklist on a daily basis. I knew I had to complete it for the research study. Without the checklist it is not that easy.

Structured interview with C

Researcher: How and to what extent has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?

C: Awareness of facial expressions and the importance of communication lead me to take the time to listen to others and to be listened to. Being aware of living in the moment is important and I learned to appreciate life more. The past has gone and I learned from it. The future is still ahead. I am more prepared for my lessons and learned to prioritise. I am aware of my dominant needs and always satisfy them. I have a better relationship at school with my learners. I ensure that parents know what their children's problems are and contact them immediately, instead of avoiding the parents. I am very happy in my career at the moment.

Researcher: How and to what extent have your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?

C: I have found that I am happier and more relaxed. I listen carefully whereas before, I either switched off, or cut my learners off when they asked questions, anticipating what it was they wanted to ask. I had done the same with the people around me and my family, but now I listen more attentively and people and the learners respond better. My family have observed that I am more relaxed and that I am more willing to go somewhere, even

if I am busy with schoolwork. I passed my learners' licence very quickly. I have received a lot of encouragement to get my driver's licence and I will do so although not at the end of this research studied as I promised.

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion where teachers give all the time and learners do not give back in return?*

C: *I always knew this, but I now accept it as a fact and have come to terms with it. I still expect the best from my learners, but realised that they do not always meet my expectations and I am not so disappointed.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent do you answer to your dominant needs and how has it improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

C: *Always. If I can identify one for the day, I definitely make sure I go for it. As a teacher it has made me more relaxed and less stressed. I go to movies and shows more often than ever before. I have discovered that it is a wonderful de-stressor.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion?*

C: *I always try to choose the better of two options. Being aware of different views in class, namely what you want and what the learners want makes me think first before getting angry.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you achieved homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?*

C: *I am definitely still very busy, but I do not stress and panic as before. I think of an action and only then do I react. I had a lot on my plate at school, but I have this feeling that I am in control and take one step (or bite) at a time and enjoy what I am doing. I do not feel overwhelmed as I sometimes used to. I am in control and doing what I need to do.*

Researcher: You indicated that you have previously acquired formal therapeutic intervention which was less successful. How does the Gestalt therapeutic intervention you have been exposed to over the past three months compare to previous intervention?

C: I have experienced that my talk-therapy and the Gestalt approach complimented each other to a large extent. The success of the Gestalt approach was evident in my psychiatrist remarking “you are doing very well” for the first time in the ten years that I have been consulting him on a monthly basis.

Researcher: Which aspect of the intervention have you found to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?

C: I enjoyed the checklist the most. If my score was 12 out of 15, I had a very busy day. If my score was 5 out of 15, I had a slow, relaxed day. I noticed that at first all the days were hectic, but towards the end of the research programme my school days were more relaxed because my dominant needs became important to me.

Researcher: Please indicate your needs which have not been addressed through the therapeutic intervention.

C: I can't think of anything.

Researcher: To what extent could you apply the skills taught during the intervention without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?

C: I will miss the checklist, but I feel confident that from the notes I have made, I would be able to apply the Gestalt principles. I would have to prepare thoroughly, though.

Structured interview with D

Researcher: How and to what extent has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?

D: Recently I started thinking about my encounters with learners. Being more in touch with myself led to my appreciation of the professional relationship I have with learners. It

benefited me to the point where not only do I apply the skills and principles learned in the classroom situation, but also in my social life. Hence I experience less stress.

Researcher: *How and to what extent has your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

D: *I have become more aware of my surroundings. I talk more often with people and am now able to connect better with them.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion where teachers give all the time and learners do not give back in return?*

D: *I have made peace with it, although I have not accepted it completely. I am honest when I say that sometimes I receive gratitude from learners, which means a lot to me.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent do you answer to your dominant needs and how has it improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

D: *I still battle with this. I am still in the habit of dealing with an immediate issue which is not necessarily my dominant need.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion?*

D: *I love the fact that I am growing in character, personally and also as a teacher.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you achieved homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?*

D: *I am more aware of my senses, surroundings and the people in my environment. I also deal better with various situations.*

Researcher: *Which aspect of the intervention have you found to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?*

D: Visualising my 'safe place' and breathing techniques. My stress-levels decline when I apply these.

Researcher: Please indicate your needs which have not been addressed through the therapeutic intervention.

D: Not applicable

Researcher: To what extent could you apply the skills taught during the intervention without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?

D: I write memo's in my diary to remind me of the skills and principles.

Structured interview with E

Researcher: How and to what extent has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?

E: I am more aware of my environment and the here-and-now. I am often able to reach a point of relaxation. My increased awareness has led to a greater awareness of what might happen. I have learned to listen instead of just taking action.

Researcher: How and to what extent have your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?

E: In all honesty I feel more comfortable and at peace since I told you my 'secret'. In a way I can give expression to whom and what I am. I find it easier to communicate with the people around me. I have spoken to the deputy, whom I admire and 'climbed out of the cupboard'. I can start every morning with a smile, because I know I do not have to pretend any longer.

Researcher: How and to what extent have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion where teachers give all the time and learners do not give back in return?

E: *I have made peace with the fact that all children are different. As long as I can make a difference in one child's life, I am happy,*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you answered to your dominant needs and how did it improve your quality of life as a teacher?*

E: *I am not yet succeeding a hundred percent in answering to my dominant needs.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion?*

E: *I have not.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you achieve homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?*

E: *I find it easier to relax and avoid unnecessary conflict, although I do not always succeed in it. I have learned to stay away from all negative people.*

Researcher: *Which aspect of the intervention have you found to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?*

E: *Deep breathing and visualising my 'safe place'.*

Researcher: *Please indicate your needs which have not been addressed through the therapeutic intervention.*

E: *None*

Researcher: *To what extent could you apply the skills taught during the intervention without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?*

E: *I have internalised and implemented quite a number of the points on the checklist and do not need a reminder.*

Structured interview with F

Researcher: *How and to what extent has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

F: *The emotional support from others has caused me to want to improve myself in the work situation, and make it work.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent has your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

F: *Taking time to notice or be aware of your environment does allow you to be more relaxed and less uptight. Caring people around you, make you feel much stronger about carrying on.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion where teachers give all the time and learners do not give back in return?*

F: *I give all I can when I teach and I have learned to ignore those learners who are not interested and concentrate on those who are.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you answered to your dominant needs and how has it improve your quality of life as a teacher?*

F: *If I have social activities on weekends I am more relaxed and enjoy them more without this hysterical feeling about not working.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion?*

F: *I think I have told myself that I have the right to sometimes lose my temper even though it is not a good idea – but you can be driven to it.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you achieved homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?*

F: *I think I am trying and convince myself that I am doing the best I can and cannot do more, even if what I do is not that fantastic.*

Researcher: *You indicated that you have previously acquired formal therapeutic intervention, which was less successful. How does the Gestalt therapeutic intervention you have been exposed to over the past three months compare to previous intervention?*

F: *Simple communication with others makes one feel so much stronger about going on.*

Researcher: *Which aspect of the intervention have you found to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?*

F: *I think all needs were addressed.*

Researcher: *Please indicate your needs which have not been addressed through the therapeutic intervention.*

F: *All needs were addressed.*

Researcher: *To what extent could you apply the skills taught during the intervention without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?*

F: *Just by speaking to other people, makes you so much more aware of your circumstances and how you should concentrate and think of your dominant needs and satisfying them.*

Structured interview with G

Researcher: *How and to what extent has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

G: *My sense of awareness was always very good and is improving. It makes you a lot more sensitive to specific situations and reactions from various people. This helps you not to take comments personally. I experience my environment intensely. Now I know it is okay to see the sadness in a shell or the hurt of a tree and that it increases the quality of nature.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent has your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

G: *It is wonderful to know that I may share the wonder of nature with the learners. Previously I experienced it and wrote it down without sharing it with others. I am sharing more.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion where teachers give all the time and learners do not give back in return?*

G: *I never expect anything from learners. To me it was a given. Now that I share more, I also receive more from the learners. In my case it is not only one-sided. Unfortunately this leads to disappointment and unhappiness.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent do you answer to your dominant needs and how did it improve your quality of life as a teacher?*

G: *I have not reached the point yet. I eat and exercise though, because I have to and not because I want to.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion?*

G: *From time to time I am aware of polarities where as I did not even think about this in the past. This knowledge has improved my judgement in situations.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you achieved homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?*

G: *I have achieved balance by not staying within the one pole of my personality and emotions. I have reached a greater balance in the way that I think and act and I apply it.*

Researcher: You indicated that you have previously acquired formal therapeutic intervention, which was less successful. How does the Gestalt therapeutic intervention you have been exposed to over the past three months compare to previous intervention?

G: All previous therapy was useless. The Gestalt therapy worked brilliantly. I immediately felt better after one individual session. (G also requested individual therapy apart from the research study)

Researcher: Which aspect of the intervention have you found to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?

G: The therapy with the two chair work with the dolls (Individual therapy). The practising to be able to say 'no' was beneficial.

Researcher: Please indicate your needs which were not addressed through the therapeutic intervention.

G: None

Researcher: To what extent could you apply the skills taught during the intervention without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?

G: I remember it from time to time and realise there is one more cross (x) which has turned into a tick (√)

Structured interview with H

Researcher: How and to what extent has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?

H: Self-relaxation has helped me a lot in increasing my sense of awareness of not making hasty decisions. Sometimes I am of the opinion that learners are wrong, but after self-relaxation, I realise that I must also give them time to explain.

Researcher: How and to what extent has your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?

H: *It has taken me a long time, but finally I am in contact with my environment and can communicate with the people in it. I lacked self-confidence and could not believe in myself. I thought I was not coping and never would. I have realised there is no such thing though and that I am just feeding my brain with the wrong information. I have started to think positively and eventually everything has changed.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion where teachers give all the time and learners do not give back in return?*

H: *Although learners do not give back in return, I do my best and I do achieve results.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you answered to your dominant needs and how has it improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

H: *I consider myself as the most important person and then everything and everybody else. I answer to my dominant needs by believing in myself.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion?*

H: *By accepting my failures and correcting my mistakes.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you achieved homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?*

H: *I can do things on my own without the help of anyone.*

Researcher: *You indicated that you have previously acquired formal therapeutic intervention, which was less successful. How does the Gestalt therapeutic intervention you have been exposed to over the past three months compare to previous intervention?*

H: *I have had difficulties in life and should have received therapeutic intervention, but I did not. This therapeutic intervention confirmed that I am now strong enough to face life.*

Researcher: Which aspect of the intervention have you found to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?

H: The self-concept projection with the stone.

Researcher: Please indicate your needs which have not been addressed through the therapeutic intervention.

H: I was happy with everything.

Researcher: To what extent could you apply the skills taught during the intervention without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?

H: I can still remember and apply five of the skills and principles taught without referring to the checklist.

Structured interview with J

Researcher: How and to what extent has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?

J: I can now focus on each situation without getting 'confused' or frustrated. I am aware of everything around me. I am less irritable with the learners as well as my loved ones. I am aware of my actions and how they affect others. I now think before I just blurt something out, taking the possible negative consequences into consideration. This has not only helped in the working environment, but also in personal situations.

Researcher: How and to what extent has your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?

J: I have become aware of all my surroundings and enjoy them more. I make time to notice things around me and I am more aware of nature and the calming effect of being outdoors.

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion where teachers give all the time and learners do not give back in return?*

J: *I am still being upset by one specific one-sided relationship, but am coming to terms with it as time passes. I know that I have done all I can and that the learners will only change if they want to. I cannot change them.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent do you answer to your dominant needs and how has it improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

J: *I am aware of my dominant needs and have made an effort to follow through with them. If I am tired and still have schoolwork to do, I take time-out and continue when I feel better. I am also more aware of other people's dominant needs.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion?*

J: *I've learnt that it is better to look at the positive and to leave the negative aspects behind. I have become more gentle.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you achieve homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?*

J: *For the first time in years I am happy. I have realised that the peace and calm in my life has created a more relaxed living and teaching environment. I am more aware of how things affect my well-being. I have achieved a balance between work, personal life and all things in general. I do not lose my temper as easily as previously.*

Researcher: *You indicated that you have previously acquired formal therapeutic intervention, which was less successful. How does the Gestalt therapeutic intervention you have been exposed to over the past three months compare to previous intervention?*

J: *I have only received counselling for personal issues, but the Gestalt helped me to realise that I cannot change everything and everyone. I have come to terms with many*

unresolved issues (unfinished business) and have moved on with peace, knowing that my life will be better because of it.

Researcher: *Which aspect of the intervention have you found to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?*

J: *The awareness of my environment and closure helped me to move on and enjoy the here-and-now.*

Researcher: *Please indicate your needs which were not addressed through the therapeutic intervention.*

J: *None*

Researcher: *To what extent could you apply the skills taught during the intervention without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?*

J: *I try to keep in mind those things that make me happy. I take time off when I need it and I do not feel guilty.*

Structured interview with K

Researcher: *How and to what extent has an increased sense of awareness improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

K: *I again remember the basic things which are important in life. My emotions are more intact, which helps me to get the learners to relate to what I try and teach. I have found peace in myself and can portray this to the outside world and learners.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have your contact and communication with your environment improved your quality of life as a teacher?*

K: *Awareness of my senses has improved my life. I have forgotten to listen, taste and smell and took it for granted. Once I was faced with becoming 'human' again, I can focus better and achieve a lot more, work faster and even prioritise better.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the relationship of one-sided inclusion where teachers give all the time and learners do not give back in return?*

K: *I force the best out of them, no matter what. I don't feel responsible when the learners act out of character and realise it is choices they have made.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you answered to your dominant needs and how has it improve your quality of life as a teacher?*

K: *I have a busy schedule and if my dominant needs are not met, I make time even if I have to set the alarm clock for 02:00.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you come to terms with the fact that there are two poles to every characteristic and emotion?*

K: *I remain positive and only mingle with happy and positive people. It is a choice one makes to choose either the negative or the positive.*

Researcher: *How and to what extent have you achieved homeostasis since the start of the empirical research study three months ago?*

K: *I have come in contact with myself, am aware of the here-and-now and the functioning of my senses.*

Researcher: *You indicated that you have previously acquired formal therapeutic intervention, which was less successful. How does the Gestalt therapeutic intervention you have been exposed to over the past three months compare to previous intervention?*

K: *The different activities (experiments) and not talking made all the difference. The self-concept projection with the stone impacted tremendously on my life. I have realised that what I must be careful of when choosing a lover again, is that I seem to choose those who are in need.*

Researcher: *Which aspect of the intervention did you find to be the most beneficial in regaining homeostasis?*

K: *The fact that nothing is wrong with my methods of regaining homeostasis. These methods are burning candles, talking to myself and meditating on the good things in life.*

Researcher: *Please indicate your needs which have not been addressed through the therapeutic intervention.*

K: *None that I am aware of.*

Researcher: *To what extent can you apply the skills taught during the intervention without the checklist as reinforcement instrument?*

K: *I helped my own sister with what I have learned. I helped her to become more assertive and how to say 'no' to unreasonable demands.*

ANNEXURE Q

SELF-CONSTRUCTED INDEX TO MEASURE THE INCIDENCE OF CAREER-RELATED STRESS SYMPTOMS EXPERIENCED BY THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AFTER THREE MONTHS

The information divulged in this questionnaire will be for the knowledge of the researcher only. Although the information gained through the questionnaire will be published in her research report, no names or any other information through, which the research subject, can be identified will be published. The information gained through this questionnaire will not be used against the research subject at any given time.

Name of research subject (for empirical use only): _____

This questionnaire is aimed at determining degree to which you experience career-related stress symptoms as a teacher. You are requested to consider each statement and reflect your true reaction when doing so. Rate the degree to which you experience the statements listed below from 1-5, where '1' indicates the lowest and '5' the highest degree of experience. Indicate your choice by marking the appropriate block with an 'x'.

Rating scale:

1 = Not at all

2 = Some times

3 = Often

4 = Very often

5 = All the time

Stress symptom	1	2	3	4	5
I am short tempered.					
I am aggressive.					
I overreact.					

I complain.					
I lack enthusiasm.					
I suffer from insomnia.					
I can't relax.					
I experience mood swings.					
I cry.					
I am impulsive.					
I suffer from panic attacks.					
I use alcohol.					
I smoke.					
I use painkillers.					
I use drugs.					
I dislike my career.					
I dislike the learners.					
I dislike my colleagues.					
I avoid the learners.					
I avoid the parents.					
I avoid my colleagues.					
I lose control.					
I don't want to get up on a school day.					
I hurt myself (nail biting/hair pulling/scratching/cutting)					
I feel inadequate and ineffective as a teacher.					
I don't live up to my own expectations.					
I lack self-confidence.					
I have a low self-image.					
I feel I will never be a good teacher.					
I feel anxious.					
I feel confused.					
I feel frustrated.					

I feel angry.					
I feel guilty when I do not work.					
I feel lonely.					
I feel dissatisfied.					
I am irritable.					
I am nervous.					
I feel depressed.					
I have suicidal thoughts.					
I feel listless.					
I suffer from poor judgement.					
I can't make decisions.					
I am forgetful.					
I can't concentrate.					
My lesson preparation is poor.					
I lack imagination.					
I work hard, but can't achieve my goals.					
I find teaching uninteresting.					
I lack focus					
I am not coping with the changes in teaching.					
I can't cope with the work load.					
I perform better under pressure.					
I suffer from colds and flue.					
I have a spastic colon.					
I suffer from gastro-intestinal symptoms (stomachache/diarrhoea/constipation/indigestion/haemorrhoids)					
I have unhealthy eating habits					
I am under weight/over weight.					
I suffer from some form of diabetes.					

I suffer from allergies.					
I suffer from a dermatological condition (skin irritations/acne/eczema/psoriasis/hair loss).					
I have a low libido.					
I am impotent. (males)					
I suffer from menstrual disorders. (females)					
I suffer from respiratory problems (asthma/breathlessness).					
I have dizzy or fainting spells					
I have cardio-vascular problems (heart attack/palpitations/chest pains/ angina).					
I get muscular twitches.					
I suffer from migraine.					
I get tension headaches/backache/neckache.					
I suffer from excessive tiredness					

Thank you for your co-operation.

Annamarie Horn
RESEARCHER