

**EXPLORING THE RESILIENCE OF TEACHERS FACED WITH LEARNERS'
CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLASSROOM**

by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

In 1994, South Africa made the shift towards a democratic dispensation characterized by equality and social justice. In order to prevent democracy from being an empty ideal, mainstream as well as special schools in the South African education system had to go through a process of restructuring and transformation in order to create an inclusive school environment conducive to the learning and development of all learners. This brought about increased responsibilities for teachers. However, research indicates that many teachers were not prepared or equipped to successfully manage the transformation of schools and classrooms to accommodate all learners in an inclusive, equitable and quality education system. This created numerous challenges which contributed to teachers' stress and attrition. One of the most prominent difficulties was an inability to cope successfully with challenging learner behaviour. This seems to have had a detrimental effect on the teachers' resilience. The inability to cope with challenges presented by the diverse learner population, accompanied by the gradual decline in their resilience, contributed to an unrewarding classroom ethos. Following Ungar's socioecological perspective on resilience, which informed the theoretical framework of this study, I viewed resilience as being influenced by the reciprocal interaction between the individual and the environment. This qualitative case study, informed by an interpretivist paradigm, was designed to explore teachers' lived experiences and the various factors impacting upon their resilience. It also aimed to offer a deeper understanding of how resilience influences the ability of teachers to manage challenging learner behaviour. To address these issues, a special school (school of skills) in the Western Cape Province was chosen as the case for the study. Three teachers from the academic sector and three from the skills sector formed part of this case. Semi-structured individual interviews, non-participant observation, and a semi-structured focus group interview were used to gather and triangulate data. Four themes emerged from the data: risk factors, internal stressors, protective factors, and internal strengths. The findings indicated that risk factors were dominating the available protective factors present in the lives of the participating teachers, making the attainment of resilience a complicated task. Nevertheless, the study also showed that increased resilience enhances the management of challenging learner behaviour and simultaneously enhances well-being, motivation and self-confidence. The importance of gaining sufficient knowledge about learners' contexts, their challenges and how to apply various techniques to meet their needs, was highlighted.

Keywords: Teacher resilience, challenging learner behaviour, socio-ecological perspective, reciprocal interaction, school of skills, year-two teachers, risk factors, protective factors, well-being.

OPSOMMING

In 1994 is 'n demokratiese bedeling, gekenmerk deur gelykheid en sosiale geregtigheid, in Suid-Afrika ingelei. Ten einde te voorkom dat demokrasie slegs 'n leë ideaal bly, moes beide hoofstroom- en spesiale skole in Suid-Afrika 'n proses van restrukturering en transformasie deurgaans om 'n inklusiewe skoolomgewing bevorderlik vir die leer en ontwikkeling van alle leerders te verseker. Hierdie proses het tot 'n toename in die verantwoordelikhede van onderwysers gelei. Navorsing toon egter dat baie onderwysers nie gereed of bekwaam was om die transformasie van skole en klaskamers suksesvol te bestuur ten einde alle leerders binne 'n inklusiewe, regverdig en kwaliteit-onderwyssisteem te akkommodeer nie. Dit het verskeie uitdagings geskep wat tot verhoogde stresvlakke en uitputting by onderwysers bygedra het. Een van die opvallendste uitdagings van onderwysers was die hantering van uitdagende leerdergedrag wat tot verlaagde veerkragtigheid gelei het. Die onvermoë van onderwysers om die uitdagings wat met 'n diverse leerdergemeenskap verband hou te hanteer, asook 'n geleidelike afname in hulle veerkragtigheid het tot 'n negatiewe klaskamer kultuur bygedra. Ungar se sosio-ekologiese perspektief wat veerkragtigheid sien as beïnvloed deur die wedersydse interaksie tussen die individu en sy of haar omgewing het hierdie studie onderlê. Hierdie kwalitatiewe gevallestudie, ingebed in die interpretatiewe paradigma, is ontwerp om onderwysers se geleefde ervarings rakende die onderskeie faktore wat 'n invloed op hulle veerkragtigheid het, te ondersoek. 'n Verdere doelwit was om meer insig te verwerf in hoe veerkragtigheid die vermoë van onderwysers om uitdagende leerdergedrag te hanteer beïnvloed. Om hierdie aangeleentheid aan te spreek is 'n spesiale skool (vaardigheidsskool) in die Wes-Kaapprovinsie as geval vir hierdie studie gekies. Drie onderwysers van die akademiese en drie onderwysers van die vaardigheidssektor het aan die studie deelgeneem. Semi-gestruktureerde individuele onderhoude, nie-deelnemende observasie en 'n semi-gestruktureerde fokusgroeponderhoud is as metodes ingespan om data in te samel en te trianguleer. Vier temas kon vanuit die data geïdentifiseer word. Die bevindings het aangedui dat risikofaktore die beskikbare beskermingsfaktore in die lewens van die deelnemende onderwysers oorheers wat die verwerwing van veerkragtigheid gekompliseer het. Bo en behalwe dit het die studie ook aangetoon dat verhoogde veerkragtigheid die hantering van uitdagende leerdergedrag asook welwees, motivering en selfvertroue bevorder. Die belang daarvan om voldoende kennis van die leerder se konteks en uitdagings te verkry en hoe om verskeie tegnieke te gebruik om in hulle behoeftes te voorsien, is uitgelig.

Sleutelwoorde: Onderwyserveerkrachtigheid, uitdagende leerdergedrag, sosio-ekologiese perspektief, wedersydse interaksie, vaardigheidskool, jaartwee-onderwysers, risikofaktore, beskermingsfaktore, welwees.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my unborn son. The expectancy and excitement of holding you in my arms, accompanied with my desire to ensure you have the best possible life I could provide you, has driven me in my last months of this study. I look forward to our journey together.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Declaration</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Opsomming</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Dedication</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>List of appendices</i>	<i>xii</i>
<i>List of figures</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>List of tables</i>	<i>xiv</i>
<i>List of acronyms</i>	<i>xv</i>

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	1
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY	7
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	8
1.3.1 Aim of Study	9
1.3.2 Research questions	10
1.4 THE RESEARCH PLAN.....	10
1.4.1 Theoretical framework	11
1.4.2 Introducing the researcher	12
1.4.3 Research paradigm	13
1.4.4 Research design.....	14
1.4.5 Research methodology.....	15
1.4.6 Research methods.....	16
1.4.6.1 <i>Selection of participants</i>	16
1.4.6.2 <i>Methods of data collection and analysis</i>	17
1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	18
1.6 A REVIEW OF THE KEY CONCEPTS	20
1.6.1 Resilience	20
1.6.2 Teacher resilience.....	21
1.6.3 Challenging behaviour.....	21
1.6.4 Inclusion/Inclusive education	21
1.6.5 Special schools	22
1.6.6 Well-being	22
1.6.7 Self-efficacy	23
1.7 STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION.....	23

1.8 CONCLUSION	23
CHAPTER 2	
LITERATURE REVIEW	25
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	25
2.2 THE SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF RESILIENCE	26
2.3 RESILIENCE DEFINED	29
2.4 TEACHER RESILIENCE	
2.4.1 Introduction	30
2.4.2 The four dimensions of teacher resilience.....	33
2.4.2.1 <i>Profession-related aspects of teacher resilience</i>	33
2.4.2.2 <i>Emotional dimension of teacher resilience</i>	34
2.4.2.3 <i>Motivational aspects of teacher resilience</i>	35
2.4.2.4 <i>Social-related aspects of teacher resilience</i>	37
2.4.3 The role of stress as risk factor.....	39
2.5 CHALLENGING LEARNER BEHAVIOUR	40
2.5.1 Defining challenging learner behaviour	40
2.5.2 Employing Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological model for an holistic view of challenging learner behaviour	42
2.5.2.1 <i>Person characteristics: the adolescent</i>	44
2.5.3.1 <i>The role of the chronosystem on challenging learner behaviour</i>	48
2.5.3.2 <i>The role of the macrosystem on challenging learner behaviour</i>	48
2.5.3.3 <i>The role of the exosystem on challenging learner behaviour</i>	50
2.5.3.4 <i>The role of the microsystem on challenging learner behaviour</i>	51
2.5.3.5 <i>The role of the mesosystem on challenging learner behaviour</i>	53
2.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER	55
CHAPTER 3	
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	57
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	57
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM.....	58
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	60
3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	63
3.4.1 Introduction	63
3.4.2 Qualitative research	63
3.5 RESEARCH SETTING.....	65
3.6 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS	67
3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS.....	69
3.7.1 Interviews	69

3.7.1.1 <i>Semi-structured individual interview</i>	70
3.7.1.2 <i>Focus group interview</i>	71
3.7.1.3 <i>Observation</i>	73
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS	74
3.9 DATA VERIFICATION	75
3.9.1 Trustworthiness or credibility as criterion.....	76
3.9.1.1 <i>Triangulation</i>	76
3.9.1.2 <i>Member checking</i>	76
3.9.2 Reliability or dependability	77
3.9.2.1 <i>Audit trail</i>	77
3.9.3 Confirmability as criterion	78
3.9.4 Generalizability or transferability.....	78
3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	78
3.11 CONCLUSION	79
CHAPTER 4	
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	80
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	80
4.2 THE RESEARCH SETTING.....	81
4.2.1 Description of year-two academic teachers.....	89
4.2.2 Description of workshop teachers	90
4.3 THE DATA GENERATING PROCESS	90
4.3.1 Semi-structured individual interview procedure	90
4.3.2 Non-participant observation	92
4.3.3 Semi-structured focus group discussion.....	92
4.3.4 Data analysis process.....	93
4.3.5 Data collection.....	94
4.3.6 Data reduction and data display phase	94
4.3.7 Interpretation and conclusion phase	96
4.4 DATA PRESENTATION	96
4.4.1 Theme 1: Risk factors.....	98
4.4.1.1 Classroom.....	98
4.4.1.2 School.....	105
4.4.1.3 Community.....	108
4.4.1.4 Government.....	111
4.4.2 Theme 2: Internal stressors.....	114
4.4.3 Theme 3: Protective factors.....	116
4.4.3.1 Classroom.....	117

4.4.3.2 School.....	121
4.4.4 Internal strengths	124
4.4.4.1 Resilient person	124
4.4.4.2 Personal well-being	126
4.5 DATA DISCUSSION	127
4.5.1 Introduction	127
4.5.2 What risk and protective factors are present in the lives of the year-two teachers in the school?	127
4.5.2.1 Risk factors.....	128
4.5.2.2 Internal stressors.....	140
4.5.2.3 Protective factors.....	142
4.5.2.4 Internal strengths	147
4.5.2.5 How do the risk and protective factors influence the teacher’s management of challenging learner behaviour?	148
4.5.3 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER	160
CHAPTER 5	
CONCLUDING REMARKS RECOMMENDATIONS	
LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS	161
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	161
5.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS	161
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	166
5.3.1 Classroom.....	166
5.3.2 School context	169
5.3.3 Community.....	171
5.3.4 Government context	173
5.3.5 Alternative methods of support	174
5.4 LIMITATIONS	176
5.5 STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY.....	177
5.6 FURTHER RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES	179
5.7 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON THE TOTAL RESEARCH PROCESS	180
REFERENCE LIST.....	182

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of approval: Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee	201
Appendix B: Letter of approval: Western Cape Education Department	202
Appendix C: Letter of approval from principal.....	203
Appendix D: Letter of consent to participants.....	207
Appendix E: Individual interview schedule	211
Appendix F: Focus group interview schedule	213
Appendix G: Observation schedule.....	215
Appendix H: Interview coding example.....	216
Appendix I: Interview example with data chunks and preliminary codes.....	218
Appendix J: Individual interviews and focus group themes merged.....	220
Appendix K: Final themes	226

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological model of interacting systems.....	44
Figure 2.2: Erikson’s flow diagram of psychosocial development	45
Figure 2.3: Joyce Epstein’s model of overlapping spheres of influence of family, school and community.....	54
Figure 3.1: Sequence of procedures during a case study design	62
Figure 3.2: Focus group interview seating arrangements.....	73
Figure 4.1: Percentage of learner, educators and special needs schools in South Africa.....	84
Figure 4.2: Learner profile	87
Figure 4.3: Steps to generate a semi-structured interview guide.....	91
Figure 4.4: Data analysis process	94
Figure 4.5: Coding process.....	95
Figure 4.6: Codes to categories	96

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Burden's four categories of challenging behaviour.....	40
Table 2.2: Specific classroom behaviour problems.....	41
Table 3.1: The process of the case study research pertinent to this study.....	61
Table 3.2: Research participants who formed part of the study.....	68
Table 4.1: Census data regarding learners with special needs.....	82
Table 4.2: Distribution of special needs requirements per province.....	82
Table 4.3: Special needs education in South Africa.....	83
Table 4.4: Research school.....	85
Table 4.5: Learner offences in the research school.....	88
Table 4.6: Reference to source of data.....	97
Table 4.7: Themes and categories from the data analysis.....	97
Table 5.1: Risk and protective factors impacting teacher resilience on various levels.....	163

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACAPS	Adapted Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit and/or Hyperactivity Disorder
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5 th Ed.
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESR	Educator-School Ratio
FET	Further Education Training
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
INDS	Integrated National Disability Strategy
LER	Learner-Educator Ratio
LSR	Learner-School Ratio
MMH	Mild Mentally Handicapped
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
PPCT	Process-Person-Context-Time
REC	Research Ethical Committee of the University
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SIAS	Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SNE	Special Needs Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The aim of this qualitative case study was to explore teachers' resilience in the face of challenging learner behaviour. Embedded in an interpretive paradigm and employing an exploratory and descriptive stance, it was conducted in a school of skills in the Western Cape Province. Schools of skills provide learners with learning difficulties struggling to progress in mainstream schools the opportunity to be trained in practical skills preparing them to enter the world of work. The study was further embedded in a social-ecological theoretical framework which called for a specific view on resilience, to be explored in section 1.4.1. Taking a social-ecological viewpoint on resilience entailed that greater focus be given to the social and physical environment, seen as the focal point of resources for personal growth (Ungar, 2012a, p. 15).

There are various definitions of resilience in the literature. The following more generic definition was provided by Knight (quoted in Smith, Lynch and Knight: 2007, p. 67).

Resilience is seen as an important life-skill that enhances emotional and social wellbeing and enables people to cope with life. It involves the ability to be flexible and adaptive in response to a problem, the ability to 'bounce back' after a negative experience and the ability to empathize with how others feel. It recognizes that relationship skills are as important as self-awareness skills. It involves a mindset that sees problems as challenges and a belief in the value of prevention and proactive approaches.

While Knight (2007) mostly focuses on individual traits when defining resilience, Rutter (2012, p.34) claims that it can be viewed as "an interactive concept in which the presence of resilience has to be inferred from individual variations in outcome in individuals who have experienced significant major stress or adversity." This is in line with Oswald, Johnson and Howard's (2003) definition of resilience in Beltman, Mansfield and Price (2011, p.188), as "the capacity to overcome personal vulnerabilities and environmental stressors." Developmentally, resilience could also be viewed, according to Bobek (2002), in Mansfield, Beltman, Price and McConney

(2012, p.358), as a process that “occurs over time involving the ability to adjust to varied situations and increase one’s competence in the face of adverse conditions.”

In this study, my focus was specifically on teacher resilience. It was therefore important to first provide tentative definitions which could help describe this particular phenomenon and set the scene. Brunetti (2006, p. 813) defines teacher resilience as a element that helps teachers stay dedicated to teaching, no matter how many obstacles come their way, while Gu and Day (2007, p. 1314) describe it as a teacher’s ability to stay in control of challenging circumstances, maintain their dedication to teaching, and also develop professionally. Yonezwa, Jones and Singer (2011, p. 916) describe teacher resilience as the way in which teachers confront and manage adversity in order to ensure the success of their learners.

Challenging learner behaviour in South African schools has become a “disproportionate and intractable part” (Marais & Meier, 2010, p. 41) of teachers’ experiences and a major source of distress. These conditions cause great concern among South African teachers, and they also seem to have difficulty managing these behaviours (Prinsloo, 2005, p. 449). According to Harcombe (2001, p.213), challenging behaviour may also sometimes be “categorized as individual abnormality or deviance and is automatically assumed to require clinical intervention by a psychiatrist, psychologists or other professionals.” According to Levin and Nolan (1996), in Marais et al. (2010, p.44), such behaviour can include “talking out of turn, name calling, humming, calling out and disrespectful behaviour like verbal aggression, teasing, punching, neglecting academic work, and refusing to follow instructions and assault.” Learners with conduct problems may display behaviour ranging from aggression aimed at people or animals, to damaging property or stealing (DSM-5, 2013, p.470). Those exhibiting this kind of behaviour may be growing up in difficult circumstances, which often include violence, poverty, lack of sanitation, unemployment, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, and a lack of good nutrition. Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000), in Marais and Meier (2010, p.43), view challenging learner behaviour as affecting “the fundamental right of a learner to feel safe and to be treated with respect in the learning environment.” It can also be viewed, as noted by Levin et al. (1996), in Marais et al. (2010, p.43), as a barrier preventing teachers from fulfilling their objectives in the school context and can potentially contribute to stress and burnout among them.

According to Knight, Balatti, Haase and Henderson (2010, p.2), teachers’ well-being may be affected negatively by poor relationships with colleagues or learners. These lower levels of

well-being can potentially influence teachers' resilience, with a resulting negative impact on their job performance. Apart from challenging learner behaviour, other factors, as noted by Friedman (2004), Kyriacou (2001), Wilhelm., Dewhurst-Savellis and Parker (2000) and Wilson (2002) in Mansfield et al. (2012, p. 357), can also have an impact. Exorbitant workloads, lack of support from relevant parties, the expectation that they will meet the complex and diverse needs of all their learners, as well as low professional status, can all have a negative impact on teachers' resilience. Henderson and Milstein (2003), in Gu and Day (2007, p. 1302), argue that it is unrealistic to expect learners to be resilient if their teachers, who are seen as potential role models, do not display such qualities. Resilient teachers are therefore important, since they have "a strong sense of vocation, self-efficacy and will be motivated to teach" (Gu & Day, 2007, p.1302).

South Africa became a democracy in 1994, with subsequent changes in all sectors of the country. Accompanying the move towards democratization was the "respect and preservation of children's rights" (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010, p. 387). The education system was subjected to a complete overhaul, in line with the principles of the South African Constitution, including "equity, non-discrimination, freedom from discrimination, respect and social justice" (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.18). According to Naicker (2005), in Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.18), these values were central to the "sociocritical perspective which developed in education." The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) initiated the process of change in the education system (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.18). The move towards a more inclusive and just education sector brought about the development of further important policy documents. These included the South African Schools Act 84 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the Education White Paper 6: (Special Needs Education) *Building an inclusive education and training system* (Department of Education, 2001).

Special schools, such as the research school in this study, were also required to conform with the policy requirements and legislation, including the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) (1997), the National Commission on Special Educational Needs and Training, the National Committee on Education Support Services (1997), the Draft National Disability Policy Framework, and guidelines for the implementation of the National Disability Framework (2008). In line with the policy changes, schools had to make the shift towards a more inclusive and equalitarian school structure. According to Swart and Pettipher (2001, p.30), inclusion in schools should be seen not only as a concept which enhances equality

and the accommodation of a diverse population but should also aim to meet the diverse needs of every learner in the school system. This notion is supported by Sharma, Lorman, and Forlin (2011), as well as Walton (2010) in Engelbrecht, Savolainen, Nel, and Malinen (2013, p. 306), who not only view inclusive education as being about the inclusion of learners in mainstream schools but also believe that such learners should receive quality education, regardless of their differences. The Education White Paper 6 of 2001 lays down clear guidelines to teachers in South Africa on the implementation of inclusive education (Department of Education, 2001). According to the White Paper, such education should be viewed as recognizing that all children have the ability to learn with the necessary support. It involves the “enabling [of] education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all [children and it also requires] respecting differences in learners” (Department of Education, 2001, p. 6).

These policies not only aimed to promote equality and inclusivity in the education sector but also set out further guidelines for teachers. The Education White Paper 6 emphasized that teachers are responsible for ensuring that all learners, regardless of “age, gender, ethnicity, language, class disability, HIV or any other infectious diseases,” be given the opportunity to develop optimally (Department of Education, 2001, p. 6). The South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996 deals with many further aspects of the South African education system.

One aspect with which teachers found it difficult to cope was the abolition of corporal punishment. According to the South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996, “everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way” (Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, p.1247). The National Education Policy Act No 27 of 1996 (Department of Basic Education, 1996, p.4) reinforced this principle, stating that “no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution.” Today, by law, no one is allowed to use corporal punishment in any school.

Smit (2013, p. 346), however, contends that teachers feel a sense of hopelessness and disempowerment since corporal punishment has been abandoned. They see its abolition as one of the causes of a rise in challenging learner behaviour in South African schools. According to Wolhuter and Van Staden (2008, p.395), in Smit (2013, p.346-347), 85% of teachers name challenging learner behaviour as one of the reasons they are unhappy in their workplace, while 79% have considered leaving the profession because of such behaviour. Teachers today are not

only responsible for educating learners and helping them reach the required scholastic outcomes but also have to maintain an inclusive, disciplined and democratic school environment in which all their learners can develop into holistic citizens. The responsibility rests on teachers who work in special schools to differentiate the content and the method of instruction in order to meet the learners' needs (Department of Education, 2007, p. 10). According to Walton (2012, p. 119), differentiated learning material allows all learners, regardless of their intellectual abilities, to participate in class, with a greater chance of improved self-belief and confidence.

The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 forms an integral part of the South African education system. It includes policies like the Language in Education policy, the National Policy on HIV/AIDS, for learners and educators in public schools as well as students and educators in further education and training institutions, the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools, which was formulated in 1998, and the Policy on Learner Attendance, developed in 2010. According to the Admission Policy of 1996, public schools in South Africa should ensure that they provide all suitable learners with access to education. No school may unfairly discriminate against any learner, nor should any successful learner be denied class attendance or participation in scholastic events (Department of Education, Act no 27 of 1996, p.2). Special schools should also ensure that they enroll learners whose needs can be met by qualified staff members in appropriate learning environments (Department of Education, 2007, p.7). According to the policy document 'Guidelines to Ensure Quality Education and Support in Special Schools and Special School Resource Centres', special schools need to think carefully before enrolling learners and should determine whether the support services offered would meet their needs (Department of Education, 2007, p.7).

The above policy changes, coupled with several comprehensive curriculum changes since 1994, caused immense frustration and tension between the "national agenda of educational transformation that encompasses redress, equity and social justice and the contextual realities of teacher education programmes, schools and teachers in South Africa" (Shafer & Wilmot, 2012, in Engelbrecht et al., 2013, p.310). Teachers in the changing South African school sector were now not only expected to cope with policy changes, decentralization, curriculum changes and increased teacher-learner ratios but also with the abolition of corporal punishment which, according to Bosch and Oswald (2010, p.65), has left them with no "alternatives to deal effectively with unacceptable learner behaviour".

The increased demands and responsibilities placed on teachers working in special schools could have had a negative influence on their resilience. They were asked to constantly adapt to curriculum changes and changed policies, as well as to assist learners from various backgrounds in their classrooms. This created many challenges, especially for older teachers, since they lacked training in “remedial work or special education per se [and therefore] lacked confidence in implementing inclusive education” (Greyling, 2009, in Pather, 2011, p.1106). According to Pillay, Goodard and Wilss (2005, p.22), changes in work patterns, the need to keep up with different types of functions of families, as well as new information and communication technologies, have all had a negative impact on teachers’ well-being and resilience. Concurring with the above, Hay, Smit, and Paulsen (2001), in Pather (2011, p.1106), see a lack of knowledge of inclusive education as playing a pivotal role in arousing negative attitudes among teachers.

The teachers in the research school in this study faced all the above challenges, with additional factors which may have acted as stressors. Learners in the special school sector present with diverse learning challenges which require more intensive levels of support. Many of the learners in the research school came from environments characterized by poverty, unemployment, gang violence, family violence, single-parent households, and substance abuse. Learners who are referred to special schools have often found it difficult to cope academically in mainstream schools due to learning difficulties, including reading and mathematical learning problems. Some of the learners attending the research school also had auditory and visual problems, as well as physical disabilities. Additionally, some had specific learning challenges due to epilepsy, mild intellectual challenges, and communication difficulties. Some were also challenged by attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). According to the DSM – 5 (2013, p. 61), such learners display “persistent pattern[s] of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development.” Teachers not only have to manage and educate learners with the above characteristics but themselves also need to receive continuous training, so that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to further develop their learners (Department of Education, 2007, p.10).

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

During the period 2010 to 2014, I was employed as a school counsellor and teacher at the research school, one of seventy-three special schools in the Western Cape area. I came to know

first-hand the challenges facing both teachers and learners. While working in the school, I coached soccer and cricket, and also looked after forty hostel learners. I chose these various roles in order to spend more time with learners and get to know them on a more personal level. In 2015 I took time off from the school to complete my internship (educational psychologist) at a different institution. Since the completion of my internship year I returned to the research school where I am currently continuing my role as school counselor. During the five years at the school I observed learners behaving differently in different teachers' classrooms. I also saw teachers treating learners differently, depending on their academic and sporting abilities. Some also tended to label learners as undisciplined, disrespectful or impossible to teach.

Teachers working in the research school found it difficult to manage challenging learner behaviour, with a resultant negative impact on their resilience. There seemed to be a general feeling of hopelessness among the teachers. According to Kgosana (2006), in Maphosa and Shuma (2010, p.395), teachers often feel a sense of disempowerment and are resigned to challenging learner behaviour. This not only affects their resilience but, as noted by Rossouw (2003, p.413) in Mestry and Khumalo (2012, p.98), also contributes to classroom environments which are not conducive to teaching or learning. This view is echoed in a study conducted by Mestry and Khumalo (2012, p.105), where the participants said that challenging learner behaviour contributed towards a negative learning environment. Such behaviour not only affects learning but also erodes the trust between teachers and learners. This lack of trust may not only harm the teacher-learner relationship but may also have a negative effect on the teachers' ability to manage discipline, either in the classroom or on the school grounds, which in turn could lead to lower teacher resilience. However, exploring resilience among teachers as it relates to the management of challenging learner behaviour could provide insights which could be used to create a more supportive environment for both teachers and learners in the school context.

The value of resilience in the education sector is undeniable, since it holds many advantages for teachers and learners alike. Teachers, however, do find it difficult to cope with the new inclusive education system. It is important therefore to identify which aspects influence their resilience negatively, so that they could adopt a more positive outlook towards both themselves and their learners. Enhanced resilience and well-being could contribute to an improved management of challenging learner behaviour, as well as encouraging learners' optimal development in schools. In turn, this could lead to a healthier society and improved economic

conditions. My own observations, coupled with teachers' complaints about their learners' behaviour, my knowledge of the teacher-to-learner ratio, policy changes, the management of the diverse learner population, and their decline in resilience, especially since some of the teachers had been hospitalized for depression and stress, motivated this research. I believed it would benefit both teachers and learners if a study could be conducted in the school to identify the factors influencing teacher resilience and teacher-learner relations.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As noted above, resilience in the current South African education system holds great value for both teachers and learners. It can protect teachers and learners in difficult circumstances, helping to alleviate frustrations and negativity among teachers and improving the academic performances of learners. Various factors may negatively influence the development of resilience among teachers in South Africa. One of these is challenging learner behaviour, which may threaten the safety of both the learners and the teachers (Maphosa & Shuma, 2010, p.395). The teachers working in the school of skills which acted as the research school for this study appeared to be challenged by complex conundrums, of which learner behaviour seemed to be top of the list.

Since the legislation abolishing corporal punishment, teachers have found it increasingly difficult to effectively manage challenging learner behaviour, with a resulting negative impact on their resilience. According to Naong (2007, p.283), in Marais and Meier (2010, p.41), the abolition of corporal punishment seems to have led to an increase in challenging learner behaviour in South African schools. Teachers feel they are being treated unfairly and believe that learners now have more rights than teachers (Maphosa & Shuma, 2010, p.396). Many teachers believe that learners are now free to act as they please. According to Maphosa and Shuma (2010, p.396), this is also a form of abuse, since the learners' "future as responsible citizens" is being threatened. Smit (2013, p.347) further argues that violence in schools may lead to "suicide, limited concentration span, numeracy and literacy learning problems, poor performance in class, high absentee and drop-out rates, being unmotivated in class and in general, loss of desire to succeed in life." He concludes that schools should take the initiative to ensure that they create a safe democratic environment, one which would be suitable for quality teaching and learning (Smit, 2013, p.353).

According to Zhou (2003), in Brunetti (2006, p.812), learners from impoverished areas characterized by crime, violence, unemployment and substance abuse can have an especially negative impact on their teachers' well-being. At the research school, both the well-being of teachers and their level of resilience seemed to be questionable, as high levels of stress and illness were eroding their personal lives. It is important not to underestimate the crucial value of teachers and the role they play in the development of learners. For this reason, it was important to have positive and resilient teachers in the research school. To ensure that the learners would receive quality education, it was essential to identify the risk factors influencing the lived experiences of teachers. This could inform follow-up studies designed to intervene by strengthening the protective factors for and with teachers. Ultimately, this could lead to the enhancement of the management of challenging learner behaviour, positive teacher-learner relationships, and strengthened teacher resilience.

1.3.1 Aim of study

The aim of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the contrasting risk and protective factors that influence teacher resilience in the particular school of skills chosen. According to Masten and Powel, (2003) and Werner (2000) in Toland and Carrigan (2011, p.98), "risk factors and protective factors combine additively and severe stress in the system can be counteracted by personal qualities or sources of support in the environment." The resilience of teachers in this instance could then be viewed as the result of the interaction between the balance of protective/risk factors at the teachers' individual levels and the balance of protective/risk factors at the environmental level (Toland & Carrigan, 2011, p.98).

The overarching goal of this study was to explore which factors influence teacher resilience and how a potential lack of resilience could affect their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour in the classroom. The hope was that by obtaining valuable information about teachers' resilience and how this influenced their relationship with their learners, as well as the management of challenging learner behaviour, teachers would be able to use this information to improve their educational experience. This could potentially lead to the successful management of challenging learner behaviour in the particular special school.

1.3.2 Research questions

The main research question was: *What factors influence resilience among teachers working in a special school acting as research school in relation to challenging learner behaviour?*

The following complementary research questions helped in structuring the investigation of the main research question:

- What risk and protective factors are present in the lives of the year-two teachers in the school?
- How do the risk and protective factors influence the successful management of challenging learner behaviour?

1.4 THE RESEARCH PLAN

In a qualitative study, the researcher “serves as the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data and, as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information” (Merriam, 1998, p.20). In a qualitative study, therefore, the researcher would be central to the process. In this study, I used a qualitative case study as my research design. According to Merriam (2009, p.23), in a qualitative study the researcher is interested in “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences.”

Case study research is also viewed as descriptive, since it involves intensive investigations of people in a specific context (Lindegger, 2006, p.460). This approach allowed me to gather valuable information about the levels of resilience in the year-two teachers in the school of skills, as well as how their resilience levels influenced their management of challenging learner behaviour. I believed this information could help them to understand the various factors influencing their resilience, potentially leading to an enhanced teaching experience.

In this section, I will first present my theoretical framework, followed by a brief explanation of myself as researcher. Thereafter I will present the research paradigm as well as my research design. This will be followed by the research methodology and research methods I used to gather valuable information pertaining to the research questions. In concluding this chapter, I will also review the various ethical issues which were considered during the study.

1.4.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework forms an important part of any research. In this particular study, I employed the social ecology perspective of resilience. In viewing resilience among teachers

from a social-ecological perspective, it was important to keep in mind the various personal and environmental factors which might have enhanced or limited their resilience. In the following paragraphs, I provide a brief description of the social ecology of resilience, highlighting the most essential aspects of this theory as they relate to this particular study. A more detailed account of these important aspects will be given in Section 2.2.

According to Ungar (2012a, p.14), the environment has a profound impact on resilience. In order to understand the ecology of resilience it is important to gain knowledge of mutual person-environment interactions. Resilience could also be seen as a “set of behaviours over time that reflect the interactions between individuals and their environments, in particular the opportunities for personal growth that are available and accessible” (Ungar, 2012a, p.14). It is, however, important to keep in mind that such interactions need to be meaningful in order to enhance teacher resilience. According to Ungar (2012b, p.1), resilience was seen in the past as something an individual possessed, rather than a “process that families, schools, communities and governments facilitate.” An ecological analysis of resilience, according to Ungar (2011, p.1), consists of four principles, decentrality, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relativity. These aspects will be explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

Lerner (2006), in Ungar (2012a, p.14), also advocates a more contextualized understanding of individuals, based on the work of Vygotsky (1978). According to Ungar (2012, p.14), this “explores the scaffolding of experience that supports human development.” This shift in understanding means that resilience can now be viewed as “interactional, environmental and culturally pluralistic.” Based on these new aspects, a more holistic view of the individual and his or her environment would need to be followed in order to understand the complexities of resilience. According to Anthony (1987), in Ungar (2012a, p. 13), a shift in the field of resilience also occurred, with the focus moving from the individual’s traits to a more interactional process of challenging environments. Thus for teachers to develop professional resilience, reciprocity is needed between them and their supporting environment (Yonezawa, Jones & Singer, 2011, p.913).

In summary, in order to enhance teacher resilience in the research school it was important not only that the teachers had positive interactions with their respective environments but that these environments should also be supportive. According to Ungar (2012a, p.17), “resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and

physical resources that build and sustain their well-being, and their individual and collective capacity to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways.” This implies that teachers should have the will and the courage to access resources within themselves and their environments. This could contribute to enhancing their resilience, enabling them to act more appropriately and effectively when confronted with challenging behaviour in the classroom.

This section gave a basic description of the theoretical orientation I chose for the research and also affirmed my decision to use a social-ecological perspective to discuss teacher resilience.

1.4.2 Introducing the researcher

As noted above, before I took time off in 2015 to complete my internship and since returned in 2016, I worked as a school counsellor in the research school for five years and witnessed the various frustrations experienced by the teachers in the school. This influenced my decision to investigate teacher resilience and how it impacted on the management of challenging learner behaviour. I completed an internship (as educational psychologist) at a different institution from January 2015 to 31 December 2015, after which I returned to the research school.

As I had been employed at the research school and knew the teachers, I realized that taking an objective stance and aiming for an “objective reality” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5) would be impossible. According to Ratner (2002, p.1), to be objective in a study the researcher would need to be a “passive recipient of external information, devoid of agency.” In my case, this would have been difficult to maintain, given my relationship with the research school and the participants. Subjectivity in this study was unavoidable, since it had influenced both the topic under investigation and my choice of research setting. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.12) note that researchers find it difficult objectively to observe their participants, since “any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity.” Consideration of these factors was important in ensuring the trustworthiness of the study. Researcher reflexivity is particularly important in qualitative research, as the researcher is an active participant, rather than detached, in the process of knowledge reproduction. Reflexivity means that the researcher not only focuses energy on the participants and their experiences but also ensures a constant process of re-evaluation of his or her own stance, values and perceptions, during the research process. Applying reflexivity in a study offers a researcher the opportunity to evaluate his own ideas or thought processes, which in turn can contribute to him

becoming a better researcher (Watt, 2007, p. 82). In this study, I employed various methods of data collection to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, while interpreting the data was viewed as a reflexive activity (Mauthner, Parry and Backett-Milburn, 1998 in Mauthner and Doucet, 2003, p.414). Additional quality criteria to enhance the trustworthiness of the study will be discussed in Section 3.9.

1.4.3 Research paradigm

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.6), paradigms are “systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researcher’s the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions [namely]: ontology, epistemology and methodology.” In order to better understand the paradigm of this study, it is important to define these three dimensions. Ontology indicates the nature of the reality that is to be studied. Epistemology refers to the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what is to be known. The last dimension, methodology, can be viewed as the way the researcher goes about gaining more knowledge about the unknown, with the aim of bringing the unknown to light. An interpretive paradigm was employed during this study. According to Merriam (2002, p. 4), this involves “learning how individuals experience and interact with their social world [and] the meaning it has for them.”

I believe that each individual makes meaning of their own world and that it is important for a researcher to gain sufficient knowledge about research participants’ meaning-making processes in order to understand their respective realities. According to Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006, p. 273-274), the interpretivist paradigm “involves taking people’s subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them (ontology), making sense of people’s experiences by interacting with them and listening carefully to what they tell us (epistemology), and making use of qualitative research techniques to collect and analyse information (methodology).”

The interpretive paradigm uses a qualitative approach which is centred on the idea of how the participants experience their world (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 6). Qualitative research also allows one to do an in-depth study of the participants’ natural setting and to interpret their experiences, perceptions and understanding of disruptive behaviour and how it can be managed. This approach allowed me to obtain valuable information on teachers’ resilience and their management of challenging learner behaviour.

The decision to follow an interpretive approach informed my research methodology, including the design and methods used to gain more knowledge on resilience among teachers and how this influenced their response to challenging learner behaviour.

1.4.4 Research design

According to Durrheim (2006, p.34), a research design can be defined as a “strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of research.” Rowley (2002, p.18) mentions that a research design connects the data which should be accumulated and the conclusions which are drawn from the introductory questions, thereby promoting continuity in a particular study. To achieve this coherence in the design, the researcher should look at various factors, namely the purpose of the specific research, the context in which it takes place, the research paradigm, and the specific techniques used in order to obtain information (Durrheim, 2006, p.37). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001, p.270), qualitative research focuses on the procedure rather than the outcome of the research. In a qualitative research study, it is also important to understand the social action of the participants in terms of their contexts.

As noted above, I used a qualitative case study design which informed my methodology and methods. According to Yin (2003), in Baxter and Jack (2008, p.545), when selecting a case study design the researcher should consider the following: “a) the focus of the study is to answer how and why questions; b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.” It was therefore important to identify the type of case study to be used, which in this research was an instrumental case study. According to Stake (1995), in Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 549), an instrumental case study is used when a researcher aims to achieve more than simply understanding a particular situation, but wishes to explore a specific phenomenon in some depth. The case in this particular study was used to investigate the phenomenon of teacher resilience in relation to challenging learner behaviour. Yin (2003), in Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p. 15), maintains that a case study research can be viewed as conducting an “empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence.” It allows the researcher to explore institutions or people and support the deconstruction and reconstruction of a specific phenomenon.

The topic under investigation will therefore be “studied in its natural context, bounded by space and time” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 15). According to Merriam (2002, p. 8), it is important when conducting case study research to remember that the unit of analysis will define the study. Case study research ensures that the topic under investigation is not viewed only through one lens, but rather through numerous lenses which allow for various features of a specific phenomenon to be identified and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). Lather (1992), as well as Robottom and Hart (1993) in Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 545), support the notion of allowing participants to share their stories, since this will enable the researcher to better understand their experiences. The lived experiences and their impact on resilience and challenging learner behaviour of six year-two teachers at a specific school of skills therefore formed the unit analysis for this particular study. Case study research, however, does not come without challenges. One aspect of which researchers need to be mindful is how to “lift the investigation from a descriptive account of ‘what happens’ to a piece of research that can lay claim to being a worthwhile, if modest addition to knowledge” (Rowley, 2002, p. 16). Nevertheless, case study research also holds benefits, since it may reveal information which may not otherwise have been obtained through alternative methods (Rowley, 2002, p. 16).

In a qualitative case study approach, certain qualitative methodologies are used to obtain information from the participants. I used the following qualitative methods of data collection to gain a better understanding of the participants’ experiences: semi-structured individual interviews, observations, and a focus group interview.

1.4.5 Research methodology

As the researcher, it was important to select a research method which would make it possible to obtain optimal information during the study. According to Mason (1996, p.19), in Silverman (2010, p.121), the methods you select should reflect an “overall research strategy.” The research methodology will shape what methods will be used in the attempt to bring the unknown into the known. As a researcher, I was interested in how people made sense of their environments, and I therefore chose to follow a qualitative approach in this study.

According to Merriam (1998, p.5), “qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible.” Qualitative researchers aim to gain more knowledge on “how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 1998, p.6). These aspects of qualitative research are all important, but

researchers should also bear in mind that they will enter a research study with their own views and perceptions.

1.4.6 Research methods

The research methods used in this study were selected because of their conformity with the chosen research design and methodology. They included purposive sampling, which was used to select the participants, and convenience sampling to select the research school. Three qualitative data collection methods, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and observation, were also used. The various data collecting methods will now be discussed.

1.4.6.1 Selection of participants

The sampling of participants refers to the process the researcher undertakes to identify appropriate participants who will eventually become the focus of the study. Convenience and purposeful sampling are often used in qualitative studies. The school of skills (a particular type of special school, to be further defined in Chapter 3) selected as the case for this study is situated in the Western Cape Province. It gives learners with learning difficulties the opportunity to develop academically, as well as enhancing their knowledge in a specific skill which could effectively be used in the country's economic sector. The school was selected using convenience sampling. This is appropriate when people or an institution are known to the researcher, are within easy reach and access, and agree to take part in the proposed study (Durrheim & Painter, 2006, p.139). I selected the special school for my study because I had previously worked there and already had an established relationship with the school and the participants. I was also conversant with their various concerns and problems.

I used purposeful sampling to select the participating teachers from the school. This type of sampling allows the researcher to identify information-rich sources which could offer detailed descriptions of the subjects' experiences, enhancing the analysis of the data (Durrheim, 2006, p. 49). In this study, the unit of analysis was six teachers teaching learners in their second year of schooling, acting as 'voices' on behalf of the school as a bounded system (case). They included three teachers from the academic sector of the school's programme, as well as three working in the skills workshops. Differing in age and work experience, they were chosen because they could offer valuable data from various sectors of the school. They could also provide information about the knowledge and skills they used to manage challenging behaviour as well as insights into their resilience.

1.4.6.2 Methods of data collection and analysis

Various methods are used in qualitative research to gather information, primarily “interviews, observation or document analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p.11). These methods aim to elicit rich and detailed information which could assist the researcher in answering the research questions. In the section below, a brief description will be given of the data collection methods and the data analysis process

- **Data collection methods**

In this study, I employed the following methods: semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews, and observation.

Interviewing participants, either within a group or individually, is an important part of gathering information for a qualitative study. One of the aims of the interview process is to gain insight into the participants’ world. According to Punch (2014, p. 144), interviews allow the researcher to gain access to “people’s perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality”. The individual semi-structured interview approach consists of pre-developed, open-ended questions which allow the interviewer and interviewee to engage in a conversational type of interview (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p.185). This method is valuable because the researcher can obtain information through specific questions, as well as allowing the interviewee the freedom to explore his or her own experiences and emotions. At the start of my research, I conducted individual interviews with the participants. This gave me important information about the various successes and challenges the teachers experienced, as well as their problems with managing challenging learner behaviour.

According to Kelly (2006, p.304), a focus group interview involves a small group of people who share a similar type of experience. This form of interview allows subjects to react to the researcher’s questions, as well as giving them an opportunity to hear each others’ responses. The value of this method is that the researcher has the opportunity to gather information from more than one participant within one session. In this study, the focus group interview allowed all the participating members to share their thoughts and ideas on teacher resilience and learner behaviour. I used predetermined questions, which I had developed after completing the individual interviews and observations, to direct the focus group discussions. Here the teachers actively participated and shared ideas. Punch and Oancea (2014, p. 186) suggest that the

researcher has important roles to fulfil during the focus group interview, among them “facilitating, moderating, monitoring and recording.” I therefore acted as a facilitator and recorded the responses of the group.

Observations formed an important part of this study, since I was interested not only in the various experiences and perspectives of teachers but also in how they interacted with others and with their environment (Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest & Namey, 2005, p, 13). By using observation as a data collection method, I was able to obtain valuable information about how the teachers behaved in their social context and work environment.

- **Data analysis**

To analyse the data, I employed qualitative content analysis. According to Thorne (2000, p.69), this method was originally developed for and used in the grounded theory methodology of Glaser and Strauss. “This strategy of data analysis involves taking one piece of information or data and then comparing it to all other data which may be similar or different in order to develop conceptualizations of the possible relations between the various pieces of data” (Thorne, 2000,p 69). Eventually this generated a number of main themes. These will be discussed in Chapter 4 and used in addressing the research questions.

1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Certain ethical principles are considered important in research and were applied in this study. These were non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy, privacy, the confidentiality of the participants, respect for those involved, and justice. According to Allan (2008, p 131), non-maleficence can be viewed as the responsibility of a psychologist, or in this instance the researcher, not to cause any damage to people or to behave in such a manner that may cause harm. Haahr, Norlyk and Hall (2014, p.10) define non-maleficence as “the obligation [of the researcher] not to inflict harm” to the participants in the study. Such harm may be caused when the research findings or results are placed above the interest of the participants. Haahr et al. (2014, p. 10) say that this should always be avoided, adding that “in research, the probable benefits should outweigh the risk to participants.” To ensure non-maleficence in this study, I was transparent about the research process, telling the participants about my goal for the study and my intentions. I remained truthful to them throughout the research process. I also ensured that I was competent as a researcher by preparing well for the interview process.

The second ethical consideration to which I had to adhere was beneficence. According to Allan (2008, p.135), this is the “moral obligation of psychologists to act for the benefit of others.” When applying this principle, the researcher needs to act for the benefit of the participants at all times. This view is supported by Haahr et al. (2014, p.10), who see beneficence as those behaviours of the researcher which could benefit participants. In order to maintain beneficence I undertook not to violate the rights of participants and to respect their welfare. I told them of the benefits the study could offer, both for them and for the broader community. I also tried to adhere to the principle of beneficence by respecting the autonomy of the subjects.

According to Allan (2008, p.128), autonomy can be viewed as the responsibility of the researcher to allow participants to make informed, voluntary decisions about their lives. This should include being allowed to make an informed decision on whether they want to take part in the proposed study. Autonomy can also be viewed as the “individual’s right to hold views, make choices and take actions based on personal values and beliefs” (Haahr et al., 2014, p.10). To maintain the autonomy of the participants, I gave them sufficient knowledge about the consequences of their participation to allow them to make informed decisions. Autonomy is also closely linked to the privacy and confidentiality. I gave each participant a consent form, in which I clearly explained their role in the study so they could make an informed decision regarding their participation and involvement

The researcher also needs to protect the privacy of his or her participants and ensure that the confidentiality of all documents and information is maintained. Grossoehme (2014, p. 120) holds that the researcher should at all times ensure that the identity of participants be kept private, especially when working with a small research group. To achieve this, I discussed with the teachers the methods I would use to maintain their privacy. Everything they told me would be kept confidential, and I would only release information with their permission. For five years, all data would be kept in a locked cabinet, to which only I, as researcher, and my supervisor, Dr. Oswald, would have access. Each participant also received a code number, for example P1, P2 etc., to further protect anonymity. According to Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014, p. 354), one can also ensure confidentiality by allowing all the subjects to read all reports prior to making them public.

For Mack et al., (2005, p. 9), it is the researcher's responsibility to "respect the values and interest of the community in the research and, wherever possible, to protect the community from harm." According to Allan (2008, p. 123), psychologists, or in this instance the researcher:

"must respect the dignity of people, such as their public reputation, psychological and physical integrity, and their uniqueness. This requires them to communicate respect for other people through their actions and language. They must not denigrate the character of people by engaging in conduct that demeans them as persons, or that defames or harasses them."

It is important for the researcher at all times to treat participants with respect and ensure that all the information received is kept confidential. With this study, it was important for me at all times to respect the above ethical principles. I adhered to the professional code of ethics and ensured that the data obtained and presented was a true and honest reflection of the particular research. My conduct and decisions were guided by the principles of respect for others and acting in the best interest of the participants.

In terms of justice, the researcher should ensure that he or she treats all participants without unfair "discrimination or favouritism" (Allan, 2008, p.126). I obtained permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to conduct my research in the special school (reference number: 20120903-0058). I also obtained ethical clearance from the research ethics committee at Stellenbosch University before I commenced my research in the school. Further attention will be paid to the ethical aspects of this study in Chapter 3.

1.6 A REVIEW OF THE KEY CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Resilience

As noted above, resilience can be seen as the ability to bounce back from negative experiences. Any form of adversity may have a negative impact. According to Luther, Cicchetti and Becker (2000), in Schoon (2012, p.145), "adversity [may] comprise of genetic, biological, psychological, environmental, or socio-economic factors that are associated with an increased probability of maladjustment." Rutter (1987), in Ungar (2012a, p. 14), emphasizes the value of reducing exposure to risk and the need to promote an enhanced self-esteem which could improve individual resilience.

1.6.2 Teacher resilience

According to Gu and Day (2013, p.26), “teacher resilience is not primarily associated with the capacity to bounce back or recover from highly traumatic experiences and events but, rather, the capacity to maintain equilibrium and a sense of commitment and agency in the everyday worlds in which teachers teach.” To perform at their best over an extended period, teachers need to be resilient (Gu & Day, 2013, p 22). In this study, a contextualized view of resilience will inform the theoretical framework of the research, echoing the work of Ungar (2012a, 1-14) on the social-ecological perspective of resilience.

1.6.3 Challenging behaviour

Challenging behaviour is defined by Levin and Nolan (1996, p.161), in Marais and Meier (2010, p.44), as “talking out of turn, name-calling, humming, calling out, off-task behaviours (e.g. daydreaming, fidgeting, doodling, tardiness, inattention), physical movement that, whether intended or not, is bound to disrupt (e.g. wandering about, visiting other learners, passing notes, sitting on the desk, throwing objects around the classroom) and disrespect (verbal aggression, teasing, punching, neglecting academic work, refusing to follow directions, and assault.” According to Prinsloo (2005, p.449), challenging behaviour could also be seen as “undisciplined behaviour and an aversion to the acceptance of authority, which results in the disempowerment of teachers.”

1.6.4 Inclusion/Inclusive education

Currently, the principles and values of inclusive education inform education policy in South Africa. UNESCO (1994, p. 6) defines an inclusive education system as follows: the education system should accommodate

all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups.

In South Africa, inclusive education is about recognizing and respecting the differences among all learners while at the same time building on the similarities. It is also about “acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support” (Department of Education, 2001, p. 16). Inclusive education will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

1.6.5 Special schools

Education White Paper 6 identifies three levels of support which would be provided in the South African education sector, namely low intensive support, which is given in mainstream schools, moderate support, which will be provided in full-service schools, and high-intensive support, which is provided in special schools (Department of Education, 2001, p.15). According to the White Paper 6, special schools should enable all learners to develop to their full potential, so that they can participate as equal members of society (Department of Education, 2001, p.5). Special schools in South Africa play a pivotal role in an inclusive education system, not only by helping learners who need intensive support but also as resource centres offering expertise and support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to full-service schools (Department of Education, 2001, p.21). It is important, however, to note that the research school in this study currently only acts as a special school (school of skills) and does not fulfil the requirements set out in White Paper 6 for providing services as a resource centre to other schools. Schools of skills use a curriculum adapted from the curriculum and assessment policy to suit learners with barriers to learning. It is envisaged that learners who experience barriers to learning and who find it difficult to cope with the mainstream curriculum have the opportunity at the school of skills to attain a certificate which would enable them to either continue their learning and development in tertiary institutions or they would be able to enter the world of work (Western Cape Education Department, 2013, p.3).

1.6.6 Well-being

Hofmann and Tetrick (2003), as well as Snyder and Lopez (2002) in Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway and McKee (2007, p.194), argue that well-being goes beyond the “absence of ill health to include the presence of positive states,” and could be extended for example to aspirations to learn, to become independent and to gain confidence. Improved well-being could enhance teachers’ work performance and learners’ scholastic performance, which in turn could lead to improved learner behaviour. Well-being and the factors which may influence this state of mind will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

1.6.7 Self-efficacy

According to Bandura (1993), in Sosa and Gomez (2012, p.879), to achieve your goals or to successfully complete tasks you require self-efficacy. Ashton, Webb and Doda (1982), in Sosa

et al. (2012, p.879), define teachers' self-efficacy as "teachers' belief in their skills and ability to positively influence students' learning and outcomes."

1.7 STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

This research report has been structured in the following way:

Chapter one: This introduces the research study. It also provides an outline of the research process followed in the study.

Chapter two: Gives an in-depth overview of the literature, with the focus on the theoretical framework used in the study, on positive emotions, as well as related concepts such as resilience, well-being and self-efficacy. Challenging learner behaviour will also be discussed.

Chapter three: This provides a comprehensive discussion on the research process, including the research paradigm and design, the research methodology, methods of data collection, and the ethical considerations that were involved.

Chapter four: This is dedicated to a presentation and discussion of the research findings.

Chapter five: This chapter will present a summary of the findings, recommendations, and the limitations of the study.

1.8 CONCLUSION

The aim of chapter one was to orientate the reader in the framework of the study. It highlighted the motivation for the research and its potential importance, together with an outline of the research process as it was implemented in the study. In Chapter 2, an in-depth review will be given of the literature, with the focus on positive emotions and related concepts such as resiliency, well-being and teachers' self-efficacy. The chapter will also include a section on challenging learner behaviour.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Mouton (2001, p. 86), any research study should begin with a review of current literature. The literature review is central to any study. It allows the researcher to engage with

the literature related to his topic of choice. According to Hart (1998, p.13), as quoted in Silverman (2010, p.323), the literature review should include

the selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed.

The study of the literature allows the researcher to identify a ‘knowledge gap’. This may give the potential focus for the study, as well as provide a basis from which to discuss the research findings (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit., 2004, p. 27). The literature review supports the problem statement and the rationale of the study, as well as the aim of the study. It also creates a basis of knowledge from which meaning can be made during the interpretation of data collected. The literature that will be reviewed and discussed in this chapter focuses on teacher resilience in relation to challenging learner behaviour. As explained in Chapter one, I chose the social-ecological perspective as the theoretical framework for this study.

This chapter will begin with a detailed discussion of the social-ecology perspective of resilience and its effects on teachers working with challenging learner behaviour. Additionally, the chapter aims to synthesize the available literature into a conceptual framework which would highlight the role of environmental influences or experiences on teacher resilience. Teacher resilience will be discussed in four dimensions: the profession-related dimension, emotional dimension, social dimension, and the motivational dimension. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of challenging learner behaviour and the impact of teacher resilience on such behaviour.

2.2 THE SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF RESILIENCE

To gain a better understanding of the social-ecological perspective of resilience, we need to investigate the shift that occurred from an individualistic approach to a more holistic view of resilience. According to Ungar (2012a, p.13), almost all earlier studies of resilience saw the individual as being solely responsible for change. Individual qualities associated with resilience, for example self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, in Ungar, 2012a, p.13) and self-esteem (Brown & Lohr, 1987, in Ungar, 2012a, p.13), were highlighted as offering protection against

negative environmental stressors. According to Ungar (2012a, p.13), this means that individuals “who are disadvantaged were expected to exercise personal agency in regard to accessing opportunities in their environments in order to increase their psychological functioning.” The effects of environmental support and stressors were not considered. According to Ungar (2012a, p.14), the work of Rutter (1987) shifted the

understanding of resilience as the result of individual traits that predicted coping under stress to processes that included reducing risk exposure, developing adequate self-esteem, preventing the negative impact of risk factors on developmental trajectories, and opening new opportunities for development by shaping the [person’s] environment.

In support of the above statement, Ungar (2011, p.1) provided four principles as the basis for an ecological interpretation of resilience: “decentrality, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relativity.” These four principles will now be discussed in more detail.

According to Ungar (2011, p.1), most of the literature on resilience still focuses on the individual, rather than on the broader context. Hammen (2003, p.66), in Ungar (2011, p.4), maintains that further research is needed to “extend assessments to include key community-level variables, such as social supports and quality of neighborhoods.” **Decentrality**, or the decentering of the individual from the process, according to Ungar (2011, p.5) means that the “locus of change does not reside in either the [individual] or the environment alone, but in the processes by which environments provide resources for use of the [individual].” Wyman (2003), in Ungar (2011, p. 5), also concurs with this notion, saying that change in people is not the result of what they do, but is rather the “consequence of what their [respective] environments provide.”

It will therefore be important to consider the school context in which teachers work. A teacher’s ability or skill, for example, will only be as good as “the capacity of his or her social and physical ecologies that facilitate their expression and application for development” (Ungar, 2011, p. 6). Ungar’s (2011, p.6) definition of the ecological approach to resilience highlights three important, integral aspects which need to be considered: the individual’s social and physical ecology, the reciprocal action between the person and the context, and the person’s “[individual]-specific propensities toward positive development.” Decentrality then distinguishes resiliency from resilience. Resiliency is viewed as focusing on the individual’s characteristics, while resilience is “process-orientated” (Ungar, 2011, p.6).

According to Masten and Powell (2003, p.4), in Ungar (2011, p.7), we should “not expect a resilient person, however defined at one point in time, to be doing well every minute of the day, under all imaginable circumstances, or in perpetuity.” This statement has relevance for the **complexity** principle of resilience, which foregrounds the notion that an individual’s resilience is not constant but rather changes over time. For example, as teachers move into new schools or communities, they can recover from previous setbacks or experiences if the necessary support and resources are available. According to Mansfield et al. (2012, p.359), their resilience could be enhanced if they received support from all the respective role players. In contrast to the above, adverse working conditions contribute towards a challenging professional context which could have a negative impact on teacher resilience (Yonezwa et al, 2011, p. 916). Ungar (2012a, p.16), however, claims that resilient teachers, when faced with adversity, will “navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that build and sustain their well-being.” Ungar (2011, p.7) contends that the resilience of teachers could be enhanced if they were able to connect with supportive communal and physical ecologies. These views reflect the complexity of resilience and reinforce the importance of a teacher’s environment. More attention should be given to the complicated nature of resilience (Ungar, 2011, p. 7). For example, a comprehensive assessment of the quality of the person’s environment, with less emphasis on the characteristics of the person, could be introduced. The principle of complexity relates to “equifinality [since] many different starting points [could] lead to many different but equally desirable ends by many different processes relevant to different ecologies” (Ungar (2011, p.7).

Atypicality, the third principle of resilience, refers to behaviour shown by individuals in order to cope under adverse circumstances. Atypical behavioural traits are distinguished from the norm in that they are not necessarily accepted by society. For example, learners living in circumstances filled with violence and gangsterism often react to teachers by swearing or making threats, thereby demonstrating their own resilience. According to Bowen, Bowen and Ware (2002), as well as Nash (2002) in Brooks (2006, p. 72), learners from chaotic communities may influence and affect behaviour in educational settings. Even though these behaviours are not accepted in society, they may still be required in their communities in order to survive. They could be seen as alternative strategies or “hidden resilience” used by individuals (Ungar, 2011, p.8). Ungar (2011, p.8) also notes that “unusual behavioral patterns may be culturally and contextually relevant to successful development when the benchmarks

for that development are defined locally.” The emphasis on atypicality has great relevance for teachers in South Africa, since many learners in South African schools hail from adverse backgrounds. According to Patterson, Reid and Dishion (1992) and Sutherland and Oswald (2005) in Leflot, Lier, Onghena and Colpin (2010, p.870), some teachers, when they encounter challenging learner behaviour, react in an irritable and forceful manner. It is critical for teachers to understand the environment of their learners, in order to gain a better understanding of their behaviour. This reinforces the claim that all teachers working in the education sector should make a concerted effort to gain knowledge of and insight into the various backgrounds of their learners.

Atypicality also characterizes the way environments help protect individuals when resources are scarce. Given the constantly changing curriculum and the accompanying demands, teachers may be tempted to use their workload to avoid dealing with challenging learner behaviour, using the curriculum as a protective measure. While resilience can be seen as socially acceptable in adverse conditions, it may also lead to behaviour that we may not want to promote. In the development of resilience, however, a positive change in circumstances or context may contribute towards more socially acceptable coping strategies.

The fourth principle suggested by Ungar (2011, p.8) to explain resilience is **cultural relativity**. To understand resilience as a complex construct with varied outcomes, it is important to identify the culture in which the person under investigation lives (Ungar, 2011.p 9). According to Wong, Wong and Scott (2006), in Ungar (2011, p.9), culture in the definition of cultural relativity is seen as the “values, beliefs, language and customs” shared by groups of individuals. In the perspective of cultural relativity, resilience which is measured within a specific community may indicate either the distinctive nature of local culture or a more adjusted universal culture (Ungar, 2011, p.9). An example is provided by Chen, DeSouza, Chen and Wang (2006) in Ungar (2011, p.9), who conducted a study in urban schools in China. They found that shyness in children was viewed in the past as a precursor to successful development, whereas in the current Chinese context shyness was seen as a symbol of a child’s delayed capacity to achieve academic success. The more the individual adapts to the expectations of his environment, the more he will be viewed as being resilient (Ungar, 2011, p.9). According to Ungar (2011, p.10), to establish resilience among members of a certain context, minority groups should be allowed to negotiate with the cultural “elites for recognition of their solutions

to problems.” Resilience should be viewed as a process shaped by culture in determining protective processes (Ungar, 2011, p.10).

2.3 RESILIENCE DEFINED

During the 1970s, the term resilience was used in areas such as psychology and psychiatry to explain the positive development of people who were believed to be ‘at risk’ because of their adverse conditions (Mansfield et al., 2012, p.358). According to Mansfield et al. (2012, p.358), these conditions included “professional work challenges such as heavy workloads, classroom management, being unprepared, lack of support and lack of resources.” According to Masten (2001), in Ungar (2011, p.1), resilience may be enhanced through individual competence, as well as through contextual support. It can now be defined as “relative, developmental and dynamic, manifesting itself as a result of a dynamic process within a given context” (Gu & Day, 2007, p.1305). Despite the varying approaches, one common denominator remains: the role that the environment plays in the development and demonstration of resilience.

According to Masten (2001, p.228), in Toland and Carrigan (2011, p. 96), in its simplest form resilience could be defined as “good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaption or development.” To describe someone as being resilient, two criteria need to be present. Firstly, a significant threat that places an individual at risk for a negative outcome. According to Mansfield et al. (2012, p.357), in the case of the teaching profession this could include “high workloads, lack of support, challenging learner behaviour, meeting complex and diverse needs of learners as well as a low professional status.” Theron (2012, p. 334) argues that resilience cannot be construed if adversity is absent. According to Mancini and Bananno (2011), in Theron (2012, p.334), examples of adversity could include loss and grief, while Buckner and Waters (2011), in Theron (2012, p.334), view poverty-stricken ecologies as risk factors. We could also view learning difficulties as risk factors. According to Bauer, Keefe and Shea (2001), in Theron (2006, p.199), learners with such difficulties display minimal protective factors and find it difficult to overcome obstacles. Schoon (2012, p.145) adds that “the accumulation of [adversity and] the combined effect of timing and duration of exposure” may have a negative impact on developmental outcomes. Rutter (2006), in Schoon (2012, p.145), agrees with this, maintaining that severe exposure to adversity can outweigh the coping abilities of individuals.

Secondly, in order to be viewed as resilient, the individual will need to adapt or show positive development in the presence of adversity. Attributes such as “a strong sense of competence, efficacy and accomplishments” may assist in this (Mansfield et al., 2012, p.357). However, as noted by Lerner (2006, p.47) in Theron (2012, p.334), it is important to remember that resilience is influenced by a complicated interaction between the individual and the environment. Taking this concept into account, resilient teachers working in schools surrounded by poverty-stricken communities where there is little supportive material will need to adjust and develop their own material to help their learners. Alternatively, another group of teachers working in poverty-stricken areas characterized by malnutrition could adjust by giving their learners a good meal every day, so that they will be able to concentrate sufficiently. Masten and Wright (2010), as well as Toland and Carrigan (2011) in Theron and Donald (2012, p. 3), view resilience as entrenched in a complicated and dynamic process. The diversity of definitions of resilience and the emphasis laid on both individual and environmental factors reaffirms the multidimensionality and multiplicity of the phenomenon (Mansfield et al., 2012, p.357). For the purpose of this study, teacher resilience will now be explored in more detail.

2.4 TEACHER RESILIENCE

2.4.1 Introduction

Mansfield et al. (2012, p.366) claim that research focused on teacher resilience is scant. Lately it has gained some prominence, as the teaching profession has experienced high rates of attrition, with many teachers leaving the profession. Price et al. (2012, p.91) claim that the work of teachers has become challenging following policies that have placed more responsibilities on teachers, but with less reward. As a result, the teachers feel alienated and ill-equipped to meet their goals. These changes could lead to “stress, burnout”, as well as teacher attrition (Price et al., 2012, p. 91). Resilience is required for teachers to do quality work and to teach at their best over time (Gu & Day, 2013, p.22). The need for resilient teachers in the current education sector cannot be disputed (Le Cornu, 2009, p. 717). According to Parker (2009, p.5), the factors which may serve as a buffer to harmful conditions have been investigated. Cooper, Dewe and O’Driscoll (2001), in Parker (2009, p.6), identified the most influential buffers to teacher stress as: “social support, self-efficacy, self-concept, coping strategies, optimism and hardiness or resilience.” According to Bandura (2006), in Parker (2009, p.7), buffers may not only reduce stress but may also contribute to an enhanced well-being and a sense of accomplishment. Social support from role players such as fellow teachers, administrators, the school organization and the principal play a key role in alleviating stress

and attrition (Brunetti, 2006, p. 820). Efficacy can also be linked to a teacher's belief in his or her ability to educate learners (Ross & Bruce, 2007, p. 3). Enhancing efficacy has critical value in an education system, especially when we consider that teachers with an improved self-efficacy will set themselves higher goals and also work harder towards achieving these goals, regardless of the barriers they may encounter (Ross & Bruce, 2007, p. 3). Efficacy not only promotes persistence among teachers to achieve success but also, according to Ross and Bruce (2007, p.4), enhances the confidence to use various classroom approaches. Teachers with a higher self-efficacy are willing to build positive relationships with lower-achieving learners, which in turn may result in improved academic performances, since these learners tend to be more influenced by the expectations of these teachers (Ross & Bruce, 2007, p. 4).

A positive self-concept, as noted by Roche and Marsh (2000, p. 439), may also be a mediating factor, offering a positive influence on results across different contexts. A self-concept, however, is not inherent in a specific person, but rather is developed and formed through the individual's experiences with and interpretations of his environment (Roche & Marsh, 2000, p. 442). According to Roche and Marsh (2000, p. 442), the individual's self-concept could be influenced by reinforcement and feedback from peers. In evaluating self-concept in the education sector, we find that it plays an important role in teachers' resilience and level of performance. According to Roche and Marsh (2000, p. 446), those with a low self-concept may experience feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, whereas those with a stronger self-concept may be more positive, maintaining their motivation to improve and succeed.

As an important buffer, resilience focuses on the factors which may lead to teacher commitment (Parker, 2009, p. 7). Those personal capabilities which enhance teacher commitment are not only seen as protective and leading to less stress but are also viewed as helping teachers to have "more positive experiences, [improving] their well-being and [enhancing their] sense of achievement" (Bandura, 2006, in Parker, 2009, p.9). The concept once again underlines the diversity of resilience. According to Mansfield et al. (2012, p.358), interaction between the individual and his environment, between the protective and risk factors, as well as individual characteristics such as personal strengths, assets or competencies, all play a crucial role in the development of resilience. Teachers face risk and protective factors, both of which can ultimately have an influence on their resilience. According to Toland and Carrigan (2011, p. 98), risk factors may impede development, while protective factors may promote development. It is important, therefore, that a balance be struck between risk and protective factors (Toland

& Carrigan, 2011, p. 98). According to Punamaki (1987), in Boyden and Mann (2005, p.7), personal protective factors include autonomy, self-help skills and aptitude. Familial protective factors, for example a supportive family and a sound family structure, could also help teachers to overcome challenges (Dawes (1992), in Boyden & Mann (2005, p.7). Added to this, environmental factors, which may include bonds with pro-social adults, positive peer relationships and effective schools, could contribute to the development of other protective factors such as self-esteem, a sense of competence, and self-belief (Boyden & Mann, 2005, p.8). Enhancing these factors may improve resilience and the ability to manage difficult circumstances. The presence of resources in the lives of individuals may also counteract adversity, ultimately leading to successful adaptation and development (Masten & Powell (2003, p. 10). According to Toland and Carrigan (2011, p. 98), resilience is the outcome of interaction between the balance of protective/risk factors at the individual level and the balance of protective/risk factors at the environmental level.

Resilient teachers bring great value to the South African education system. They are more likely to persevere in adverse conditions and find it easier to adapt to change (Mansfield et al., 2012, p.357). As individuals, they are able to create their own support networks and learning experiences (McCormack, Gore, & Thomas, 2006, in Le Cornu, 2009, 717). Resilience can also be viewed as the ability of a teacher to control his or her emotions, as well as being able to effectively communicate within a particular society (Tait, 2008, p.72). Added to this, teachers with resilient qualities are also less inclined to consider leaving the profession (Mansfield et al., 2012, p.357). Teacher resilience may also promote the retention of quality teachers in the school system (Gu & Day, 2007, p.1314).

However, not all teachers are resilient. According to Gu and Day (2013, p.24), even those who are viewed as resilient may find it difficult to maintain their resilience over an extended period of time. They could change from continuing their pursuit of excellence to simply trying to survive in their work environment. Many factors may hinder a teacher from developing or maintaining resilience. Through identifying these aspects we should be able to help improve teacher resilience.

As previously noted, Ungar (2012a, p. 17) contends that resilience as a quality is shared between the individual and society. Interactions with society play an important role in the recovery from stress. Gu and Day (2013, p.23) cite a publication of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2005, p.9) in support of Ungar:

The quality of teaching is determined not just by the quality of the teachers - although that is clearly critical - but also the environment in which they work. Able teachers are not necessarily going to reach their potential in settings that do not provide appropriate support or sufficient challenge or reward.

2.4.2 The four dimensions of teacher resilience

To understand the complexity of teacher resilience and how various factors impact on its development, we need to examine it, as suggested by Mansfield et al. (2012, p. 362), within four dimensions: the professional, emotional, motivational and the social dimension. In the present study, the different qualities relating to the four dimensions could also be configured as protective buffers against harmful factors, both in the self and the environment.

2.4.2.1 Profession-related aspects of teacher resilience

According to Mansfield et al. (2012, p. 362), the profession-related dimension involves aspects of teaching practice, including indications that the teacher is organized, well-prepared, and can manage time effectively. The resilient teacher will be committed to his or her learners, will have useful teaching skills, will be adaptable, and will have reflective qualities. However, as noted by Friedman (2004), Kyriacou (2001), Wilhelm, Dewhurst-Savellis and Parker (2000), as well as Wilson (2002) in Mansfield et al. (2012, p.357), teachers may find this difficult when confronted with “high workloads, lack of support, challenging [learner] behaviour, meeting the [diverse] needs of [learners] and low professional status.” Above all, challenging learner behaviour remains a stumbling block for teachers, and many consider leaving their profession because of disruptive behaviour (Gu & Day, 2013, p.23).

In assessing the impact of the profession on teacher resilience in South Africa, we need to take the above aspects into consideration, as well as the complex educational context in which our teachers ply their trade. According to Oswald (2010), in Theron and Engelbrecht (2012, p.268), some teachers work in schools in poverty-stricken areas characterized by a lack of education, parents who are unemployed, minimal support, increased teacher-learner ratios, as well as societal problems. According to Theron and Engelbrecht (2012, p. 268), South African teachers also face poor conditions of service, including lack of support from Education Department officials and the constant implementation of new policy documents which increase their responsibilities. These factors have a negative influence on the teaching profession.

As noted above, resilience among teachers is an important component of a successful education system. It is necessary therefore to investigate those factors which influence teacher resilience. This section offers an indication of how the context of the profession can impact teacher resilience, but it is important to note that a variety of factors can promote resilience. These will be discussed in the following sections.

2.4.2.2 Emotional dimension of teacher resilience

Teachers who find it difficult to manage the emotional aspects of their profession are more susceptible to stress or fatigue (Chang, 2009, in Mansfield et al, 2012, p. 357). As previously mentioned in Mansfield et al. (2012, p. 357), stress may lead to a lowered resilience. We therefore need to identify the various emotional factors which may strengthen teacher resilience and in the process help alleviate stress and burnout. Mansfield et al. (2012, p.358) quote several researchers who highlight factors that may contribute to resilience. Among these qualities are altruism (Brunetti, 2006; Chong & Louw, 2009), strong intrinsic motivation (Flores, 2006; Gu & Day, 2007; Kitching, Morgan, & O’Leary, 2009), perseverance and persistence (Fleet, Kitson, Cassidy, & Hughes, 2007; Sinclair, 2008), optimism (Chong & Low, 2009; Le Cornu, 2009), sense of humour (Bobek, 2002; Jarzabkowski, 2002), emotional intelligence (Chan, Lau, Nie, Lim, & Hogan, 2008), willingness to take risks (Sumsion, 2003), and flexibility (Le Cornu, 2009). Added to this, Mansfield et al. (2012, p.357) highlight qualities such as “good career decision making, self-insight and professional freedom” as factors which may enhance resilience.

According to Clonan, Chafouleas, Mcdougal, and Riley-Tillman (2004, p.104), resilience is related to competencies which serve to protect the individual against stress. The promotion of these competencies has an impact on school settings. Personal competencies, as well as the enhancement of protective factors across multiple environments, help to foster resilience. Johnson, Down, Le Cornu, Peters, Sullivan, Pearce and Hunter (2010, p.5) contend that resilient teachers are more aware of their own well-being. They eat healthy foods, spend time with their families, participate in physical activities, spend time with friends, ensure they get enough rest, limit the time they spend working at school, and make time for themselves. Self-esteem also contributes to an enhanced resilience, and according to Schaffer (1996), in Gilligan (2000, p.40), “derives from a person’s sense of their own worthiness and competence.” According to Rutter (1990), in Gilligan (2000, p. 41), two aspects in particular can contribute

to the enhancement of self-esteem: safe and balanced relationships and the successful management of assignments.

It is important to keep in mind that this study is conducted from a social-ecological perspective. According to Ungar (2012a, p.14), it should be seen as an “interactional, environmental and culturally pluralistic perspective.” In order to gain an ecological understanding of teacher resilience, we would also need to investigate the reciprocal person-environment interactions (Ungar, 2012a, p. 14). These interactions between the person and his or her environment will be discussed in more detail in sub-section 2.4.4. In the following sub-section, attention will be given to the motivational aspects relating to teacher resilience.

2.4.2.3 Motivational aspects of teacher resilience

Aspects of teacher resilience which relate to motivation include self-efficacy, focusing on consistent improvement and self-education, tenacity, determination, a positive mindset towards challenges, self-confidence and being hopeful, showing enthusiasm, as well as setting achievable, realistic objectives (Mansfield et al., 2012, p. 362). Self-efficacy involves a teacher’s belief in his or her own skills, coupled with the ability to positively influence learners’ learning and outcomes (Sosa & Gomez, 2012, p.877). To successfully carry out their goals or tasks, teachers need to combine a sense of efficacy with sufficient knowledge and skills. As with resilience, many factors appear to influence self-efficacy and ultimately to impact teacher resilience. According to Gilligan (2000, p. 41), self-efficacy plays a crucial part in resilience. Constant support, encouragement, showing confidence in the individual’s ability to engage with his environment and to make decisions could enhance not only his self-efficacy but also his resilience. Self-efficacy influences the actions of teachers, including the efforts they make to effect change in the lives of their learners (Sosa & Gomez, 2012, p.878).

Teachers’ belief in their learners’ capabilities also has an influence on their own attitude to teaching them. They may, for instance, trust their ability to educate those learners who are on a higher educational level, rather than those with lower academic functioning. Not only do teachers’ beliefs in the learners’ abilities impact their own self-efficacy but their cultural backgrounds, as well as their own negative perceptions, also seem to play a role. Teachers’ opinions and perceptions of minority learners may also have an influence on the time spent teaching them and how they are viewed, even if they perform well in school (Sosa & Gomez, 2012, p. 880). This is especially relevant in South African schools, given the high level of

cultural diversity in the country. Teacher self-efficacy is extremely important in the school sector, since, according to Sosa and Gomez (2012, p. 878), “teachers’ sense of efficacy influences the interactions believed to enhance students’ capacity to overcome obstacles.”

Factors which may enhance the self-efficacy of teachers include positive feedback from colleagues, as well as recognition and rewards for accomplishing their tasks. Those working in special schools also face learners with disabilities on a daily basis. For such teachers to offer their learners optimal opportunity for growth they need a high level of self-efficacy. Soodak and Podell’s (1994) research, discussed in Sosa and Gomez (2012, p.880), supports this view. They found that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy working with learners with learning difficulties were able to suggest better alternative prevention strategies than did those with low efficacy. Teachers with high efficacy working in these conditions trusted their own ability, while those with low efficacy tended to doubt themselves, which may have led them not to attempt alternative methods to assist their learners (Sosa & Gomez, 2012, p. 881).

The above findings reiterate the importance of healthy well-being, a positive self-esteem, as well as a positive self-efficacy among teachers. Agreeing with this, Seligman (2002), in Chafouleas and Bray (2004, p. 1), also notes that adverse feelings may serve as a barrier to growth, whereas positive emotions may lead to determination, discovery and thus to attainment. A teacher with a “high sense of self-efficacy tends to build positive learning environments, positive expectations and positive relationships with students” (Sosa & Gomez, 2012, p. 881). The value of establishing and maintaining a high sense of efficacy among South African teachers is undeniable. In order to accomplish this positive frame of mind, we need to investigate the role of relationships and interaction in the teacher’s environment. A more detailed discussion on the value of relationships and social interaction will be given in the context of the socially-related dimension of resilience.

2.4.2.4 Socially-related aspects of teacher resilience

The socially-related dimension of teachers’ resilience entails the social interactions in the work environment. They include aspects such as developing a support structure or network, asking for support, and being able to take advice from others (Mansfield et al., 2012, p. 362). According to Masten and Wright (2010), in Theron, (2012, p. 334), “resilience promoting interactions [is] embedded in basic protective systems [which] include positive attachment, self-regulation processes, opportunities for agency and mastery, reasoning, and problem

solving, supported by effective executive functioning, meaning-making, and culture and religion.” Thus resilience does not stand alone, but is rather a reciprocal activity which requires interaction between two entities; it also relies on context, which includes our most valuable relationships (Kent, 2012, p.111). Taking this into account, we have to view teachers’ interactions with their context as important in the overall development of their resilience. According to Supkoff, Puig, and Sroufe (2012, p.17), teachers’ resilience could be seen as the result of the collective history both of each individual and of his or her environment. Teachers’ interactions with their environment seem to play a pivotal role in the development of their resilience. For this reason, more attention will be given to the factors that may either promote or inhibit teachers’ interactions with their environment.

According Howard and Johnson (2004), as well as Tait (2008) in Mansfield et al. (2012, p. 359), teachers need well-developed social skills to facilitate the advancement of communal support systems. Castro, Kelly and Shih (2010, p.623) maintain that they should also be able to develop new strategies to help them manage difficult circumstances. While such social factors could aid the development of teacher resilience, Smith and Ingersoll (2004, p. 683) suggest that mentor support for teachers also plays a valuable role in the strengthening of resilience. According to Hong (2012, p.428), teachers value support from their colleagues, from school management, as well as from friends and family. The environment in which they apply their skills and the support they receive play critical roles in their positive development. Hong (2012, p.428) further found that factors such as supportive staff and principals who gave positive feedback and motivation not only contributed towards the teachers’ development and growth but also enhanced their self-efficacy.

Jordan (2006), in Le Cornu (2009, p.719), views mutuality as an important element in developing resilience. One of the critical characteristics of mutuality is reciprocity. Le Cornu (2009, p. 719) sees this as the development that takes place in learning environments where the individual not only takes responsibility for his own well-being but also of those who form part of the specific community. Taris, Van Horn, Schaufeli, and Schreurs (2004, p.105) define reciprocity as “the quality of one’s perceived investments in and benefits from an exchange relationship.” An imbalance in this relationship, where one aspect outweighs the other, may however result in negative outcomes.

Empowerment is also an important building block in achieving growth-inspiring relationships. It offers teachers enhanced levels of energy, creativity and flexibility, while “trusting, respectful and reciprocal relationships” with colleagues may also result in the empowerment of teachers (Le Cornu, 2009, p.720).

The final component which Jordan (2006), in Le Cornu (2009, p. 720), views as important in building resilience is fearlessness, defined in Le Cornu (2009, p.720) as “the capacity to move into situations or circumstances, even though we experience fear or hesitation.” Courage cannot be viewed as an innate characteristic, but rather as developing through the constant encouragement of peers. One aspect to be borne in mind is that interaction between peers may be either positive or negative; this could influence the experience and development of tenacity in teachers (Le Cornu, 2009, p. 720).

In the above section, the focus was upon factors which could enhance teachers’ social interactions, as well as how positive and supportive interactions might ultimately enhance teachers’ resilience. It is, however, important to note that there are factors which may be detrimental to the strengthening of teachers’ well-being, self-efficacy, self-belief and resilience. These factors will be discussed as pointers towards future research and to gain insight into which factors need to be alleviated in order to promote teacher resilience. According to Steel (2001), in Parker (2009, p. 5), one of the fundamental characteristics of teaching is the breadth and multiplicity of interactions in the workplace. The social sphere seems to be an area where teachers experience a great deal of stress, since they are required to balance the demands of all the role players in their lives (Ritvanen, Louhevaara, Helin, Vaisanen & Hanninen, 2006, in Parker, 2009, p.5). Stress forms part of teachers’ lives, and it is important that we pay attention to this aspect since teachers’ attrition could be caused by high levels of stress and the increased responsibilities placed upon them (Parker, 2009, p. 2). In the next section, a brief discussion on teacher stress will help clarify how it may occur and the role it plays in the building of resilience.

2.4.3 The role of stress as risk factor

High levels of stress are clearly one of the main causes of teacher attrition (Parker, 2009, p. 2). According to McIntyre (2003), in Tait (2008, p.58), teachers view their “teaching assignments, and [the] frustration with politics in their profession, the lack of adequate resources and inadequate mentoring support” as among the reasons causing them to leave their profession.

Those who experience school administration as unsupportive tend to move to schools where they will find a better fit, which could result in the previous schools losing teachers with high efficacy (Yost, 2006, in Beltman, Mansfield & Price, 2011, p. 192). It should be remembered, too, that teachers not only face factors which may cause stress in their workplace but also have to manage their personal lives, make time for family, as well as ensure economic stability (Le Cornu, 2009, p.719).

Teachers are also expected to adapt, to keep up with family activities, changes in work arrangements, “as well as new information and communication technologies,” all of which ultimately influence their well-being and competence (Pillay, Goodard & Wilss, 2005, in Johnson et al, 2010, p.1). Long hours at work, challenging learner behaviour and increased administrative responsibilities can further add to teachers’ stress (Price et al, 2012, p.81). According to Yonezawa et al. (2011, p.916), increased teacher-learner ratios, old or outdated learning materials, communities marked by poverty, displaced parents, as well as gang violence may all raise the stress levels of teachers and challenge their resilience. Thus chronic exposure to stress may influence teachers’ ability to function optimally in their work environment. Stress not only impacts teachers’ work performance and their resilience but may also have a negative impact on their health.

Chronic stress exposure may lead to health problems, such as coronary diseases, as well as some cancers. It may also have a psychological impact, and those experiencing chronic stress may suffer feelings of incompetence (Parker, 2009, p. 3). It may also lead to burnout, which, according to Byrne (1991), quoted in Parker (2009, p. 3), may result in teachers being “less sympathetic to students, less tolerant of classrooms disturbances, less able to prepare well for classes, less committed and dedicated to their work [which could] ultimately lead to increased absenteeism and withdrawal from the profession.” It is evident that stress can have a debilitating effect on teachers, affecting their commitment to learners, to their profession, and to themselves.

2.5 CHALLENGING LEARNER BEHAVIOUR

2.5.1 Defining challenging learner behaviour

Currently, we find that challenging learner behaviour is on the increase in South African schools (Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe & Van der Walt, 2004, p.170). As noted in Chapter one,

such behaviour can be placed on a continuum from less serious behavioural difficulties to more serious problems (McNamara, 1987, in Samuelsson, 2007, p.3). Less challenging behaviour could include talking in class or learners mocking each other, whereas disrespectful behaviour would include swearing or physical aggression (Levin & Nolan, 1996, in Marais & Meier, 2010, p.44). Levin and Nolan (1996), in Marais and Meier (2010, p.44), also ascribe conduct such as lack of concentration or constant moving about in class as adding to teachers' stress. According to Burden (1995), in Samuelsson (2007, p.2), teachers view any behaviour as disruptive when it interferes with the academic process. Burden (1995), in Samuelsson (2007, p.2), further discusses challenging behaviour in four categories, as presented in Table 2.1

Table 2.1: Burden (1995)'s four categories of challenging behaviour.

<p>Hyperactivity: high level of activity and non-aggressive contact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a) unable to sit still, and fidgets; b) talks too much; c) cannot wait for pleasant things to happen; d) constant demand for attention; e) hums and makes other noises; f) excitable; g) overly anxious, and h) poor coordination
<p>Inattentiveness: inability to complete work and activities and has a high level of distractibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a) does not stay with games and activities; b) does not complete projects; c) inattentive and distractible; d) does not follow directions; e) withdraws from new people and is shy; f) sits fiddling with small objects, and g) unable to sit still.
<p>Conduct disorder: inability to accept corrections, tends to tease others, and shows a high level of defiance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a) does not stay with games or activities; b) cannot accept corrections; teases others; discipline does not change behaviour for long; e) is defiant and "talks back"; f) moody; g) fights, and h) has difficulty handling frustration
<p>Impulsivity: constant demand for attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a) reckless and acts careless; b) has numerous accidents, and c) gets into things

Note: Adapted from Burden (1995), in Samuelsson (2007, p.2-3)

Little (2003), in Samuelsson (2007, p.4), also divides learners' behaviours into four groups, as reported by teachers on learners who are difficult to manage in the classroom. See Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Specific classroom behaviour problems

Disobedience	Not doing what the teacher asked, which can range from not completing tasks to defiance
Idleness/slowness	Learners working slowly, which does not include learners who do not have the ability to work faster, but rather those learners who spend a large amount of time not working diligently.
Unnecessary noise	This behaviour can range from loud voices to banging on desks
Aggression	This behaviour includes verbal and physical aggression, which includes swearing or kicking, hitting or biting

Note: Adapted from Little (2003), in Samuelsson (2007, p.4)

As seen above, there are many different manifestations of behaviours that teachers perceive as challenging. They also seem to have great difficulty in managing these behaviours. It is important therefore to understand their origin. Bru (2006), in Samuelsson (2007, p.4), isolates three aspects which may influence challenging learner behaviour: (a) cognitive competence, (b) relevance of schoolwork, and (c) going against school norms. Learners tend to go against the expectations of their teachers in order to gain status among their peers. This not only relates to their competency but also to how they view the applicability of their schoolwork (Bru, 2006, in Samuelsson, 2007, p.4). This notion seems to cause immense frustration among teachers, since much of their contact time with learners is consumed by their attempts to manage challenging behaviour (Little, 2005, in Samuelsson, 2007, p.5).

2.5.2 Employing Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model for an holistic view of challenging learner behaviour

Given that a socio-ecological perspective is followed in this study, challenging learner behaviour will need to be investigated holistically. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model, which includes his focus on the effect of different systems on the life of the developing individual, will be used to explain the origin of challenging learner behaviour. Bronfenbrenner's model can be viewed as multidimensional, with a specific focus on proximal processes "at the centre of the Process-Person-Context-Time" (PPCT) model (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009, p.198). Singal (2006) and Mitchell (2005), in Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.10), maintain that the bio-ecological model offers a better understanding of

the “development of systems” and the “development of individuals” in these systems. The model may also offer valuable information about the school context and home environments, as well as about teachers (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.11). By applying the bio-ecological model in this study, I hope to gain information about challenging learner behaviour which would deepen our understanding of this phenomenon.

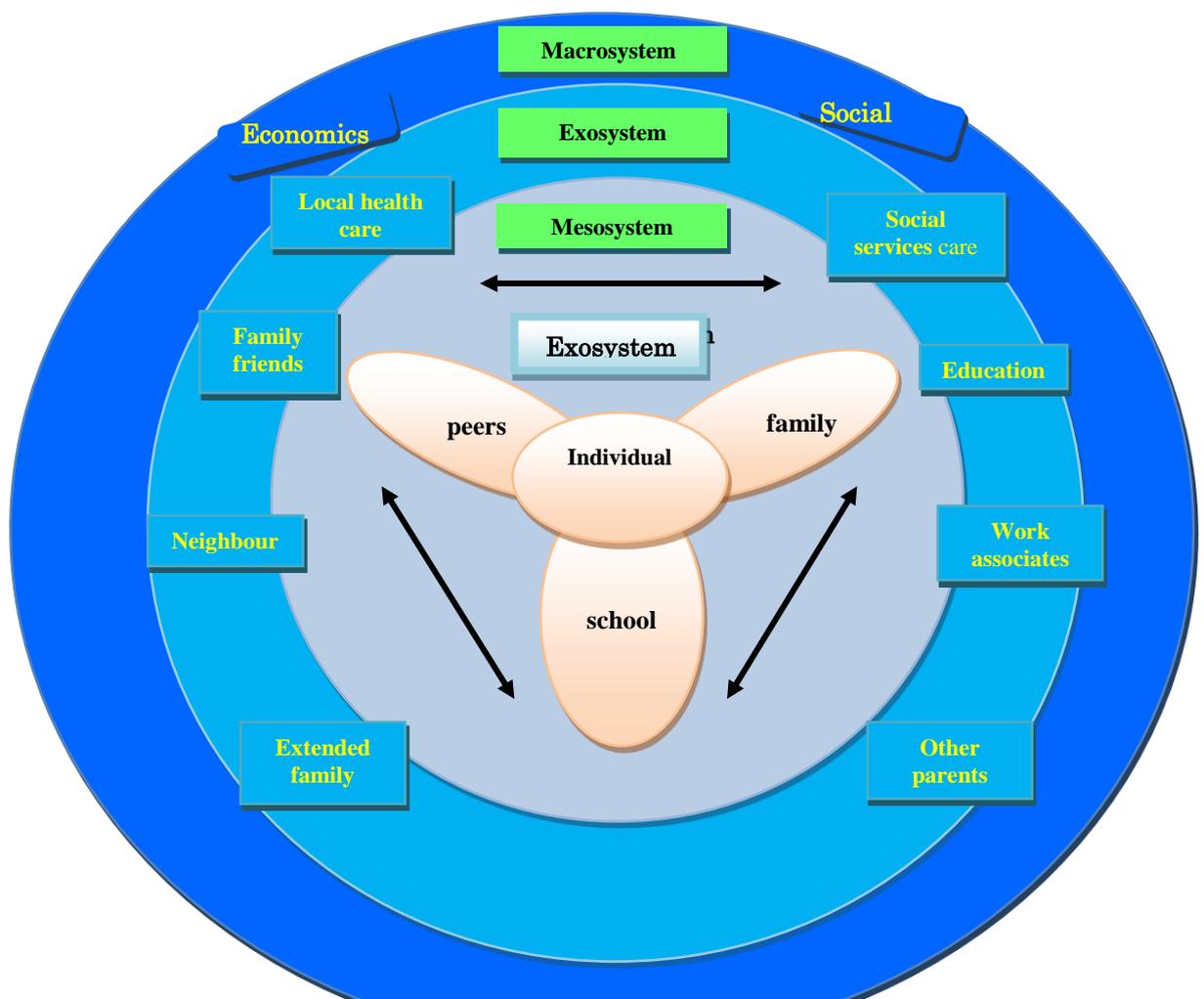
I will briefly discuss the PPCT model. The emphasis will be on challenging learner behaviour, highlighting the role of the individual in the centre of the model, and of the different systems in the context of the individual. **Proximal processes** are pivotal in this model. These are the events which occur regularly in the lives of developing individuals and can be seen as the “engines of development” (Tudge et al, 2009, p.200). Development happens through increasingly complex mutual interactions between the individual and his or her immediate environment. These interactions are the proximal processes in Bronfenbrenner’s model (Tudge et al, 2009, p.200). The learners’ direct interactions with parents, teachers (and the school) and peers will be included in this discussion.

The **person** also plays a crucial role in his or her own development. The interaction between the individual and the environment will be influenced by the personal characteristics that the individual brings to the reciprocal actions. The model makes clear the influence of the environment on the individual, but also allows for a clearer view of the individual’s role in influencing his or her context (Tudge et al., 2009, p.200-201). The assumption could therefore be made that the individual’s view of his or her own circumstances may influence the manner in which he or she reacts to other people. If learners perceive their circumstances to be hopeless they will also lack the enthusiasm needed to interact positively with teachers or with their peers. This may also have an impact on teachers, faced with a sense of hopelessness and a lack of support, which may lead to a failure to effectively manage challenging learner behaviour.

Time is also an important aspect of the PPCT model. “[A]ll aspects of the PPCT model can be thought of in terms of relative constancy and change” (Tudge et al., 2009, p.201). Individuals change over time in the various systems in which they are embedded. Cultures are also continually changing. The changes may be small or comprehensive, depending on the period of historical time. The learners who were indirectly involved in this study were in their adolescent developmental phase. This is a complex stage in human development, characterized

by accelerated growth and changes which may translate into higher levels of vulnerability and stress (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2009, p.112).

The **context** of the developing individual comprises four interrelated systems. According to Tudge et al. (2009, p.201), these are the microsystem, which influences the person directly (for example, parents, family, teachers or friends), the mesosystem, which entails the relationships between microsystems, the exosystem, which includes environments where the development of a person, is not situated, but yet gets influenced directly (example: parent, work-related stress), and the macrosystem, which according to Bronfenbrenner (1993), in Tudge et al. (2009, p.201), includes a group who share “culture, subculture, or other extended social culture.” Even though the macrosystem is situated the furthest from the developing person, it still has an indirect impact, since it both influences and is influenced by all the other systems (Tudge et al., 2009, p.201). These four systems will be discussed in more detail in the following sections. Figure 2.1 gives a visual representation of the interaction between the individual and the various systems.



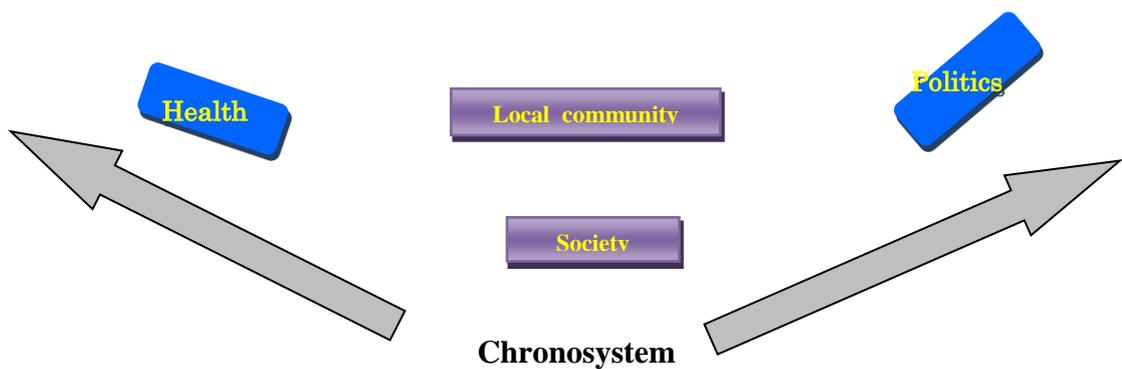


Figure 2.1 Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model of interacting systems (Adapted from Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p. 13).

2.5.2.1 Person characteristics: the adolescent

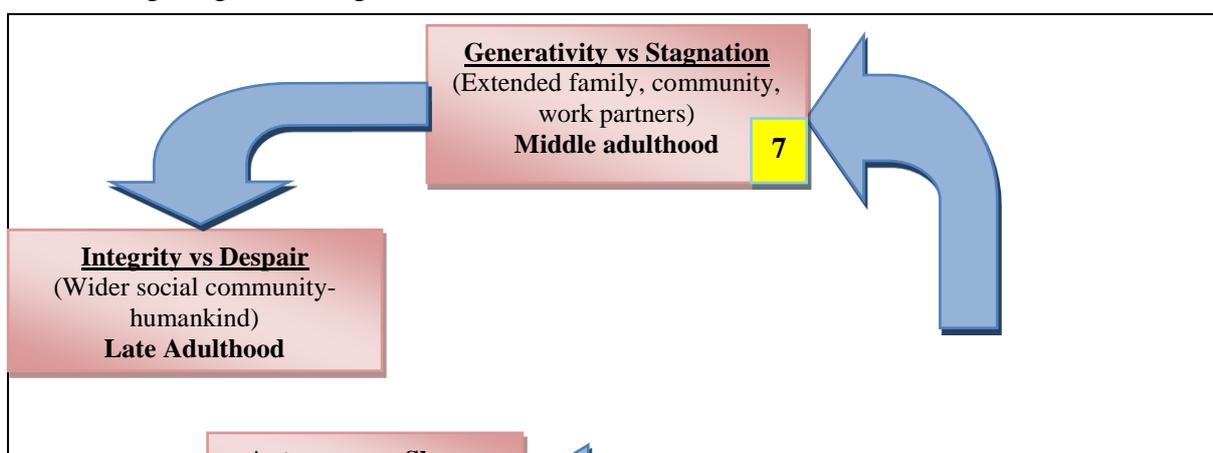
Children show various needs during their developmental years. Weeks (2000), in Prinsloo and Gasas (2011, p.493), says that children

want to be accepted and needed by their families; they want to be cared for and protected; they want to be treated with respect and dignity; they want to experience a sense of belonging and feel valuable to their families; they want to be educated and guided to act in a socially acceptable way and they want to benefit from opportunities which will provide them with a feeling of self-actualisation.

In order to extend the examination of the impact of relationships and context on the behaviour of the adolescent, I will briefly discuss Erikson's theory of psychosocial development.

Erikson defines eight stages of psychosocial development which occur over a person's life span. Each of these stages involves challenges between two opposite poles. According to Donald et al. (2002, p. 75), the individual is confronted by these challenges at each stage and resolves the conflicts according to his or her background and know-how, before progressing to the next stage. However, the development of the individual may be hindered or influenced by constant exposure to negative experiences.

A flow diagram representing of Erikson's eight stages of development and social relationships in each stage is given in Figure 2.2.



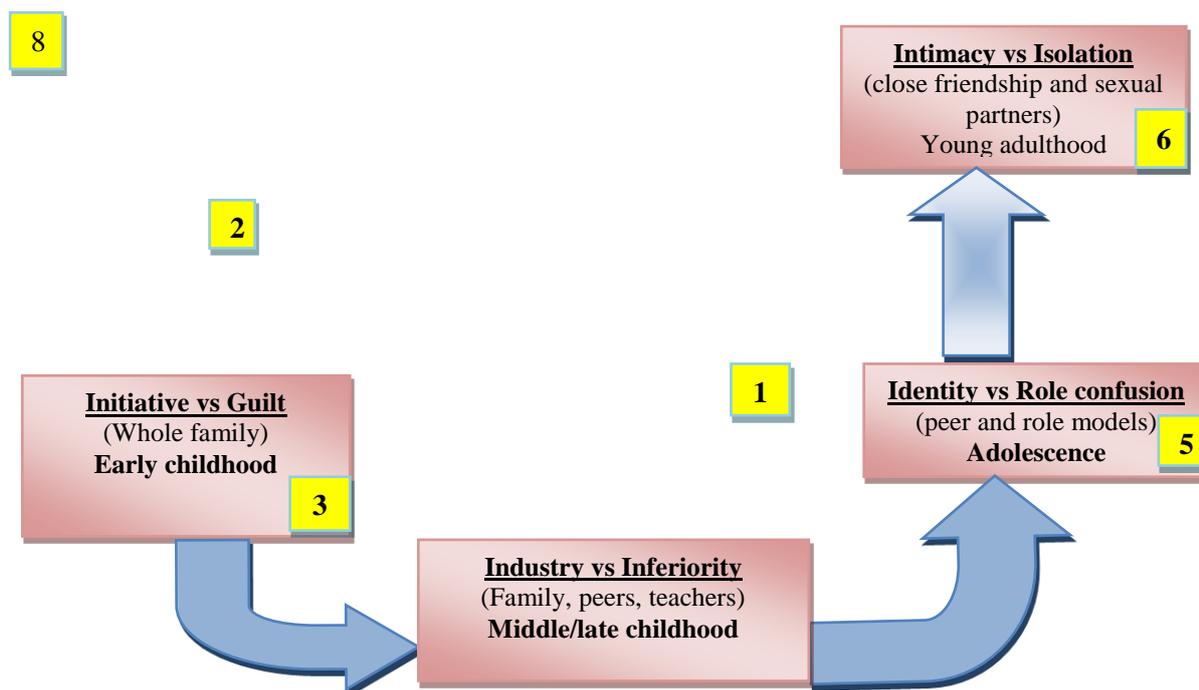


Fig 2.2 Erikson's flow diagram of psychosocial development (Adapted from Donald et al., 2002, p. 76)

Since this research was conducted in an environment where teachers had to educate and manage the behaviour of adolescents, only the fifth phase of psycho-social development was relevant to the study. This phase is characterized by **identity versus role confusion**. Here the adolescent strives to obtain an identity and to find a place in society. This process may be accompanied by confusion, which in turn may impact the adolescent's belief in their ability to achieve success (Donald et al., 2002, p. 78). During this period many mental, emotional and bodily changes occur (Larsen & McKinley (1995), in Whitmire (2000, p.2). The support and recognition of friends outweighs the importance of parents and care-givers during this developmental period. As noted by Furman and Buhrmester (1992) in La Greca and Harrison (2005, p. 49), these support structures have a significant influence on learners' "self-concept and well-being." Teachers have the difficult task of separating these learners' scholastic challenges from the societal and mental characteristics commonly formed in this period (Whitmire, 2000, p. 1). To cope with these challenges, teachers need to gain sufficient knowledge about adolescent development.

The developmental phase of adolescents can be divided into "early, middle and later stages" (Whitmire, 2000, p.3). The early stage is from ages ten to fifteen, and is characterized by the need to be accepted by friends. The middle stage, from thirteen to seventeen, is marked by a

preoccupation with their bodies and with defiant behaviour. The third stage, from sixteen to the mid-twenties, shows as heightened sexual activity and an increased dependence on friends for support (Whitmire, 2000, p.3). During adolescence, great value is placed on peer relationships and on belonging. Learners in this phase feel the need to be accepted. According to Harter (1997), in La Greca and Harrison (2005, p.50), approval or acknowledgment from peers may contribute to achieving “self identity” and “psychological adjustment.” However, approval and acceptance are not easily obtained, posing many challenges for learners and ultimately for teachers. Learners who are accepted or belong to higher-status groups of friends tend to display strong self-esteem and self-belief and communicate more confidently. Teachers need to bear in mind that not all learners are so ‘fortunate’ as to belong to these groups. They may be rejected by their peers, resulting in a low self-esteem, a lack of confidence, and anxiety. These outcasts, according to La Greca and Harrison (2005, p.50), tend to be “victimized” by their peers. This in turn contributes to feelings of depression and isolation (Crick & Bigbee (1998), Prinstein, Boergers & Vernberg (2001), and Vernberg (1990), in La Greca and Harrison (2005, p.50). This factor needs consideration, since these at-risk learners already face complex cognitive and biological changes.

These changes may contribute to an increase in conflict between adolescents and their parents, teachers and peers, and can manifest as challenging behaviour in the classroom. One aspect of this phase, often overlooked by teachers, is the intensified pace of brain development during adolescence, which may add to the vulnerability of the learner. According to Hardman (2012, p.209), recent research on brain development shows that “pruning of unused synapses in the cerebral cortex continues in adolescence,” while “increasing myelination leads to stronger connections among various parts of the brain.” Different parts of the brain mature at different rates. The part concerned with emotional responses is fully mature during adolescence and even more active than in adulthood, while the pre-frontal cortex which controls the executive functioning of the brain is not yet mature. These changes make adolescents more vulnerable to risky behaviour and even to disorders which may present as challenging behaviour in the classroom (Hardman, 2012, p.209).

Learners who are excluded or who are discriminated against by their peers tend to seek acceptance and a sense of belonging by joining crowds showing defiant and disrespectful attitudes, prone to substance abuse and risky behaviour. Teachers need to realize that, for learners who are excluded from certain peer groups and who lack the necessary support from

their parents or family, misfit groups will fulfil the role of their micro-system and will offer them a sense of belonging and security. They will view their group members as role models and confidants, and do everything to protect their group affiliation. Even though these groups may safeguard such learners from social exclusion, they may still experience depressed feelings (La Greca & Harrison, 2005, p.57). Learners belonging to these groups tend to exhibit challenging behaviour in class, posing a threat to the teachers' ability to effectively educate them. Lacking quality reciprocal interactions with their parents and families, many as a result also lack respect for their teachers and other authority figures. In turn, this may influence teachers' capacity to manage their behaviour. These conditions pose many challenges for teachers, adding to their frustration, anger and sometimes to attrition.

The learners in the research school were in this phase of their development. Many grew up in backgrounds characterized by violence, abuse and an absence of strong role models. Finding it difficult to adapt to socially acceptable behaviour, they were constantly in combat with their teachers. According to Donald et al. (2002, p. 78), it is imperative that teachers understand the process these learners go through, set them an example and take on the role of powerful role models. This includes gaining an insight into their learners' backgrounds and developing effective strategies with which to manage their behaviour (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p. 495).

2.5.3.1 The role of the chronosystem in challenging learner behaviour

In order to understand the complexities of Bronfenbrenner's model, we need to examine the chronosystem and how it may impact the behaviour of learners. The chronosystem relates to the time factor, the impact it has on the various systems mentioned above, and how these influence the development of individuals (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.15). The chronosystem is made up of the environmental events and changes which occur throughout a child's life, including any socio-historical events. On the level of macro-time in South Africa, examples could include the impact apartheid (1948-1994) had on learners or the implementation of a new curriculum in the South African education system. During this period, some teachers lacked the skills to adjust to these changes, leading them to self-doubt and a failure of confidence (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.15). Teachers in the research school, as described in the previous section, were also faced with an ever-changing adolescent learner population. This posed many new challenges, both in the classroom and in the school at large. The learners' behaviour had a negative effect on the teachers' well-being and resilience, since they did not have the skills needed to effectively communicate and to manage the learners.

Along with macrotime, micro- and mesotime play a role in the proximal processes of individuals. According to Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.16), microtime refers to the regularity of these interactions, while mesotime relates to the intermission between interactions. We should also keep in mind that the success of proximal processes depends not only on the regularity but also on the stability of environments, since people from poverty-stricken areas characterized by violence may hinder this process (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.16).

2.5.3.2 The role of the macrosystem in challenging learner behaviour:

The macrosystem is the least proximal to the learner, but could indirectly impact learners' behaviour. According to Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.14), the macrosystem "refers to the dominant social and economic structures and attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies inherent in the system of a particular society and culture." In this study, one aspect which plays a role in the macrosystem is the cultural influences of the learner. Cultural beliefs or values shared within a certain context could have a real impact on the development of an individual (Tudge et al., 2009, p.201). Not only do cultural differences influence challenging learner behaviour on a macro-level but the curriculum and educational policies could also have an impact.

After South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, the South African school sector had to make a shift towards a more equal and just education system. Social, educational and administrative measures were taken in order to secure the safety of children (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010, p.387). Section 12 of the South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996 states that "everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way" (Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, p.1247). In line with the Constitution, the National Education Policy, Act No 27 of 1996 stated that "no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution" (Department of Basic Education, 1996, p.4). This created some difficulty for teachers, given that corporal punishment had been an accepted method of managing challenging learner behaviour before 1994. Teachers felt paralyzed and powerless in dealing with such behaviour after the banning of corporal punishment (Mtsweni, 2008, in Maphosa & Shuma (2010, p.389). Some teachers still administer corporal punishment in South African schools, but in doing so "they are committing a crime under the guise of disciplining learners" (Morrell, 2001, in Maphosa & Shuma (2010, p.389).

Suspensions and expulsions of learners are on the rise in Western Cape schools and the reasons for these include "physical and verbal confrontation, theft, substance abuse and watching

pornography" (Aziza, 2001, in Maphosa & Shumba, 2010, p.388). The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 further stated that discipline should be sustained so that learning could take place (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p.8). This placed responsibility on teachers to maintain discipline in their classrooms (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010, p.389). Now teachers not only had to cope with policy and curriculum changes but also with the abolition corporal punishment, with a resultant increase in challenging behaviour, adding to their own frustration and attrition (Squelch & Lemmer (1994), in Naong (2007, p.284). These demands could also negatively affect teacher's well-being and resilience, which indirectly could also influence challenging learner behaviour.

The Learner Attendance policy, developed in 2010, dictates that learners may be taken off the school register should they be absent from school for ten consecutive days (Department of Basic Education, 2010, p.19). Learners in the research school were aware of the implications of the policy and tended to stay at home for nine consecutive days. This affected their academic work negatively, with the result that their teachers became increasingly frustrated. By being continuously absent, the learners tended to fall behind with their work. They then found it difficult to cope with the academic demands, leading to a further lack of interest and higher rates of attrition, truancy and challenging learner behaviour

2.5.3.3 The role of the exosystem in challenging learner behaviour:

According to Bronfenbrenner (1986, p.723), the development of an individual is not only influenced by the environment with which he interacts. Less immediate external environments may also play a role. Parents' experiencing stress in the workplace may shift their concern to their children, with a negative effect on their behaviour (Meyers & Miller, 2004, and Stacks, 2005, in McPhee & Craig, 2009, p. 15). Learners' behaviour may also be influenced by the community in which they grow up.

According to DeHart, Sroufe and Cooper (2004), in McPhee and Craig (2009, p. 13), "every family lives in a particular neighborhood with physical and social characteristics that can affect children's development." The socioeconomic status of the community may have a bearing on the behaviour of learners. A poor socioeconomic state may result in a lack of support, which in turn could lead to increased challenging behaviour (Atici & Merry, 2001, in McPhee & Craig (2009, p.17). According to Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p. 493), "poverty manifests in ill health, undernourishment, deprivation of privileges, unsupportive environments in informal

settlements and squatter camps, language deficiencies, limited social status and a negative view of the future.”

Poverty in South Africa has many faces. Poverty-stricken communities are in abundance in this country, and the Western Cape Province is struggling with many risk-related challenges impacting on the lives of its children. Many learners in the research school were from poor backgrounds. According to Weiss and Fantuzzo (2001), in Lannie and McCurdy (2007, p. 86), factors that may influence learners’ behaviour include exposure to risk factors related to “health and caretaking [which includes] birth to a single parent, birth to a single mother, low birth weight and child maltreatment.” Seidman, Yoshikawa, Roberts, Chesir-Teran, Allen, Friedman and Aber (1998), in Keegan Eamon and Altshuler (2004, p.25), add that some learners grow up in environments where they have to face unlawful behaviour and gang life. “[N]eighborhoods with high population density, crime, violence, abandoned or rundown buildings, lawlessness, lack of supervision, and lack of caring about what happens in the neighbourhood are all characteristics of neighborhoods with high rates of juvenile delinquency and antisocial behaviour” (Keegan Eamon & Altshuler, 2004, p.25). Such learners may also be more prone to unfavorable peer pressure (Chen & Dornbusch, 1998, in Keegan Eamon & Altshuler, 2004, p.25). It is not surprising to see learners who are exposed to these conditions showing challenging behaviour in school. Donald et al. (2002, p.205) contend that “living under conditions of poverty may often actually lead to specific disabilities or difficulties in learning.”

Learners growing up in conditions where, because their parents are absent, they have to assume the responsibility of taking care of their siblings, or where they are deprived of opportunities to develop, do not see treating their teachers with respect as a primary concern (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p.493). Learners who are exposed to these adverse conditions are more susceptible to failure and resorting to challenging behaviour (Farrington & West (1993), as well as Garbarino, Du Brow, Kostelny & Pardo (1992), in Keegan Eamon & Altshuler, 2004, p. 25). This lack of discipline and challenging behaviour exhibited by learners may lead to the “disempowerment” of teachers, not only in the special school but also in the larger South African education system (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p. 490).

2.5.3.4 The role of the microsystem in challenging learner behaviour:

The microsystem includes the structures nearest to the learner and therefore form a “dominant part of a [learner’s] immediate environment” (DeHart et al., 2004, in McPhee & Craig (2009, p.6). According to Bandura (1977), in McPhee and Craig (2009, p.6), children tend to copy observed behaviours. The microsystem can serve to support the learner in his or her development by creating an environment of acceptance and love, but it may also act as a risk factor, for example in families who expose their children to drug abuse (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p. 14).

Inconsistent parenting and methods of discipline can exacerbate challenging learner behaviour (McPhee & Craig, 2009, p. 6, citing Woolfolk, 2008). Some parents in South Africa fail to provide their children with emotional support or the opportunity to develop optimally. Emotional neglect contributes to difficulties in children’s psychological development, which in turn may lead to a lack of understanding of norms. Taking into consideration that the vast majority of learners attending the special school came from poverty-stricken communities, with unemployment and substance abuse contributing to parents’ frustration and despondency, it is not surprising that in many of these cases the parent-child attachment seemed non-existent. This lack of care and the detachment of the parent from the child means that the child’s emotional and physical needs will not be met (Richter, 1994, in Donald et al., 2002, p.208). The absence of a bond between the learner and his or her parents plays an integral role in the development of challenging learner behaviour. Children who are neglected at home find it difficult to adjust to or adhere to societal norms. Those who come from harsh, unsupportive environments and who are exposed to educational neglect may show psychological difficulties, display a lack of empathy, and use deviant behaviour to release their inner conflicts (Donald et al., 2002, p.209). This behaviour, however, is often not understood by teachers, resulting in constant clashes between these learners and their teachers (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p. 493). Taking all the above points into consideration, if learners face violence and constant disrespectful behaviour at home, they will potentially exhibit the same behaviour in other social settings. This had relevance in this study, since many of the learners who attended the research school came from environments characterized by violence, domestic violence, single parents, gangsterism, poverty and unemployment.

Teachers may also contribute to challenging learner behaviour in schools. Their negative reactions to challenging behaviours may reinforce disruptive conduct in their classrooms (Leflot et al., 2010, p.869). However, Weyandt (2006), in Leflot et al. (2010, p. 870), argues

that giving positive feedback and attention to learners who show challenging behaviour may actually help the teacher to manage these unwanted behaviours. Teachers should also ensure that more time is spent on scholastic exercises, rather than allowing too much free time (Little, 2003, in Samuelsson (2007, p.7). Teachers who plan ahead and are more prepared tend to find it easier to manage challenging behaviour, while those who are poorly prepared and have little experience are more likely to face an increase in such behaviour (Walker, Ramsey & Gresham, 2004, in Lannie & McCurdy, 2007, p. 86). It is also important that teachers gain knowledge of their learners' backgrounds, in order to understand the various challenges the learners face and their resultant behaviour. According to Gilligan (2000, p.41), teachers should also create a school environment where learners feel a sense of belonging, because in doing so learners' "academic performance and motivation [as well as] emotional well-being can improve." Thus teachers in South African schools not only need to adapt their teaching methods but also to adapt their approach to challenging learner behaviour.

The way teachers deliver the curriculum is crucial to attaining a disciplined classroom ethos. Unprepared teachers with insufficient content knowledge of the learning material may exacerbate challenging learner behaviour (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p. 500). Such behaviour could be prevented if teachers created a classroom ethos characterized by belonging, trust and appreciation (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p.501). The shift towards an inclusive education system means that all learners have an equal right to education and no discrimination should take place. Teachers have to "recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities" (UNESCO, 1994, p. 11-12). Affecting this move towards a more inclusive education system is not an easy process. According to Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.9), it requires a shift from a previous set of "assumptions, beliefs, values, norms, relationships, behaviours and practices to another" which is "based on values of mutual acceptance, respect for diversity, a sense of belonging and social justice." Teachers in today's education sector, however, find it difficult to make this transition, a failure which impacts on their ability to meet the requirements of their diverse classrooms.

2.5.3.5 The role of the mesosystem in challenging learner behaviour:

The mesosystem is seen as the interrelation between all the different systems within the micro-system. The relationship between school and home is of key importance in learner behaviour

(Dowling & Osborne, 1994, in McPhee & Craig, p12). These two systems interact with each other and in the process also impact upon each other (Swart & Pettipher (2011, p. 14). Involvement of families and the community in the learning process may contribute to the development of a more inclusive system. However, while these partnerships may be beneficial to the development of individuals, they may also hold many challenges for the parties involved (Swart & Phasha, 2011, p. 230). Swart and Phasha (2011, p. 231) claim that for individuals to actively contribute to communities, an environment characterized by “respect, belonging, diversity, trust and collaboration” needs to be created. As noted above, continuous proximal processes between systems play a crucial role in the development of individuals. Schools and families influence each other, but they also influence and are influenced by the surrounding community (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001, in Swart & Phasha (2011, p. 231). According to Seligman (2000), in Swart and Phasha (2011, p. 231), the above systems are also affected by “social, political and economic realities.” In order to better understand the influences of these interacting systems on the development of individuals, we now look at Epstein’s theory of overlapping spheres of influence, which according to Swart and Phasha (2011, p. 232) was informed by Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological model.

According to Epstein (2002), Simon and Epstein (2001), Sheldon (2007), as well as Turnbull and Turnbull (1997) in Swart and Phasa (2011, p.232), Bronfenbrenner’s model also informed Epstein’s theory “of overlapping spheres of influence.” Epstein and Sanders (2006), in Swart and Phasa (2011, p.232), maintained that “children are best supported when schools and families work together with other teachers, parents and community members to solve problems and to reach shared educational goals.” In figure 2.3, Epstein’s model indicates the overlapping spheres of influence between families, communities and schools, and how these areas of influence can be affected by the actions of the participants within particular systems.

EXTERNAL MODEL

Force B

Experience, philosophy and practices of family

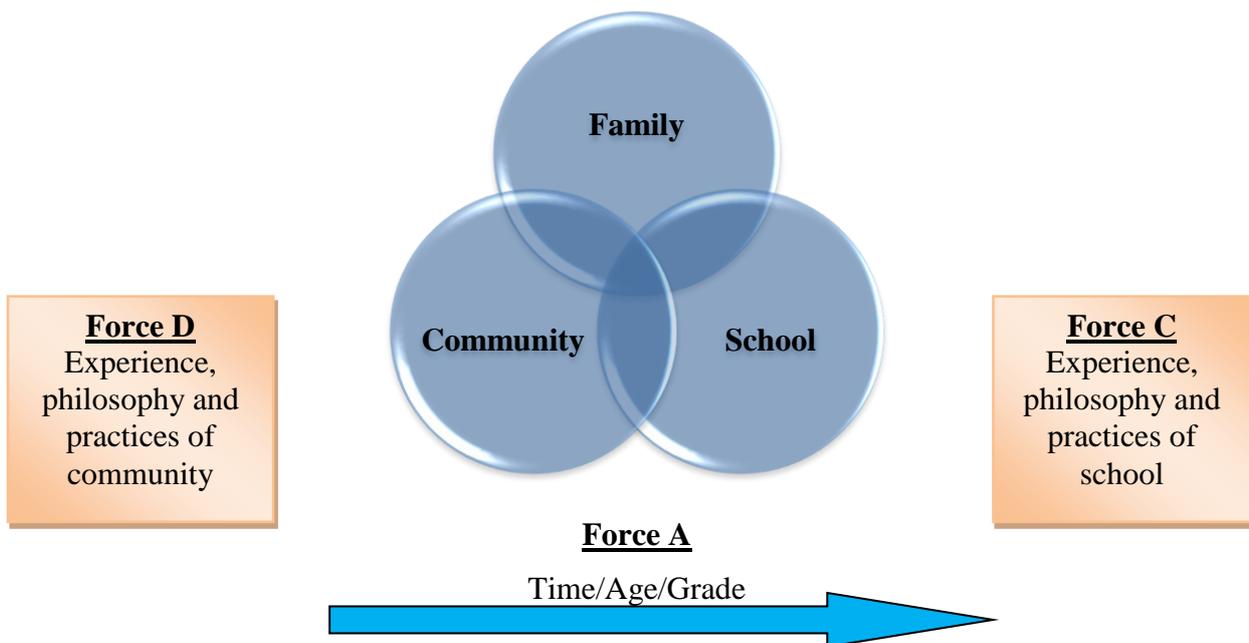


Figure 2.3 Joyce Epstein’s model of overlapping spheres of influence of family, school and community (Adapted from Swart & Phasha, 2011, p.233)

As shown in the model above, Epstein divides the influences on individuals into two sectors, the internal and external sectors of influence. The external sector or sphere of the model “demonstrates that the extent of overlap is in interaction with and affected by forces of time and forces associated with the experience, philosophy and practices of every sphere” (Swart & Phasha, 2011, p. 232). The internal sector or sphere of the model shows where and how interpersonal interaction occurs between family members, the school, and the larger society. Areas of interdependence are shown as non-shaded areas, while dependence is shown in the shaded areas. The overlapping spheres represent family, schools, teachers and communities that work together to effect change. However, if collaboration is not successful, these spheres and their influences can also have a negative impact on individuals (Swart & Phasha, 2011, p.232). Good communication, support and collaboration within these spheres offer great benefits for the individual at the centre of the model, since they may contribute to enhanced “self-esteem, motivation, academic skills [and] independence” (Swart & Phasha, 2011, p. 233). Interaction between these spheres has particular relevance for the study of resilience, since self-esteem and motivation may also enhance teacher resilience.

An example of how the systems interact or how they can alter the behaviour of learners is given by Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.14). Schools and teachers provide learners who come from

difficult circumstances with support and love, which may gradually enhance their self-esteem and confidence. The support from the teachers may, however, diminish if they face situations where they do not receive support from parents. According to Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.490-491), the lack of parental involvement in a child's development demotivates teachers. This may lead to school environments that are not "conducive to positive character development," which in turn may increase challenging learner behaviour. Nor is a lack of parental involvement the only determinant of challenging learner behaviour. The attitudes and behaviour of teachers and principals can also play a crucial role. Principals who show a lack of interest in the needs of learners or teachers may exacerbate challenging behaviour in schools (Leithwood & Beatty (2008), in Prinsloo & Gasa (2011, p. 494). Added to this, teachers who do not have the skills needed to cope in an inclusive education system or the ability to manage challenging learner behaviour often feel insecure and lack the motivation and enthusiasm to educate their learners, which again can lead to challenging learner behaviour in classrooms (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p.495).

2.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature that offered a central focus on the socio-ecological perspective of resilience. Specific attention was given to the factors that may influence teacher resilience and how such resilience may have an impact on challenging learner behaviour. To understand such behaviour better, a more holistic view was adopted. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model was used to describe the potential origins of challenging learner behaviour, and how each particular system may influence the behaviour of learners. The next chapter looks at the research plan, and how this will be put into action.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore factors influencing teacher resilience and how these may affect teachers' success in managing challenging learner behaviour. The study had a dual purpose: firstly, to offer year-two teachers in a special school (school of skills) an opportunity to voice their experiences on the factors influencing their resilience in the school as a working environment, and secondly, to narrate their experiences with managing challenging learner behaviour. This could help us understand the link between teacher resilience and challenging learner behaviour.

As given in Chapter One, the main research question was: *What factors influence resilience among teachers working in the special school acting as research school in relation to challenging learner behaviour?*

The following complementary questions helped in structuring the investigation of the main research question:

- What risk and protective factors are present in the lives of the year-two teachers in the school?
- How do the risk and protective factors influence the successful management of challenging learner behaviour?

In this chapter, I will describe the procedures used to answer the above questions in more detail. This entailed using a specific research paradigm and research design, as well as research methodology. I will also include a discussion on the procedures used to identify the research setting, as well as the selection of participants. A description of data collection methods, data analysis and data verification strategies will also be provided. Finally, a section will be dedicated to the specific ethical considerations which had to be taken into account and adhered to during the research process.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994, p.107), a paradigm can be viewed as “a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles.” It serves as “a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107). Krauss (2005, p.759) sees a paradigm as the “identification of underlying basis that is used to construct a scientific investigation.” According to Durrheim (1999, p.36), paradigms are systems of “interrelated ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions.” As noted in Chapter one, an interpretive paradigm was employed in this study. According to Merriam (2002, p.4), researchers who apply this paradigm in their research studies wish to gain more knowledge on how people experience and interact

with their social world and the meaning it has for them. Fully to understand the paradigm chosen for this study, we need to shed more light on its underlying ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions.

The ontological assumptions framing the paradigm are used to identify the “nature of reality that is to be studied and what can be known about it” (Terre Blanch & Durrheim (2006, p.6). When applying such assumptions, we need to pose the questions: “What is the form and nature of reality? and therefore “What is there that can be known about it?” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.108). Within the interpretive paradigm, the ontological dimension holds “that there is no objective reality [but that] multiple realities are constructed by human beings” (Krauss, 2005, p. 760). In terms of this principle, each individual will experience an event differently, thereby constructing multiple realities (Krauss, 2005, p.760). The realities of participants in a research study, embedded in the interpretive paradigm, will be based on their experiences of the social interactions taking place within their contexts (Durrheim, 2006, p.40). In this study, the experiences and views of the various teachers informed the research investigation.

‘Epistemology’ is derived “from the Greek word ‘epistêmê’, meaning knowledge (Krauss, 2005, p. 758). According to Trochim (2000), in Krauss (2005, p.758), it can be viewed as the process of obtaining knowledge. It can also refer to the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what is to be known. Given this assumption, the researcher will need to keep the following questions in mind: “What is the relationship between the knower and what is known? How do we know what we know? [and] What counts as knowledge?” (Krauss, 2005, p. 759). According to Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006, p.274), the interpretive paradigm is the main instrument used in gathering information. To do this, the researcher interacts with the participants, listening to what they have to share, and using qualitative techniques to gather and to analyse the information obtained. Coll and Chapman (2000) and Cousins (2002), in Krauss (2005, p. 759), support this notion and believe that knowledge is gained through the significance participants add to the phenomena being investigated, and that researchers collaborate with their participants in order to obtain valuable information. It is, however, important for the researcher to maintain an objective view in order to establish how things really are in the research context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.108). As argued in Chapter one, objectivity is not always possible, as we bring our subjective realities with us into the research process. In this study, I put certain measures in place to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

The methodology component of the paradigm is defined by Hills and Mullet (2000, p. 11) as “a conceptual framework for doing research that is grounded in theory,” while ‘methods’ refers to the various techniques used by the researcher to collect data. The methodology has to correspond with the particular phenomenon of interest. Different phenomena may require the use of different techniques. By concentrating on the event under investigation, rather than the methodology, the researcher can select appropriate methodologies for their exploration (Krauss, 2005, p.761). For this study, I used a qualitative methodology. I accepted that the participants would construct knowledge through what they experienced, their beliefs and values (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004, p.20). Teacher resilience and its impact on challenging learner behaviour were to be explored. It was therefore important for me to understand how teachers viewed resilience in their own frame of reference and how they made meaning of the way their experiences related to being resilient (Henning et al, 2004, p.20). I therefore needed to be sensitive to the impact of environmental influences on the meaning-making processes and make a concerted effort to understand teacher resilience as understood by the participants themselves (Henning et al, 2004, p.20).

The qualitative researcher needs to take all aspects into consideration when conducting research. This entails immersing oneself in the particular context and culture of the participants, thereby gaining firsthand experience of their environment (Kraus, 2005, p.759). This allows one to understand the “complex world of human experience and behaviour from the point of view of those involved in the situation of interest” (Krauss, 2005, p. 764).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design could be viewed as “a plan or blueprint” on how a particular study will be conducted (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 74). As quoted in Chapter one, Section 1.4.4, Durrheim (2006, p.34) defines a research design as a “strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of research.” According to Rowley (2002, p.18), it is “the logic that links the data to be collected and the conclusions to be drawn to the initial questions of a study; it ensures coherence.” It forms an important part of a study, since it serves to answer the research question (Mouton, 2001, p.55).

To address the research question and achieve my research objectives, I employed a qualitative case study design. According to Yin (2014, p.2), a case study is an “investiga[tion] [into] a

contemporary phenomenon (the case) in its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident.” Smith (1978), in Merriam (1998, p.21), sees a qualitative case study as “an intensive description and analysis of a single unit or bounded system.” A case study could also be viewed as a unit which is enclosed by boundaries. It could be conducted on an individual, a programme, a group, or any other phenomenon of interest, such as a school or a community (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p.16). The context of a case study is important, as it allows the researcher to investigate individuals, groups, events, situations, programmes, activities and other phenomena of interest (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p.16).

According to Merriam (1998, p. 29), case studies are particularistic, descriptive and heuristic. **Particularistic** means that the study will focus on a particular situation, event or programme, offering more information about the phenomenon being studied (Merriam 1998, p.29). The **descriptive** nature of case studies offers a rich and “thick” description of the phenomenon being investigated. The last characteristic of a case study is its **heuristic** nature, which refers to its ability to broaden the reader’s understanding of the particular phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 1998, p. 30). According to Yin (2003), in Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p.31), there are three types of case study research: exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. In this study, I followed an exploratory and descriptive form, since I was interested in exploring and describing “the observable and learned patterns of behaviour, customs and ways of life a culture-sharing group,” in this case the year-two teachers of the research setting (case) (Hancock & Algozzine (2006, p.31). The selected teachers acted as voices on behalf of the school as a bounded system.

As a researcher, I am interested in how people experience their social contexts and the meaning they make of them. Selecting the case study as my design enabled me to gain knowledge of the process of a particular phenomenon (teacher resilience in relation to challenging learner behaviour). As described in Chapter one, the type of case study utilized during this study was Stake’s (1995) instrumental case study design. I chose this type of design because I wanted to gain “insight and understanding of a particular situation or phenomenon” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p.550). According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p.32), the main purpose of an instrumental case study design is to gain knowledge about the theoretical inquiry. This would mean that an “enhanced understanding of the particular issue being examined [would be] of secondary importance to a greater insight of the theoretical explanation that underpins the issue” (Hancock

& Algozzine, 2006, p.32). Table 3.1 gives a step-by-step illustration of my case study approach in the research process:

Table 3.1: The process of the case study research pertinent to this study

Step 1	Identify research problem in the natural school context
Step 2	Examine the problem and gather information to answer the research questions by conducting a literature review to explore current literature relevant to the study.
Step 3	Select participants for the research study
Step 4	Gather valuable information pertaining to the study through conducting initial interviews and observing the participants in their school context
Step 5	Conduct a focus group discussion with all the participants in order to triangulate information received as well as to reflect on their experiences
Step 6	Data analysis (by means of qualitative content analysis) and data verification
Step 7	Develop final paper to serve as an information source for other researchers and teachers who have difficulties with teacher resilience in the South African context, with a particular emphasis on challenging learner behaviour.

Table 3.1 represents the various steps I followed to gain insight into the context of the research participants. According to Rowley (2002, p.18), case studies allow the researcher to investigate a phenomenon in its context, offering a better understanding of the world around us. This was important since I aimed to gain an understanding of teachers' experiences, their contexts, and the various aspects which influenced their resilience and how this impacted their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour in their classrooms. Figure 3.1 gives a visual representation of the research process I followed.

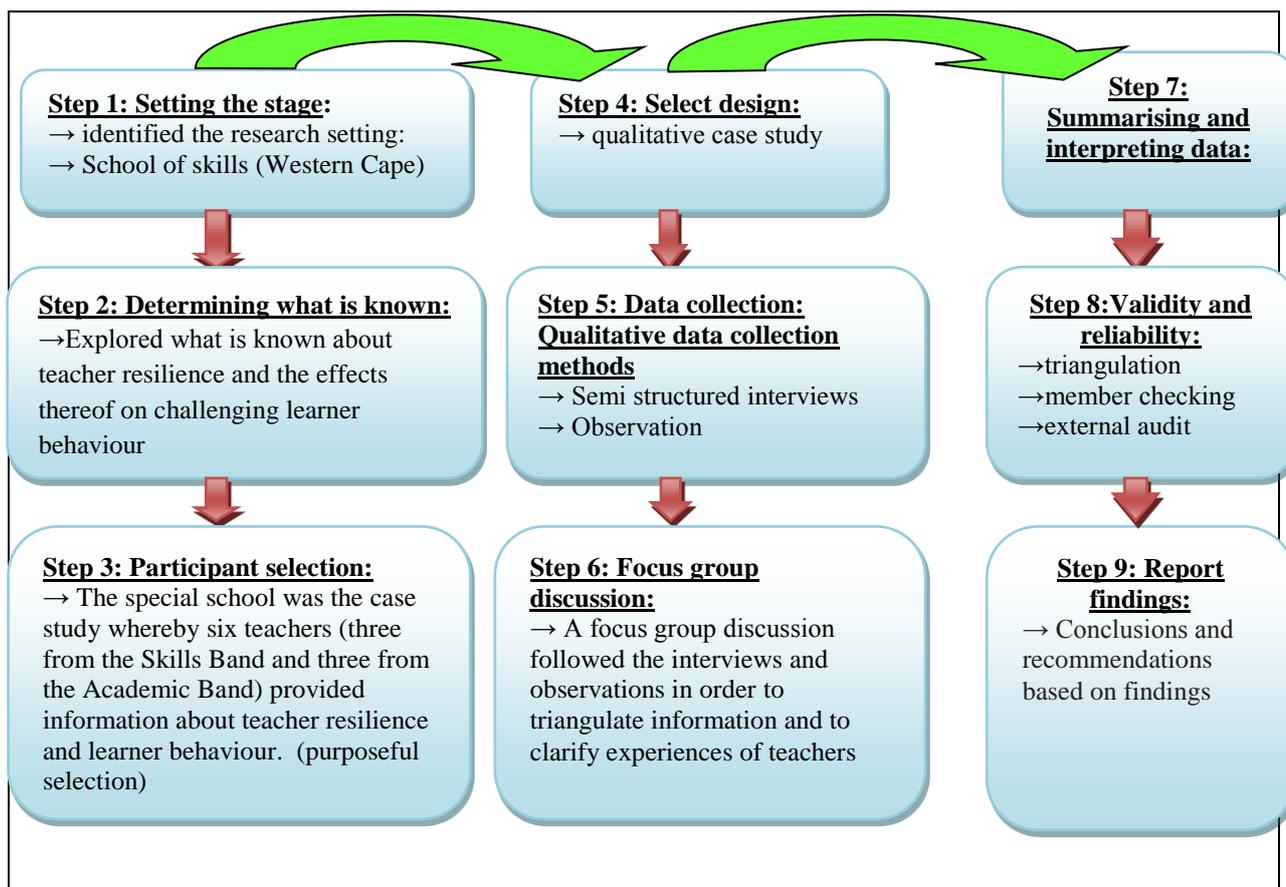


Figure 3.1 Sequence of procedures during a case study design (Adapted from Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 84)

As shown in figure 3.1, my first responsibility was to determine in which setting my research would be conducted. The idea was to conduct “an in-depth analysis in a natural context using multiple sources of information” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p.16). The setting was a school of skills in the Western Cape Province. The second stage was to determine what was known about the specific topic and to identify knowledge gaps in the research. This would assist me in establishing the importance of my study in identifying its strengths and weaknesses, and determining how the methodology should be adapted to secure information which could fill the knowledge gap (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p.26). I carried out a literature review to establish the knowledge gap, which helped to guide my topic selection for the study. Following Figure 3.1, the third stage of the research process was to identify the participants. Using purposeful selection, I chose three year-two teachers from the skills band and three year-two teachers from the academic band. The fourth stage included deciding the design for the study. I chose a qualitative case study, since I was interested in a “holistic description” of the selected teachers’ experiences and understandings of teacher resilience and challenging learner behaviour. These would consist of the “views of group members and the researcher’s

perceptions and interpretations of the group's functioning" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p.31). The methodology informed stages five and six of the study. A qualitative methodology allowed for qualitative methods in gathering data. I used semi-structured interviews and observation of the teachers in their context. Stage six called for a focus group discussion to clarify whether the information received was correct and to gather further information based on the previous methods employed. Stage seven of this framework was data analysis, which entailed qualitative content analysis. The last stage involved pulling all the information together in a report which could serve as a resource for other researchers and teachers in the future.

To conclude, the design chosen was the most appropriate to achieving the outcomes of my study. The case study gave me the tools necessary to investigate "complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon" (Merriam, 1998, p.41).

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.4.1 Introduction

As indicated above, I followed a qualitative methodology in this study. This entailed gaining more knowledge of "the complex world of human experience and behaviour from the point of view of those involved in the situation of interest" (Krauss, 2005, p. 764). The main research question, "How does teacher resilience influence challenging learner behaviour?" guided the study. It presented certain challenges in selecting the most appropriate methodology to obtain sufficient knowledge about this particular phenomenon. The research methodology, viewed by Krauss (2005, p. 759) as the practices used to gain knowledge, forms a valuable component of a research study. Selecting the most appropriate methodology is therefore crucial in obtaining valuable information and achieving the desired goal as researcher.

3.4.2 Qualitative research

As researcher, I wanted to explore the impact of teacher resilience on challenging learner behaviour. I believed this should be done holistically, and I therefore followed a qualitative research approach. I also chose this because I was interested in how people experience and make sense of their environments. I used this approach to answer the main research question and the two sub-questions relating to this study.

According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 26), qualitative research, due to its various paradigms, is difficult to define. Straus and Corbin (1998, p. 10-11) contend that any kind of research that generates findings without the use of quantification could be viewed as qualitative. These definitions, however, do not take into account all the characteristics of qualitative research. It is therefore important to use a more suitable definition to explain qualitative research in its totality. According to Yilmaz (2013, p. 312), it can be defined as:

“an emergent, inductive, interpretive and naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social situations and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world.”

Yilmaz (2013) here provides a clear indication of what qualitative research entails. Since I used this approach, I will further clarify its key features. Yilmaz (2013, p. 312) holds that qualitative research “explores what it assumes to be a socially constructed dynamic reality through a framework which is value-laden, flexible, descriptive, holistic, and context sensitive.” How participants experience their environment and the meaning they attach to it therefore becomes central. According to Malterud (2001, p.483), qualitative research entails gathering, arranging and deciphering information using qualitative data collection methods, such as for example interviews. It is also used to explore the “social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves in their natural context.” In this study, I investigated teachers’ experiences of their environment and the impact it had on their resilience. Qualitative research is concerned with the process, rather than the outcome. According to Suter (2012, p.344), qualitative studies use an “analytic framework” to guide the critical processes, which in this case can be viewed as how events relate to one another. To achieve this and gain a deeper insight, researchers need to immerse themselves in the process, so they can experience what it is like to be part of the culture of an institution (Krauss, 2005, p. 760).

I therefore had to put myself in the shoes of the year-two teachers at the school of skills, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of what they experienced and how they viewed resilience and challenging learner behaviour. Immersing myself in this way allowed me to “capture data on the perceptions of [teachers] from inside” their worlds (Miles & Huberman, 1994, in Punch & Oancea, 2014, p.147). Using direct quotations from participants, the researcher can obtain information on how they feel, their experiences, their thoughts about

what is happening, and their meaning at a personal level (Yilmaz, 2013, p.313). It should be noted that, for the information to be trustworthy, the researcher should ensure that the data is of a rich, descriptive nature, so that the reader may fully understand what and how things happened, gaining insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 321).

3.5 THE RESEARCH SETTING

Currently, there are seventy-three special schools, including twenty schools of skills, under the auspices of the Western Cape Education Department. The school in which the research was conducted is one of the schools of skills. As established in Chapter one, it was a special school (school of skills) that accommodated learners who needed intensive support, and did not act as a resource centre to other schools. It offered educational programmes that gave life-skill training and programme-to-work linkages. The learners attending the school experienced intellectual barriers which had prevented them from mastering the mainstream curriculum. Placed in the school of skills, they were given an adapted curriculum catering to their needs (Western Cape Education Department, 2013). As previously indicated, I used convenience sampling in the selection of the research school. This method of sampling is the “least rigorous technique, involving the selection of the most accessible subjects” (Marshall, 1996, p.523). Marshall (1996, p.523) also notes that this method of sampling does not call for a lot of funding and can save the researcher “time, effort and money.”

I worked in the research school as school counselor for five years, from January 2010 until December 2014. During this period, I had the opportunity not only to hear but also observe teachers’ frustration in the school. My observations gave me insight into the various challenges they faced and how they tried to manage these challenges. The information obtained during this period inspired my decision to explore teachers’ resilience, the factors that might impact on their resilience, and how it influenced their management and ability to cope with challenging learner behaviour. From my knowledge of the school, I had a clear indication of the context in which my participants were situated. The fact that I followed a qualitative research approach reflected my interest in how my participants (which in this case were year-two teachers in a school of skills) experienced their social context and the meaning they attached to it.

The school gave learners who struggled academically in mainstream schools the opportunity to enhance their academic performance through more specialized support. It also provided them with skills training enabling them to contribute to the economic sector of the country. The

adapted curriculum was developed with support from teachers working in the school of skills system. It was “aligned to the content and skills within the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for the Foundation and Intermediate Phase” (Western Cape Education Department, 2013).

The curriculum encompassed four year-levels. After completion of the fourth year, some learners (although only a few) were able to further their education and training in colleges where they had the chance to qualify, for example, as fully certified mechanics, carpenters or welders. Historically, the school had accommodated only white learners, with a predominantly white staff, but since the 1994 democratic elections learners from various backgrounds, languages, races, values and beliefs joined the school. The influx of diverse learners was one of the big changes which followed the 1994 elections, so much so that the learner population currently consists of 80 percent coloured, 15 percent white and five percent black learners. The staff composition, however, has not changed a great deal. This has led to teachers finding it challenging to relate to learners from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Apart from the diversity of the learner population, the teachers are faced with various other challenges. Even though the school is situated in an affluent community, the majority of learners hail from poverty-stricken areas characterized by social and economic challenges. As previously noted, these circumstances may adversely affect learners’ academic performance, as well as their behaviour. The majority of the staff at the school had been teaching there for more than twenty years. They had had to deal with the transformation of the education system, as well as with various curriculum changes. It seemed they found it difficult to relate to their learners because of their diverse cultures and difficult home circumstances, struggled to understand them and failed to manage their behaviour effectively. They were unable to establish strong supportive relationships with their learners, which may have affected their ability to educate and to manage challenging learner behaviour.

There were many accounts of teachers who in the last years were absent from school as the result of burnout or stress-related illnesses. This factor in particular motivated this study. I wanted to explore and understand the various pressures which could negatively influence teacher resilience in the school, with the aim of laying down guidelines which, by enhancing their well-being, could ultimately prolong their teaching careers.

3.6 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

According to Patton (2002), quoted in Suri (2011, p.65), “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding, rather than empirical generalizations.” Suter (2012, p. 350) believes that the goal of the researcher is to “maximize the value of data” collected, so that it can contribute to the development of theory. As noted in Chapter one, Durheim (2006, p.49) views purposeful sampling as extremely valuable, especially in qualitative research, since it allows the researcher to obtain detailed accounts of the participants’ experiences, enhancing the analysis of data. According to Suter (2012, p. 350), the sampling of participants can be divided into three categories: distinctive sampling, participants sharing a universal goal or participants selected resisting prediction. These aspects provide an indication that sampling depends on what the researcher would like to achieve.

I decided that I would use distinctive sampling to select my research participants. This would allow me to select a group of individuals who would hopefully provide me with valuable information as a basis for my study. I therefore chose to investigate a small group of six year-two teachers, treating them as voices and representatives of the school as a bounded system. I believed they would “illustrate features of interest” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2005, p.328) for this particular study.

I approached the school principal for permission to conduct my research in the school. I received informed written consent from the principal (see Appendix C) after I had explained the purpose of the study. I also drew on the principal’s expertise for advice on who could be potential participants. He suggested that those teaching year-two learners would be ideal subjects, since they showed a wide diversity in terms of their ages, years of experience, management of challenging learner behaviour, as well as their involvement in the school and sport activities. The year-two teachers included those who were new to the teaching profession, as well as those who were close to retirement. Before I could approach any of the participants, I had to obtain ethical clearance from the research ethical committee of the university (REC) (see Appendix A), as well as the Research Department of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) (see Appendix B).

I selected six teachers from various age groups who taught learners in their second year at the school of skills. I believed that this sample would “adequately answer the research question” (Marshall, 1996, p.523). These teachers had varied teaching experience and taught different subjects. A further reason for their selection was their involvement in extra-curricular activities and the greater contact time they had with their learners. Three teachers, two white males and one white female, were from the academic sector, while the other three, again two white males and one white female, were from the skills sector. I hoped to gain knowledge of their own perspectives and experiences in the two different sectors in the school. I obtained informed consent (see Appendix D) from the teachers, explained the aim of the study and described their role in the research. I also ensured that all were aware that their participation was voluntary and confidential. Table 3.2 gives a detailed representation of the diversity among the subjects selected for the study:

Table 3.2 Research participants who formed part of the study

Participant	Age	Teaching experience	Subject	Extra-curricular activity	Gender	Race
P1	54	30 years	Afrikaans and Natural Science	Rugby and cricket	Male	White
P2	29	5 years	Afrikaans	Rugby	Male	White
P3	36	14 years	Carpentry	Rugby	Male	White
P4	53	24 years	Welding	Soccer	Male	White
P5	26	4 years	Art	X	Female	White
P6	30	4 years	Office Administration	Netball	Female	White

(X = No involvement)

3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection in a qualitative case study forms a valuable part of the study. According to Krauss (2005, p. 764), the goal of the researcher is to “understand the complex world of human experience and behaviour from the point of view of those involved in the situation of interest.” Merriam (2009, p. 85) echoes this, noting that data collected in qualitative research can be viewed as “bits and pieces of information” obtained from the environment. When carrying out

qualitative research, the researcher must avoid imposing his own views, but instead must remain open, sensitive and empathetic to the responses given by the participants (Krauss, 2005, p. 764). Yilmaz (2013, p.315) maintains that data collected through qualitative methods are dependent on context, and researchers should therefore keep the findings within the given context and report any “personal and professional information that may have an impact on data collection, analysis and interpretations.” Yin’s caution played a role in this study, since I was familiar with the context in which the research was to be conducted. As noted previously, Watt (2007, p.85) argues that a researcher has to realize that his “subjective motives” may influence the trustworthiness of a study. Measures should be put in place to maximize trustworthiness. In this study, I used multiple methods of data collection to enhance the trustworthiness of my findings. I employed semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews and observations in the participants’ natural setting, with the aim of gathering valuable information.

3.7.1 Interviews

According to Haahr, Norlyk and Hall (2014, p.7), the use of interviews is well known as a data collection technique in qualitative research. Interviews offer the researcher the opportunity to gain insight into what people think of their own experiences. This can be done by formal or informal interviews and by observing what the subjects do in their natural settings (Krauss, 2005, 765). As part of this, it is important to develop an interview guide. This helps the researcher before the interview, by maintaining clear communication with the participants, during the interview process, by helping keep track of the most important topics to be discussed, and after the interview, by helping with contextualizing all the information received (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p. 189).

“Qualitative research is the systematic collection, organisation, and interpretation of textual material derived from talk or conversation” (Grossoehme, 2014, p.109). Interviews are used to delve into the meanings participants attach to a certain event in their social context (Malterud, 2001, p.483). Tong, Sainsbury and Craig (2007), cited in Grossoehme (2014, p. 110), hold that interviews explore the experiences of participants, and that through questions and answers the meaning they attach to their experiences can be established. According to Forsey (2012), in Punch and Oancea (2014, p.183), interaction between the researcher and the participant takes places during the the interview process, as both parties strive to make meaning out of the questions as they are developed. The questions will derive both from the topic under investigation and from the literature review and will be selected by the researcher (Haahr et al.

2014, p. 7). Thus the interviewer guides the interview process and determines in which direction it will proceed (Haahr et al. 2014, p. 7).

Interviews allow the researcher and the participants to engage in the meaning-making process together. Structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews are found in qualitative research, each method possessing its own characteristics (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge (2009, p. 16). For this study, I chose the semi-structured interview method to generate data pertaining to the phenomenon under investigation.

3.7.1.1 Semi-structured individual interview

Semi-structured interviews use specific open-ended questions to obtain information about topics the researcher wishes to explore (Hancock et al., 2009, p. 16). According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006), cited in Grossoehme (2014, p. 110), this kind of interview allows the researcher greater freedom to adapt to certain topics which may arise during the interview, as they are “not locked in stone” but are flexible. The open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews not only provides information about the topic under investigation but also allows the interviewer and interviewee to discuss contingent topics which may have surfaced during the interview in more detail. Open-ended questions give the participants more freedom to express themselves and offer their own opinions and views on a certain topic. They also allow for a more interactive process, which can also lead to a more relaxed environment.

When carrying out a semi-structured interview, it is important that the interviewer show good listening skills, distinguishing information important to the study and making sure that all the relevant aspects of the topic under investigation are covered. In this way, the researcher comes to understand the complex actions of participants without needing to guide the discussion, an approach which could restrict the investigation (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p.185). For the individual interviews with the six participants, I compiled a schedule with a few open-ended questions to guide me. See Appendix E for the interview schedule.

It was essential to create a non-threatening environment. I therefore consulted with each participant about the venue, time and date they preferred for their interview. During the interviews, I discussed issues of confidentiality and anonymity with each participant. I also gave each a consent form (see Appendix D), securing their written consent to use a recorder to document our interview sessions.

3.7.1.2 Focus group interview

I used focus group discussions to gather more data on the phenomenon under investigation. Before these discussions, I drew up an interview schedule which was based on the data derived from the individual interviews and the observations (See Appendix F). This allowed me to obtain further information about the experiences, opinions and feelings of the various participants (Mack et al., 2005, p.52). Such a schedule provides the opportunity to gather information about the “social norms and the variety of opinions or views within a population” (Mack et al, 2005, p. 52). A focus group is a qualitative data collection method used to gain more knowledge of the social norms and perspectives of a certain group (Mack et al., 2005, p.51). Focus group discussions are also based on a certain topic and follow a semi-structured format, which includes open discussions and responses from the selected participants (Grossoehme, 2014, p. 110). According to Sandelowski (2000, p.338), focus group discussions may provide the researcher with extensive information about a phenomenon.

The six teachers acting as participants were included in the focus group discussion. Through it, I hoped to gain more information on the participants’ responses to the phenomenon under exploration, their interactions with each other, as well as clarifying the process (Grossoehme, 2014, p. 110). According to Reid (2009), in Haahr et al. (2014, p.8), a focus group discussion allows the researcher to gain more knowledge on the insights of the group through exploring their feelings and their thoughts. It also allows them to hear each other’s perspectives, concerns and opinions. They will influence each other by sharing their opinions, given that they will differ in age, gender, education, resources and experience. They may also be able to share solutions and management strategies, which again could assist and enhance their resilience. Sharing their concerns would help them to realize that they are not alone and may create a sense of belonging. An important factor in gaining knowledge, focus groups thus provide data on “social and cultural norms, the pervasiveness of these norms within the community, and people’s opinions about their own values” (Mack et al., 2005, p.52). To achieve these, however, the researcher will need to establish his own his role in the process.

According to Patton (2003, p.7), the researcher needs to be a facilitator in the group discussion, listening to and responding to each participant’s answers or feedback. However, Mack et al., (2005, p.54), maintain that, in the focus group process, the researcher can be a moderator as well as a facilitator. The role of a facilitator is to recruit participants, to answer any advance

questions they may have, and to be reliable. A moderator, however, has to take the lead in the group discussion, ask questions relevant to the research inquiry and motivate the participants to share their views and opinions (Mack et al., 2005, p. 55). In this study, I fulfilled the responsibilities of both facilitator and moderator. I identified the potential group participants, answered any questions they might have had, and encouraged them to take part. I guided the subsequent discussion and documented the information I received. I used audio recordings to gather information and to ensure that the information was reliable

It is important to ensure and protect the rights of all participants during the interview process. According to Brinkman and Kvale (2005), in Haahr et al., (2014, p. 8), in order to conduct a sound interview, the researcher needs to be aware of the reactions of the participants while they are answering questions. He should explain the purpose of the group discussion, be truthful with the participants, and not make promises which cannot be kept. He should also ensure confidentiality, which can be maintained by assigning each group member a number or pseudonym which could be identified on a seating chart (Mack et al., 2005, p.53). In line with the suggestion of Mack et al., I assigned each participant a number, P1 to P6, and these were used during our focus group discussion. The ground rules for the discussion should also be explained to the group members, and they should be reassured as to their privacy and anonymity (Mack et al., 2005, p.53). According to Haahr et al. (2014, p. 11), it is the responsibility of the researcher to conduct ethically good research and “to do well in human relationships.” I adhered to the above guidelines as closely as possible. Figure 3.2 represents the focus group seating, with the pseudonyms indicated:



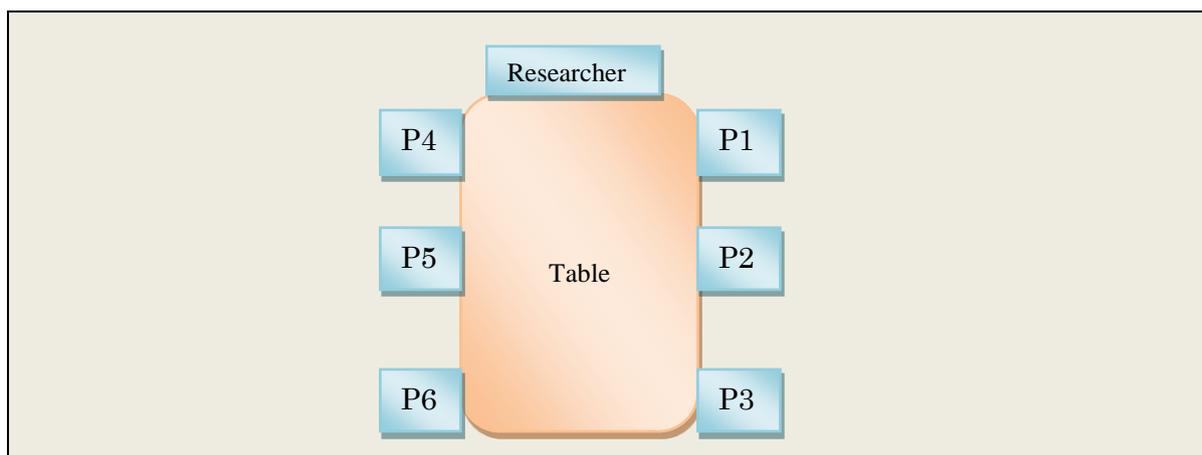


Figure 3.2: Focus group interview seating arrangements (Adapted from Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005, p.70)

3.7.1.3 Observation

A data collecting method should only be used “when it is systematic, when it addresses a specific research question, and when it is subject to the checks and balances in producing trustworthy results” (Merriam, 2009, p.118). I used observation in this study to gather data which could help me understand the communal and environmental contexts where actions took place (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013, p.3-4). According to Hancock et al. (2009, p.18), observation is a valuable method for corroborating information. For example, the teachers were asked in the interviews how they managed challenging learner behaviour. The answers they gave could be verified by observing them in their respective classrooms, as well as on the school grounds. Through observation, I was able not only to verify but also to revise or correct information received in direct encounters (Hancock et al., 2009, p. 18). I could share in the actions of the subjects, while getting to know what they did in their particular contexts (Henning et al., 2004, p.84). For this reason, observation as a data collection method gave me valuable information on the teachers’ resilience and how this might influence their management of challenging learner behaviour.

Observation was used not only to gather information about the subjects’ behaviour in their respective contexts but also to secure valuable data on their working environments and classroom setups. Such data is described by Hancock et al., (2009, p.19) as “contextual descriptions.” In this study, it included data on resources available to the participants which could influence their teaching ability and their resilience.

Henning et al. (2004, p.83) divide observation into two categories of knowledge, Etic and Emic. **Etic** involves designing an observation schedule, where the researcher attaches what has been observed to predetermined headings in the schedule. In the **Emic** category, however, the researcher “makes field notes and then locates the knowledge thus constructed in categories that [he] builds up inductively from what [he] has learned from the research participants, thus giving some space for their voice” (Henning et al., 2004, p.83). For this study, I chose an etic approach. I designed an observation schedule that I used to investigate the teachers’ behaviour and subsequently record the interactions between them and their learners. An observation checklist is attached as Appendix G. Through observation, I gained an understanding of the “physical, cultural, and economic contexts in which study participants live; the relationship among and between people, context, ideas, norms, and events; and people’s behaviour and activities, what they do, how frequently, and with whom” (Mack et al., 2005, p.14). In doing so, I had to take certain factors into consideration, including the physical setting, the activities and interactions of participants, conversations between myself and the participants, and subtle factors such as for example unplanned activities, as well as my own conduct. As researcher, I not only had to observe my participants in order to collect data but also had to record the data observed.

Video recordings as well as written reflections helped me both to avoid missing any important events and to obtain rich data. I made sure that the camera was set up prior to the observation sessions, to discourage the participants from losing focus. Through observation I obtained data on their way of life, which I could not otherwise have achieved (Henning et al., 2004, p.84).

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data involves summarizing all the information received and presenting it in such a manner as to highlight the most important aspects of the study (Hancock et al., 2009, p. 24). This process is ongoing, beginning early in the data acquisition process and continuing right through the inquiry (Bradley, Curry & Devers, 2007, p.1760). However, it is not an easy task and calls for creativity, patience and discipline from the researcher (Miles et al, 2014, p.323). Henning et al. (2004, p.101) contend that it is a “process that requires analytical craftsmanship and the ability to capture understanding of the data in writing.”

I used qualitative content analysis to analyse the data I collected. According to Sandelowski (2000, p.338), “[q]ualitative content analysis is a dynamic form of analysis of verbal and visual

data that is oriented toward summarizing the informational contents of that data.” Where applicable, I transcribed all the information recorded verbatim so that it would be available in text format (Henning et al., 2004, p.104). The interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, since this was the preferred language of the participants. During content analysis, the researcher will need to adjust the data received to accommodate new information and insights (Sandelowski, 2000, p.338). I also focused on the reciprocal factors in both the context and the participants (Miles et al., 2014, p.322). Finally, I broke the data into chunks, coding and categorizing these in order to identify the emerging themes (Patton, 2003, p. 11).

During the first stage of data analysis, I read through the texts of all the individual cases. This gave me a global understanding of the content generated. During this phase, I had already identified tentative themes in the text. However, as Henning et al. (2004, p.104) point out, coding does not officially take place during the initial phase, which should only be used to gain an overall understanding of the context and the data received. Once I had read through the texts and gained an understanding of the data, I was able to assign codes to the various chunks of data, referred to by Henning et al., (2004, p.104) as “units of meanings.” I also made use of markers and colour pencils to help me identify the various units of meaning.

Once stage one was completed and I was satisfied with the ‘chunking’ of data, I proceeded with stage two, the data analysis. I compared the data chunks across the various participants, so as to identify any differences or similarities. I grouped the differences and similarities, coded and labelled each of them, and placed them in categories. I continued refining the themes and categories until only a few central themes remained. Refining the data is important, especially since it may also contribute to the development of recommendations. A more detailed description of the analytical process will be given in Chapter four.

3.9 DATA VERIFICATION

As the researcher, I needed to present valid and reliable data as findings of my study. The analysis of data has real consequences. I had the responsibility of adhering to those methods of analysis which I believed would “produce authentic, valid conclusions” (Miles et al., 2014, p.354). I therefore needed to carefully consider the data received and the methods used to draw conclusions (Miles et al., 2014, p.330). According to Suter (2012, p. 362), the researcher should be able to answer the question, “Is the whole process, from research question to implications, truly transparent and open to critical thinking by the reader?” Guba and Lincoln (1985), cited

in Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 276), argue that the credibility of a good qualitative research study depends on the “neutrality of its findings or decisions.” To enhance the trustworthiness of the study and the findings, I used Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) model in Suter (2012, p. 362). This covers the criteria of “transferability, dependability confirmability and credibility” which are important in qualitative research.

3.9.1 Trustworthiness or credibility as criterion

Credibility is a measure of the researcher’s objectivity and the control of any personal bias (Suter, 2012, p.363). Suter (2012) defines it as “an overarching criterion for judging the trustworthiness of qualitative data analysis. Credible conclusions are believable when accompanied by strong evidence, clear logic, valid data, and the ruling out of alternative explanations” (p. 363). We can therefore view credibility as the aspect which highlights the similarities between the research findings and the real world. According to Merriam (2009, p.215), various strategies can be used to enhance the credibility of a study. Two of these, triangulation and member checking, will be discussed below.

3.9.1.1 Triangulation

According to Patton and Cochran (2002, p. 27), triangulation is used to increase the validity of findings through identifying evidence from various sources, then comparing these with one another. In this study, I used three different methods of data collection - individual interviews with each of the participants, a focus group discussion with all six of the subjects, and observations in their respective classrooms. I compared (triangulated) the data from these three methods, looking for similar findings which could strengthen my data claims and ensure “various and divergent constructions of reality” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p.277).

3.9.1.2 Member checking

Member checking is further method of enhancing the credibility of findings (Grossoehme, 2014, p.111). Merriam (2009, p. 217) sees it as “respondent validation,” encouraging feedback from the various participants on the findings as they emerge in a particular study. The aim of this method is ultimately to “assess the intentionality of respondents, to correct [the] obvious errors, and to provide additional volunteer information” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p.277). I therefore used member checking in our focus group discussion to eliminate any confusion or misinterpretations, resulting in a true reflection and understanding of the participants’ perspectives.

3.9.2 Reliability or dependability

The reliability of a study refers to the likelihood that it will give the same results if someone else were to repeat it (Grossoehme, 2014, p.111). A similar study should show a consistency in data collected and research results, even though alternative interpretations of these results may be possible. According to Yilmaz (2013, p. 320), a study can be viewed as dependable or reliable when “the process of selecting, justifying and applying research strategies, procedures and methods is clearly explained and its effectiveness evaluated by the researcher.” Triangulation and member checking are used to establish reliability and dependability, since they ensure that the reliability of a study overlaps with the results received, thus enhancing its credibility and trustworthiness. Yilmaz (2013, p.320) also suggests that the researcher make use of an “audit trail” to enhance the reliability or dependability of a study.

3.9.2.1 Audit trail

I used an audit trail to confirm the reliability of this study. Suter (2012, p. 350) suggests that the researcher keep a journal to describe the various approaches used in data analysis. Merriam (2009, p. 223) views an audit trail as a “running record” of the researcher’s interactions during analysing and interpreting the data. It not only supplies a track record of interactions during data analysis but also allows the researcher to retrace his steps, bringing forth new ideas or explaining previously misunderstood themes (Suter, 2012, p. 350).

It is important for the researcher to substantiate the claims made by the research. According to Patton (2003, p.12), “qualitative findings are judged by substantive significance.” The audit of data collection and analysis could result respectively in a “dependability judgment” or a “confirmability judgment.”

I gave a detailed account of how the study was conducted and analysed in Sections 3.7 (research methodology) and 3.8 (data analysis). Chapters three and four provide a more detailed description of the audit trial and research process I used. I kept my research practices as transparent, organized and accessible as possible.

3.9.3 Confirmability as criterion

Suter (2012, p. 363) views confirmability as the control over “researcher’s bias.” Yilmaz (2013, p.320), on the other hand, holds that a study will have confirmability when the findings are

based on the analysis of the data collected and evaluated through an auditing process. To achieve the above, the researcher needs to ensure flexibility in the process of research discovery (Suter, 2012, p. 363). Merriam (2009), in Suter (2012, p.364), highlight the following aspects as enhancing the consistency of a study: triangulation, member checks, an audit trail, and thick descriptions. Keeping an audit trail allows the reader to “evaluate your conclusions,” as well as gain “trust” in your findings (Suter, 2012, 364). I also held validating discussions with my supervisor to address researcher bias.

During my study, I allowed my participants to offer their own perceptions and accounts of the phenomenon under investigation. I generated thick descriptions of their stories, so as to contextualise the study, and allowed an “inquiry audit” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 278). I will give a detailed account of the findings in the following chapters.

3.9.4 Generalizability or transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985), cited in Yilmaz (2013, p. 320), view generalizability and transferability as important criteria in assessing the rigour of a study. Transferability is achieved if the findings can be conveyed to alternative environments (Yilmaz, 2013, p.320). This was a qualitative case study, and it is therefore unlikely that the data generated from such a small study could be generalized to apply to a larger population. Yilmaz (2013, p. 320), however, maintains that the researcher can use thick descriptions of the “setting, context, people, actions and events studied” in order to enhance the transferability of a study which lies between interpretation and action. This means that the transferability of a qualitative research design should rather be determined by another researcher who wants to replicate the study in a context of his own choice (Henning et al, 2004, p.151).

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As described in Chapter one, Section 1.5, ethics is a key component of any research study, so it is critical to adhere to specific ethical guidelines. As researchers, we “perform our interpretations and invite audiences to experience these performances, to live their way into the scenes, moments and lives we are writing, and talking about” (Denzin, 2009, p. 151). It is therefore crucial that we give a true account of the data collected and our research findings. Mack et al. (2005, p. 8) divide ethics into two kinds: research ethics, which deals with the interactions between the researcher and the participants, and professional ethics, which deals with issues such as the duplication of data and plagiarism. Appropriate preventative measures

should also be taken to prevent harm to the participants (Grossoehme, 2014, p.120). As discussed in Chapter one, Section 1.5, the core principles that I adhered to in this study were non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy, privacy and confidentiality, and respect.

3.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a detailed description of the research design. I employed a qualitative case study design and used qualitative methods to generate data. The procedure for selecting participants, the choice of semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and observations were also recorded. I discussed the process of data analysis (qualitative content analysis) and the considerations taken into account with data verification and ethics. In the next chapter, I will outline and explain my work with the data and the research findings. I will also indicate and discuss the various themes derived from the data which could contribute to answering the research questions.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As indicated in Chapters 1 and 3, the primary research question of the study was as follows: *What factors influence resilience among teachers working in the special school, acting as research school, in relation to challenging learner behaviour?*

The following complementary research questions helped in structuring the investigation of the main research question:

- What risk and protective factors are present in the lives of the year-two teachers in the school?
- How do risk and protective factors influence the successful management of challenging learner behaviour?

In this chapter, I will first provide a thick and detailed description of the context in which the study was conducted and of the participants of this inquiry. This will be followed by a reflective report whereby the data collection and analysis process will be discussed in order to prove the validity of the findings, which ultimately enhances the trustworthiness of the study. Thereafter, the findings will be presented through discussing four themes by using the perspectives and direct quotes from the participants' own words. This will not only help to provide rich descriptions of their perspectives but will also enhance the authenticity of the study. The chapter will be concluded with a discussion of the findings in the light of the relevant literature.

Data was collected in various forms during the study. As explained in Chapter 1, section 1.4.6.2 and Chapter 3, sections 3.7.1.1 to 3.7.1.3, semi-structured individual interviews (Interview schedule: Appendix E), focus group interviews (Interview schedule: Appendix F) and observations (Observation check list: Appendix G) were used to collect data. The data collected acted as a representation of the larger group of teachers in the school of skills.

4.2 THE RESEARCH SETTING

Nelson Mandela (1995), in Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses and Seekings (2010, p.21), called for South Africa to focus on repairing the past injustices and wrongdoing to our children and

youth, and develop institutions which value them and show them affection and warmth. He went on to say that our children and youth “are special, not only because they are vulnerable, and are the first to suffer whenever we adults get things wrong, but also because of their remarkable spirit, their ability to heal not only themselves but their societies as well” (Bray et al., 2010, p. 22). The children and youth of South Africa form a critical part of our society, and as adults we should do everything in our power to ensure they receive the support and care they need to develop optimally.

In 1996, a task force was instructed to investigate special needs and support services in the South African education sector in order to improve past inequalities. It consisted of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services (Department of Education, 2001, p. 5). Published by the Department of Education in February 1997, the report showed that specialized education was primarily provided to the white minority group, and that the education sector had failed to meet the requirements of our diverse nation (Department of Education, 2001, p. 5). It suggested that training institutions be developed on the basis of equality and inclusion. These institutions should encourage participation, developing learners optimally so that they can contribute to society (Department of Education, 2001, p. 5). In the past, the special needs education sector separate learners according to their specific needs and to their race. It was therefore important to develop a more inclusive and equal sector, characterized by a diverse population which would be representative of our nation. The following tables offer an indication of the inequality of services rendered for learners with disabilities based on data collected using the Education Management Information System (EMIS). Table 4.1 gives census data on learners with special needs, while Table 4.2 reflects the distribution of special needs requirements per province. The data in these tables was sourced from Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

Table 4.1: Census data on learners with special needs

Provinces	Number of special schools	Learners in special schools	% learners	% total special schools in province
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			in special schools	
Eastern Cape	41	6483	0.28%	10.79%
Free State	19	3127	0.40%	5.00%
Gauteng	96	25 451	1.62%	25.26%
KwaZulu-Natal	58	7631	0.28%	15.26%
Mpumalanga	15	2692	0.29%	3.95%
Northern Cape	8	1392	0.68%	2.11%
Northern Province	19	4250	0.23%	5.00%
North West	42	4364	0.46%	11.05%
Western Cape	82	9213	0.96%	21.58%
TOTAL	380	64 603	0.52%	100.00%

(Note: Adapted from the Education White Paper 6, 2001, p. 13).

Table 4.2: Distribution of special needs requirements per province

Province	Sight	Hearing	Physical	Mental	Multiple	Not specified	Total	% Per province
EC	161898	68531	115717	41432	35997	38604	462179	17.39
FS	133614	33045	41960	13947	16461	18127	257154	9.68
GAUT	211769	59868	69936	24033	26030	63906	455542	17.14
KZN	183758	76034	129894	42646	24895	44863	502090	18.89
MP	98322	31895	41381	12211	9019	19085	211913	7.97
NC	18529	6083	9052	3791	2403	7137	46995	1.77
NP	113088	51416	60078	22578	16019	33690	296869	11.1
NW	129442	37571	54706	17768	16913	23134	279534	10.52
WC	40603	18965	35051	14146	6499	30174	145438	5.47
TOTAL	1091023	383408	557775	192552	154236	278720	2657714	100.0

(Note: Adapted from the Education White Paper 6, 2001, p.14)

The tables give an indication of the inequalities of the past, as well as the imbalances in special education service delivery among the various provinces. KwaZulu-Natal, for example, had 18.89 % of the disabled population, yet they only had 15.26 % of the special schools, whereas

the Western Cape had 5.47 % of learners with special educational needs but had 21.58 % of the special schools.

According to a 2004 report by the Human Rights Commission, learners in rural areas have been treated unfairly. There were not enough special schools in these areas; some of the schools did not function properly, nor did they have qualified staff to attend to the diverse needs of the learners (Department of Education, 2008, p.3). In 2007, there were 408 special schools across South Africa, providing education to 91,280 learners who were recognized as having special educational needs (Department of Education, 2008, p. 3). However, it was found that special schools in urban areas were still better equipped to educate learners with special educational needs than those in rural areas. A more recent survey on special schools, conducted across South Africa in 2013, recorded significant changes in this sector, compared to the initial report in the Education White Paper 6 of 2001. Table 4.3 below gives a more recent indication of the division of service delivery among special schools in South Africa.

Table 4.3: Special needs education in South Africa

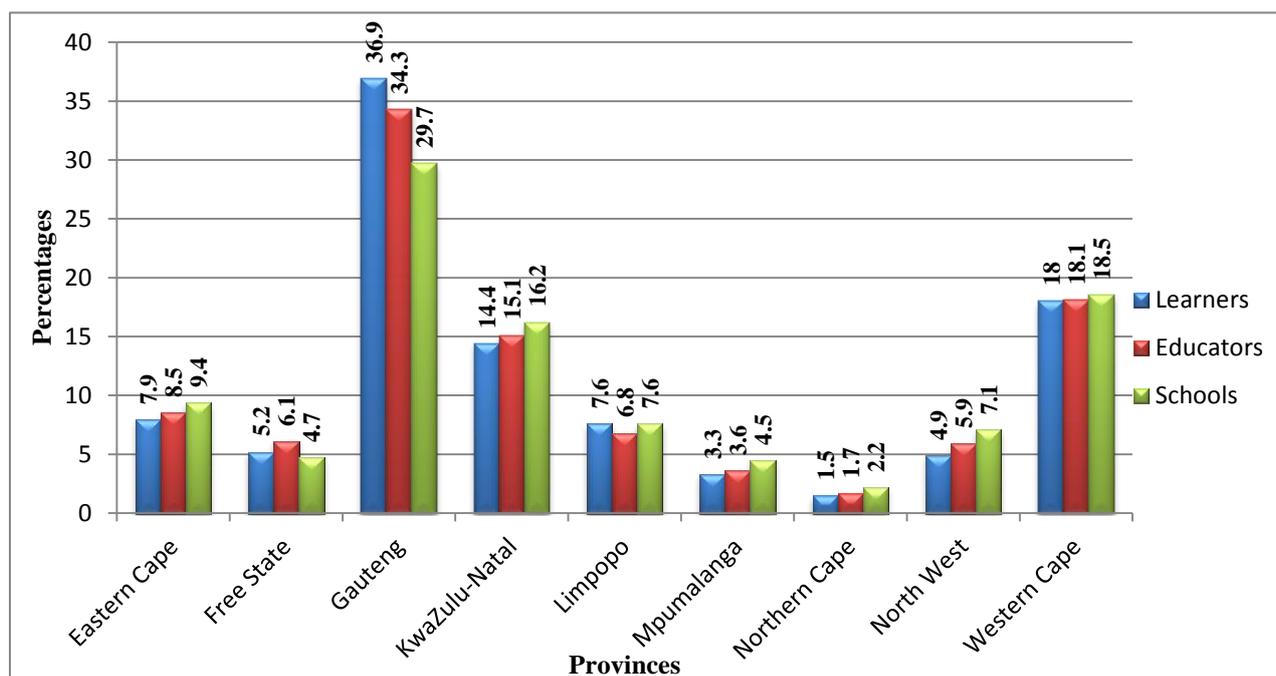
Province	Year	Learners	Educators	Schools	LER	LSR	ESR
Eastern Cape	2012	9117	854	42	10.7	217	20.3
	2013	9165	876	42	10.5	218	20.9
Free State	2012	5801	625	21	9.3	276	29.8
	2013	6036	624	21	9.7	287	29.7
Gauteng	2012	41184	3396	131	12.1	314	25.9
	2013	42958	3513	133	12.2	323	26.4
KwaZulu-Natal	2012	16264	1393	72	11.7	226	19.3
	2013	16785	1547	73	10.9	230	21.2
Limpopo	2012	8524	684	34	12.5	251	20.1
	2013	8598	696	34	12.4	253	20.5
Mpumalanga	2012	3549	355	20	10.0	177	17.8
	2013	3818	368	20	10.4	191	18.4
Northern Cape	2012	1646	165	10	10.0	165	16.5
	2013	1691	172	10	9.8	169	17.2
North West	2012	5437	465	32	11.7	170	14.5
	2013	6764	605	32	11.2	211	18.9

Western Cape	2012	20076	1802	82	11.1	245	22.0
	2013	20689	1851	83	11.2	249	22.3
TOTAL	2012	111598	9739	444	11.5	251	21.9
	2013	116504	10252	448	11.4	260	22.9

LER: National learner-educator ratio; **LSR:** National learner-school ratio; **ESR:** National educator-school ratio (**Note: Adapted from Department of Basic Education, 2015, p. 36**)

From the information in Table 4.3, we see that 116504 learners were in 448 special schools during 2013. These learners were educated and supported by 10252 teachers at an LER (National learner-educator ratio) of 11.4. Table 4.3 also indicates that during 2013 the LSR (National learner-school ratio) was 260, while the ESR (National educator-school ratio) was 22.9. Figure 4.1 is a visual representation of the percentage of learners, teachers and special needs schools in the different provinces across South Africa in 2013.

Figure 4.1: Percentage of learners, educators and special needs schools in South Africa



(Department of Basic Education, 2015, p. 36)

Figure 4.1 indicates the number of learners in each province who required special needs education, the number of teachers who were available to provide support and education, as well as the number of special needs schools available to serve these learners. The most recent data shows that schools offering special needs education are more equally divided among the various provinces. As seen in figure 4.1, the special needs schools and the number of special

needs educators available for these learners have been brought in line with the number of learners in each province requiring special needs education and support.

It should be noted that the information above refers to the whole special needs education (SNE) sector in South Africa. The research school, which currently fulfils the role of a school of skills, only offers support to Mild Mentally Handicapped (MMH) learners. This means that learners who for example fall within the autism spectrum or who are blind or deaf would not receive support in this school, but instead would attend a school which specializes in these areas. The Department of Education (2008, p.7) supports this distinction, advising that each special school should be cautious when enrolling learners and should only enroll those whom the school and staff can adequately support and educate. Table 4.4 gives background information on the research school during 2015.

Table 4.4: Research school

Total Learners	Male	Female	Ages	Teachers	Teacher-Learner ratio	Feeding Schools	Category	Barriers	Coloured	White	Black
632	482	150	14-18	39	16.2	102	MMH	ADHD ADD	63%	32%	5%

(Source: Research school)

From the data in table 4.4, it can be seen that there were 632 learners enrolled during 2015, with a teacher-learner ratio of 16.2. The table also provides information on the current diverse learner population in the school and how service delivery has changed over the years since special needs education was reserved to the white minority group.

The school of skills, situated in an affluent suburb in the Western Cape Province, was founded in 1956. In the past, the special school's teacher population was predominantly white Afrikaans teachers who provided support to white Afrikaans and English speaking learners from the surrounding community and broader areas. However, with the shift to a more inclusive and equal education system, changes were made in the school of skills. As reflected in Table 4.4, the dynamics of the learner population has changed over the last 60 years. Today, the majority of learners attending the school are coloured. However, even though the learner population in the special school has changed, the demography of the staff has remained relatively the same, so that currently there are only four teachers of colour (10, 2%) employed at the school.

The school of skills recently employed a school counselor as well as a social worker to help provide emotional support to learners. They are supported by the district-based support team and district psychologists, with regard to correct placement and further support to learners attending the school. The school of skills has four year levels, namely year one which forms the bridging year and year four, which is the final school year for the learners. These year levels are divided into two learning sections, namely an academic and a skill side, where learners are exposed to both learning fields. The school has a governing body which is actively involved in school activities, as well as a management team who meet every week to discuss various strategies which could be employed to improve the educational experience for learners and teachers. There are also extracurricular activities, like sport and culture, available to the learners who are encouraged to participate on a daily basis. Even though all the teachers are encouraged to take part in extracurricular activities, the responsibilities have been passed on to younger teachers, which seem to affect not only the relationships among staff members but also the teacher-learner relationships.

In the morning, thirty minutes before the school starts, teachers meet in the staff room to discuss plans for the day. This meeting also serves as a platform to present any feedback about school events or workshops which took place the day before. There seems to be a relaxed atmosphere among teachers in the morning during the staff meeting. Those who are not on school ground duty also gather in the staff room during break times, where there seems to be a division among the younger and older teachers. During break times, teachers also seem to share their frustration and sometimes anger about some learners, and even about teachers causing some tension among staff members. With regard to school facilities and resources, it is important to note that the research school, as noted earlier, is currently only a special school and is not as well equipped as a special resource centre. The special school does, however, offer all learners the opportunity to attend computer classes each week and the school has also recently been equipped with visualizer white boards to help with teaching. Additionally, the school grounds are well-kept, the workshops fully functional, and the sport facilities adequate.

As mentioned above, the special school is situated in an affluent suburb of the Western Cape Province. However, the learners attending the school are not so fortunate. The majority of those attending the special school come from impoverished areas ravaged by unemployment, abuse, gang violence, single-parent households, as well as substance abuse. Even though the school

has a governing body and teacher-parent committee, parent involvement in the school seems to be minimal, and the majority of parents also show a lack of interest in their children's scholastic development. As noted in Chapter three, learners enrolled at the school of skills have intellectual barriers, making it difficult for them to cope with the mainstream curriculum. Those attending the school of skills must therefore meet the requirements of a specific learner profile. Figure 4.2 provides a description of the learner profile of those who qualify to be enrolled in schools of skills.

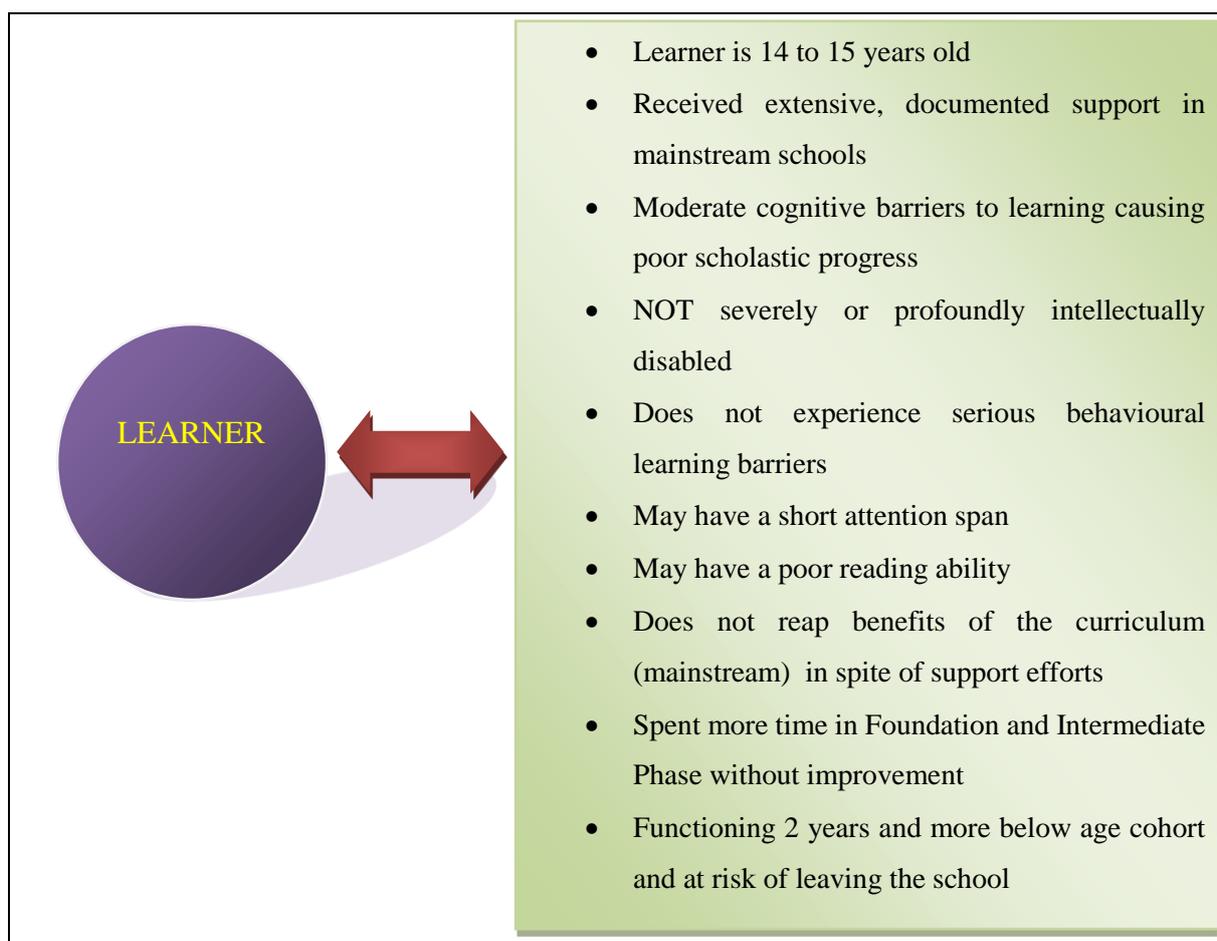


Figure 4.2 Learner Profile (Western Cape Education Department, 2013, p.3)

From the information in Figure 4.2 it is evident that a very specific learner with specific support needs should be enrolled at the school of skills. Schools of skills in the Western Cape Province use an adapted Curriculum and Assessment Policy, developed by teachers working in these schools to meet the learners' requirements. As mentioned above, there are four year levels in the schools of skills by which learners after the completion of year four would receive a "Certificate of Attainment endorsed by the Western Cape Education Department." This should enable them to further their education and training or to enter the world of work (Western Cape Education Department, 2013). The academic performance of the majority of learners in the

school, however, is below average and it seems as if learners are more focused on developing their skills than their scholastic performance. As a result, only a small percentage of learners are able to attend Further Education Training (FET) institutions based on their academic performances. The majority choose to enter the work force for minimal wages as labourers in welding, spray painting or carpentry companies.

There is a general feeling that teachers do not have the necessary skills or knowledge to manage challenging learner behaviour. Table 4.5: provides information on the various learner offences which have occurred over the past six years.

Table 4.5: Learner offences within the research school

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Chemical substances trading	4	3	2	2	5	3
Chemical substances using	14	27	52	24	50	53
Smoking	316	307	332	180	228	428
Possession of dangerous articles	5	7	7	14	5	12
Theft	6	5	17	3	4	5
Assault	7	13	12	15	10	14
Fighting serious	50	45	40	23	26	42
Fighting/hassling/teasing	69	83	35	17	25	16
Seriously challenging authority	367	260	151	149	245	282
Sexual misconduct	25	30	18	11	25	20
Backchatting	62	79	49	53	43	47
Planned bunking	62	41	39	51	72	69
Bunks periods	155	179	338	217	181	167
Serious bad behaviour	268	279	342	245	277	144
Serious disruption of class	366	346	358	252	249	120
Disobedience serious	898	429	538	408	382	287

(Source: Research school)

Reviewing the information given in table 4.5, we see that smoking on school grounds, the challenging of authority figures, as well as disobedient behaviour were high during 2015. It should be noted that these figures were accumulated by either teachers or learners reporting the various offences. If we look, for example, at the incidence of learners smoking, learners challenging authority figures as well as disobedient behaviour, we see that these figures were far higher in 2010 than the figures for 2015. This could indicate that the level of tolerance of teachers has increased over the years in between or that only the more serious cases were being reported. The perception in the school was that challenging learner behaviour was on the increase, despite statistics to the contrary. Along with the above challenges, teachers also face a diverse group of learners, with varied abilities who experience literacy and numeracy challenges as well as ADHD/ADD, which seem to affect teachers' motivation and resilience. In a meeting with the school principal, he confirmed that several teachers had had to take sick leave because of stress at the workplace. I believed that by gaining knowledge from six year-two teachers in the special school about their management of challenging learner behaviour and the factors which could impact their resilience, I would better understand the challenges these teachers faced in the research school and the strategies they could employ to keep themselves motivated, which could ultimately lead to enhanced resilience.

4.2.1 Description of year-two academic teachers

Three year-two academic teachers, two males and one female, took part in this study. As outlined in Chapter three, they were selected on the basis of their diversity in terms of age, teaching experience, subject fields, and involvement in extracurricular activities. Pseudonyms were allocated to each participant in order to protect their anonymity (see Table 3.2 in Chapter 3 section 3.6). The participants (as for all the teachers at the school) had the responsibility of constantly adapting their teaching and learning materials to suit their learners' needs, in line with the adapted curriculum provided by the Western Cape Education Department. The work material of year-two learners is supposed to be on a grade seven mainstream level, but many learners in the research school were unable to perform on this level. Learners were supplied with workbooks and stationery, since they were unable to afford these materials themselves. They were not given homework, but were expected to complete assessment tasks and worksheets developed by the teachers at school. The average teacher-learner ratio for these three teachers was 1:22.

4.2.2 Description of workshop teachers

Three workshop teachers also took part in this study, two male teachers and one female teacher. They were selected using the same criteria as for the academic teachers and were also given pseudonyms (see Table 3.2, in Chapter 3, section 3.6). The workshop teachers were responsible for teaching learners a particular skill, one which would assist them in the world of work or would enable them to further their education in a FET college. There was no set curriculum in the workshops, and the teachers needed to develop the work material as well as carrying out assessment tasks to determine if the learners had reached an acceptable level when they left the special school. The different workshops were equipped to give learners the opportunity to fully develop their respective skills. The average teacher-learner ratio in the three workshops was 1:20. The welding and carpentry teachers who engaged in this study, P4 and P3, had the added responsibility of ensuring the safety of their learners since they constantly worked with potentially dangerous tools and machinery. Learners in the workshop sector were also not given homework, but were expected to work on their various projects in the workshops. In order to understand how these year-two teachers experienced challenging learner behaviour, how they managed this, and which factors influenced their resilience. I collected data using various qualitative data collection methods. In the next section, I provide a more detailed account of the data generating process.

4.3 THE DATA GENERATING PROCESS

After individual discussions with potential participants, six teachers told me that they would love to take part in the study. I then gave each participant a consent form (see Appendix D) and explained the details of the form to them. Each of the six signed the consent form. In the next section a detailed account of the data collection phase will be presented

4.3.1 Semi-structured individual interview procedure

As described in Chapters one and three, semi-structured individual interviews were selected to gain valuable information from the participants. I used an interview schedule which consisted of open-ended questions (see Appendix E) as a guideline during the interview sessions. This ensured that the information obtained would relate to the initial inquiry. According to Punch and Oancea (2014, p. 188), it is important that the researcher, before proceeding with the interview process, properly prepare and plan how and what he would like to achieve during

this stages. I therefore designed a guide which would assist me during the interview process. Figure 4.3 describes the steps I followed in developing my interview guide.

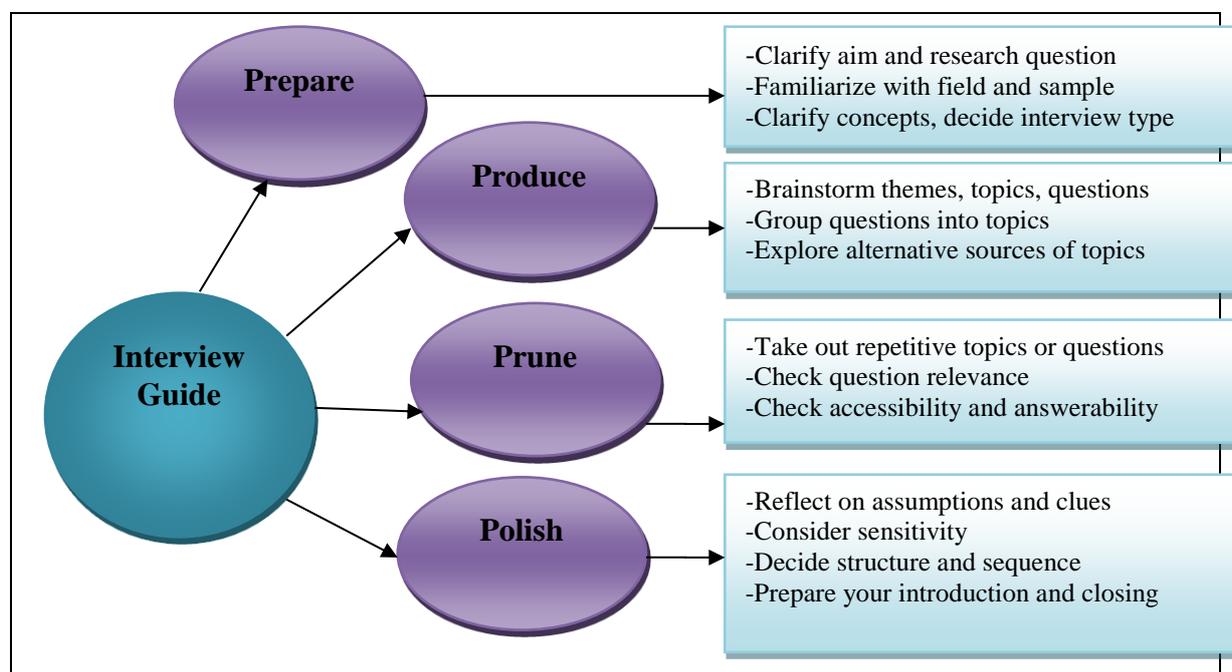


Figure 4.3: Steps to generate a semi-structured interview guide (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p. 189)

Once informed consent had been obtained, we arranged both the dates and the venue where the interviews would take place. All the participants gave a time which suited them and all agreed to have their interviews at their homes. Each individual session lasted between sixty and ninety minutes, and all participants seemed to enjoy the experience. They told me after the sessions that the questions had really made them think and re-evaluate the way they addressed certain issues in their workplace. All the interviews were audio-recorded, again with the informed consent of the participants. During the interviews I noticed that some were a little hesitant to answer some questions, knowing that they were being recorded, but I re-assured them that all interviews would be kept confidential and that their anonymity would be protected. I transcribed all the interviews myself in order to stay engaged with the data, which also helped me to make meaning of the participants' responses.

4.3.2 Non-participant observation

Further data was obtained by observing the participants in their classrooms. The observation schedule (see Appendix G) kept the focus on how the teachers managed learner behaviour in their respective classrooms. The audio recording was also done with the informed consent of the participants. I told them that they should be themselves and try not to be concerned about being recorded. The camera was placed at an angle that allowed the teachers' actions to be fully observed. Initially, both teachers and learners were slightly apprehensive about the camera in the classroom, but seemed less aware of the camera as the session progressed. Each observation session lasted sixty minutes.

4.3.3 Semi-structured focus group discussion

The six teachers took part in the focus group discussion, which was conducted at the research school. The initial session carried on for too long and had to be terminated as the participants had other commitments. The focus group discussion had to be continued at the home of one of the participants a week apart. An audio-recording of the session was made with the informed consent of all the subjects. It was also important to explain prior to the start of the session that there were no correct or incorrect responses, and they should feel free to offer their honest opinions and views about the topics under discussion.

A focus group interview guide (see Appendix F) was developed after the individual interviews, and the classroom observations were transcribed. The focus group interview guide contributed towards validating the data received both from the individual interviews and the observation sessions. The guide also served to ensure that discussions during the sessions remained on topic and that all the potential information about certain aspects could be obtained. All the teachers seemed to enjoy the focus group discussion and were eager to take part. They seemed to give honest accounts of their experiences, opinions and views, and there emerged a sense of unity and belonging among them. The focus group discussions also seemed to enhance the confidence of all participants, since they realized that their concerns were shared among the group. They indicated that not only had they learned from each other about managing challenging learner behaviour and maintaining discipline in their classrooms, but that the sessions also had therapeutic value, since they had been able to share their concerns and disappointments within a safe and supportive space.

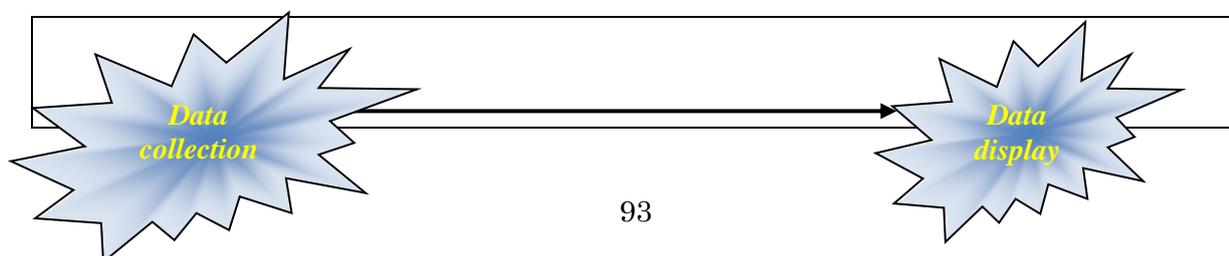
Even though the sessions were audio-recorded, I still made field notes and transcribed the data verbatim immediately after the sessions. The interviews were transcribed in Afrikaans, since this was the mother tongue of the participants. However, when using direct quotes to present data and findings, I translated these into English to enhance readability.

4.3.4 Data analysis process

Data analysis can be viewed, according to Mouton (2001, p. 108), as “breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships.” As previously explained, I conducted a qualitative study with the goal of gaining a more in-depth understanding of my participants’ experiences and the meaning they brought to these. According to Punch and Oancea (2014, p. 218), the richness and complexity of qualitative studies lead to various methods which can be used to analyse data. Miles and Huberman (1994), in Punch and Oancea (2014, p.218), note that the various techniques are sometimes “interconnected, overlapping, complementary and sometimes mutually exclusive.” However, ultimately the goal of data analysis is to gain a better understanding of the data generated, and this is achieved through a thorough investigation into the “relationships between concepts, constructs or variables to see whether any patterns emerge” (Mouton, 2001, p. 108).

Thus my qualitative content approach to analysing the data entailed developing concepts from the material obtained (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p. 221). As an inductive approach, qualitative content analysis also means that the researcher, rather than predetermining categories or themes, instead develops these through a process of inductive reasoning.

As part of this approach, I followed the model of Miles and Huberman (1994), in Punch and Oancea (2014, p. 224), in making meaning of the data. Their model comprises three components, “data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions.” Figure 4.4 depicts the model and its three components.



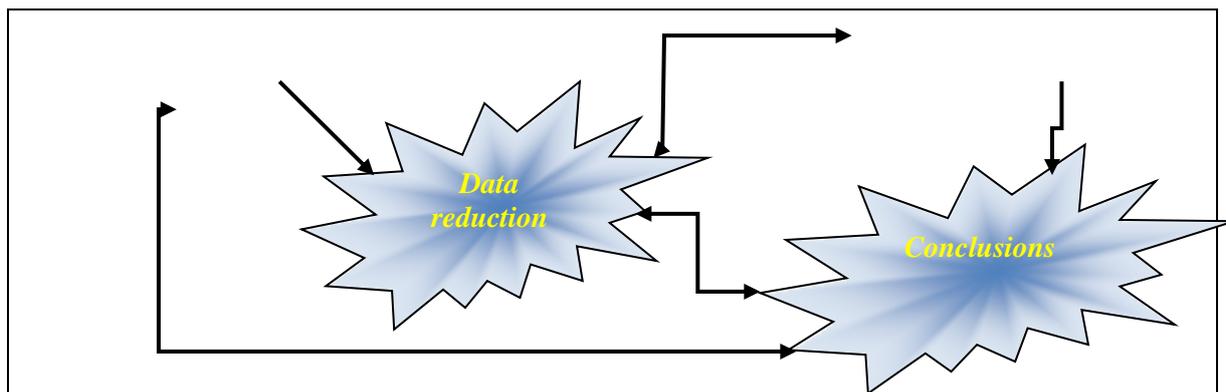


Figure 4.4: Data analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 1994, in Punch & Oancea, 2014, p. 224)

Miles and Huberman's model of presentation views the whole process as interactive. This means that the three phases occur concurrently with each other. According to Forman and Damschroder (2008, p.46), each phase is used to create new knowledge from raw data. The various interconnected phases within the data analysis process are discussed below.

4.3.5 Data collection

During the first phase of the analysis process, I collected a large mass of raw data by using the various qualitative data collection techniques as previously described. I then immersed myself in the data, in order to make sense of the whole before I divided it into more manageable units of analysis (Forman & Damschroder, 2008, p.47). Making sense of the whole could also be viewed as open coding, as described by Henning et al. (2004, p. 104). It entails going through all the data to gain a complete understanding or view of the information received. I followed this process by reading through my interview transcripts repeatedly, by listening to my audio recordings, and by making notes as I did so. This allowed me to make connections within the data which could be further explored in the data analysis process.

4.3.6 Data reduction and data display phase

According to Punch and Oancea (2014, p.224), reducing the data occurs throughout the whole data analysis process. During the initial phase of analysis, the reduction of data occurs through "editing, segmenting and summarizing" (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p.224). Forman and Damschroder (2008, p.48) contend that the reduction phase in qualitative content analysis is very important since it attaches "rigour to the process". Punch and Oanca (2014, p.224) also maintain that the goal of data reduction is to curtail all the data received without losing important or relevant information. As planned, I worked through all the material collected to

gain a global understanding of the data. According to Henning et al. (2004, p.104), patterns already appear during this process, and codes can be assigned based on the researcher's understanding of the data. The figure below shows the coding process during this phase of data analysis.

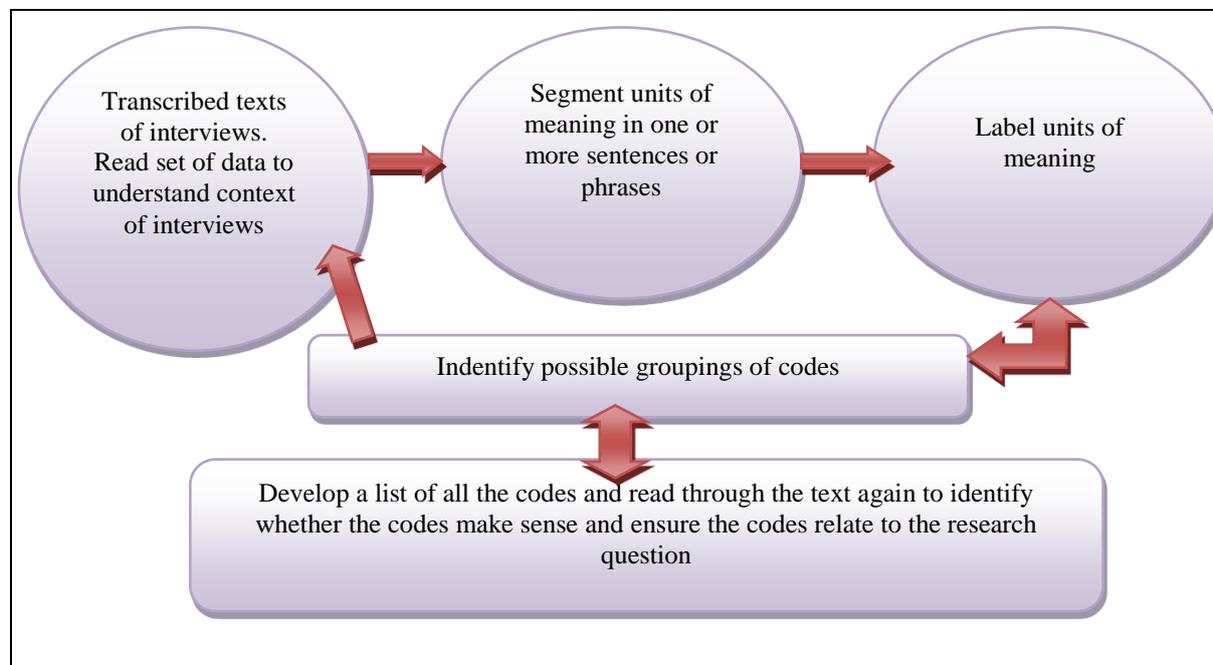


Figure 4.5 Coding process (Adapted & Henning et al., 2004, p. 104)

The data sets generated during the individual interviews and the classroom observations were first coded to determine possible patterns and gaps which could inform the interview guide for the focus group interview. Thereafter the coded material from the focus group interview was merged with all the previous data obtained from the individual interviews.

In order to reduce the amount of data received during the collection phase, I added two columns to the transcribed text, a data chunks column and codes column, on the right-hand side of the document (see Appendix H). This allowed me to follow a process of “working the data” (Henning et al, 2004, p.104). According to Punch Oancea (2014, p. 224), data displays help the researcher to “organize, compress and assemble information.” Data displays not only fulfil the role of presenting data but also allow the researcher to further analyse the data which have been received (Punch & Oancea, 2014, p. 225). This constant analysis of data enabled me to identify “units of meaning” (Henning et al, 2004, p.105). After working through each individual interview, I indicated the data chunks of each individual interview in the data chunks column, then allocated preliminary codes in the codes column (see Appendix I). Finally, I merged all the coded data from the individual interviews into categories in one document. I followed the same process of data coding with the data generated during the focus group interview, and

merged the result with the preliminary categories of the individual interviews (see Appendix J). Figure 4.6 indicates the process of converting codes into categories in qualitative content analysis.

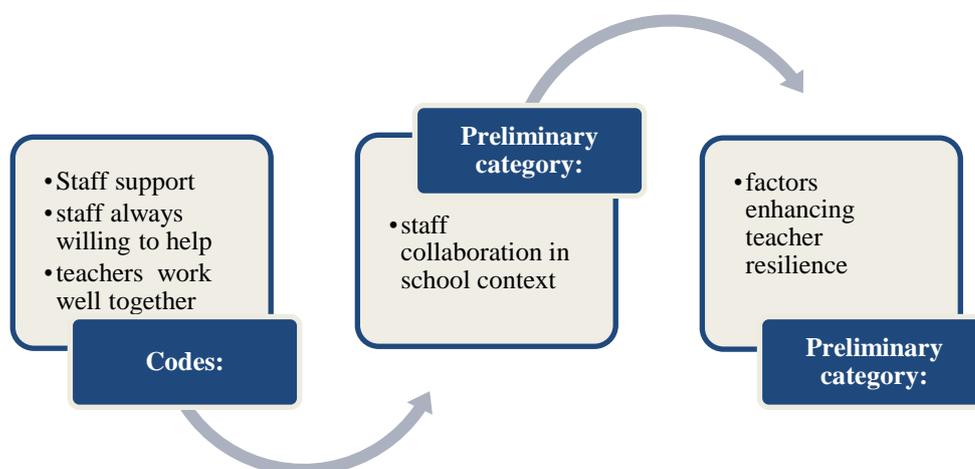


Figure 4.6 Codes to categories (Adapted from Henning et al., 2004, p. 106)

As described above, data reduction takes place throughout the whole data analysis process. During this, the researcher will need to constantly revise and refine the data. Figure 4.6 shows how the researcher, through the constant refinement of data, may arrive at a more suitable category, one which relates better to the research question. Thus through a process of refinement I could identify more suitable categories from which I could extract the themes which would be used as basis for my discussion (see Appendix K). According to Henning et al. (2004, p. 107), only when the researcher is satisfied that the themes embody a sound investigation of a “chunk of reality” may it be used to support the argument.

4.3.7 Interpretation and conclusion phase

This is the third phase in this model and it involves putting all the information together in such a manner as to offer the researcher a better understanding of the data (Forman & Damschroder, 2008, p.56). Miles and Huberman (1994), in Forman and Damschroder (2008, p.56), observe that there are various methods to interpret data, which include the restructuring and “writing descriptive and interpretive summaries.” It should be noted, however, that even though this phase is placed last in the analysis model it may still occur during all previous phases. Though I made some interpretations and conclusions while initially working through the data, I still had to test and refine these conclusions by revisiting the data. My interpretation of the data will be given and discussed in the next two sections, while my final conclusions will be presented in chapter five.

4.4 DATA PRESENTATION

During the data collection process, four themes emerged from the participants' views and experiences of challenging learner behaviour and the influence it had on their resilience. I will present the findings of this study according to these four themes. I used direct quotes taken from the various participants' own words. To prevent confusion, for the remainder of the thesis I will indicate the source of the data from the data analysis process as in Table 4.6

Table 4.6: Reference to source of data

Pseudonym of participant	School Sector	Individual Interview	Observation	Focus group interview
E.g. P1-P6	A=Academic W= Workshop	Ii	Ob	Fg

Note: Direct quotations from participant one from the academic sector during the individual interviews will be cited in the text as P1 (A, Ii.).

As shown below in Table 4.7, the four themes and their associated categories, obtained from the analysis process, represent four aspects which influence the resilience of teachers in the school of skills and directly or indirectly impact their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour.

Table 4.7: Themes and categories from the data analysis

THEME 1	CATEGORIES
Risk factors	Classroom
	School
	Community
	Government
THEME 2	CATEGORIES
Internal stressors	

THEME 3	CATEGORIES
Protective factors	Classroom
	School
THEME 4	CATEGORIES
Internal strengths	Resilience
	Personal well-being

4.4.1 Theme 1: Risk factors

Mansfield et al. (2012, p.357) refer to the value of teacher resilience and how it may prevent teacher stress and attrition, in particular within the South African education system. Various factors, however, may negatively impact a teacher's well-being and resilience. For example, unfavourable conditions in the school context may contribute not only to heightened stress levels among teachers but could also ultimately lead to burnout (Price et al, 2012, p.91). It was important, therefore, to explore the participants' experiences of the various factors which might have negatively impacted their resilience. The classroom category, with related factors based on their views and perceptions will be discussed in the section below.

4.4.1.1 Classroom

The data showed that the classroom context can significantly contribute to teacher stress. The following factors in particular seemed to impact on the teachers' ability to manage challenging learner behaviour and had a negative impact on their resilience: teacher-learner ratio, the various kinds of challenging behaviour, learners who were incorrectly placed in the special school, a lack of respect for authority, substance abuse, adapted learning material which was either too difficult or too easy for the learners, incorrect teaching practices, and challenges with inclusion.

One of the factors that the teachers singled out as having a profound effect on their ability to effectively educate learners and to manage challenging behaviour in the classroom was the teacher-learner ratio. P1 (A, Ii) said that his average teacher-learner ratio was 1:22, which, according to him, was too high for a special school and restricted him from effectively

managing learner behaviour. P2 (A, Ii), with a teacher-learner ratio of 1:25 in his classroom, indicated that some “learners get lost in the process.” This claim seemed to be supported during the observation session in the classroom of P1 (A, Ob), where it was evident that some learners did not receive the same amount of attention and lost interest in the learning material. According to P5 (A, Ii), the high number of learners in the classroom contributed to their challenging behaviour. For example, while she attended to some of the learners, others would cause mischief and disrupt the class, adding to her stress levels. This was confirmed while observing P5 (A, Ob) during her class session. Some learners were disruptive, throwing papers at each other, fighting and swearing, while the teacher was giving individual attention to a specific learner. This particular observation session offered a glimpse into this teacher’s struggles to maintain discipline in a class with a high teacher-learner ratio. P3 (W, Ii), a workshop teacher, had a teacher learner ratio of 1:23. He felt that this was unmanageable, as the learners worked with dangerous machinery and it was difficult to keep his eye on everyone. As a result, he feared for the learners’ safety on a daily basis. This caused him stress and also affected his well-being. In the light of the teachers’ responses, it is clear that a high teacher-learner ratio in a school of skills poses many challenges to teachers. Not only are they expected to manage discipline and meet each learner’s needs but also have the added pressure of ensuring the safety both of their learners and of themselves.

The data further revealed that teachers not only struggled with the high number of learners in their classrooms; they also found it difficult to cope with the co-morbid factors accompanying these high numbers. It was important, therefore, to explore what these factors were and how the teachers perceived them. The participants explained which types of learner behaviour they deemed disruptive or challenging and how these affected their resilience and classroom management. P1 (A, Ii) foregrounded an important concern. He maintained that certain learners should not be in the special school, as they functioned intellectually at a higher level than the others, and should be able to cope successfully in a mainstream classroom, given the necessary support. On the other hand, he also said that some learners struggled academically and this influenced their motivation in the school. These learners, although on different poles of the continuum, became disinterested in the learning material and this led to attention-seeking behaviour. They often lacked respect for authority figures, challenged them, and mocked and harassed other learners. Other forms of challenging behaviour included learners playing on their cell phones, making degrading remarks, and hindering others from learning. These findings were supported by the data obtained during the observation session in the classroom

of P1 (A, Ob). The learners demonstrated varying levels of intellectual ability, but those who struggled seemed to indulge in challenging behaviour, such as eating in class, talking and fighting. P2 (A, Ii) concurred that many learners answered back to the teacher, and did not follow instructions in class. This behaviour was also observed during the observation session in P2's (A, Ob) classroom, where learners would impulsively shout answers, and even laugh and call out degrading names should anyone answered incorrectly. Challenging behaviour identified by P5 (A, Ii) included writing on tables, throwing objects at each other, fighting and lying. Some learners tended to taunt the teachers and would "push you till you break." P5 (A, Ob)'s despondency was evident in her classroom when she failed to maintain discipline. She attempted to keep her cool as the session continued and tried to manage the behaviour in a calm and collected manner. Eventually, however, she reached breaking point and shouted at the learners, which only added to the detrimental effect of the challenging behaviour in her classroom. It was clear that this resulted in increased stress for her. It was also noticeable how hopeless and powerless she became. According to P1 (A, Fg), learners mocked him and pushed him to get a reaction from him. When he eventually reacted, he was always regarded as being to blame. He also mentioned that learners who had recently entered the school of skill had not been exposed to proper disciplinary systems at their previous mainstream schools, making the task of the teachers in the present school more difficult. He did, however, admit that not all learners were disruptive and that it was generally only a small group who negatively affected the learning of their peers. According to P1 (A, Fg), these learners needed to be placed in schools specializing in behaviour management, but this however was not an option since these schools, even if available, were always filled to capacity. This frustrated him a lot. It was interesting to note that the three participants from the workshop sector shared some of the experiences of the academic teachers, such as for example talking back and lack of respect for authority, but in general it seemed as if they experienced fewer occurrences of challenging learner behaviour.

The participants also offered their own reasons for challenging learner behaviour. As previously noted by P1 (A, Ii), learners were incorrectly placed in the special school on the basis of their intellectual ability. Additionally, because of the closing-down of certain reformatory schools, he felt that "many learners are [were] placed in the special school based on their behaviour problems and not on their scholastic performance." Special schools were now seen as the last resort for learners with behavioural problems. He also felt that the ability of learners to perform academically had declined over the years, for example in literacy and

numeracy. The current learning material seemed too challenging for many of the learners attending the special school, with a resulting negative impact on their commitment and motivation. P4 (W, Fg) concurred and felt that certain learners seemed to function on a primary school level, since simple instructions had to be repeated all the time and the learning material needed to be continuously explained. This conclusion was shared by P3 (W, Ii), who maintained that certain learners were intellectually too weak to make progress in the workshops and posed a safety threat, not only to themselves but to their peers as well.

According to P3 (W, Fg), another cause of challenging learner behaviour and of the low academic performance was that “learners are [were] not kept busy at all times.” P5 (A, Fg) agreed with this view, and felt that learners who were not suitably engaged might misbehave and demonstrate disruptive behaviour. P1 (A, Ii) argued that some teachers were inclined to “spoon feed” learners, which left them unprepared for the world of work and unable to take responsibility for their actions. P6 (W, Fg) indicated that learners also “play[ed] on the emotions of teachers” and refused to study for assessments because they knew teachers would make the assessment tasks easier. Making these tasks easier would allow the learners to complete them more quickly, leaving them at large and prone to disruptive behaviour. It also seemed as if some teachers were deliberately lowering the standard of assessment tasks to ensure that they did not have to deal with the same ‘difficult’ learners the following year. This was a big concern, since not only could it be viewed as incorrect teaching practice but could also deprive learners of quality education and the chance to develop the skill needed to take responsibility for their own learning. According to P1 (A, Ii), this practice gave certain learners the leeway to stay out of school while still managing to pass their specific year, leaving the impression that they could do anything without having to answer to the consequences. This influenced their behaviour negatively, impacting teacher motivation and resilience. Apart from the above-mentioned factors contributing to challenging learner behaviour in the classroom, P1 (A, Ii) also felt that unemployment after school, the economic and political situation in the country, as well as corruption might (albeit indirectly) negatively influence learner motivation and behaviour.

Importantly, P5 (A, Ii) contended that teachers might also have a role to play in challenging learner behaviour. The majority of the learners hailed from harsh backgrounds and the teachers needed to understand this. Unfortunately, some teachers resorted to old methods, such as shouting at the learners, to manage their behaviour. As argued above, this only seemed to contribute further to their disruptive behaviour. Learners attending the special school already

had a low self-esteem and low confidence, and saw themselves as stupid. By shouting at them, the teachers sacrificed any respect from these learners. According to P5 (A, Fg), the learners saw themselves as “I am dumb and there’s no point you teach me anything because I won’t understand it anyway.” Treating such learners with disrespect not only harms their self-esteem but causes immense damage to the teacher-learner relationship. P1 (A, Ii) admitted to shouting at learners, which negatively influenced his relationship with them and raised his stress levels to the extent that he sometimes felt ill. P5 (A, Fg) also blamed primary school teachers for learners’ low self-esteem and challenging behaviour, as those who did not cope were pushed aside and labeled as special school learners while still attending primary schools.

A further factor which seemed to contribute to challenging behaviour, as recorded by P5 (A, Fg), was that teachers were not consistent in their management of such behaviour. This not only confused the rest of the staff and learners but also contributed to the frustration of both teachers and learners. P6 (W, Fg) agreed with this point, stating that some teachers allowed challenging behaviour in their classrooms, making it difficult to maintain discipline as a team. This was also evident during the observation sessions, as each participant had different class rules, communicated differently and adopted different methods to manage challenging behaviour (not necessarily all successful). P2 (A, Fg) related a previous attempt in the school to instil a uniform approach to managing learner behaviour. This was unsuccessful, as some of the teachers were unwilling to adapt or were too busy to try new methods. P4 (W, Ii) suggested that teachers should refrain from placing too much focus on negative behaviour, and that learners should be rewarded for good behaviour. Spending more time on positive factors might contribute to heightened positivity and improved motivation, whereas the constant focus on the negatives could potentially compromise their well-being and resilience.

P4 (W, Ii) also saw substance abuse at home, as well as on the school grounds, as playing a significant role in challenging learner behaviour. This view was shared by all the participants. According to P1 (A, Ii), constant drug abuse by learners caused immense frustration among teachers. Not only did teachers sometimes fear for their lives but they also feared for the lives of the other learners in the class. Drug abuse was not only a problem experienced by teachers in the academic sector. P3 (W, Fg) also said that learners under the influence of substances often worked with dangerous machinery. This not only posed a threat to their safety but also unfairly presented a risk to his work as a teacher should something happen to these learners.

ADHD was another factor influencing challenging learner behaviour in the classroom. According to P3 (W, Ii), these learners experienced difficulty in concentrating and in following instructions, which was frustrating for teachers since they constantly had to repeat instructions. P1 (A, Ii) felt a lack of appropriate training in ADHD left some teachers not suitably skilled to work effectively with these learners, which caused them strain and frustration. They felt inadequate, which further reduced their resilience. However, P2 (A, Fg) contended that most teachers had the theoretical knowledge to manage learners with ADHD, but unfortunately did not know how to apply this knowledge and skills at ground level in the classroom. On the other hand, P2 (A, Fg) indicated that you could have all the experience in the world, but a loss in the motivation to make a difference and to try new ideas could negate the potential of knowledge and skills. P1 (A, Fg), an older teacher, confessed that he might fall within this bracket. Early in his career, he had been extremely motivated and willing to try new strategies, but as the years went by and with all the changes in the education system he became less enthusiastic and motivated, and more stressed.

The last factor which seemed to impact teacher resilience and their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour in the classroom was inclusive education. This is generally viewed as the most significant educational imperative for addressing diversity in the classroom and ensuring quality education for all. In the research school, teachers had to learn to cope with and manage a diverse learner body. As a special school, it presented the last bastion of support for learners and in this respect fulfilled a very important role in the support network. From the data, it seemed as if the teachers had difficulty understanding and accepting the principles and practices of inclusive education. It was evident that P1 (A, Ii) understood the educational approach, but viewed inclusive education as “not practical and it does not work.” He also felt that for inclusion to be successful you needed smaller classes, which, as noted earlier, was currently not the case at the school. P2 (A, Ii) concurred with this. According to him, there were more learners entering the school every year but the staff numbers remained the same, placing a lot of responsibility on the current teacher body. This had an influence on their levels of motivation. P5 (A, Ii) adhered to the redundant definition of inclusive education, as only being about including learners with severe disabilities in the classroom. Education White Paper 6 of 2001 ascribes to the wider definition of inclusive education as pertaining to the successful inclusion of *all* learners. Furthermore, this participant indicated that teachers in the school of skills were not trained or skilled enough to accommodate the diverse learner population in the

school, making them feel inadequate. According to P4 (W, Ii), “teachers don’t have a choice,” while P3 (W, Ii) stated that including learners of different disabilities in the workshop held many challenges. He constantly had to watch the intellectually low-functioning learners to ensure they did not hurt themselves or their peers. He felt that alternative schools should be created for learners whom he deemed as being incorrectly placed in the special school. Schools for learners who were functioning intellectually higher than their peers and schools for learners who showed low intellectual functioning but were not physically disabled were necessary (contrary to the principles and practices of inclusive education). According to P6 (W, Ii), inclusion was a very difficult concept to employ in the school of skills, since there were learners with varying abilities in the same classroom. She mentioned that inclusion “placed a lot of strain on teachers to keep up with the diverse learner needs,” adding more stress and the need to do more work, which could lead to a lower well-being and resilience. These conditions, as noted above, provided teachers with the ideal opportunity to apply differentiated teaching methods in their classrooms, but they seemed to have difficulty using these strategies. This could have been caused by their lack of knowledge and understanding of how to differentiate the curriculum, teaching and assessment practices. If teachers were able to differentiate their learning material to accommodate all learners, they could have a more positive view of inclusion, given that this concept aims to promote inclusive education.

From the data generated, it was evident that various factors in the classroom context not only impacted the teachers’ ability to educate learners effectively but also influenced their ability to maintain discipline and to manage challenging learner behaviour. They faced many challenges which seemed to influence their well-being, motivation and resilience. Factors such as learner substance abuse, high teacher-learner ratios, a perceived decline in the learners’ intellectual abilities, and challenging learner behaviour all contributed to increased frustration and stress. This had a detrimental effect on the teachers’ well-being and could ultimately have led to their attrition. From the data, it was clear that they felt inadequate, unsupported, hopeless and frustrated with their current classroom situation. Even though they tried to maintain a positive outlook in the face of these challenges, their resilience seemed to be compromised. However, the classroom context was not the only one identified as playing a role in teacher resilience. From the data generated, it was clear that the school itself also had an impact on the teachers’ well-being and resilience. Several factors in the school context presented as risk factors and will be explored in the following section.

4.4.1.2 School

The second category under the theme ‘risk factors’ was the school context. The data indicated that the school context and its accompanying factors also influenced the teachers’ motivation and well-being. As previously stated by Knight et al. (2010, p.2), poor relationships could negatively impact a teacher’s resilience and well-being. School factors, as derived from the data, included unmotivated colleagues who found it difficult to adapt to change, poor management of discipline in the school, difficult teacher relationships, inadequate staff development, and a lack of appreciation among staff members. These factors, together with the various co-morbid issues, will be discussed in the section below.

One of the factors which the participating teachers identified as influencing their well-being and motivation was colleagues who were unwilling to adapt to change. P1 (A, Ii) mentioned that the school of skills had not adapted well to inclusion. While P2 (A, Ii) shared the same view, he additionally felt that some teachers in the special school had a “do not care attitude,” and that “they don’t see the point in adapting the learning material to suit the learners needs since they felt that the curriculum anyway constantly changes,” which caused a lot of frustration among staff. According to P4 (W, Ii), “older staff should stop looking for excuses not to adapt,” and should teach according to the learners’ needs. He also maintained that management had more control over curriculum adaption and implementation in the academic sector in the school than in the skills sector. This might have had a negative impact on older academic teachers, since they were constantly being monitored. P5 (A, Ii) also mentioned that some subject head teachers failed to develop work material in line with requirements of the curriculum, creating a lot of frustration among the teachers. She suggested that this was degrading to both teachers and learners, since the learning material was sometimes below the level of ability of certain learners and this negatively influenced their motivation and self-esteem. This was especially critical, since learners who were not at task tended to indulge in challenging behaviour. The derived data showed that outdated learning material and the unwillingness of more experienced teachers to develop learning material in accordance to the curriculum standards not only impacted learners negatively but affected younger teachers as well. The influence of more experienced teachers on those newly entering the education system should not be underestimated. P1 (A, Ii) noted that teachers’ resilience could be affected by “life knowledge, experience and background.” He noted that young teachers who lacked experience were easily influenced and became negative. This meant that they would eventually follow the negative example set by their seniors, and could ultimately lose the willingness to

adapt. Nor was an unwillingness to adapt to change the only factor which influenced teachers negatively. The data also showed that the division between young and old teachers in the special school caused immense discontent, especially among the younger staff members. It was therefore important to explore this phenomenon in order to determine the impact it had on the teachers' well-being, motivation and resilience.

According to P3 (W, Ii), the older teachers were just waiting to retire and were disinclined to make the necessary changes. The younger staff members were more motivated to effect change and valued the school more. In the light of this, the suggestion was made that younger teachers should have the opportunity to take over. He felt that the younger teachers were being constantly "picked on and bad mouthed" by older teachers, and it seemed as if the older staff members were just waiting for the young teachers to make mistakes. This led to friction and a lack of unity among the staff. This view was shared by P2 (A, Ii), who felt that older teachers nursed grudges, took their frustrations out on younger teachers, and were just in the education system to see out their time. According to P4 (W, Ii), "unmotivated teachers only see the negatives in the school." This caused a divide between younger and older teachers, and it seemed as if the younger teachers' opinions and ideas were not heard. The depreciation of the younger teachers not only negatively influenced staff relationships but their resilience also seemed to have been affected. P3 (W, Fg) contended that the staff at the research school were under the illusion that unity prevailed at the school, but the contrary was the reality. He suggested that the staff did not work well together, and constant "back stabbing" was common practice at the school.

The above participant also felt that some staff members were unwilling to share responsibility for managing challenging learner behaviour and instead expected management to deal with behavioural difficulties. P1 (A, Ii), however, suggested that "management was not doing enough to handle disciplinary issues within the special school, and currently it only seemed to be the principal who was doing something." He also noted the management team's inability to solve problems. They tended to blame teachers for problems in the system, while the learners could do whatever they wanted no fear of any consequences. According to P5 (A, Fg) and P6 (W, Ii), disciplinary strategies such as detention were unsuccessful, since learners did not mind staying after school. They suggested that the school needed more effective disciplinary strategies.

The division between younger and older teachers and between the management team and teachers was clear. For teachers to become more resilient, support and extrinsic motivation in the form of appreciation in the workplace were necessary. From the data, it seemed to be lacking. P2 (A, Ii) claimed that teachers were not heard by management, and whenever new ideas were posed they were not even taken into consideration. This caused teachers to become despondent. P1 (A, Ii) echoed this, adding that teachers' suggestions were being suppressed by management. Not being heard by management was not the only factor which seemed to cause teacher frustration. P1 (A, Ii) also felt that the school lacked leadership over the equal sharing of responsibilities. Some teachers had more responsibilities than others, while certain teachers did not do what was required from them. This made him angry, to the point that he would consider leaving the profession. Apparently, the school faced a challenging situation, as over forty percent of the staff were nearing retirement. Should they resign prematurely due to frustration or lack of support, the school would entail a great loss, as it would be difficult to replace their knowledge and expertise..

A further factor which seemed to influence the teachers was the staff development sessions held at the school. According to P6 (W, Ii), "workshops and staff development sessions for teachers were not worthwhile." She admitted that teachers had to keep up with current developments in the education sector, but since the workshops seemed to hold no value for teachers, they became despondent and not interested to attend them. P5 (A, Fg) also mentioned that, out of twelve workshops conducted at the school, only two were relevant, and this was one of the reasons staff members were not eager to attend these sessions. P2 (A, Fg) confirmed that staff development sessions held at school on Friday afternoons added to the teachers' frustration and lack of motivation, since they felt these workshops held no value for them, and would have preferred to spend their time with their loved ones.

Exacerbating this concern was the fact that the teachers lacked the knowledge and confidence to work with learners with high support needs. P5 (A, Ii) indicated that not only did teachers not have sufficient knowledge of relevant policies but they were also "not qualified enough to work with the respective learners at the special school." Teachers working in the special school needed special training and skills to meet the diverse needs of the learners, but from the data it became clear that they currently lacked sufficient knowledge or confidence to effectively support all their learners. This seemed to influence their self-belief, motivation and resilience. P6 (W, Fg) also suggested that all teachers in the South African education sector should be

required to attend counseling courses to gain knowledge and skills on how to work with learners.

The data revealed that there were many factors in the school context which influenced the teachers' well-being, motivation and resilience. They also felt that they were not making any contribution to the development of learners, which again could lead to a lack of resilience and to teacher attrition. This was an important factor, since it was made clear that the school would find it difficult to replace current knowledge and expertise should teachers leave the school prematurely. Teachers needed adequate support to maintain their motivation and willingness to effect change. The data also indicated that the community had an influence on teacher resilience, which will be explored in the following section.

4.4.1.3 Community

The third category under the theme 'risk factors' entailed the communal factors that might impact teacher resilience and contribute to challenging learner behaviour. As derived from the data, these factors included learners living in poverty-stricken areas, a lack of parental involvement, and a lack of knowledge about socially acceptable behaviour. These factors and how they influence teacher resilience will be discussed in the section below.

According to P1 (A, Ii), "seventy percent of learners attending the special school come from poverty-stricken areas". To his knowledge, these areas were characterized by single-parent households, broken homes, substance abuse, violence and emotional neglect. Accompanying these factors, he also highlighted the absence of father figures or role models in the lives of the learners. P2 (A, Ii) noted that not only did these learners participate in risky behaviour, they also showed a lack of respect towards their parents. All the participants shared these views, and P6 (W, Fg) added that some of her learners in the workshop were also victims of sexual abuse. Before completing Form 22 to report these cases to either the school counselor or the principal, she often had to listen to their experiences. She tried to provide support where she could, but she felt out of her depth since she was not qualified to deal with these issues. She also mentioned that learners would often share their terrible experiences in class. Emotionally draining, this not only negatively impacted her ability to effectively educate them but also reduced her level of tolerance for certain minor behaviours like talking in class. This lack of tolerance was illustrated during P6's (W, Ob) observation session where, even though her learners exhibited good discipline compared to other classes, she still lost her cool when some

learners borrowed pencils or had quiet conversations. Taking the various responsibilities of teachers into account, along with their role as confidants, it could be expected that teachers with a low resilience would find education a daunting task, one which might lead to burnout and attrition.

The learners' behaviour was influenced by their interaction with their environment. Given that many of those who attended the research school were faced with difficult circumstances on a daily bases, their behaviour in the school was of concern. This conclusion seemed to be supported by P1 (A, Ii), who viewed challenging learner behaviour as a direct consequence of the learners' contexts. He also ascribed their lack of knowledge or understanding of socially acceptable behaviour as one of the factors contributing to their negative behaviour in the school. This point was supported by P3 (W, Fg), who claimed that the learners often had no one at home to teach them right from wrong, and that there was often no structure at home. P3 (W, Ii) also believed that only "twenty percent of the learners attending the school had disabilities, while eighty percent were placed there due to their behaviour problems." It was clear that learners faced many challenges that could influence their behaviour in the school negatively, and this held several consequences for teachers in the classrooms. According to P1 (A, Ii), challenging learner behaviour like "anger outbursts," which were often experienced in the school, originated in their backgrounds. The impact of the learners' environments on both the teachers and the school was also illustrated by P5's (A, Fg) example of learners who expressed a desire to quit using substances, but who, when they returned home, were exposed to constant substance abuse by parents and family members. This made abstinence an almost impossible task. Not only did this negatively impact the teachers' motivation, since they had the responsibility to educate learners under the influence, but the learners' own self-belief, motivation and confidence also seemed to be affected, creating a sense of hopelessness in the school community.

It should be remembered that the school is not attended by learners from the community in which it is situated. Learners at the special school often have to travel long distances to attend school. It was therefore a challenge for teachers to access resources in these communities or to make contact with community members and parents. As noted previously, the parents were often unemployed and lived in poverty, which in turn compromised their ability to make contact with the school. The data indicated that the lack of parental involvement seemed to negatively influence teacher commitment and resilience. According to P1 (A, Ii), parent-child relationships seemed to be non-existent in the lives of a large percentage of learners attending

the school. Parents seemed to lack interest in the development of their children. Some parent support was evident, but only during extra-curricular activities such as sport. Not once had he received any support when confronted with challenging learner behaviour. P3 (W, Ii) agreed with this, describing learner households as “chaotic”, with learners receiving minimal support from their parents. It was thus not surprising that teachers were under the impression that parents were unable to control their children. This lack of involvement and support from the side of the parents left teachers with the responsibility of acting as both educators and care-givers, placing a further strain on their well-being and resilience. To make matters worse, parents sometimes blamed the teachers for their children’s bad behaviour. This led to the teachers losing interest in the learning and development of these learners, a result which was detrimental to the welfare of both learners and teachers. P5 (A, Ii), however, noted that some parents were willing to serve on the PTA (Parent Teachers Association), but their contribution was restricted to helping with the planning and organizing of fundraising events. The parents on the PTA, however, were only a small percentage of the parent population, so that in most cases the teachers would end up doing all the work. P6 (A, Ii) held a more positive view of parents, emphasizing the contribution they could make in the learning and development of their children. She was in constant contact with parents about learner behaviour, and noted that some parents actually worked collaboratively with her in managing their children’s homework tasks and behaviour.

However, the majority of the participants claimed that support from the parent body was minimal. Teachers felt alone in dealing both with challenging learner behaviour and other challenges which could have a negative influence on their resilience. P1 (A, Fg) suggested that parent participation and involvement should be encouraged. Parents should be encouraged to attend the school for information sessions where teachers and parents could work collaboratively to manage problems of behaviour. All the participants shared this hope, while P2 (A, Fg) added that these sessions could also be used to identify suitable strategies and solutions to address learner behaviour. This would not only alleviate stress among teachers but would also help the parents to feel empowered.

P1 (A, Fg) suggested that, because of the various stressors learners had to face daily, they seemed to have lost their self-pride, with a negative impact on teacher-learner relationships. Learners combined behavioural problems with a lack of motivation and commitment to learning. Teachers often felt as if some learners showed no regret for own indiscretions. P1 (A,

li) considered knowledge of learners' contexts as critical to the successful management of their behaviour. A better understanding of the behaviours needed to survive these environments could shed more light on why learners exhibited certain behaviours in school. This knowledge could therefore contribute towards more empathetic approaches to managing challenging learner behaviour, in turn leading to a more disciplined school environment.

In this section, it became clear that the community could not be separated from the school, or from the experiences of both teachers and learners in the school. Environmental factors influencing learners would ultimately impact on the teachers' well-being and resilience, and should therefore be regarded as an important component in any school system. Teachers in the research school, though not physically sharing learners' environments and not exposed to the same harsh conditions, should make a concerted effort to understand learner behaviour, managing these behaviours, as well as acting as care-givers and role models. They would need self-belief, confidence, motivation and resilience to cope with these demands. Unfortunately, as noted in this section, teachers were often left without support or involvement from the parents, which clearly had a negative influence on their resilience. In addition to communal factors, the data also showed the influence of the government sector on teacher resilience. This category and the impact it has on teacher resilience will be discussed in the section below.

4.4.1.4 Government

The fourth category under the theme 'risk factors', as derived from the data, explores how the government might erode teachers' resilience and contribute to challenging learner behaviour in the research school. These factors included the lack of support from the Education Department, issues of curriculum development, problems with the attendance of workshops, and learner qualifications.

All the participants shared the view that teachers received minimal support from the Education Department. They were left to fend for themselves, which created a great deal of uncertainty among staff members. According to P1 (A, li), the "education system has collapsed," and officials lacked understanding of the nature of learners attending this particular school. This conclusion was shared by P4 (W, li), who indicated that officials in particular lacked understanding of the academic level at which these learners functioned. This was especially obvious in the workshops, where certain learners were unable to meet the minimum requirements and not only endangered their own lives but also those of their peers. On the other side of the continuum, as previously argued, some learners were incorrectly placed in the

special school on the basis of their intellectual ability. With the necessary support, they should have been able to cope successfully in the mainstream sector. Currently, these learners appeared unmotivated, with little interest in their school work and prone to disruptive behaviour. P1 (A, Fg) also shared his frustration with officials from the district office. Teachers' concerns were not considered, and they were often blamed for learners' misbehaviour. P3 (W, Fg) concurred with this view and believed that the Education Department could do more to support teachers, rather than focusing only on teachers who made mistakes. Teachers were also kept busy with "irrelevant things". P6 (W, Ii) noted that she had neglected to make contact with them and was therefore unsure whether they would give her the necessary support. This seemed to cause discontent among teachers, since they relied on the Education Department to provide them with guidance and support. This was emphasized by P3 (W, Fg), who stated that "no one recognized what teachers [did] at the school and it [felt] as if the work they [did] was worthless." P5 (A, Ii), however, shared a more positive contribution of the Western Cape Education Department. They distributed relevant newspapers and their website was structured and very informative. From the findings discussed above, however, it was clear that the majority of participants believed that the support and acknowledgement from the Education Department was minimal. This influenced their motivation and resilience, since they felt devalued, unappreciated and unsupported.

The Education Department's role in the development of the curriculum for special schools also seemed to cause concern among the teachers. According to P1 (A, Ii), the development of a new special school curriculum had been delayed for years, and it still seemed to be far from completion. According to P3 (W, Ii), the situation with the new special school curriculum was frustrating since it never seemed to come to fruition. P2 (A, Ii) also noted that, despite teachers now being included in the development of a new curriculum, it appeared as if their opinions and views were not seriously considered. The curriculum seemed to have been rewritten over and over again, causing teachers to feel despondent and negative, not only about the curriculum but also towards the Education Department. This lengthy process also affected the teachers' trust in the Education Department, since they seemed to be constantly disappointed. P1 (A, Ii), who as previously mentioned was nearing retirement, refused to take part in the development of the new curriculum. He felt he should be remunerated, since his expertise had been developed over many years in the special school sector. The value he might have brought to the table was undeniable, especially since teachers often complained that the current curriculum and learning material did not meet their learners' needs. He could have made a useful contribution to the

curriculum. P2 (A, Ii) argued that the curriculum was too difficult for certain learners, causing them to feel worthless. On the other hand, it was not sufficiently challenging for those who should really attend mainstream schools. This was a true conundrum in the school. Not only was the learning material too difficult for certain learners, but there was also no uniformity in the curriculum across different special schools. The result was that learners left school with varying abilities and skills, depending on their particular special school. (This was despite the adapted version of the national curriculum provided by the Western Cape Education Department, in which the teachers had some say). According to P3 (W, Ii), this lack of uniformity created confusion among teachers, parents, learners and schools. Teachers were left with the responsibility to develop their own learning material in accordance to what they felt would be at an appropriate level. Unfortunately, this created tension among the teachers, leaving them frequently feeling inadequate to dealing with this task. According to P5 (A, Fg), the teachers were never sure whether their own adapted learning material met the requirements of the learners or would further their training in tertiary education institutions, leaving them feeling that they were potentially letting their learners down. She also noted that the current adapted curriculum had no point of contact with learners' contexts, making it difficult for the learners to progress academically. Novice teachers, on entering the special school sector, felt completely lost in trying to develop learning material for learners at different ability levels. These feelings of confusion and uncertainty shared by teachers over the curriculum were nicely illustrated by P2 (A, Fg), who he said that "there [was] nothing being followed, but there was definitely something being followed."

The data also indicated that teachers' resilience was negatively influenced by the workshops presented by the Education Department. According to P3 (W, Ii), they felt forced to attend workshops conducted over weekends, which caused much discontent among them. He viewed these workshops as useless, which further contributed to the teachers' frustration. This frustration was shared by all participants, while P5 (A, Ii) added that the teachers lacked motivation to attend these workshops since no learning opportunity was offered. The last factor derived from the data was the qualifications that learners received at the end of their schooling at this particular special school. According to P3 (W, Fg), the qualifications were not accredited or recognized by tertiary institutions, which made it difficult for learners to further their training. Those learners who had aspirations to enter tertiary education institutions found it difficult to be accepted, since their qualifications were not recognized. This situation led to teachers feeling that they were not really contributing to the development of learners, making

them despondent and concerned for the future of their learners. They also felt worthless themselves, because their learners were negatively affected. P2 (A, Fg) argued that learners realized that their certificates were of little value and therefore lost interest in their schooling, while P3 (W, Fg) suggested that learners were able to do the skills courses offered at tertiary institutions, but lacked the theoretical knowledge to qualify as certified welders, mechanics or carpenters

In summary, it seemed as if the teachers in this study were not receiving the necessary support, motivation or appreciation from the Education Department. Even more disconcerting was that they had to grapple with the knowledge that they were not making a relevant contribution to the future of their learners, as they received an unrecognized certificate, making it difficult for them successfully to enter the world of work. The teachers felt that the Education Department was unable to offer appropriate solutions to their problems, causing severe despondency. These were all critical factors that required attention, since they seemed to have a negative impact on the teachers' wellbeing and resilience. The data also indicated that internal stressors also negatively influenced their resilience and well-being. This factor and how it impacted resilience will be further discussed in the section below.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Internal stressors

As previously argued, external factors may have an impact on teacher resilience. However, Mansfield et al., (2012, p.357) argue that internal factors may also influence the development of resilience. The data showed that internal stressors were mostly entwined with workplace experiences and should be discussed as such. No clear categories were identified, but certain factors will be explored.

P2 (A, Ii) listed personality, lack of sleep and acceptance as factors affecting teacher resilience. He noted that certain individuals kept to themselves and lacked social skills, which affected their ability to effectively communicate with their colleagues, parents and learners. Additionally, he mentioned that personal disappointment played a significant role, since it “alter[s] you[r] thinking, mak[ing] you grumpy and irritated”. Teachers who had experienced personal disappointments were more likely to be less lenient or forgiving if they felt irritated. P3 (W, Ii) also identified constant exposure to negative experiences as a factor that could affect resilience. According to P1 (A, Ii), personal disappointments in the workplace influenced his well-being. On various occasions he had failed to gain promotion, which made him despondent and unmotivated to try his best. It also negatively impacted his level of tolerance, as he became

reluctant to adapt to change and found it increasingly difficult to effectively manage disruptive learner behaviour in the classroom. P2 (A, Ii) identified disrespect showed by colleagues and learners, together with a lack of appreciation and acceptance, as negative influences on his work life, while P3 (W, Ii) acknowledged that negative experiences contributed to his short temper, causing him to lose his cool and be aggressive towards colleagues and learners. P5 (A, Ii) “sometimes felt like crying” when things seemed to get too difficult to handle. Tiredness also caused a lack of commitment and motivation. This response was shared by all participants. P1 (A, Ii) claimed that he was physically and emotionally drained after each school day. Feelings of tiredness were aggravated in the case of teachers who did not allow themselves sufficient time to rest. P3 (W, Ii) noted that various teachers were too involved in school work and never made time to relax, resulting in negative mindsets, stress and burnout.

It was clear that the teachers felt unappreciated. They appeared not to receive sufficient recognition for the work, leaving them with feelings of worthlessness. According to P1 (A, Ii) if teachers had been better appreciated they would have been more motivated to adapt and committed to staying in their profession. P3 (W, Ii) argued that those who constantly received negative feedback would feel negative about the self, refusing to engage in change initiatives. P2 (A, Ii) agreed, noting that “teachers need[ed] to be taken care of” to stay motivated. According to P6 (W, Ii), a lack of appreciation could lead to a lack of self-belief and resilience. Teachers with a low self-esteem could lack resilience. The data highlighted feelings of worthlessness, a lack of support, lack of belief in the special school system, financial difficulties, and problematic interpersonal relationships as among the factors impacting negatively on teachers’ self-esteem. P1 (A, Ii) identified the constant curriculum changes, challenging learner behaviour, and the belief that his work was not making a worthwhile contribution as factors in his lack of belief in the self. P2 (A, Ii) highlighted the lack of recognition from the Education Department, as well as his lack of understanding of inclusion, as factors affecting his self-efficacy. According to P4 (A, Ii), teachers’ lack of belief and faith in the special education system also contributed to their lack of motivation and self-belief. This lack of trust also seemed to influence their willingness to adapt to constant changes. Together with these factors, the data also pointed to teachers’ financial concerns. According to P2 (A, Ii), teachers’ remuneration was not commensurate with their responsibilities and their workload, which caused a lot of frustration among staff members. This could also be one of reasons why they lacked the motivation to attend workshops after hours. Problematic interpersonal relationships among the staff, as well as negative experiences that could push

teachers beyond “breaking point”, were also revealed in the data. P4 (A, Fg) indicated that the lack of understanding of the factors that could build their resilience also needed attention.

In summary, it was evident that various factors that needed attention were contributing to feelings of worthlessness, low self-esteem and low self-efficacy among teachers. Personal disappointments, an inability to manage learner behaviour effectively, the lack of support, respect and appreciation, feeling devalued and underpaid, tiredness and too little time to recuperate left them with feelings of despondency. As one participant emphasized, they were really in need of training to become more resilient in the workplace.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Protective factors

As mentioned in Chapter two, protective factors play a key role in the enhancement of teachers’ resilience. According to Cooper et al. (2001), in Parker (2009, p.6), factors such as self-efficacy, being able to cope with adversity, and receiving support may actually alleviate stress, ultimately contributing to an improved teacher resilience. It was therefore important to explore the participants’ experiences of the various aspects which may positively have impacted their resilience. These factors, based on their views and perceptions, will be discussed in the section below.

4.4.3.1 Classroom

During the collection of the data, the participants identified various factors in the classroom context which might not only have potentially enhanced the teachers’ resilience and their management of challenging learner behaviour but also might have improved their overall teaching experience. These factors included knowledge of inclusive education, the learners’ context, the classroom ethos, knowledge of ADHD, and positive teacher-learner relationships. These factors and how they influenced the teachers’ resilience and their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour will be further discussed below.

The first factor identified as playing a significant role in the development of teacher resilience was knowledge of inclusive education. According to P1 (A, Ii), inclusion could be viewed as the responsibility of teachers to “accommodate anyone in a specific situation.” For P5 (A, Ii),

inclusive education implied that it was the responsibility of teachers to accommodate all learners, regardless of their intrinsic barriers or other extrinsic challenges. From the data, it seemed as if all the participants were informed about the principles underlying the inclusive education approach, but, as previously noted, some seemed to lack the ability or skill to create an inclusive learning environment for their learners. Certain teachers argued that the inclusion of learners in the school had to some extent been achieved. P2 (A, Fg) suggested that the special school provided support to learners with varying levels of functioning through adapting assessment tasks, the use of scribes, and through reading support, while P4 (W, Fg) claimed that all learners were given an equal opportunity to join in sporting activities, regardless of their disabilities. This was important, since many of the learners at the special school had been exposed to exclusion during their earlier schooling careers. It was also evident during classroom observations that certain teachers did their best to treat all the learners equally and to include everyone during the lesson sessions. This was particularly evident during the session in P5's (A, Ob) classroom. Establishing these conditions as the rule (and not the exception) in all classrooms might contribute to learners feeling less isolated and worthless. Creating an inclusive school environment together as a team could also enhance the teachers' resilience. The learners might feel a sense of belonging, which could contribute to improving their behaviour in the classroom. This, however, seemed difficult to accomplish. P2 (A, Fg) claimed that, for teachers to be inclusive of all learners, they would need to be a "master of all", which he defined as someone who communicated well, knew the various cultures, and understood all the learners. To some extent this was observed during P2's (A, Ob) class session. He showed good communication skills and seemed to relate to learners' backgrounds, which improved the participation and interaction of learners. In the light of the above, it seemed as if certain teachers were more dedicated to the values and practices of inclusive education, while others struggled to implement the necessary strategies in their classrooms. Where they taught in a more inclusive way, their learners were more responsive and eager to participate,

Inclusive education, however, not only implies the accommodation of all learners but also means that teachers have a greater responsibility to gain knowledge about their learners, which in turn could help the successful implementation of the process. P6 (W, Ii) indicated that teachers should have sufficient knowledge of learners' contexts. They should understand that the majority of learners came from harsh backgrounds, and that this might negatively influence their behaviour in the classroom. Teachers should also realize that their own contexts differed from that of the majority of their learners. According to P1 (A, Ii), they should take this into

consideration in their attempts to manage challenging learner behaviour. P2 (A, Ii) supported this view, feeling that a more in-depth knowledge of learners' contexts could be beneficial to teachers. Knowledge of learners' backgrounds could help teachers become more "streetwise", assisting them in understanding the language used by learners. Being able to communicate effectively with learners and understanding their lingua franca might bridge the gap between teachers and learners, assisting in the management of challenging behaviour. However, when learning and using the learners' way of talking, teachers should be careful of undesired familiarity with their learners, with the risk of disrupting the disciplinary structures in the classroom. According to P5 (A, Ii), she enjoyed gaining knowledge of learners' backgrounds, since this helped her to better understand their behaviour. P4 (W, Ii) also noted that he had many learners from challenging environments. However, he tried "not look at the [their] shortcomings, but rather at [their] potential, or rather what potential God saw in [them]," which made teaching and managing challenging behaviour easier.

The third factor identified as playing a role in teacher resilience was the classroom ethos. According to P2 (A, Fg) teachers should create a classroom where their learners will feel safe and respected. All the participants shared this notion, while P5 (A, Fg) added that teachers should also create a feeling of belonging and be passionate. According to P3 (W, Fg), one should also show trust and allow learners the opportunity to correct their own mistakes. P6 (W, Ii) from the skills sector, identified "basic counseling skills" as a component which could assist teachers in a special school to build relationships and trust with learners. These were all valuable techniques that could assist teachers in managing learner behaviour, especially considering the environments in which the learners were brought and the violence to which they were sometimes exposed. Adding to the above factors, P6 (W, Ii) noted that teachers should also understand that learners faced more difficult and complex circumstances and challenges than people had in the past. Teachers should therefore not expect them to be perfect. From the data, it seemed as if some teachers, forgetting the learners' day-to-day experiences, expected them to behave in a more mature way. This conclusion was endorsed by P6 (W, Ii), who thought that teachers "need[ed] to realize that the learners were just children, that [they were also children once], [they] were also fourteen and fifteen year-old teenagers who also had relationship problems and parents who fought, and this was [all] they had to go through." According to P2 (A, Ii), the management of challenging learner behaviour could also be enhanced if the teachers were able to relate to learners, read non-verbal cues, and communicate on the learners' level. He noted that these skills would help teachers to identify in which "state

of mind” learners were. This would not only assist them in maintaining discipline in the classroom but could also lead to enhanced resilience. This was a valuable point, since being able to understand learners’ state of mind could help teachers adapt their communication methods and treat learners with respect, which in turn could lead to mutual respect. P3 (W, Fg) suggested that by gaining the respect of learners, teachers would not run the risk of losing learners, since shouting at them and treating them with disrespect could cause them to shut down. According to P5 (A, Fg), good behaviour should also be acknowledged and praised, which could enhance learners’ self-belief and confidence. P4 (W, Fg) noted that to maintain discipline in the classroom and workshops teachers needed to be well prepared and have structured sessions. This view was shared by P3 (W, Ii), who added that teachers should be willing to repeat instructions to get all the learners on board.

The next factor pertains to learners with ADHD. The participants showed some knowledge about ADHD, but found it difficult to manage these learners. According to P1 (A, Ii), learners with ADHD experienced difficulty in concentrating for long periods and tended to be very active in class. P6 (W, Ii), however, argued that learners were sometimes unfairly labeled with ADHD, when they were just being energetic. She also mentioned that it was crucial for all teachers to have sufficient knowledge about ADHD before labeling learners. The data seemed to indicate that teachers who found it difficult to maintain discipline in their classrooms were quick to point to ADHD as the culprit. They saw medication for ADHD as the best solution to their problems. Some participants, however, identified alternative solutions which could help alleviate their problems. According to P1 (A, Ii), teachers should allow learners with ADHD to “take breaks and to stand up.” This was a valuable suggestion, since class sessions were up to an hour in length. More active learners found it difficult to concentrate for such an extended period. P2 (A, Ii) viewed individual attention as a possible solution to managing learners with ADHD, while P5 (A, Ii) maintained that teachers should “stay calm and not lose their temper.” She gave these learners extra time during assessments. The data showed that in-depth knowledge of ADHD and the various techniques used to manage these learners successfully could only be obtained through experience. P5 (A, Fg) contended that she had learned a lot through experience and by observing what older and more experienced teachers did.

The last factor derived from the data indicated that positive teacher-learner relationships were crucial in the management of learner behaviour. According to P2 (A, Fg), in order to manage learner behaviour effectively, teachers needed to have a good relationship with learners. This

could be enhanced by building relationships, for example during extracurricular activities such as sport. On the other hand, P6 (W, Fg) noted that theoretical knowledge about intrinsic barriers to learning might help teachers to manage challenging behaviour and that they should also be “gentle” when working with learners. According to P4 (W, Fg), love, affection and empathy were valuable characteristics in building good relationships and maintaining discipline. P1 (A, Ii) listed “patience, wisdom, calmness and restraint” as important when a teacher tried to understand and manage challenging behaviour in the classroom. According to P5 (A, Ii), to establish good teacher-learner relationships, teachers had to treat learners with respect, be caring, speak individually to each learner, and be good role models. Being good role models was of key importance. The learners at the school lacked good role models in their lives, which might have been one cause of their lack of motivation. Teachers needed to show them alternative pathways to better learning and behaviour. As a result, learners might become more enthusiastic and motivated to achieve success and rise above their circumstances. This change in mood might not only improve teacher-learner relationships but could also lead to improved discipline and teacher well-being, as well as teacher resilience.

Thus the data highlighted various factors in the classroom context which could enhance a teacher’s ability to manage challenging learner behaviour. It also indicated that knowledge about potential barriers and knowing how to manage these barriers could have a favourable influence on teacher-learner relationships, the teachers’ well-being and their resilience. Developing more resilient teachers in the school context is very important. Mansfield et al., (2012, p.357) observed that resilient teachers were more likely to persist in difficult conditions and would also find it easier to adapt to change. The next category as derived from the data is the school context. Several factors, presented as protective in the school context, factors will be explored in the following section.

4.4.3.2 School

The second category under the theme ‘protective factors’ addresses the school context. The participants identified various factors in the school context which might not only have enhanced their resilience but also their well-being. As derived from the data, these included the teachers’ ability to develop learning material, school management, supportive staff, and staff development. These factors and how they affected teachers’ resilience will be further discussed below.

P1 (A, Ii) suggested that, even though no set curriculum was followed in the school, the teachers still adapted well, developing their own learning material despite their feelings of inadequacy. Some teachers also felt that the school management team was at times supportive. This, however, contradicted the previously argued notion under the theme ‘risk factors’, category school context, as some teachers said they felt unsupported and unheard, which negatively influenced their motivation and resilience. The data, however, indicated that not all the teachers felt unsupported and that some shared positive experiences with management. Two of the six teachers reported positively about the management team. One of these was P5 (A, Ii), who maintained that management, who consisted of the principal, the two deputy principals, as well as the department heads, were all “wonderful”. They adopted an open approach where teachers could feel free to approach them at any stage to discuss difficult issues. P3 (W, Ii) agreed, saying that “management were always willing to help where they could.” It was important to create an environment where teachers felt comfortable to ask for support. This would help to bridge the gap between teachers and management. Collaboration and cohesion among staff could also be enhanced, contributing towards improved self-esteem, confidence and ultimately to teacher resilience. A school management team should therefore ensure they create a school environment in which all teachers feel valued and supported, since this may contribute to enhanced teacher commitment and productivity.

As previously argued, the majority of teachers felt that there was no cohesion among staff members and also that they did not support each other. However, the data indicated that there were teachers who differed from the above view and felt supported by their colleagues. According to P4 (W, Ii), the school had always given him support. He maintained that teachers in the skills department all stood together, which created a strong bond among them. This support and collaboration in the skill sector seemed to contribute to an improved belief in their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour. As previously reported, they had fewer disciplinary issues in the workshops. Teachers who felt supported by colleagues were more confident and trusted their own ability to solve challenges. Having a supportive staff could not only contribute to enhanced cohesion among staff but could also help teachers to believe in their ability to overcome challenges presented in the education system. From the data, it became evident that positive social interactions and relationships could favourably influence teacher resilience. However, as previously argued by some teachers, resilience could also be negatively influenced by combative relationships in the work place. .

The last factor which may positively influence teacher resilience in the school context was the staff development sessions held by the school. As previously argued, the majority of teachers found the staff development sessions presented by the school to be of little value, which seemed to negatively influence their commitment and resilience. However, not all teachers shared this view, instead arguing that certain sessions were informative and contributed to improved relationships among staff members. P2 (A, Ii), who had previously argued that staff development sessions at the school were sometimes worthless and time-consuming, noted that some of the team-building sessions did offer some joy. He also realized the value these sessions held for teachers, sometimes providing them with the opportunity to gain more knowledge about curriculum-based aspects and learner behaviour, as well as factors which enhanced teacher resilience. He also noted that these sessions could offer teachers techniques for managing challenging learner behaviour which could be employed in the school context. According to P5 (A, Ii), workshops covering relevant topics such as ADHD, drug abuse, and how to manage learners with these barriers, could also help teachers overcome various of their daily challenges. It was important to take this factor into account, since knowledge of behaviour management techniques could not only empower teachers but could also contribute to improved discipline in the classroom. P6 (W, Fg) noted that workshops which gave teachers the tools needed to alleviate their challenges could also lead to increased motivation and commitment of staff. According to P5 (A, Ii), staff development sessions could also strengthen unity among staff members, since the teachers were often required to work together. The data also indicated that teachers experienced a lot of frustration and therefore needed a safe space where they could share these experiences as well as new ideas. P4 (W, Fg) suggested that frequent group sessions should be held at the school, in which the teachers could discuss their concerns without being judged. All the participants shared the above view, while P3 (W, Fg) added that these sessions could enhance resilience, since the teachers would realize that they were not alone and would have the opportunity to gain more knowledge about more pressing issues. Group sessions may also contribute to enhanced motivation by helping teachers to focus on the tasks at hand. Lastly, P4 (W, Fg) suggested that teachers should be trained to present workshops. Not only would this serve as a learning opportunity for them but they would also be more open to listening and learning from their colleagues. As was clear from the data, having sufficient knowledge, staff unity and supportive relationships played an important role in enhancing teacher resilience. As previously noted by Mansfield (2012, p.357), teachers who lack support find it more challenging to adapt, and as a result may be less resilient. These unfavourable conditions may also lead to teacher burnout and attrition. As the data indicated,

some teachers felt supported but still needed to share their frustrations, a factor that requires attention since these frustrations and inhibited negative feelings could lead to a lack of motivation and commitment from teachers. The data indicated that, even though teachers were negative about staff development sessions as they were currently conducted, they still benefited from certain sessions and recognized the inherent contribution these sessions could make and how they could contribute to enhanced teacher resilience. They even made recommendations on how to improve these sessions so they would be of greater value to all staff members.

This is an important factor that needs to be taken into consideration by management, to ensure that teachers receive optimal value from these sessions, which could contribute to enhanced knowledge, motivation and commitment. The next theme as derived from the data is internal strengths. Several factors which serve as internal strengths and which could influence teachers' resilience will be explored in the following section

4.4.4 Internal strengths

As previously discussed, internal factors could also influence teacher motivation and resilience. The data highlighted two factors pointing to certain internal strengths in teachers which could be exploited to combat risk factors. These include the characteristics of resilient individuals and factors influencing resilience, as well as personal well-being

4.4.4.1 Resilient person

All the participants demonstrated a relatively sound understanding of what resilience entails. According to P1 (A, Ii), being resilient meant being “adaptable”. He noted that, in order for teachers to be resilient, they would need to make a mind shift, understand that learners develop and can change over time, as well as gain background knowledge of learners' contexts (as previously discussed). He also noted that resilient individuals would be able to accomplish the above while still maintaining their values and beliefs. P5 (A, Ii) viewed resilience as the ability to persevere, regardless the barriers one faced. To be resilient meant that one should be strong minded and able to resist against all odds. According to (P2, A, Ii), resilient individuals need to be honest and be able to think on their feet. P3 (W, Ii), who previously admitted that he had a short temper, shared that resilient individuals should be able to manage tension and negative experiences. They should also be able to “take the negatives with which [they were] bombarded

and turn it into positives.” It was evident that P3 (W, Ii) had a relatively good understanding of how resilient individuals should manage difficult circumstances, but seemed to find it difficult to apply these skills under pressure. According to P6 (W, Ii), resilient individuals would refrain from overreacting, would have self-control, and would know how to manage difficult situations. The data indicated that, even though some teachers had sufficient knowledge of resilience, they struggled to apply these skills in their own work lives, often succumbing to frustration and low self-belief. P4 (W, Ii) suggested that resilient individuals would not allow their personal circumstances to interfere with their daily functioning in the workplace. This was an important factor, given that some teachers’ personal circumstances contributed to increased stress which not only influenced their work performance but also affected their health. It was important to understand which factors negatively influenced resilience, since this could help teachers avoid burnout and stress.

The data also pointed to factors which could enhance teacher resilience and lead to improved well-being and productivity. According to P1 (A, Ii), resilience could be enhanced through a knowledge of people, as well as through training and working experience. He noted that one must be able to understand people, their cultures, beliefs and values in order to communicate effectively and thus to enhance collaboration. Gaining sufficient knowledge about the various factors relating to the management of challenging learner behaviour, through workshops, staff development sessions as well as through work experience, was also deemed valuable in the process of achieving an enhanced resilience. He also noted the value of constant motivation and encouragement from colleagues, friends and family in improving teachers’ self-belief and confidence. P3 (W, Ii) listed appreciation and positive feedback from colleagues, learners and the Education Department as valuable contributing factors in enhancing teacher resilience. If teachers feel appreciated, their feelings of worthlessness may disappear, resulting in enhanced commitment and motivation. This notion was shared by P4 (W, Fg), who said that “learners saying thank you was amazing.” Teachers also wanted to feel that they had somehow contributed towards their learners’ success. This would give them a sense of purpose and accomplishment which could also positively enhance their resilience. The data also indicated that teachers felt underpaid and that an improvement in salaries could help maintain their motivation and commitment. Contrary to the above, P3 (W, Ii) shared that he loved his work and felt that an element of enjoyment in the workplace would definitely motivate and encourage teachers to adapt to change.

According to the data, the teachers showed a general understanding of resilience and, more specifically, of the characteristics of resilient individuals. They also understood the various factors, whether positive or negative, that influenced teacher resilience. Although the teachers showed knowledge of resilience and how to achieve and maintain it, they still found it difficult to apply these strategies in their own context, causing them a lot of frustration. This was an important factor and required consideration, since their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour and to teach effectively also seemed to be compromised. The data indicated that teachers did have an understanding of the various factors that could negatively influence teacher resilience. This knowledge could assist them in planning and structuring their days better, as well as helping them to utilize their available resources to prevent burnout, stress or ultimately attrition. Nevertheless, being able to identify the various causes of low self-esteem or factors negatively influencing resilience could be seen as a step forward in becoming more resilient.

4.4.4.2 Personal well-being

As mentioned earlier, resilience is not only achieved through positive interactions between an individual and his or her environment but also through personal factors such as an enhanced well-being, self-belief and confidence which also contribute to an improved level of resilience. According to Clonan et al. (2004, p.104), resilience is closely related to factors which serve to protect individuals against adversity. It is therefore important that teachers in the education sector, and more specifically in the special schools, reinforce these factors in order to maintain a level of motivation which could eventually lead to an improved resilience. The data foregrounded various methods employed by teachers to maintain well-being and motivation. These methods will be discussed in the section below.

According to P1 (A, Ii), he felt physically and emotionally tired when he returned home. He would exercise to get rid of his stress and keep himself motivated. While he exercised, he would self-reflect on his work day and how he managed challenges. For P2 (A, Ii), getting rid of stress and staying positive meant spending time with his family. They “often [went] away for weekends to break away from the norm and they also tried to do as many fun activities as possible.” P3 (W, Ii) noted that teachers had to be able to relax. He therefore participated in physical activities like running and bike riding to clear his mind and to stay motivated. P4 (W, Ii) and his wife constantly went for walks on the beach and he also kept himself busy with hobbies which seemed to have a calming effect on him. Additionally, P5 (A, Ii) emphasized the importance of a good support system in the quest to become resilient. She often felt

overwhelmed by her day, but confiding in family and friends helped her to gain a renewed perspective of her purpose in the school.

It seemed as if teachers found various methods to detach themselves from their daily tasks, allowing them time to relax and to recuperate mentally and physically. This had a positive influence on their motivation and resilience. However, as previously argued they struggled to cope in the school and also seemed to lack self-belief and commitment. Therefore in order to enhance their resilience they needed, among other factors, to gain sufficient knowledge on various relaxation techniques and how to employ them.

4.5 DATA DISCUSSION

4.5.1 Introduction

In the previous section, I presented the findings derived from the data. In this section, I will give a discussion of these findings, supported by the relevant literature, with the aim of answering the main research question: ‘What factors influence resilience among teachers working in the special school acting as research school in relation to challenging learner behaviour?’ The data discussion will be structured by means of the two complementary research questions: ‘What risk and protective factors are present in the lives of the year-two teachers in the school?’ and ‘How do the risk and protective factors influence the successful management of challenging learner behaviour?’ The social-ecological perspective of resilience, supported by the four principles of decentrality, complexity, atypicality and cultural relativity, as suggested by Ungar (2011), will be used to guide the discussion. Furthermore, in order to fully explain the complexity of resilience and how various factors impact on its development, I will also use the four dimensions identified by Mansfield et al. (2012, p.362), the professional, emotional, motivational and social dimensions.

4.5.2 What risk and protective factors are present in the lives of the year-two teachers in the school?

It is important to note that both risk and protective factors play a role in the attainment of teacher resilience, as “risk factors and protective factors combine additively and severe stress in a context [could] be counteracted by personal qualities or sources of support in the environment” (Masten & Powell, 2003, and Werner, 2000, in Toland & Carrigan, 2011, p.98). Teacher resilience could therefore be viewed as the result of the balance of protective and risk factors at the teacher’s level and the balance of protective and risk factors at the environmental level (Toland & Carrigan, 2011, p.98). According to Ungar (2012, p.14), an individual’s (teacher’s) context plays an integral role in the development of resilience. Teachers who are exposed to unsupportive environments that offer constant challenges and adversity may therefore find it difficult to become resilient and may end up leaving the profession.

The data from this study showed that participants identified various risk factors that threatened their well-being and resilience, but also noted protective factors that could be harnessed to address the ill-effects of risk factors. For the purpose of this discussion, the various environmental risk factors impacting on the teachers’ work lives, as well as internal stressors, will be discussed. The focus thereafter will be on the protective factors in the teachers’ lives.

4.5.2.1 Risk factors

Before I discuss the profession-related risk factors as identified by the teachers, it is important once again to briefly mention the particular educational context in which these teachers had carved out their careers. They were employed at a special school with particular characteristics. It was in effect a school of skills whose primary purpose, through an adapted curriculum, was to develop the basic skills learners would need to enter the world of work. However, although there were learners who had the necessary intellectual capabilities to further their education at tertiary institutions, unfortunately this did not serve as the main purpose of the school, since these learners fell within the minority of the learner population.

The teachers identified several risk factors pertaining to the profession-related dimension, as mentioned by Mansfield et al. (2012, p.362). This dimension was influenced by all the aspects which might either inhibit or promote a teacher’s ability to teach effectively. Teachers who received the necessary support from their work environment would be resilient, in the sense that they would be more committed, prepared and adaptable. However, not all teachers are fortunate to work in supportive environments. According to Friedman (2004), Kyriacou (2001), Wilhelm et al. (2000) and Wilson (2002), in Mansfield et al. (2012, p.357), teachers whose

working experience is characterized by risk factors such as high workloads, lack of support or challenging learner behaviour, will find it difficult to act in resilient ways. Ungar's (2011, p.1) principle of decentrality, which stipulates that an individual's resilience will depend on his environment, has a bearing on the above argument. He argues (2011, p.5) that the "locus of change does not reside in either the individual or the environment alone, but in the processes by which environments provide resources." Teachers facing challenging circumstances on a daily basis, coupled with a lack of support, could be less resilient than others working in more favourable circumstances. The data showed that the teachers identified specific risk factors in relation to the different environmental contexts of the classroom, school, community and government.

- **The classroom context**

In the classroom context, several risk factors were evident. In the first place, the high teacher-learner ratios had an impact on the teachers' ability to teach effectively, while they also impacted their ability to maintain discipline in their classrooms. This is in line with the literature, which states that overcrowded classrooms may negatively influence teacher resilience (Yonezwa et al, 2011, p.916). Teachers in both the academic and workshop sectors were affected by increased teacher-learner ratios. The teacher-learner ratios in the workshops were unmanageable. The teachers found it difficult to meet all learners' needs, which resulted in learners working unsupervised on machinery. This posed a threat not only to learners and their peers but also to the teachers responsible for their safety. Overcrowding in classrooms needs attention, as it can result in heightened stress as a factor contributing to teacher attrition (Parker, 2009, p.2). Increased levels of stress also relate to the emotional dimension of resilience, and teachers experiencing heightened stress may eventually have a lowered resilience (Mansfield et al, 2012, p.357).

As noted above, the teachers found it difficult to maintain discipline in their classrooms. These challenges, however, were not reserved only for teachers working in the school of skills. Marais and Meier (2010, p.41) noted that undisciplined behaviour has become a "disproportionate and intractable part" of teachers' experiences in the South African education context. In response to this, teachers should be better prepared to face challenging circumstances in schools. Another risk factor that resonates with the challenge of maintaining effective discipline in the

classroom is teachers' difficulty in dealing with learners challenged with ADHD. This created tension among the teachers, since these learners often had difficulty following instructions and concentrating. This not only created problems in the classrooms but in the workshops as well. This finding is confirmed by Donald et al. (2002, p.282), who noted that learners with ADHD "display persistent age inappropriate symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity that are sufficient to cause impairment in major life activities." Given the enrolment criteria for learners attending schools of skills (Western Cape Education Department, 2013, p.3), the teachers should have expected them to have concentration difficulties and should therefore have been prepared to cope with these conditions. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

Since I followed a social-ecological approach to resilience during this study, we had to take a holistic view of every learner. Given the harsh backgrounds of some of the learners attending the school, Nash's (2002) comment, cited by Brooks (2006, p.72), that disordered environments may influence behaviour in a school needed to be taken into consideration. Teachers in the special school attested to finding challenging learner behaviour difficult to manage. This feeling of inadequacy is relevant to the complexity principle of resilience. This claims that, even though teachers may be resilient, constant exposure to adverse conditions may cause their resilience to decline (Yonezwa et al, 2011, p.916). Learners attending schools of skills should not exhibit serious behavioural barriers (Western Cape Education Department, 2013, p.3), but this seemed not to be the case in the research school. The influence of undisciplined behaviour on teachers should not be underestimated. According to Levin and Nolan (1996), in Marais and Meier (2010, p.43), these behaviours may act as a barrier, preventing teachers from achieving their purpose in the school, and can also lead to teacher stress, burnout and attrition.

The teachers also indicated that substance abuse by learners negatively impacted their resilience, creating a further risk factor in the classroom. Substance abuse was a huge concern; these learners not only caused various disruptions in class but the teachers often feared for their own lives as well as for those of their learners. Teachers in the skills sector were especially alarmed, since many of these learners had access to dangerous machinery while in their altered states. Not only did this pose a threat to learners' safety but the teachers' employment was also threatened, since they would be held accountable for any injuries which could occur. It was evident that substance misuse among learners not only hindered the teachers from educating their learners but they themselves were also under constant stress and fear. This is a factor that

needs attention, since teachers who experience chronic stress may develop feelings of inadequacy (Parker, 2009, p.3). These negative experiences may also contribute to teachers becoming unsympathetic, unprepared and less devoted to their careers; in turn this could lead to teacher attrition (Byrne, 1991, in Parker, 2009, p.3).

Incorrect placement was also identified as a risk factor. It seemed that many learners were placed in the school because of behavioural difficulties, rather than as a result of intellectual challenges. This impacted negatively on both teachers and learners, especially on those learners who showed a higher intellectual ability. These learners were less challenged by the learning material, so they were more likely to become bored and display undisciplined behaviour. This is not in line with the Department of Education's (2008, p.7) stipulation that special schools meet the needs of the learners they enrol with appropriate learning environments and support. Learners who are not intellectually challenged may lose interest in their scholastic performance; they could display behaviour not socially accepted and ultimately could drop out of school. The Adapted Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (ACAPS) states that teachers have the responsibility to differentiate their learning material to suit each individual learner so that he or she could achieve their academic goals (Western Cape Education Department, 2013, p.3). However, the data from this study showed that the teachers seemed to lack knowledge about differentiation. According to Walton (2012, p.118), differentiation is a valuable tool, since it allows all learners to access the curriculum. This could have contributed to their frustration, since they were struggling to meet the learners' needs.

A further risk factor in the classroom was the standard of learning material, which caused anger and frustration among the participating teachers. They indicated that the learning material presented to learners was often of a low standard and seemed to underestimate the potential of certain learners. Some teachers were also inclined to "spoon feed" learners, which left learners unprepared for the world of work. Other teachers seemed to deliberately lower the standard of assessment tasks, to ensure that they did not have to deal with the same learners the following year. This violated the rights of learners to be educated in an inclusive environment which, as stated in the Education White Paper 6, entails recognizing that all learners have the capacity to learn and that "education structures, contexts and methodologies [should be altered] to meet all children's needs" (Department of Education, 2001, p.6). Certain teachers were also persuaded by negative colleagues to revert to incorrect teaching practices and ultimately ended up applying the same strategies as the others. Incorrect teaching practices could be viewed as

atypical behaviour influenced by cultural relativity. Atypical behaviour could be defined as behaviour not necessarily accepted by society but required to maintain resilience, while cultural relativity, as described by Wong et al. (2006), in Ungar (2011, p.9), refers to “values, beliefs, language and customs” shared within a community. Ungar (2011, p. 8) also describes atypical behaviour as “hidden resilience”. Influenced by the values, principles and practices of choice of the staff at the school of skills, teachers could choose to lower own standards of teaching. They could employ incorrect teaching practices to prevent extra work, potentially alleviating tiredness, stress and ultimately leading to increased well-being. This, however, places a question mark on the resilience of teachers in the school. Bunetti (2006, p. 813) suggests that teachers with an increased level of resilience would stay dedicated to quality teaching, despite the barriers they had to face, while Gu and Day (2007, p.1314) feel that resilient teachers will maintain control over their own circumstances, while still upholding their ambition to teach and to develop.

A further risk factor in the classroom that jeopardized teacher-learner relationships was the practice of some teachers to shout at learners in an effort to manage their behaviour. This negatively affected learners’ self-esteem. Teacher stress could be the reason for shouting at learners. According to Byrne (1991), in Parker (2009, p.3), stress would make teachers “less tolerant of classroom disturbances.” This is relevant to the emotional dimension of teacher resilience, since teachers who experience stress may find it difficult to cope with the emotional conditions of their profession (Mansfield et al, 2012, p.357).

The last risk factor in the classroom has to do with inclusive education. It seemed as if the teachers understood the particular approach to teaching on a theoretical level, but struggled with the implementation of inclusive practices in the classroom. The purpose of inclusive education is to improve the quality of education for all learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2001, p. 30). The participants, however, questioned the value of inclusive education, and this reduced their motivation to teach in an inclusive way. This finding was disconcerting, given that these teachers were rated as educational specialists, with the know-how to include and accommodate learners who needed intense levels of support. However, according to the findings of this study, this was not the case. The teachers were not adhering to UNESCO’s (1994, p.6) definition of inclusion, which states that the education system should accommodate

all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and

working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.

The negative view shared by the teachers in the school on implementing inclusive education also relates to Ungar's (2011, p.1) principles of resilience, atypicality and cultural relativity. Teachers could easily join the majority view of inclusive education so as to avoid the added responsibilities of an inclusive classroom environment. This would ensure a form of resilience, but at the expense of quality education for all learners.

As seen in the section above, teachers indicated many risk factors at the classroom level which influenced their ability to teach effectively, as well as their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour. These challenges also negatively impacted their well-being, motivation, self-esteem and resilience. It was therefore important that they receive the necessary support and training, in order to improve their self-belief, which could also contribute to a more positive, shared view of an inclusive education system.

- **The school context**

On a broader level, the school context also impacted the teachers' resilience. The influence of the school on the teachers' resilience also extended to the socially related aspects of their resilience, as this dimension included social interactions, support structures at work, and opportunities to ask for help (Mansfield et al., 2012, p.362). When teachers face continuous exposure to adverse conditions in a school, they may find it difficult to become resilient. In this study, the teachers identified various risk factors in the school context which negatively influenced their commitment and motivation to teach. These factors will now be discussed.

The data showed that there were longer-serving teachers at the school who lacked motivation and were unwilling to adapt to change. This created tension among staff members; especially younger teachers were frustrated by this but were also susceptible to the negativity in the school. The young, inexperienced teachers looked to senior staff members for guidance and could therefore easily have adopted their negative attitudes to the learners, the school and the curriculum. The lack of motivation by older teachers could be ascribed, among other reasons, to the constant changes which had occurred in the South African education sector since 1994. These changes included "respect and preservation of children's rights" (Maphosa & Shumba,

2010, p.387) and the move towards “equity, non-discrimination, freedom from discrimination, respect and social justice” (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.18). Teachers were also expected to adapt to high work standards, as well as to information technologies (Pillay et al, 2005, p.22). Older teachers, who in the past had been used to employing corporal punishment as a way of managing challenging learner behaviour, could no longer do so, since new policy prohibited this. While these changes in the education system contributed to their lack of motivation, they also felt disempowered (Smit, 2013, p.346).

A further risk factor in the school context was the division between senior and junior staff members. Younger teachers claimed that they were not given sufficient opportunities to excel in the school environment, resulting in friction, a lack of unity among staff members, and less support for junior staff. Knight et al. (2010, p.2) identified poor relationships with colleagues as a contributing factor to a lack of well-being in the school context. Teacher resilience in the research school was negatively affected by discontent among staff members, by unsupportive relationships, as well as by a lack of collaboration among staff members. Yonezawa et al. (2011, p.913) claim that for a teacher to develop professional resilience, a reciprocal interaction between the teacher and a supportive environment is needed. This also relates to the social aspects of teacher resilience identified by Mansfield et al. (2012, p. 362). Resilient teachers would be better able to develop support structures and to ask for assistance.

The teachers found that the management of certain challenges in the school was ineffective and could be identified as a risk factor in attaining resilience. Additionally, many teachers felt unheard and worthless. The management team would often request teachers to give their opinions and ideas, but when these ideas were not in line with those of the management team, they would be dismissed with no explanation. Teachers need the support and resources of their management team. Should this be lacking, the development of their resilience as teachers could suffer. Ungar (2012a, p.17) maintains that “resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural and physical resources that build and sustain their well-being and their individual and collective capacity to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways.” Should teachers feel unsupported and unheard by management they may eventually lose the will to seek assistance; in turn, this could lead to inappropriate teaching practices, low well-being and reduced resilience. However, if they receive the necessary support they may be more inclined and willing to adapt to change and new innovations in the school context. According to Brunetti

(2006, p.820), support from all the role-players, including both teachers and management, could alleviate stress and attrition.

According to Education White Paper 6, special schools and support centres should accommodate those learners who have intensive support needs. Teachers should have the know-how to enable all such learners to develop to their full potential so that they could participate as equal members of society (Department of Education, 2001, p.5). It is imperative, therefore, that all training workshops or staff development sessions given by the school should be of high quality, not only to maintain the teachers' motivation but also to give them the skills needed to support all their learners. The participating teachers in this study, however, singled out inadequate staff development sessions as a risk factor influencing their motivation and commitment to teaching. Workshops and staff development sessions initiated by the school were generally viewed as worthless, and the teachers were therefore less committed to attending them. According to the literature, a change in people is not the result of what they do, but rather the "consequence of what their [respective] environments provide" (Wyman, 2003 in Ungar 2011, p.5). Taking into consideration the continuously changing education system and the teachers' failure to cope with the various challenges in the school, one would expect them to be eager to attend training sessions to further their knowledge and keep up with new policy developments so as to be better able to educate their learners. It was concerning that various teachers found these sessions worthless and not applicable to practice. These shared negative perceptions about training required attention, since teachers have to ensure they receive continuous training, acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to further the development of all learners (Department of Education, 2008, p.10).

- **The community context**

The teachers also identified some communal risk factors which impacted on their resilience. As previously noted, the environment and individual characteristics are both involved in the attainment of resilience. According to Ungar (2012a, p.14), the environment has a profound impact on resilience. To fully comprehend the various risk factors present in the community context it will be necessary briefly to review the context in which the school was situated. The learners attending the school came predominantly from poverty-stricken areas characterized by, among other factors, unemployment, gang violence, and substance abuse. The school itself, however, was not situated in the feeder community, but in a more affluent area that differed

markedly from the background to which the learners were accustomed. The learners, as well as their parents (when needed at the school), made use of public transport to attend the school. With this backdrop in mind, I will discuss the various risk factors relating to the community.

Often learners from harsh environments exhibited undisciplined behaviour which affected the teachers' well-being and commitment. A large percentage of these learners had no father figures or role models and tended to be disrespectful towards authority. Teachers found these behaviours very challenging and often became angry and frustrated, since they seemingly lacked the skills to manage these learners. Once again, it is important to take heed of Ungar's (2012a, p.15) emphasis on the role played by the social and physical environment of the individual, in this case that of the learner. To understand and accept their learners, teachers need to view them more holistically. The data showed that they had sufficient knowledge of their learners' contexts, but seemed not fully aware of the effects these contexts had on their learning and behaviour. They were never exposed to similar living conditions. This was especially evident in the case of the teacher who struggled to cope with sexually assaulted learners who had confided in her. She experienced this as emotionally exhausting and often felt out of her depth in trying to help these learners. This was evident in her over-reaction to minor transgressions in her classroom.

The data also indicated that teachers felt learners lacked an understanding of socially acceptable behaviour, since many learners would have outbursts of anger. When we consider the various negative experiences faced by learners on a daily basis and the violence they have to endure, we might view their angry outbursts and socially unacceptable behaviour as atypical behaviour needed to survive their harsh environments (Ungar, 2011, p. 8). In order to survive, they need to exhibit aggressive macho behaviour when confronted with adversity or the threat of being assaulted or robbed. This defensive state, however, seemed to be carried over into educational settings, causing many challenges for teachers. This is confirmed by Nash (2002), in Brooks (2006, p.72), who views chaotic environments as factors contributing factors to unacceptable behaviour in educational settings. Perhaps understandably, the teachers in the school of skills found these behaviours disruptive and unbearable, and would often act out their frustrations in an irritable and coercive manner, only making matters worse. The learners tended to view this as a challenge or threat, often giving rise to even further challenging behaviour (Sutherland et al., 2005, in Leflot et al., 2010, p.870).

A further risk factor in the community, as identified by the teachers, was the lack of parental support and involvement in the school. According to the teachers, parents from low-income communities lacked interest in the development of their children, while parent-child relationships seemed to be non-existent. There appeared to be little if any support from parents, which left teachers with the responsibility not only to educate learners but also to manage challenging learner behaviour on their own. Additionally, they had to serve as care-givers, since many parents were involved in substance abuse and other social ills. Many learners were therefore not only exposed to substance abuse but were also often left to fend for themselves. Taking the above factors into account, it is not surprising that many learners misused substances, lacked motivation, and displayed socially unacceptable behaviour. The impact of their environment was clearly illustrated by the data. Certain learners were seriously contemplating quitting substance use, but were continually subjected to such abuse in their environments, making abstinence extremely difficult. A build-up of adversity may have a negative impact on an individual's developmental outcomes (Schoon, 2012, p.145). Therefore if adversity outweighs protective factors, learners may end up conforming to culturally acceptable behaviour in local communities which in the case the majority of learners attending the school would be substance abuse and gang affiliation. The impact of learner's context on their resilience is further explained by the principle of cultural relativity, as previously discussed (Wong et al., 2006 in Ungar, 2011, p. 9). On the basis of this principle, learners' resilience would be shaped by their experiences in their local communities. In light of the above, the role of teachers in the school becomes even more significant in the development of learner resilience, since they have the opportunity to expose learners to alternatives marked by loving and supportive environments. According to Mansfield et al. (2012, p.357), teachers would need to develop learners' "competence, efficacy and [sense of] accomplishment", in order to enhance their resilience. It is, however, important to note that, in order for learners to become resilient, those of their teachers who are viewed as role models would need to show resilient qualities (Henderson et al, 2003, in Gu & Day, 2007, p.1302).

- **The government context**

The data indicated that the teachers had identified certain risk factors in the government context which had an impact on their resilience. As previously noted, many changes in the South African education system occurred after the 1994 democratic election. These brought about many new challenges for teachers. According to Swart and Pettipher (2001, p.18), a complete

overhaul took place; education now had to promote “equity, non-discrimination, freedom from discrimination, respect and social justice.” Accompanying this shift towards a more just and inclusive education system was the introduction of various important policies to which teachers now had to adhere. According to the Education White Paper 6, teachers now had the responsibility of ensuring that all learners, regardless of “age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases”, had the opportunity to develop optimally (Department of Education, 2001, p.6). However, in order to ensure the successful implementation of an inclusive education system teachers needed to receive the appropriate training and support. According to the data, this was lacking in the case of the teachers working in the school of skills.

The data further showed that the teachers received minimal support from the Education Department and were left to fend for themselves, causing frustration and especially uncertainty among them. The participating teachers felt that the Education Department lacked understanding of the needs of learners attending the school of skills. It was believed that learners were incorrectly placed in the school by educational officials. This was not only frustrating to teachers but was also detrimental to the development of the learners. In terms of intellectual potential, the learners appeared to be at two different poles of a continuum: those who were intellectually too weak to cope with the requirements of the curriculum, and those who were believed to have the ability to cope successfully in mainstream schools, given the necessary support. Enrolling these learners in the school of skills was against policy, since it was the responsibility of all special schools to ensure they only enrolled learners for whom they could provide support. Special schools should also be viewed as the last resort for learners. If learners have the ability to succeed in mainstream schools with the necessary support, they should be enrolled in these schools (Department of Education, 2008, p.7). This is supported by the recently revised SIAS document (Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support), which states that learners who have low to moderate support needs should be accommodated in mainstream schools, whereas only learners with high-level support needs should be accommodated in special schools (Department of Basic Education, 2014, p.19). Nevertheless, the situation in the school of skills created a sense of hopelessness and a lack of motivation among intellectually weak learners, while learners who were intellectually stronger found the learning material boring and less valuable. These conditions gave rise to undisciplined behaviour and truancy. The teachers therefore faced the difficult task not only of giving these learners the support they needed but also of managing the co-morbid behaviours

and attitudes arising from these unfavorable conditions. One solution could be to give teachers the support they need to ensure that all learners have an equal opportunity to develop optimally. As previously noted, this support, which was supposed to be delivered by the Education Department, seems to be lacking.

Since teachers in the research school had to deal with a diverse learner population, the successful implementation of differentiated teaching should help to address their challenges. It is the responsibility of teachers to differentiate the learning material in order to meet all the learners' needs (Department of Basic Education, 2014, p.34). This would entail the teachers adapting the learning material, as well as their teaching and assessment methods, in order to meet each learner's needs (Department of Education, 2008, p.10). The teachers were bound to adhere to all the policies and regulations, ensuring that all learners received quality education, regardless of their barriers (Department of Education, 2008, p.1). However, in order to apply differentiated teaching methods, they needed the appropriate knowledge and skills. It was clear from the data that they found it very difficult to meet their learners' needs. This could have been due to a lack of knowledge on the implementation of differentiated teaching, which could be ascribed to insufficient training. The Department of Basic Education should accept the responsibility for training teachers thoroughly when new initiatives are introduced into education documents. When this is not the case, teachers flounder and become despondent, as was the case with those who took part in this study. They stated that any support they received was both minimal and of low value.

A further risk factor highlighted in the data was the teachers' frustration over the role the Education Department played in the development of a new special school curriculum. It seemed as if this was taking a long time. Teachers also felt that their opinions and input were not heard by the Department of Education. This contributed to a lack of belief and trust in the Education Department. This could only be detrimental, since in order to develop professional resilience teachers need positive interactions with a supportive environment (Yonezwa et al, 2011, p.913). It was also evident that the current curriculum was not meeting the needs of the learners, creating frustration simultaneously among both teachers and learners. Different special schools also seemed to follow different curriculums. This lack of uniformity across the special school context created tension and anxiety among learners, parents and teachers. The data thus showed that teachers' perceptions and interactions with the Education Department were of a negative nature, further negatively impacting their resilience. The ever-changing

curriculum, the lack of uniformity in learning content across special schools, the lack of support from the Education Department, and the responsibility of the teachers to provide learners with quality education: all these led to teachers having to take the initiative to develop their own learning content. Unfortunately, they seemed to lack an understanding of what their learners required to further their education and training in tertiary institutions which made them feel hopeless, fearing that they had failed their learners. They wanted all their learners to be able to further their education at tertiary education institutions. However, in a private conversation I had with Allister Mather (Curriculum advisor, Western Cape Education Department) on 20 April 2016, it became clear that teachers in schools of skills were not intended to develop their learners for tertiary institutions, but rather to give them the basic skills to enter the world of work as unqualified workers (personal communication, A. Mather, 20 April 2016). As recorded earlier, certain learners in the school of skills did have the potential to further their education, and so were incorrectly placed. Not giving these learners the chance to further their education seems to contradict to the principle that all learners, regardless of their differences, should be allowed an opportunity to develop optimally (Department of Education, 2001, p.6).

From the above discussion, it is clear that lack of support and adequate training from the Education Department equates to a risk factor negatively affecting teachers' motivation, self-belief and resilience. It was important to take this factor into account; for teachers to change and develop, their environments should provide the necessary resources (Ungar, 2011, p.5).

4.5.2.2 Internal stressors

As previously noted, resilience is affected not only by external factors but by internal factors as well. It is important to note that these two factors cannot be separated. Since the aim is to gain a social-ecological understanding of resilience, we need to investigate the reciprocal person-environment interactions, as described by Ungar (2012a, p.14). The data showed various internal stressors impacting on teacher resilience. These will be discussed within the social-ecological framework, with the support of Ungar's (2011) four principles, decentrality, complexity, atypicality and cultural relativity, as in the case of the environmental risk factors. Similarly, the four dimensions identified by Mansfield et al. (2012, p.362), professional, emotional, motivational and social, will also be employed in exploring the internal stressors as identified by the participating teachers.

The teachers highlighted personal disappointments, experienced both at home and in the workplace, as negatively influencing their well-being and professional commitment. Constant exposure to negative experiences led them to become despondent, unmotivated and reluctant to adapt, which undeniably impacted their ability to effectively educate their learners. Mansfield et al's. (2012, p.362) profession-related dimension of resilience comes into play here. This refers to teachers' ability to stay committed to their profession, despite adversity. It seemed as if the teachers in this study lacked the resilience needed to overcome disappointments and adversity. This could be ascribed, among many other factors, to the effect of the many changes on different levels in the education system over the last few decades. This placed a weight of responsibility on teachers, with minimal reward, resulting in their feeling out of their depth, alienated and inadequate (Price et al., 2012, p.91). Additionally, the participating teachers said that they felt unappreciated and unaccepted by colleagues and learners. These negative emotions may have contributed to heightened stress, burnout and teacher attrition (Price et al, 2012, p.91). The emotional dimension of resilience, identified by Mansfield et al. (2012, p.357), also has bearing on this finding. Teachers who find it difficult to manage the emotional components of their profession would tend to experience enhanced stress and burnout. Should these teachers, however, work in an environment with sufficient support and appreciation, Ungar's principle of the complexity of resilience would be applicable (Ungar, 2011, p.1). Their resilience would most likely increase, with a positive effect on their workplace experience. However, the teachers in this study seemed to be under constant stress, which could only have been counterproductive to the attainment of resilience. They seemed to be less tolerant of undisciplined behaviour and often reacted aggressively towards their colleagues and learners. These undesirable behaviours were contrary to the characteristics shown by resilient teachers and could be ascribed to tiredness and a low self-esteem. According to Tait (2008, p.72), resilient teachers would be able to control their emotions and communicate effectively with their social environment.

It became evident that the participating teachers felt worthless, exhausted and sometimes struggled with low self-esteem. These negative feelings seemed to originate from prolonged adverse experiences which, according to Gu and Day (2013, p.24), could be harmful to the teaching profession, since such teachers could lose interest in effecting change. From the data, it was evident that teachers' experiences played a critical role in the development of their resilience. According to Gu and Day (2013, p.23), quoting from a publication of the OECD (2005, p.9):

The quality of teaching is determined not just by the quality of the teachers - although that is clearly critical - but also the environment in which they work. Able teachers are not necessarily going to reach their potential in settings that do not provide appropriate support or sufficient challenge or reward.

Teachers play a critical role in the successful implementation of inclusive education in South Africa and should therefore receive the necessary support and appreciation, not only to stay motivated and committed to doing quality work but also to enhance their resilience, since, as previously mentioned by Milstein (2003) in Gu and Day (2007, p.1302), resilient teachers may contribute towards resilient learners.

4.5.2.3 Protective factors

In the section above, it was clear that there were many risk factors present in the worklives of teachers which ultimately negatively impacted their resilience. However, as previously noted, resilience can be viewed as the result of interactions between risk and protective factors (Toland & Carrigan, 2011, p.98). The value of protective factors in the development of resilience should not be underestimated, since as noted in the previous sections, risk factors may hamper resilience, whereas protective factors, as mentioned by Toland and Carrigan (2011, p.98), may enhance resilience. Protective factors could also be referred back to Ungar's (2011) principles, which serve as the foundation of a social-ecological interpretation of resilience, decentrality, complexity and cultural relativity. As previously noted with regard to 'decentrality', while neither the individual (teacher) nor the environment is exclusively responsible for attaining resilience, it could be achieved through the processes by which the environment offers resources to the teacher (Ungar, 2011, p.5). Therefore it could be assumed that if a teacher interacts positively and receives sufficient support from the environment, resilience could more readily be obtained. With regard to 'complexity', it is assumed that no person (teacher) can be resilient at all times (Masten et al, 2003, in Ungar, 2011, p.7). A teacher's resilience could therefore be enhanced with support from a community of role-players (Mansfield et al, 2012, p.359). The principle of 'cultural relativity' refers to the measurement of resilience within a specific community (Ungar, 2011, p.9). As previously mentioned, there were many teachers in the research school who lacked motivation and commitment, which negatively influenced younger, less experienced teachers. On the basis of the principle 'cultural relativity', we could then assume that, if these teachers were exposed to protective factors such as enhanced support, motivation and acceptance, their commitment to teaching and resilience could improve.

Protective factors also relates to Mansfield et al's (2012, p.362) four dimensions of resilience, the professional, emotional, motivational and the social dimensions. The professional dimension relates to a teacher's commitment to being organized, well-prepared and to managing time effectively. This, however, can only be achieved if a teacher is exposed to protective factors which enhance self-esteem and self-belief. The emotional dimension refers to teachers' ability to cope with the emotional challenges of their profession (Mansfield et al, 2012, p.357). On the basis of the literature, teachers would only be able to manage emotional challenges if they believed in themselves and had a heightened self-efficacy (Mansfield et al, 2012, p.357). The motivational dimension also links to the emotional dimension, as mentioned above, where self-efficacy is believed to play a crucial role in teacher resilience. According to Gilligan (2000, p.41), the self-efficacy of teachers can only be achieved if they receive sufficient support and encouragement. The last dimension, as mentioned by Mansfield et al. (2012), entails the social dimension. According to Mansfield et al. (2012, p.362), social interaction and support structures play an important role in the development of resilience. Given this notion, we could assume that, if teachers had sufficient support structures in place and were constantly encouraged, their resilience would improve. The data underscored various protective factors indentified in relation to different contexts impacting on teachers' resilience in the special school. These protective factors, in both the school and classroom contexts, will now be discussed.

- **The classroom context**

The data indicated that there were various protective factors which impacted on teacher resilience in the classroom. Creating a sense of belonging and providing learners an equal opportunity to excel seemed to not only enhance discipline in the classroom but teachers who adhered to these principles seemed to enjoy their work far more than those who did not. Considering that many learners currently attending the school of skills had previously been exposed to exclusion and isolation in their different primary schools, providing them with an equal opportunity to excel was in line with the ideals as set out in the SAIS document, whereby all learners, regardless of "family disruptions, language issues, poverty, learning difficulties [or] disabilit[ies]", are provided access to quality education and participation within an inclusive school environment (Department of Basic Education, 2014, p.11). The data also indicated that, through creating a classroom ethos characterized by mutual respect, trust, love,

affection, empathy and safety, learner discipline would improve and productivity would increase, which could further help to alleviate teacher stress. The above mentioned notion could be related to the principle of ‘decentrality’, which states that a person is formed by what his or her environment provides (Wyman, 2003, in Ungar, 2011, p.5). We could therefore deduce that, if learners (who as previously mentioned come from challenging backgrounds) were exposed to environments, as noted above, their behaviour and motivation to succeed might improve, eventually leading to increased teacher commitment and resilience.

The data also highlighted the value of good communication skills in the classroom as a protective factor. It became clear that teachers who were able to relate well to learners, who could read non-verbal cues, who could communicate calmly on the learners’ level and who provided continuous praise experienced less disciplinary issues and stress and were more inclined to adapt to new initiatives. Teachers who applied these strategies in their classrooms experienced more success and therefore had increased self-efficacy and resilience. This relates to the motivational aspects of resilience, since teachers with an increased self-efficacy are more likely to believe in their ability to positively influence learners’ learning and development (Sosa and Gomez, 2012, p.877).

Knowledge of and insight into learners’ backgrounds and communities of origin and how these may impact their behaviour in a classroom context could also be identified as a protective factor in the classroom. According to Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.493), teachers often do not understand why learners display challenging behaviour. Gaining sufficient knowledge about learners’ backgrounds and cultures could help teachers become more ‘street-wise’, helping to bridge the gap between the learners’ ‘language’ and that of the teachers. Understanding the impact of environments on behaviour could also assist teachers in managing these behaviours, further easing their frustration and feelings of helplessness. Knowledge of learners’ contexts and the influence these have on their behaviour or actions in the classroom is also very important, since, according to Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.495), having sufficient insight into learners’ backgrounds may assist teachers in developing appropriate strategies for managing challenging learner behaviour. This notion was confirmed by Donald et al. (2002, p.78) who maintained that it is important for teachers to understand the various processes and challenges learners go through and to take on the responsibility of being role models for their learners.

The data showed that positive teacher-learner relationships also serve as a protective factor contributing towards teacher resilience. Some teachers noted the value of these relationships, and it was clear that those who maintained positive relationships with their learners faced fewer challenges in the classroom and were more relaxed and motivated to teach. Weyandt (2006), in Leflot et al. (2010, p.870), also claims that the management of unwanted behaviours could be improved through providing learners with encouragement, positive feedback and support. The data indicated that, in order to achieve positive teacher-learner relationships, teachers would need to show qualities such as patience and self-restraint, while nurturing their learners and acting as good role models. However, in order to employ these qualities, they would need a positive self-efficacy. According to Sosa and Gomez (2012, p.881), teachers with an improved self-efficacy tend to create positive learning environments and are able form good relationships with their learners. If we take into consideration the learners' contexts and the numerous challenges they face on a daily basis the value of positive teacher-learner relationships is undeniable. This was supported by Gilligan (2000, p.41) who noted that learners' behaviour, scholastic performance, determination and well-being could be improved through creating environments where they feel accepted, safe and loved. Teachers therefore have an ideal opportunity to show these learners an alternative to their norm. According to Swart and Phasha (2011, p.231), creating supportive environments is essential to the development of learners who can positively contribute to society. It could serve as a buffer against stress and adversity, and, according to Bandura (2006), in Parker (2009, p.7), may enhance teachers' sense of accomplishment and well-being.

- **The school context**

The data showed that there were protective factors in the broader school context which could also enhance teacher resilience. One of these was evident in the practice of certain teachers who lacked motivation but still managed to adapt their learning material, underlining their commitment to teaching, regardless of their feelings of inadequacy. This behaviour was in line with Ungar's (2011, p.1) principle of 'cultural relativity'. According to this, resilience within a specific community (school) could be viewed as conforming to the requirements of the school (Ungar, 2011, p.9). Therefore, even though the teachers in this study lacked motivation (which was shared by most teachers), they still fulfilled the expectations of the school. It also became clear that, even though some teachers experienced school management as unsupportive, there were still those who were able to tap successfully into support and resources from management.

The support and resources they secured acted as a protective factor, resulting in increased self-belief and self-efficacy. Smith and Ingersoll (2004, p.683) confirm that mentor support could lead to heightened resilience. Receiving adequate support and being given access to resources also relate to the social dimension of resilience. According to Masten et al. (2010), in Theron (2012, p.334), “resilience promoting interactions [is] embedded in basic protective systems [which] include positive attachment.” Not only were some teachers supported by management but it was evident from the data that support was also received from colleagues. This relates to Jordan’s (2006) view, in Le Cornu (2009, p.719), of mutuality. According to Le Cornu (2009, p.719), mutuality could be viewed as the development which takes place in a learning environment where a teacher not only takes responsibility for his or her own well-being but also for the well-being of those who form part of the school community. This can contribute to an enhanced unity and bonds between some teachers which would be beneficial to the attainment of resilience. The data also indicated that teachers’ self-concepts improved through support and encouragement. Teachers who have an improved self-concept and self-efficacy tend develop good supporting relationships, carrying out more challenging tasks and believing in their own ability to succeed (Ashton, Webb & Doda, 1982, Lee & Smith, 1996, Payne, 1994, and Tucker et al, 2005, in Sosa & Gomez, 2012, p.887). This was an important factor, worth consideration, since many teachers in South Africa threaten to leave the profession or do so eventually.

Despite a previous indication to the contrary, certain teachers (albeit in the minority) did value the staff development sessions initiated by the school. They saw them as offering an opportunity to gain knowledge and new insights which would enrich their practice. Continuous development and training are especially important in schools of skills, considering the diverse learner population. Teachers should ensure they receive the necessary training to develop their skills and knowledge, so as to be able to make a valuable contribution to the development of their learners (Department of Education, 2008, p.10). From the data, it appeared that the team building sessions were viewed as the most valuable, since the teachers were allowed the opportunity to bond and interact with other staff members. Importantly, these sessions seemed to create some unity among staff members. Teachers’ would leave these sessions feeling more motivated, relaxed and more committed to achieving the aims and goals of the school. This improved emotional state was in line with the motivational dimension of resilience and held great advantages for learners. Teachers with a heightened self-efficacy are more likely to have

positive interactions with learners which could “enhance [their] capacity to overcome obstacles” (Sosa & Gomez, 2012, p.878).

4.5.2.4 Internal strengths

As previously mentioned, both internal and environmental factors play a role in the attainment of resilience. A previous section looked at internal risk factors impacting teacher resilience, but the data indicated that internal strengths also played a key role in the development of teacher resilience. According to the literature, internal strengths include autonomy, self-help skills, and the ability to maintain positive relationships (Boydon & Mann, 2005, p.6). These are crucial resources which could counteract adversity and help towards successful adaption and development (Masten & Powell, 2003, p.10).

The data showed that the teachers had a sound understanding of resilience and, more specifically, the qualities of a resilient person. The teachers demonstrated insight into the role that positive and negative factors played in the development of resilience. They understood that individual characteristics which enhanced teachers’ engagement not only served to reduce stress but also helped to improve their experiences and their well-being (Bandura, 2006 in Parker, p.7). Demonstrating sufficient knowledge of the construct of ‘resilience’ and the accompanying factors, which may either enhance or decrease resilience, can serve as an important protective factor.

The data also indicated that teachers acknowledged the value of being able to manage tension and control one’s emotions. The literature confirmed that resilient teachers were able to control their emotions, as well as effectively interacting with their social environments (Tait, 2008, p.72). It became clear that receiving constant support and encouragement, as well as feeling appreciated, contributed largely to the enhancement and sustainment of resilience. This was in line with Ungar’s (2011) principle of complexity. However, we cannot expect teachers to be resilient at all times (Masten & Powell, 2003, p.4). As proposed by Mansfield et al. (2012, p.359), resilience could be enhanced with support from relevant role-players. It seemed as if a minority of teachers in this study felt that they did receive some support from the school and were appreciated. This could be related to the social dimension of resilience, which claims that positive interaction may lead to enhanced resilience (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004, p.683). This also has a bearing on the motivational dimension of resilience, in that positive interactions and

support may lead to improved self-efficacy and enhanced self-belief (Sosa & Gomez, 2012, p.877). Improved self-efficacy and resilience also held value in the special school; as previously mentioned, many teachers not only lacked self-belief but also the belief that their learners would achieve success.

Additionally, the data showed that the teachers used various strategies to help maintain and improve their resilience. These included staying healthy, doing exercises, spending time away from work, doing enjoyable and relaxing activities, and having a good support network. These factors were important and required attention; Johnson et al. (2010, p.5), for example, noted that resilient individuals (teachers) would be more likely to be aware of their own well-being, spend more time with family, be physically active, and ensure they got enough rest. In the literature, resilience is closely related to factors which serve to protect individuals against adversity (Clonan et al, 2004, p.104). These strategies were in line with the social dimension of resilience, since it is understood that by promoting personal competencies teachers can enhance their resilience. It was clear from the data that, even though teachers experienced difficulty in coping with various challenges and showed a lack of resilience, their commitment to teaching was evident in their attempts to maintain positive well-being and self-efficacy.

4.5.2.5 How do the risk and protective factors influence the teachers' management of challenging learner behaviour?

In the previous section, I discussed the various risk and protective factors impacting teacher resilience. From the data it was evident that challenging behaviour was one of the key stumbling blocks in the teachers' progress towards achieving resilience. They not only found it difficult to cope with challenging learner behaviour but also found the various co-morbid challenges to be detrimental to their well-being and resilience. This was concerning, especially since challenging behaviour is on the rise in South African schools (Zulu et al., 2004, p.170). Such behaviour has many faces. Little (2003), in Samuelsson (2007, p.4), contends that challenging behaviour as experienced by teachers could be placed in four categories, "disobedience, slowness, unnecessary noise and aggression." The participating teachers agreed that challenging behaviours such as disrespect, playing on cell phones, talking in class, backchatting, writing on tables, bombarding each other with objects and making degrading remarks caused them distress in the classroom. It is, however, important to bear in mind that the above behaviours do not complete the full spectrum of challenging behaviours. Harcombe (2001, p.213), for example, contends that challenging behaviour could also be "categorized as individual abnormality or deviance and is automatically assumed to require clinical

intervention by a psychiatrist, psychologists or other professionals.” It was clear from the data that teachers faced many challenges and responsibilities, all which could ultimately impact their motivation and commitment to teaching. According to Price et al. (2012, p.81), teacher stress could be aggravated by challenging learner behaviour. In this study, therefore, it was important to explore how risk and protective factors might influence the participants’ ability to manage challenging learner behaviour. These influences will be discussed in the sections below.

- **The influence of risk factors on managing challenging learner behaviour.**

As noted in the previous sections, risk factors, especially challenging learner behaviour, are not only detrimental to the implementation of an inclusive education system but also negatively affect teachers’ well-being, commitment to teaching and resilience, which could result in teacher attrition. Mansfield et al. (2012, p.357) also identified challenging learner behaviour as a factor leading to negative outcomes in the work lives of teachers. According to Hamachek (1995), in Donald et al. (2002, p.188), disruptive behaviour constitutes one of the biggest barriers faced by teachers in the classroom. In South Africa, challenging learner behaviour is considered one of the factors leading to the resignation of quality teachers. Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.490) agree with this view, noting that there is a “general climate of undisciplined behaviour and an aversion to the acceptance of authority, which results in the disempowerment of teachers” in South Africa. According to Gu and Day (2013, p.24), enhancing resilience among teachers could promote the retention of quality teachers in the school system. With this end in mind, we need to look at the various risk factors impacting teachers’ ability to manage challenging learner behaviour in order to alleviate their stress and enhance their teaching experience and resilience (Mansfield et al., 2012, p.357).

In order to gain a better understanding of challenging learner behaviour, I used Bronfenbrenner’s (1970) bio-ecological model of development to gain more clarity on the origin of socially unacceptable learner behaviour. Both the models of Bronfenbrenner and Ungar are contextualist models, one focusing on human development and the other on resilience. Using Bronfenbrenner’s model here was valuable as it could provide a clearer understanding of learners in the adolescent phase of development (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.10). According to Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.14), this model refers to five systems, among others, which may directly or indirectly impact learner development: the microsystem (closest

system to the learner), the mesosystem (relationship between microsystems), exosystem (one or more environments which may indirectly influence the learner), the macrosystem (includes attitudes and beliefs of societies also having an indirect impact on the learners) and the chronosystem (which includes the time factor and how it relates to the interactions of the various systems and the influence it has on the learner). From the data it became clear that the learners' contexts of origin and the direct influence these had on both challenging behaviour and teacher resilience could not be excluded. The participants in the research school highlighted challenging learner behaviour and unsupportive parents as key factors having a detrimental effect on their motivation, resilience and their ability to teach effectively. Taking into consideration learners' unfavourable communities of origin, compounded by absent parents, a lack of role models and their particular phase of development, it was not surprising that many turned to challenging behaviour. According to Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.490), the origin of such behaviour lies in the disintegration of family life. Teachers confronted with learners who exhibit challenging behaviour will need to explore the potential impact of learners' contexts on their behaviour. According to Weeks (2000), as quoted in Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.493), children want to be:

accepted and needed by their families; they want to be cared for and protected; they want to be treated with respect and dignity; they want to experience a sense of belonging and feel valuable to their families; they want to be educated and guided to act in a socially acceptable way and they want to benefit from opportunities which will provide them with a feeling of self-actualisation.

In light of the above, we can deduce that Bronfenbrenner's family, as a microsystem which encompasses the immediate environment "where proximal processes" occur, plays a critical role in the development of challenging learner behaviour (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.14). Learners who experience adversity instead of love and support within the family microsystem could be prone to such behaviour. Lerner (2005), in Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.14), also observes that "unsupported child-headed households, drug abuse [as well as] family and school violence may serve as a risk factor within this system." Zhou (2003), in Brunetti (2006, p.812), concurs that teachers are often faced with challenging behaviour from learners who come from environments characterized by crime, violence, unemployment and substance abuse. Unfortunately, these conditions seemed to be a reality in the lives of many learners attending the research school, creating various challenges for their teachers. The teachers, however, were

not the only ones affected by these unfavourable conditions; adversity may well have contributed to the learners own feelings of being isolated (Najman, Bor, Anderson, O’Callaghan & Williams, 2000, p.439, in Prinsloo & Gasa 2011, p.490). As the learners attending the research school were in the adolescent phase of their development, feelings of isolation might have contributed to their challenging behaviour. This view was echoed by that of Le Greca (2005, p.50), who argued that adolescent learners who are excluded may be more inclined to join peer groups who go against social norms.

There was no direct reference in the data to the complex developmental phase in which the learners in the school found themselves. Nevertheless, the teachers in the research school worked with learners in the adolescent phase of development and should have had insight into the particular challenges that accompany this phase. Teachers should acquire sufficient knowledge of the adolescent phase of development in order to have a better understanding of learner behaviour and to contain their own feelings of inadequacy and frustration. According to Donald et al. (2002, p.78), this phase is characterized by “identity versus role confusion.” The individual struggles to form his or her own identity while finding a place in society. Teachers should therefore realize that this phase is very confusing to learners. Various emotional and bodily changes occur which also pose many challenges to learners (Larsen & McKinley, 1995, in Whitmire, 2000, p.2). Learners during this phase also attach more value to peer relationships. According to Furman and Buhrmester (1992) in La Greca et al. (2005, p.49), this contributes to their “self-concept and well-being.” Unfortunately, it also seems to contribute to teacher alienation. Hardman (2012, p.209) also warns that the uneven changes in brain development which occur during this phase could enhance these learners’ vulnerability to risky behaviour. Peer relationships also receive more value during this phase, so learners who experience adversity or a lack of parental support in their family microsystem, resulting in feelings of isolation, may seek a sense of belonging with peer groups. Some of these peer groups may be characterized by challenging behaviour, which can spill over into the school system. The exosystem indirectly influences the learner. As previously discussed, many learners who attended the research school lived in impoverished communities characterized by unemployment, violence and substance abuse. Parents who are unemployed and suffer from chronic stress may give their children a hard time. Although there was evidence that the teachers had some insight into the contextual influences leading to challenging learner behaviour, they struggled to fully comprehend the impact of the various challenges faced daily by these learners. Their failure to manage challenging learner behaviour was evident in the data; many of the

teachers were in distress and confessed to feelings of hopelessness. Byrne (1991), in Parker (2009, p.3), claims that enhanced stress may result in teachers being unprepared, uncommitted, unsympathetic, intolerant and less dedicated to their work. In this study, their declared inability to maintain discipline in their classrooms and their feelings of inadequacy provided insight into the impact challenging learner behaviour could have on teachers' emotions. According to Donald et al. (2002, p.78), teachers who lack understanding of the complexities of the adolescent developmental phase may also lack patience and be less tolerant of behaviour unaccepted by society.

The data suggested that the senior teachers in the school lacked the motivation to adapt to new policies and innovations and to change their behaviour accordingly. In any school, the attitude and behaviour of more experienced staff members tends to influence perceptions and attitudes to challenging learner behaviour. It is important to note that teachers' attitudes have an impact not only on their colleagues but on learners as well (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p.494). In the research school, less experienced teachers who sought guidance from senior staff found this relationship to be unsupportive and unproductive. Nor were their attitudes and perceptions of senior staff concerning the implementation of inclusive education and the management of challenging learner behaviour at all helpful. According to Bandura (1977), in McPhee and Craig (2009, p.6), people tend to model the behaviour they observe. Since some of the participating teachers encountered constant negativity and a lack of support, we could assume that exposure to these conditions would eventually result in them adopting these attitudes and perceptions themselves, which in turn could create environments conducive to challenging learner behaviour. According to Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.490), school systems which do not encourage positive development may contribute to challenging behaviour and a lack of discipline. The impact of a school system on learner behaviour relates to interactions in the mesosystem. Teacher-learner interactions could either contribute to or counteract challenging behaviour, since "experiences in one microsystem such as teacher-[learner] interactions in the classroom may influence activities and interactions in the peer group or family" (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.14). Thus if teachers have a negative view of inclusion, education policies, their salaries, learners' differing backgrounds and cultures, as well as the teaching profession in general, their negativity may filter through to their learners, resulting in challenging learner behaviour. Teachers who exhibit negativity or who lack interest or enthusiasm in their work may aggravate learner negativity (Donald et al., 2002, p. 172). According to Farrell (1995), in Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.492), "proximal processes in the home environment and the school

contribute to the emotional and social adjustment of children.” Taking into consideration learners’ negative communal factors, combined with the effect of having negative teachers, learners may see their environments as being hopeless, leading to a lack of motivation. Teachers should realize that they have an important role to play in learners’ behaviour. If they expose them to “educational neglect” (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p.493), they may, according to Kapp (2002), in Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.493), run the risk of having constant conflict with their learners.

According to the data, it seemed as if teachers’ negative beliefs about inclusive education and the outdated methods they used to manage discipline not only demolished teacher-learner relationships but aggravated challenging learner behaviour. Teachers are in direct contact with learners and can therefore impact proximal processes negatively or positively. They could play a positive role in the lives of children in their classrooms, but their interactions with their learners could also serve as a risk factor, contributing to challenging learner behaviour. From the data, it seemed as if teachers in the research school often took out their frustrations on learners by shouting at them. This kind of frustration, shared among teachers, according to Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p. 495) could be caused by teachers who lack self-belief. Considering the learners’ backgrounds and the various co-morbid challenges, the teacher-learner microsystem could serve as a protective factor. Unfortunately, this did not seem to be the case in the research school. Challenging learner behaviour was evident both in the classrooms and in the school in general, and the teachers experienced difficulty in managing these behaviours. According to Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.495), if learners are not exposed in school to factors enhancing their self-concept they may be less motivated to learn. They could also be more inclined to challenging learner behaviour, which ultimately could negatively affect the mesosystem of learners.

The participating teachers also identified unmanageable teacher-learner ratios as a risk factor contributing to their frustration and their lack of faith in their ability to cope with challenging learner behaviour. The crisis in the research school over such behaviour seemed to be shared among schools in the Western Cape Province. According to Aziza (2001), in Maphosa and Shumba (2010, p.388), there has been an increase in suspensions and expulsions in schools in the province. The participating teachers viewed the overcrowded classroom as a breeding-ground for challenging behaviour. Donald et al. (2002, p.188) confirm that overcrowded classes aggravate such behaviour. Taking into consideration that teachers in the research school

accommodated learners with high support needs, it was not surprising they highlighted several challenges relating to high teacher-learner ratios. Coupled with challenging learner behaviour, high teacher-learner ratios not only posed challenges to teachers but also threatened the learners' development. According to Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.494), learners with challenging behaviour are often excluded, with no opportunity to develop optimally.

It was clear that the teachers found it extremely difficult to manage the various challenges in their classrooms. They needed all the support that the management team, the Education Department and the community could provide. The data, however, suggested that this support was lacking. Teachers need support from all the role players to strengthen their resilience (Friedman, 2004, in Mansfield et al, 2012, p.357). Teachers in the research school needed support both to manage challenging learner behaviour and to teach more effectively. They not only lacked the knowledge and skills needed to manage challenging learner behaviour successfully but also seemed to lack the emotional well-being required to look for creative solutions to their problems. In order to create supporting environments, teachers need to accept the diversity of their learner population and the various accompanying challenges. This was a critical factor, given that the context of some of the participating teachers differed widely from that of their learners. Unfortunately, some of the teachers still resorted to the use of corporal punishment, apparently because they were not well-informed about other, more humane strategies for managing challenging learner behaviour. On a macro-level, policy forbids the use of corporal punishment in schools. Employing corporal punishment is in violation of the principles of the South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996, which states that "everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way" (Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, p.1247), and the National Education Policy Act of 1996, which holds that "no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution" (Department of Basic Education, 1996, p.4). Despite this, some teachers still rated corporal punishment as the only viable strategy to address challenging learner behaviour. They felt that their hands were tied, since they lacked the knowledge and skills to cope with these behaviours. This was an interesting finding, given that Noang (2007, p.283), in Marais and Meier (2010, p.41), views the annulment of corporal punishment as the cause of the increase in challenging behaviour in the South African school system. This issue, however, is more complex; according to Morrel (2001), in Naong (2007, p.283), schools used corporal punishment as a general means to manage challenging learner behaviour before 1994. They were therefore unprepared for the

transition in the South African education system from supporting corporal punishment to promoting learners' well-being (Gladwell, 1999, p.16, and Pinnock, 1997, in Naong, 2007, p.284). Furthermore, Noang (2007, p.284) argues that teachers themselves had been exposed to corporal punishment in the past. They believed that they had suffered no damaging consequences themselves and therefore perpetuated the opinion that corporal punishment would cause only minimal harm to learners. Adding to the above challenges, many teachers felt that they had minimal rights compared to learners and that they were being treated unfairly (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010, p. 396). Should teachers receive support on the appropriate management of challenging learner behaviour and training in how to create an inclusive classroom characterized by acceptance, love and equality, learners might be positively influenced by these approaches. Their sense of belonging and of their own worth could be enhanced, leading to more socially acceptable behaviours. These changes in behaviour management practices in schools relate to policy formation on the macrosystem level of the learner. As previously noted, the macrosystem has the least direct impact on learners, but does however impact the interactions of other systems (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.15). Learners could benefit, therefore, if teachers adhered to the new policies on disciplinary strategies. By law, teachers now have to look for alternative methods or strategies which have the best interests of learners at heart, in order to cope with challenging behaviour in schools and classrooms.

However, teachers who are unsupported by their environment (such as the teachers in the research school) may lack the necessary skills and commitment to manage their challenges in the classroom. According to Ungar (2011, p.6), a teacher's teaching skills are determined by the "capacity of [their] social and physical ecologies that facilitate their expression and application for development." Teachers facing constant exposure to negative experiences together with a lack of support may present with low self-concepts characterized by feelings of helplessness (Roche & Marsh, 2000, p.446). Werner and Smith (2001), in Ungar (2011, p.7), emphasize that teachers' resilience could be enhanced if they were able to connect with supportive environments. It is important that teachers adopt a more caring approach to managing challenging behaviour, since the manner in which such behaviour is managed could determine the future conduct of the learners (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p.494). According to Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.494), learners exhibiting challenging behaviour are often not accepted and regularly feel isolated and unwanted. In order to prevent challenging behaviour

it is therefore imperative that teachers acknowledge the diversity of the learner population and give all their learners an equal opportunity to excel, regardless of their challenges.

- **The influence of protective factors on managing challenging learner behaviour.**

As indicated in the previous section, risk factors not only contribute to challenging learner behaviour but can also negatively influence teachers' ability to manage these behaviours. It was clear from the data that teachers found it difficult to cope with challenging learner behaviour in the research school, which ultimately affected their self-efficacy, self-belief, well-being and resilience. Making a similar point, Wolhuter, Oosthuizen and Van Staden (2008, p.395), in Smit (2013, p.346), highlighted challenging learner behaviour as a factor contributing to teachers discontent and their tendency to leave their profession. However, the data indicated that there were several protective factors positively influencing proximal processes in the classroom and school systems that could militate against the obstructive effects of risk factors. It was also important to explore how these protective factors might contribute to the successful management of challenging learner behaviour.

The data showed that knowledge of learners' contexts and understanding the origin of challenging learner behaviour enhanced both teachers' self-belief and their management of these behaviours. Even though they lacked insight into the level of impact of environments on learner behaviour, they still acknowledged the importance of gaining sufficient knowledge about these issues. Those of the participating teachers who had a good knowledge of learners' backgrounds and could relate to them found it easier to maintain discipline in their classrooms. Being able to connect with learners on a personal level contributed to enhanced teacher-learner relationships and mutual respect, leading to an improved classroom ethos. Considering that learners in the research school experienced adversity on the level of the family microsystem, teachers who formed part of their mesosystem had an important role to play in enhancing positive learner behaviour. Adversity experienced on the family microsystem level could be counteracted by the teachers. Understanding why learners exhibited disruptive behaviour could assist teachers in managing such behaviour (Donald et al. (2002, p.190. Similarly, Sutherland and Oswald (2005), in Leflot et al. (2010, p. 870), observe that teachers, when confronted with challenging behaviour, often behave in an irritable way. Knowledge of learners' contexts could improve teachers' self-efficacy, which in turn impacts teachers' communication with learners

positively and improves the learners' capacity to conquer challenges (Sosa & Gomez (2012, p.878). Teachers with an improved self-efficacy would also be able to develop various strategies to manage challenging behaviour (Sosa & Gomez, 2012, p.880). It became clear in this study that knowledge of learners' family and communal systems and understanding the origin of their challenging behaviour not only benefitted the teachers but helped the learners as well, since teachers with improved self-efficacy would also create supportive classroom environments and form "positive relationships with [their] [learners]" (Sosa & Gomez, 2012, p.881). The data also indicated that understanding learners' lingua franca may help to bridge the gap between teachers and learners, which again could help with the management of challenging learner behaviour. According to Swart and Pettipher (2011, p. 14) teachers who, as part of the mesosystem, give learners love and support could help enhance their self-esteem, thereby shielding them from the effects of adversity experienced at home. In the microsystem, too, adversity contributing to challenging learner behaviour could be counteracted if the teachers (since they are in direct contact with learners) were to create classroom environments where learners felt a sense of belonging (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.14).

It became evident that, even though some participating teachers in the research school had a negative view of inclusion, they still understood the principles underlying the concept. The data showed that the school was to some extent committed to inclusive education. It offered all the learners equal opportunities to progress through assigning scribes and reading support to those who struggled to read or write. All the learners in the research school had an equal opportunity to share in extracurricular activities, which helped to counteract the isolation and exclusion they might otherwise have experienced. Creating a supportive and inclusive classroom context could contribute towards learners "acquir[ing] the necessary cognitive and social skills to establish self-confidence, a sense of worthiness, effective communication, harmonious relationships and eventual self-actualisation" (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p.494). This served as an important protective factor, given that so many learners attending the research school had not only been exposed to exclusion and isolation in their primary schools but in their home environments as well. If we take into consideration that learners attending the research school were in the adolescent developmental phase, being excluded and feeling unwanted in their microsystem may have contributed to their challenging behaviour, since such learners are more inclined to join peer groups who go against social norms (Le Greca, 2005, p.50). It was evident in the data that teachers who followed a more inclusive approach to teaching encountered fewer difficulties in their classrooms, and their learners were more

motivated to learn. Teachers working in the research school should therefore realize the valuable role they play in learners' contexts. They could enhance the development of the learners and improve their behaviour. Learners who face adversity on the family micro-level and who are prone to challenging learner behaviour could be assisted through positive teacher-learner interactions (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.14). Teachers have a responsibility to create environments where learners feel safe and accepted and where they can feel that they belong. This point is also made by Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.494-495), who hold that teachers influence the behaviour of learners since they

“determine the class atmosphere and take the initiative for relationships between themselves and each of the learners. They decide how the class routine and activities will be organized, in what way they will present the curriculum, which teaching methods they will apply and what kind of behaviour they will expect and tolerate in their classrooms.”

However, in order to achieve this preferred state, as noted above, teachers would need to maintain positive teacher-learner relationships. According to Eggen and Kauchak (1997), and Ellis and Tod (2009, p.168-171) in Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.500), three factors, “organisation, lesson flow and communication”, could enhance teacher-learner relationships and help to prevent challenging learner behaviour. In order to prevent disruptions and challenging behaviour, teachers should ensure that they know the learning content and are well prepared for their lessons (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p. 500). This is in line with the professional dimension of resilience, since it is argued that resilient teachers would be better prepared and organized (Mansfield et al., 2012, p.362). The second component which may enhance teacher-learner relationships, as suggested by Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.501), is the flow of the class lesson. Keeping learners involved creates less possibility for disruptions. This is an important factor, since teachers are also confronted with learners who are challenged by ADHD; such learners often display behaviour such as inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity and require resting periods during the lesson (Donald et al., 2002, p.282). The data indicated that, even though teachers found learners with ADHD particularly challenging, they often instinctively applied appropriate strategies in the classroom to accommodate these learners. However, despite using successful strategies at times, they agreed that they needed more knowledge and support on how to manage these learners effectively. The last factor suggested by Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.501) to enhance teacher-learner relationships is communication. The teachers in

the study acknowledged the value of effective communication and the need to connect with learners. Some of the participants believed that showing love, empathy, affection, patience and gentleness could enhance communication and teacher-learner relationships. However, if teachers are unwilling to adapt to more modern teaching approaches they will find it difficult to connect with their learners. According to Campbell (1999, p.54), in Prinsloo and Gasa (2011, p.501), a teacher's "tone of voice, body posture, and facial expression are powerful tools of communication that [he or she] can use strategically to prevent problems before they blow up." While being able to communicate effectively does serve as a protective factor, teachers should also be aware of different communication styles. In order to respond to learners using effective communication styles they would first need a positive relationship with their learners, understand their backgrounds, and be able to relate to what they say, once again reaffirming the value of gaining sufficient knowledge of learners' environments. The data indicated, however, that these aspects could only be achieved if teachers created safe classrooms, characterized by mutual respect, belonging, trust, acceptance and continuous encouragement. Positive teacher-learner relationships in the mesosystem of the learner would not only counteract adversity and challenging learner behaviour (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p. 14) but may also set the tone for a supportive classroom (Donald et al., 2002, p. 171).

In order to achieve positive teacher-learner relationships which could enhance the management of learner behaviour, a teacher would also need to have a positive self-efficacy. According to Ross and Bruce (2007, p.3), self-efficacy could be seen as teachers' belief in their ability to educate learners successfully. The data showed that, although teachers were unsure about how to differentiate the curriculum to meet the needs of all their learners, they still maintained their commitment to teaching, and ultimately to their learners, by adapting the learning material to the best of their ability. Furthermore, those with an improved self-efficacy would also be more inclined to build positive relationships with low-achieving learners, which could result in improved behaviour and development (Ross & Bruce, 2007, p.4). This conclusion once again relates to the positive impact teachers could have in a learners' mesosystem. As previously discussed, learners attending the research school were exposed to isolation and exclusion, and this seemed to influence their behaviour. If the teachers built supportive relationships with these learners their negative feelings and behaviour could be positively influenced. However, in order for teachers to develop an improved self-efficacy they would need sufficient support themselves (Brunetti, 2006, p.820). Some participating teachers acknowledged that they did receive support, and this enhanced their self-belief and commitment to teach. It was also clear that some

of the teachers saw management as being open to new ideas, kind and helpful, creating a collaborative environment in which these teachers felt comfortable and valued. According to Smith and Ingersoll (2004, p.683), such positive interactions could also enhance teacher resilience. Supportive environments not only bridge the perceived gap between teachers and management but cohesion among the staff may improve as a result, leading to enhanced protective factors such as confidence, self-esteem and resilience. The support the teachers received, albeit minimal, and the positive impact it had on some of them could indirectly impact learners' well-being in the school, with a further positive impact on the microsystem of learners (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.14). Teachers with an increased self-efficacy may display characteristics such as warmth and empathy, which again could enhance positive classroom interactions (Donald et al., 2000, p.172).

4.5.3 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

Analysis of the data collected in the research study indicated that teachers in the school of skills found it difficult to maintain their resilience. However, this was only one of the factors which negatively affected their ability to cope with challenging learner behaviour. It became evident that there were many risk factors which negatively impacted teachers. Despite these challenges, some teachers still maintained their commitment to making a difference in the lives of their learners, reflected in their level of resilience. In order to maintain or to enhance their resilience, however, they needed increased support and encouragement from all the role players in the school. Not only would this improve their well-being but their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour would also be enhanced. The value of having skilled teachers in the school of skills, especially in dealing with challenging learner behaviour, was undeniable, since teachers who applied a caring approach faced fewer disciplinary challenges and their learners were more committed to succeed. Enhancing teacher resilience would not only contribute to improved and committed teachers in the South African education system but could also strengthen the development of learners who were previously excluded, allowing them to make a valuable contribution to the South African economy, confirming the relevance of this study. Having identified the various risk and protective factors impacting teacher resilience in the school of skills and how these affected the teachers' ability to manage learner behaviour, I focused on the secondary aims of the research study. Hopefully this assisted in answering the primary research question, by exploring how these factors impact teachers' ability to effectively manage challenging learner behaviour.

Chapter 5 presents my concluding remarks, recommendations and implications for future research. The strengths and weaknesses of this research study will also be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING REMARKS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research study aimed to explore teachers' resilience when face with challenging behaviour from learners in the classroom. It investigated the risk and protective factors impacting on teachers' resilience and how these affected their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour. A qualitative case study design was employed in order to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by teachers. This approach allowed me as researcher to gain a better understanding of teachers' lived experiences and the various strategies which could be instilled, not only to enhance their resilience but also simultaneously to improve their teaching experience. Potentially, this could lead to more effective management of learner behaviour and improved learner motivation and learning.

This chapter will present my concluding remarks on the main research findings, followed by recommendations which transpired from analysis of the findings. The limitations and strengths of the study will also be discussed. The chapter will conclude with suggestions for future research and a final reflection on the research process.

5.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The South African education system entered a new era of equality and non-discrimination after the 1994 democratic election. These values were central to a "sociocritical perspective which developed in education as a result of a sharp critique of society" (Naicker, 2005, in Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.18). According to Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.19), the education system had to make a shift in order to accommodate all learners. These changes, however, brought with them many challenges for teachers working in the education system. They were now given the responsibility of acting as agents of change in schools and classrooms. However, it was clear that many teachers were unprepared for these changes. The response was an increase in stress, coupled with a lack of motivation and commitment. These conditions also seemed to

give rise to increased challenging learner behaviour, with low scholastic performance, and learner drop-outs, and ultimately to teacher attrition. It became clear that, to successfully achieve a more equitable and inclusive approach in education, South Africa needed resilient teachers skilled in coping with the rigorous demands of a transformed education system. It was imperative that all learners, and especially those with disabilities, be given equitable and quality education free of discrimination. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (2007, p.16), teachers should ensure that learners with disabilities had the opportunity to develop their “personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.”

Special schools in South Africa play an important role in implementing inclusive education, since they provide specialized support to learners with high-level support needs (Department of education, 2007, p.1). They have the added task of ensuring the optimal development of previously excluded learners, ensuring that they have the chance to make a significant contribution to our economy.

I believed that a study which focused on the enhancement of teacher resilience in a school of skills would hold great value. The more motivated and better equipped teachers were, the more they would be able to create an improved learning environment (Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008, p.81). The findings of such research could shed light on how to enhance teacher development, so that the benefits of creating resilient teachers could be prolonged.

As a school counsellor, teacher and sports coach at the research school, I realized that teachers in the school of skills department were finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the changed education system. More significantly, they were confronted with increasingly challenging learner behaviour. It was apparent that the more they experienced feelings of failure and helplessness, the less resilient they became to the daily challenges. For this reason, I decided to investigate the impact of resilience on challenging behaviour. The data I collected would not only benefit the study but would also help me support teachers in the school, an important role of an educational psychologist serving in the education system. I wanted to identify the factors impacting teacher resilience, with the aim of enhancing their resilience and their ability to manage challenging learner. I believed this was important, since we cannot expect learners to be resilient if their teachers do not themselves display resilient qualities (Henderson & Milstein, 2003, in Gu & Day, 2007, p.1302). The study revealed various risk and protective factors which

influenced teachers' resilience and their ability to effectively manage challenging learner behaviour. The most influential risk and protective factors, as derived from the data, are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Risk and protective factors impacting teacher resilience on various levels

	Risk factors	Protective factors
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers found it difficult to create inclusive classrooms Teacher-learner ratios were too high and not conducive to giving individual support to learners Learners' backgrounds contributed to challenging behaviour and class disruptions Teachers lacked sufficient knowledge and skills to cope with various learner disabilities Substance abuse by learners affected their scholastic performance and caused safety concerns for themselves, their peers and teachers Some learners were incorrectly placed in the special school The learning material was inappropriate and did not relate to learner context, nor did it challenge certain learners Some teachers employed incorrect teaching practices which caused frustration among staff members Teacher-learner relationships were not conducive to positive learner development 	<p><u>Some teachers showed:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sense of belonging in their classrooms Good communication skills Knowledge of learners' contexts Positive teacher-learner relationships
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some teachers found it difficult to adapt to changes and new initiatives Teachers were unmotivated, which not only caused tension among staff members but also affected learners negatively Teachers lacked the skills to manage challenging learner behaviour and often acted aggressively towards learners There was inequality among staff members Younger teachers lacked opportunities to excel within the boundaries of the school Constant fighting among staff members contributed to a lack of unity among staff Some teachers found school management to be ineffective in their attempt to manage difficulties at school Teachers felt that their opinions and ideas were unheard Some teachers also found the staff development sessions to be inadequate. 	<p><u>Some teachers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showed commitment by adapting their learning material Were able to tap into support Experienced staff development sessions positively
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of learners came from unfavourable environments, which negatively influenced their behaviour in the school. There was a lack of parental support for teachers, and learners had no father figures or role models to guide them The school was not situated near communities feeding the school Teachers did not fully comprehend the influence of learners' backgrounds Learners lacked understanding of socially acceptable behaviour 	
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal support from Education Department officials Education Department officials lacked understanding of the learners attending special school Constant changing of the curriculum Teachers felt that their opinions were not heard by Education Department Officials There was a lack of uniformity in the curriculum across special schools Lack of opportunities for learners to further their education and training 	

From the evidence in Table 5.1, it was clear that a multitude of risk factors overshadowed the various protective factors identified by the teachers. This was concerning, since, as previously noted, the environment plays a pivotal role in a teachers' pursuit of excellence and resilience (Ungar, 2012, p.14). The study revealed that risk factors dominated on four levels, those of the classroom, school, community and government. It would have been unrealistic, therefore, to expect teachers in the research school to be resilient at all times, given that constant exposure to adversity inevitably leads to a decline in resilience (Yonezwa et al, 2011, p.916). Constant adversity could undermine their resilience, hinder them from achieving their goals, and could eventually lead to stress, burnout, and attrition (Levin & Nolan, 1996, in Marais & Meier, 2010, p.43). It was therefore important not only that I investigate the various factors impacting on teacher resilience but also explore how teacher resilience, or its lack, influenced the management of challenging learner behaviour.

As indicated in Table 5.1, there was a significant difference between the incidence of risk factors and protective factors. While there was some evidence of protective factors in the classroom and general school context, these seemed inadequate compared to the risk factors. Thus I realized that it could be difficult to ensure an environment suitable for the development of resilient teachers. This caused a lack of motivation among teachers. They often felt hopeless, which indirectly influenced their learners' motivation as well. These unfavourable conditions occasionally led them to lose their composure. They would then revert to incorrect teaching practices, in contrast to the qualities shown by resilient individuals. It was not surprising, therefore, that such teachers raised so many concerns. Those teachers who had an improved resilience would be more committed and motivated to succeed. At the same time, they would be more inclined to adapt, showing positive results despite the severe challenges.

Given the teachers' classroom challenges, I felt that support at the school level was needed to counteract the negativity experienced in their classrooms. Such support, however, was compromised, as the risk factors far outweighed the protective factors at the school level. A minority of teachers attested to support received from management and from other colleagues, but in general the school environment was regarded as unsupportive. This was most evident with the novice teachers, who complained of not receiving the help and support they needed from senior staff members. The teachers in the school of skills were also largely left to fend for themselves, without the support needed to manage their difficulties. This not only negatively

affected their resilience but also their ability to manage challenging learner behaviour. Nevertheless, my findings showed that those teachers who were able to tap into the available resources were more inclined to adapt to the changes and new initiatives introduced by the school. They also seemed more resilient and able to manage their learners' behaviour more effectively. These teachers were, however, in the minority. An imbalance between many risk factors and few protective factors dominated the school culture.

I took the view that the community of a school can act as a network of support in the effective implementation of inclusive education, in the management of challenging behaviour, in encouraging teacher resilience, and ultimately in the optimal development of learners. Unfortunately, as indicated in Table 5.1, all the teachers I interviewed said they found the community neither supportive nor conducive to the development of resilience. Moreover, the feeder communities were far from the school and characterized by poverty and all the accompanying social ills. Parents were either unable or unwilling to support the school or the teachers in managing learner behaviour or show an interest in the learning of their children. Partnerships between teachers and parents were to a large extent non-existent. As a result, the teachers forfeited the chance to gain more insight in the contexts of their learners, but were still left with all the responsibility for the behaviour in the school. The study clearly articulated teachers' need for support from parents and other community members.

As summarized in Table 5.1, the teachers indicated that the support received from the Education Department was minimal and not of high value. I saw this as a point of concern, since the teachers needed both support and effective training to meet the challenges which have followed the changes and innovations directed by new policy initiatives. Without such support and training, the teachers' self-efficacy could be compromised. Adequate support and effective training could improve their self-efficacy, with benefits for teachers and learners. Teacher-learner interactions would be more positive, enhancing learners' capacity to overcome challenges (Sosa & Gomez (2012, p.878).

It was clear that support from all the respective role players was crucial in the process of attaining resilience. I felt that these positive interactions would not only enhance teachers' knowledge and skills to effectively manage challenging learner behaviour but would also inspire belief in their ability to effect change, which in turn could counteract teacher stress and attrition. It is important to keep in mind that these interactions should be of value and that the

various resources should be of a high quality (Ungar, 2012, p.14). Unfortunately, the study showed that the teachers working in the research school were suffering under the current imbalance of risk and protective factors, which clearly eroded their resilience and their ability to confront various challenges. According to Castro, Kelly and Shih (2010), in Mansfield et al. (2012, p.364), to achieve resilience, teachers require the skills and strategies needed to overcome their barriers. In the next section, I will offer some recommendations on addressing protective factors which could counteract the effect of risk factors in the working lives of teachers.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, I will make certain recommendations, as derived from the findings of my study. This was only a small qualitative case study, conducted in a school of skills in the Western Cape Province, and the findings are therefore not generalizable. However, I hope that my research may benefit schools of a similar nature which struggle with challenging learner behaviour and want to strengthen their teachers' resilience. I will begin with the recommendations relating to the classroom, school, community and government, followed by those which derive from the research process with the teachers; these will be presented as alternative methods of support.

5.3.1 Classroom

Possible solutions to risk factors in the classroom, based on the literature and the data, will now be described.

Teachers' negative perceptions of inclusive education:

The research findings indicated that inclusive education would be positively accepted and successfully implemented in special schools if teacher resilience was enhanced. In the light of this, the following recommendations can be made:

- Teachers need to be equipped with the skills necessary not only create inclusive classrooms characterized by equality, safety and belonging but also be able to use various techniques and strategies to successfully manage learner behaviour and promote the learning of all their learners.
- Teachers working in an inclusive education system should, according to Tomlinson, Brighton, Hertberg, Callahan, Moon, Brimijoin, Conover and

Reynolds (2003), in Walton (2012, p.118), be cognizant of the fact that they will face learners who have “different levels of readiness, interest and learning profiles.” According to Walton (2012, p.118), they should therefore differentiate their learning material so as to “ensure that the curriculum can be accessed by all learners.”

- In order to practise differentiated teaching in an inclusive education system, teachers will need not only to modify the “curriculum [but] their teaching methods, teaching and learning resources and activities, [as well as their] assessments [should be] individually relevant” (Tomlinson et al., 2003, in Walton, 2012, p.118).
- The Department of Basic Education needs to pay serious attention to the dilemma of overcrowded classrooms.
- All the major role players (teachers, school management, parents and the Education Department) need to work together in partnerships in support of teachers and learners. Collaboration between all these parties needs to be established. To this end, sufficient training is required in effective communication and collaborative problem-solving skills.

Challenging learner behaviour

- It is imperative that teachers realize that each child will present with different challenges. For this, they would have to adopt an inclusive approach, giving individual support to each learner. To achieve this, they need to understand “the role of culture in identity, learning and community building” (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007, in Kozleski et al., 2013, p.157). Culture has a profound effect on the development and behaviour of learners, adding to diversity in the classroom. This will also contribute to behavioural differences in class, and teachers should be careful to take this into consideration in managing learner behaviour. .
- Communication and listening skills, such as eye contact, reading body language, and understanding learners’ lingua franca, are also crucial to modifying challenging learner behaviour.
- Added to this, the study also indicated that teachers who treat learners with love, care, respect and patience and create a classroom ethos characterized by belonging and a sense of worth, face fewer occurrences of challenging learner behaviour and are better able to develop positive teacher-learner relationships.

- Creating a caring school environment “which cultivates the development of physical and psychological capacities” may prevent undisciplined behaviour and help the teachers to cope under difficult circumstances (Bosch & Oswald, 2010, p.74). To achieve this, the teachers would need to give learners support. They should also be encouraged to attend counselling courses; these would give them the tools needed to assess their learners’ emotional needs (Bosch & Oswald, 2010, p.74).

Lack of knowledge about disabilities and substance use

- Teachers’ lack of knowledge about the management of learners who misuse substances, as well as the various disabilities presented in the school of skills, needs attention. A survey conducted by the Department of Basic Education showed that more learners were entering special schools (Department of Basic Education, 2015, p.36). This implies that more provision is being made by the Department of Basic Education for learners who need more intense levels of support, placing the onus on teachers to be better prepared to cope with the continued influx of learners with diverse needs. They will need to engage in a process of continuous development so that they can contribute to the optimal development of all learners.
- Teachers should also be helped by management and support personnel, for example with frequent meetings, where they could discuss the various challenges they encounter in the classroom. The school-based support team (SBST) should take the lead in this respect. Officials from the district-based support team could also make a valuable contribution, offering training and support to teachers on how best to meet diverse learning needs.

Incorrect placement of learners and inappropriate learning material

- The effective implementation of the new SIAS document could mean that only learners with high support needs are enrolled in special schools. The SIAS document gives clear guidelines on the placement of learners in special schools, as it provides a “framework for the standardization of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes to all learners who require additional support” (Department of Basic Education, 2014, p.11). Education officials and teachers

should familiarize themselves with this policy document and the relevant procedures, so that they could prevent learners from being incorrectly placed.

- The SIAS document could also assist teachers in special schools with developing individual support plans. These could contribute to effective differentiation in classrooms, creating a sense of empowerment for teachers, since they would be able to contribute more effectively to their learners' development.
- By implementing the principles and practices advocated by the SIAS document, schools could prevent or address incorrect teaching practices. Teachers' practices and their learners' development would also be monitored quarterly by the SBST (school-based support team).

5.3.2 School context

Possible solutions to risk factors in the school, based on the literature and data, will now be suggested.

Unmotivated teachers and their inability to adapt

The negative mindsets of some teachers could be the result of the constant changes in the education system over the last few decades, which resulted in them being unable to keep up with the new initiatives in education. Without the skills needed to cope with new expectations from the Education Department, they gave way to negative mindsets. These filtered through to many other staff members, infecting them with a lack of self-belief and a reluctance to explore new challenges. The following recommendations are made to address the above:

- Support and positive leadership from the management team is important, as mentor support could lead to heightened resilience (Smith & Ingersoll (2004, p.683).
- A school culture of optimism, self-exploration and confidence will encourage teachers both to buy into the shared "values and norms" of the school and avoid being singled out and isolated (Sparks, 1991, in Donald et al, 2002, p.145)
- Unmotivated staff members could be encouraged by their colleagues, for example through a relationship of mutuality, which is viewed as taking ownership both of your own development and that of your colleagues (Le Cornu, 2009, p.719)
- Interactions characterized by support, encouragement and motivation can offer opportunities for teachers to engage in relationships with others, enhancing growth

and improving motivation, self-efficacy and resilience. This could lead to an improved ability to manage challenging learner behaviour.

- Positive supportive relationships among staff could also counteract inequality and result in enhanced unity among staff members.

School management

- School management teams need to realize that they play an important role in creating a positive school ethos.
- The principal and the school management team should maintain a philosophy characterized by flexibility, democracy, and a willingness to listen. They should show an interest in the staff and in their professional development, encouraging a heightened motivation and dedication. This turn would result in fewer disciplinary issues. Since teachers look to a principal and the management team to provide guidance, they would be more likely to mirror the ideals of the school management team. Thus if the principal and school management show qualities such as “dedication, [enthusiasm and constant] motivation” (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p.494), teachers might be positively influenced. They would be more inclined to adopt these characteristic in their teaching practice, since they would have personally experienced the benefits of such behaviours.
- Staff members should bear in mind that a school is an “open system” (Burden, 1981, in Donald et al, 2002, p.145), which requires that all sectors of the school function optimally in order for the school as a whole to be effective. It would be beneficial to the school to adopt a whole-school development approach, in which all sectors of the school were developed (Donald et al, p.144). Not only would this address the lack of unity among staff members but all the relevant parties would gain a sense of responsibility and ownership, thereby creating a more collaborative school context.
- The above approach would afford all role-players the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences, and to use these in managing challenging learner behaviour (Rogers, 2007, Ellis & Tod, 2009, in Prinsloo & Gasa, 2011, p.497).
- A whole-school development approach would also highlight those areas of concern in the school which could be referred to the Education Department. From this input, the Education Department could design staff development sessions. These would

address the most pertinent issues, countering the prejudice which labels staff development sessions as worthless and unhelpful. This would increase the teachers' motivation and confidence, and simultaneously restore their trust in the Department.

5.3.3 Community

The following section will offer some strategies on protective factors in the community, which could help to counteract the effect of risk factors.

Learner backgrounds impacting teacher resilience

- Teachers need to keep in mind that their frame of reference may differ vastly from those of their learners. They should expect learners who experience violence, abuse and absent parents on a daily basis to exhibit behaviours to which they are not themselves accustomed. It is important that teachers be exposed to different cultures during their training years, so that they could become accustomed to the various influences on challenging learner behaviour, and learn how to manage these.
- According to Bronfenbrenner's (1970) bio-ecological model, teachers need to realize that they play a pivotal role in a learner's mesosystem. As previously noted, learners' development in their family microsystems may be negatively influenced by constant exposure to adversity. Since teachers are in direct contact with learners, they are in a position to counteract these challenges with love and care, which could lead to enhanced learner development. Furthermore, by building positive teacher-learner relationships and fulfilling the role of caregivers and role models, teachers could enhance learners' self-esteem and confidence, offering a further buffer against adversity.
- The microsystem is the environment in which children initially learn behaviours, values and beliefs within proximal processes (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.14). Taking into consideration the various challenges to which some are exposed, it is not surprising to see them displaying socially unacceptable behaviours. It is for this reason that teachers, both those currently working in the education system and those busy studying to become future teachers, should be trained to "engage social justice, equity [and provide] opportunities [for all learners to learn]" (Kozleski et al, 2013, p.158). Teachers need to realize that the "experience in the microsystem

of the school can protect [learners] to an extent from the psychological effects of the unsupportive environment at home” (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.14). They should also realize that, while they cannot change the context in which learners live, they can still effect change if they show interest in their learners and treat them with care and respect, exposing them to positive relationships which could serve as an alternative to their norm. This study confirmed that teachers who showed interest in their learners and who developed such positive relationships faced fewer disciplinary problems, and their learners were more committed and motivated to succeed, which also enhanced the teachers’ own resilience. This was an important factor, since according to Gu and Day (2007, p.1314), resilient teachers would be more inclined to create a positive classroom ethos and would be better able to control their emotions, leading to less stress and burnout.

Parents impacting teacher resilience:

- The school is not situated in the main community which feeds the school, so there is a division between the school and its learner school population. In this situation, teachers should try not to impose their own values and beliefs, but rather attempt to understand the challenges faced by the school population.
- Taking into consideration Bronfenbrenner’s model, the teacher-parent relationship will impact a learner’s mesosystem. According to Swart and Pettipher (2011, p.14), the mesosystem includes various microsystems which interact with each other and in the process influence the learner’s development. The study showed that teachers found parental support to be minimal, creating a divide between teachers and parents which negatively impacted learner behaviour and development. Furthermore, inclusion could not be achieved without taking into consideration the interaction between the various microsystems, for example teacher-parent relationships. The teachers therefore needed to ensure that they included parents in the educational process, building supportive relationships with them, so that a positive school-family-community partnership could be created (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.14)
- Parents could be included in “life skills programmes [as well as] act as teacher-aids to help teachers address diverse needs in the classroom or school” (Donald et al, 2002, p.161).

- Teachers could also be trained to help parents with educational needs at home; which would also contribute to an enhanced teacher-parent-learner relationship (Donald et al, 2002, p.161).
- It would also be beneficial to have community outreach programmes. Teachers could connect with their school population, not only broadening their own understanding of the difficulties faced by their learners but also bringing the commitment of the school to the attention of the parents. This would potentially enhance the teacher-learner and teacher-parent relationships, strengthening the teachers' resilience and improving their management of learner behaviour. Creating these positive relationships would hold benefits for all the parties concerned. Positive interaction between the microsystems in the mesosystem "predicts positive growth in suboptimal conditions" (Ungar, 2012, p.14).

5.3.4 Government context

The importance of the Education Department in the development of teacher resilience and the maintenance of disciplined classrooms has been clearly highlighted in the data. They need support and training from the Education Department, and the following looks at protective factors in this context.

Lack of support from Education Department officials

- Training initiatives and workshops presented by the Education Department should adequately address in-service teachers' needs for professional development within a philosophy of lifelong learning. This is especially important for teachers in special schools, as they have to work with learners with intense support needs (Department of Education, 2007. p.7).
- Teachers in the research school were especially in need of training in differentiated teaching strategies, which may be the case not only for all special schools but for schools in general. Since it is the responsibility of teachers to differentiate their learning materials (Department of Education, 2014, p.34), they should receive training and support from the Education Department in this.

Curriculum issues

- Representatives of both the schools and the Education Department should have frequent meetings to discuss the appropriate placement of learners, ensuring that they receive optimal teaching and support.
- Curriculum issues also need attention in meetings between officials and teachers. It is imperative that an appropriate curriculum suitable for the development of learners in a special school be developed. Teachers bring important knowledge to the table in this respect, since they are in direct contact with learners, and should be heard by officials from the Education Department.
- The Education Department should also ensure that there is uniformity in the curriculum across all school of skills; this would help to alleviate current feelings of confusion and frustration among teachers, parents and learners.
- Learners attending schools of skills (where able) should also have the opportunity to further their education and training. A curriculum should be developed through which this need could be met. Learners would be given a sense of purpose, while teachers would feel that they played a crucial role in the development of the learners. This could lead to enhanced teacher motivation and commitment.

5.3.5 Alternative methods of support

- The study underlined the value of the focus group sessions, where teachers were invited to share their ideas and concerns in the confines of a safe, non-judgmental space. During these sessions, the participating teachers became aware of their strengths and their weaknesses, and this had therapeutic value for them. These sessions also created a sense of belonging among the teachers, as they realized that they were not alone in their struggle to become more effective. Additionally, the sessions served as a learning opportunity, where they could share ideas and strategies which could help them manage their challenges. This was especially evident in their changed perceptions of inclusive education and their suggestions for improved teacher-learner relationships. Giving them the chance to share ideas and concerns clearly opened up a space in which positive interactions between the individual and the environment could take place (Lerner, 2006, p.47, in Theron, 2012, p.334). This strengthened attributes such as “competence and efficacy”, which are needed to enhance resilience (Mansfield et al., 2012, p.357). Teachers

need a safe space where they can share concerns and ideas, and schools should take cognizance of this.

- These sessions could also give teachers an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching practice, on their behaviour management techniques, and on strategies to promote their resilience. Such reflection can lead to improved teaching practices, as the teachers will be forced to critically evaluate their “personal beliefs, values and assumptions about the world [they] live in and how these ideologies impact interpretations and interactions with others” (Kozleski et al., 2013, p.161). In this study, the teachers often tried to impose their own values and beliefs (sometimes unintentionally) on learners who were exposed to a vastly different frame of reference. They often became angry and frustrated when their learners did not behave in a way which was acceptable to them, without realizing that what seemed ‘normal’ to them might not be ‘normal’ to the learners. Ideally, group sessions where teachers could reflect on their teaching practice should take place at least once a month.
- As previously mentioned, counselling skills could assist teachers in providing emotional support to learners. However, this support does not have to be limited to the learners, as teachers with minimal counselling skills, in collaboration with “circles of support in communities”, could facilitate support groups with colleagues or parents, thereby potentially creating a caring school community (Bosch & Oswald, 2010, p.74).
- Most importantly, challenging learner behaviour could be alleviated by creating a school climate characterized by “acceptance and unconditional caring” (Corey, 2005, in Bosch & Oswald, 2010, p.74).

In summary

It was clear that we could not expect teachers to be resilient if they did not receive the necessary support, motivation and encouragement from the relevant role players (Yonezawa et al, 2011, p.913). Without such support, they will lose self-efficacy, which entails the belief in their ability to effect change in the lives of their learners (Sosa & Gomez (2012, p.877). Most of the teachers taking part in the study had entered the school system on the premise that they wanted to make a difference in the lives of children. Should they lose their faith in their ability to positively influence children, they could (as have so many other teachers) decide to leave the

profession. This was concerning, since the education system would run the risk of losing valuable human capital, which otherwise could have been used, for example, to further develop novice teachers entering special schools.

Children facing barriers to learning are often assumed not to have the intellectual capacity to further their education and training. They are therefore ‘dumped’ in schools of skills, in the hope that, if they are kept off the streets, they may eventually find work in the low-income market. I hope that my study has shed some light on this issue and that learners in the future are given an equal opportunity to develop optimally. As stated in the Education White Paper 6, we have to recognize and respect the various differences in learners, and help them to achieve success with the appropriate support (Department of Education, 2001, p.6).

I have come to realize that, through enhancing teacher resilience, we could address one of the main causes of teacher stress and attrition, that of challenging learner behaviour. By giving teachers the necessary support and guidance we could achieve the ideals set out in the White Paper 6 concerning inclusive education, “acknowledging that all children and youth can learn” (Department of Education, 2001, p.6), thereby making inclusive education a reality.

5.4 LIMITATIONS

The first aspect which could be viewed as a limitation to the study was that it was fairly narrow. In qualitative research, the sample size is normally small. However, widening the sample could help to increase the potential to generalize the research findings.

A further limitation to the study may be the allocated time frame. Keeping in mind that this was only a fifty-percent thesis study, further research, with more research time allocated, might provide findings reflecting a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of teacher resilience on challenging learner behaviour. Furthermore, if teachers from different special schools could be included, a more general perspective of teacher resilience in special schools could have been obtained. Broadening the research population might also offer valuable information from differing environments, which teachers could use to enhance their teaching experience. This would contribute to improved well-being and resilience, leading to a lower incidence of teacher attrition.

The fact that only a small group of teachers in year two of the research school took part in this qualitative case study also served as a limitation. My aim was to “conduct an empirical

investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence” (Yin, 2003, in Hancock & Algozinne, 2006, p.15). However, had the scope been broadened to include the perceptions of the learners themselves, more valuable information from both perspectives could have been obtained.

Lastly, the research resulted in unexpected findings which could help to improve further development. Less focus was given to teaching aids and supportive infrastructure in the special school. Their value was acknowledged, but the scope of the study did not allow for further analysis of these factors.

5.5 STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

One of the strengths of this study derived from the use of a qualitative case study design, as it allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants’ lived experiences. I fulfil the role of teacher at the school, but also work as a school counsellor. I therefore have the added responsibility of helping teachers and learners to develop optimally. The study gave me an in-depth view of the various factors impacting teachers’ resilience in relation to challenging learner behaviour. It also suggested ways that I could support them, not only to enhance their development but also that of their learners.

Not only did I gain insight into factors influencing teacher resilience, but I also had the opportunity to gain a firsthand account of the teachers’ concerns and the impact these had both on them and their learners. The semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions allowed me to witness at firsthand their need for support and the value of teacher development in a space where they feel safe and valued. A qualitative case study therefore proved to be an effective research design for addressing the research question of this inquiry.

I believe that the valuable data obtained on the teachers’ perspectives on the management of challenging learner behaviour could inform teacher training and development both in schools and in tertiary education. The teacher training initiatives from the Department of Basic Education on the management of learner behaviour in schools could also benefit from the results of this study.

A further strength of the study was evident in the extent to which teachers benefitted from the research process. Initially, there was considerable animosity among the teachers. Taking part in the study, however, helped them to realize that they were not alone in their struggle to maintain commitment and resilience. They were invited to critically evaluate their teaching practices, which brought about a change in mindset in their approach to teaching and managing challenging behaviour. Even though they were still sceptical about the practicality of inclusive education, they were now more open to the possibility of creating environments which were characterized by “(a) the redistribution of quality opportunities to learn and [to] participate in educational programmes, (b) the recognition and value of differences as reflected in content, pedagogy, and assessment tools, and (c) opportunities for marginalized groups to represent themselves in decision-making processes that advance and define claims of exclusion and the respective solutions that affect their children’s educational futures” (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013, in Kozleski et al, 2013, p.160). This created heightened self-belief and unity among the participating teachers, positively influencing their level of commitment to succeed. Creating positive-minded teachers in the special education system is important, since before they can offer support to surrounding schools they themselves need to be confident in their level of performance (Department of Education, 2007, p.1).

The knowledge and experience I gained from this research study could be used in workshops for training and development, helping teachers to understand the complexities of resilience and how it impacts the management of challenging learner behaviour. The focus group discussions were also experienced positively by teachers. They noted that these were “therapeutic”, since they could express their concerns and ideas in a safe and non-judgemental space. Our discussions not only created a sense of unity and belonging among the teachers but also forced them to think critically about what it entailed to create learning spaces for learners from differing backgrounds, including those who presented with special educational needs, thereby gaining new knowledge through peer learning. I hope that my study has proved the benefits of resilience in the management of challenging learner behaviour and shown how theory could be turned into practice

5.6 FURTHER RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

As previously noted, I followed a qualitative case study design during this research study, which highlighted certain areas for further research. I will review these areas, as derived from the study, in the section below.

In any further research, it will be important to keep in mind that the scope of the study was limited, as it was only a fifty-percent thesis masters' thesis. Further research would benefit from a broadened research scope. Using a broader sample of teachers, not limited to the data from teachers in one year level, as was the case in the study, but including all teachers in the a research school, could generate valuable data on the research topic. Furthermore, learners could also be included to obtain their perspectives, offering a counterpoint to the phenomenon under investigation. Focusing on teacher resilience research across a range of special schools would also be valuable.

Future research could also address the effect of low teacher resilience on learner motivation and commitment to succeed. It could also focus on the impact of unsupportive schools on learner drop-out. The research was also conducted concurrent with the development of a new special school curriculum; it could therefore be valuable to carry out a further investigation into the impact of the curriculum once it has been implemented.

It may also be beneficial to investigate the impact of pre- and in-service training on teachers hoping to enter a special school (or any other school) and how their training contributes to the development of resilience, especially when confronted with challenging learner behaviour. Teachers should ensure that they receive continuous training to enhance their teaching practice (Department of Education, 2007, p.10). Such commitment can lead to teachers who are “interdisciplinary prepared who bring a hybrid set of general and specialized education skills to the table and who can engage in critical discourse around the issue of belonging, marginalisation, power and privilege and their impact of [learner] outcomes” (Kozleski et al, 2013, p.157). On this basis, further investigation into the impact of support and training on learner development and challenging behaviour could hold great value for the future of South Africa's inclusive education system.

5.7 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON THE TOTAL RESEARCH PROCESS

Teacher resilience is not only “primarily associated with the capacity to bounce back or [to] recover from highly traumatic experiences and events but, [also] the capacity to maintain equilibrium and a sense of commitment and agency in everyday worlds in which we teach” (Gu & Day, 2013, p.26).

This research process brought into sharp focus my concerns about the management of learner behaviour and teacher resilience in the research school. The data pointed to a lack of teacher resilience and an inability to manage learner behaviour effectively. In addition, the value of understanding the learners, of being able to fully comprehend their traumas and the influence these had on their daily functioning, also became apparent. The role teachers play in their own development and that of their learners was also highlighted. In order to achieve teacher resilience and an inclusive school context conducive to learning and development, collaboration is needed between all the relevant role-players (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.21). By creating inclusive educational environments characterized by equality, unconditional positive regard, love, motivation, safety and support, teachers can minimize their disciplinary issues. Their faith in their own ability to effect change can transform the lives of their learners. As a school counsellor, teacher, sports coach and future educational psychologist, I now truly realize the value of becoming a lifelong learner who accepts responsibility for his own personal and professional development and change.

Given that many teachers see achieving inclusion as a daunting prospect, it is imperative that all role players commit themselves to the task and ensure they have the required knowledge and skills to make this a reality (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, p.21). Taking into account learners’ unfavourable environments, characterized by chaos, inequality and violence, the value of inclusive education cannot be denied. According to Green (2001, p.6), it would model to learners and their parents “the kind of inclusive society that any democratic community must wish to construct.” However, it is important to note that these conditions could not be achieved without positive teacher training and active development of the whole school culture. In the special school in this study there seemed to be a lack of belief in inclusion and a sense of worthlessness about working towards it. The need for training was clearly imperative, since it would help to facilitate “the development and fulfillment of people and [increase] the effectiveness of the [school] as a whole” (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997, in Donald et al, 2002, p.154). The Department of Education should take note of this and should create opportunities for teachers to receive quality training, thereby fostering a learning environment which would

contribute to the successful implementation of inclusive education. This responsibility, however, should not reside with the Education Department alone. The schools themselves should engage in a process of continuous development, to enhance the skills and confidence not only of the current teaching staff but also of novice teachers newly entering the classroom.

In conclusion, as a teacher-researcher in this research study, I am grateful that the process not only provided me with valuable information to enhance my practice in the school, but helped my participants as well. It seemed to have brought some awareness to them of the value of the inclusive education approach in the accommodation of learner diversity. It also reaffirmed the value of peer learning (teacher to teacher) and how this could enhance teachers' self-belief and their motivation to pursue their original reason for entering the education sector, that of effecting change in the lives of children so that they could contribute successfully to our country's economy. Lastly, I hope to transfer the knowledge I gained through the study to other teachers in the future, so that they may become specialists in their fields, enhancing their own teaching practice and resilience.

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Appendix A
Letter of approval:
Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee



UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
Job Knowledge and Leadership

22 October 2012

Tel.: 021 - 808-9003
Enquiries: Mrs S. Oberholzer
Email: oberholzer@sun.ac.za

Reference No. DESC_Cornelissen 2012

Mr T Cornelissen
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

LETTER OF ETHICS CLEARANCE

With regard to your application, **DESC_Cornelissen2012** I would like to inform you that the project, "*Exploring teacher resilience with respect to challenging learner behavior*", was approved on the following proviso's:

1. The researcher will remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal, particularly in terms of any undertakings made in terms of the confidentiality of the information gathered.
2. The research will again be submitted for ethical clearance if there is any substantial departure from the existing proposal.
3. The researcher will remain within the parameters of any applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of research.
4. The researcher will consider and implement the foregoing suggestions to lower the ethical risk associated with the research.
5. This ethics clearance is valid for one year from **21 August 2012 – 20 August 2013**

We wish you success with your research activities.

Best regards


.....
MRS S. OBERHOLZER

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humaniora)
Registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC): REC-050411-032

Afdeling Navorsingsontwikkeling • Division for Research Development

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Appendix B

Letter of Approval:

Western Cape Education Department



Directorate: Research

Audrey.wyngaard2@pgwc.gov.za
tel: +27 021 467 9272
Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20120903-0058
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mr Timothy Cornelissen



Dear Mr Timothy Cornelissen

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: EXPLORING TEACHER RESILIENCE WITH RESPECT TO CHALLENGING LEARNER BEHAVIOUR

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Approval for projects should be conveyed to the District Director of the schools where the project will be conducted.
5. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
6. The Study is to be conducted from **01 August 2012 till 28 September 2012**
7. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
9. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
10. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
11. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
12. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: 31 August 2012

Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22
www.westerncape.gov.za

Appendix C

Letter of Approval from Principal to Conduct Research at the School



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

13 August 2012

“Exploring teacher resilience with respect to challenging learner behaviour”

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

The school has been targeted as a research site for a research study which will be conducted by Timothy Cornelissen (Student in Med Educational Psychology) with student number 13670018, from the Educational Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University. The result of the study will contribute towards meeting the requirements for a Masters in Educational Psychology degree. The school was selected for the research study in order to explore resilience amongst teachers educating learners in year two as well as to identify how these levels of resilience influence their management of challenging learner behaviour.

1: PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study is designed to explore and describe teacher resilience with respect to the management of challenging learner behaviour.

2: PROCEDURES

Teachers participating within this study will be required to do the following:

Individual interview:

- It will be expected of all teachers to participate in an initial individual interview of approximately an hour. The interview will be recorded for study purposes. All information generated will be treated as confidential and will be kept in a safe place. Interviews will be conducted at the school and at a time that will suit all the participants in this study.



Departement Opvoedkundige Sielkunde • Department of Educational Psychology

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Open-ended Questionnaire

- After the individual interviews I would like to provide all participants with an open-ended questionnaire in order to generate information regarding their experiences of the various challenges they experience with the management of learner behaviour and the protective factors that they employ as supportive factors in this process.

Focus group interview :

- After the initial interviews and open-ended questionnaires I plan to have a focus group discussion with all respective participants. During the group discussion I wish to explore the findings generated by the two previous methods of data collection. This will allow for member checking and triangulation of data sources as part of the process of data verification

Participants for the respective study

Six teachers teaching learners in the second year will form part of the study. Teachers participating within this study must have at least three years experience in teaching. This will be a basic qualitative study where I aim to do an in-depth study of the participant's natural setting and to interpret their experiences, perceptions and understandings of challenging learner behaviour and their management practices. I also hope to identify which factors influence teacher resilience and how this may influence teacher-learner relations.

3: POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Participation in this study does not pose any threats for teachers or place them at any risk. The only discomfort that may exist is the time required from all respective teachers to participate within the research process.

4: POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS

Participation within the study could contribute towards self empowerment as well as enhanced resilience amongst the respective participants. By gathering data regarding the various factors that may influence teacher resilience may contribute towards the improved management of challenging learner behaviour within the school context. These aspects mentioned above could ultimately improve the teaching experience of all respective participants.

5: PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There shall be no remuneration for participation in this study.

6: CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained through the study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with the participants' consent or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by using pseudonyms instead of their real names. All data including audio recordings obtained during the respective study, questionnaires and group discussions will be stored on a protected premise in locked containers. This information will also be kept on a computer protected by a security code. All participants have access to all information but may not edit any data. The information obtained during the study will be erased six months after the completion of the study.

In addition, only the researcher and his supervising lecturer will have access to the data obtained. The researcher may discuss information with his supervisor in order to refine and improve the study methods and conclusions. Once the respective study is completed, the findings may be published in the public domain, however all participants as well as school's name and documents will remain confidential through the use of pseudonyms.

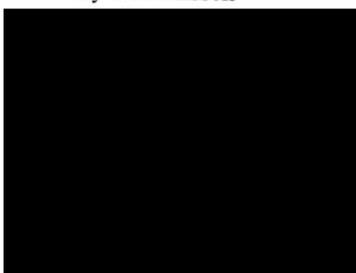
7: PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participants, as volunteers, are able to choose whether they want to participate within the respective study. If they should volunteer to participate within the study, they may at any time withdraw from the study without any consequences of any kind. The teachers may also choose not answer any questions if they want to and still remain part of the study. The researcher may also choose to withdraw any participant if circumstances arise that warrant doing so.

8: IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Timothy Cornelissen



Dr. Marietjie Oswald
Second Floor
G.G Cillie Building
Stellenbosch University
7600
Telephone: 021-8082057
Email: mmoswald@sun.ac.za

9: RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

The teachers may withdraw their consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. They will not be waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of their participation in this research study. Participants can contact Mrs Marlene Fouche (021 8084222; mfouch@sun.ac.za) at the Unit for Research Development with any questions about their rights as a research subject.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Timothy Cornelissen in English. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction

I hereby consent voluntarily to grant permission access to my school. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Principal

13-8-2012
Date:

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ (name of the school principal). He was encouraged and given ample time to ask questions. This conversation was conducted in English.

Signature of Investigator

13-8-2012
Date:

Appendix D

Letter of Consent to Participants

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Exploring teacher resilience with respect to challenging learner behavior

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Timothy Paul Cornelissen, a student from the Department of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will contribute towards thesis a Master's degree in Education in Educational Psychology. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because as a teacher within the South African school sector you are a valuable resource who can gain from this qualitative study that aim to explore teacher resilience and its impact on the management of challenging learner behaviour.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study is designed to explore and describe teacher resilience with respect to the management of challenging learner behaviour.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

(1) Individual interview:

1. It will be expected of you to participate in an initial individual interview of approximately an hour.
2. The interview will be recorded for study purposes. All information generated will be confidential and kept in a safe place.
3. Interviews will be conducted at the research school and at a time that will suit all the participants in this study.

(2) Open-ended Questionnaire

- After the individual interviews I would like to provide all participants with an open-ended questionnaire where I would like to obtain valuable information regarding your perspective of the various problems you experience at the school.

(3) Focus Group interview:

- After the initial interviews and open-ended questionnaires I wish to have a focus group discussion with all respective participants. During the group discussion I wish to explore the findings generated by the two previous methods of data collection. This will allow for member checking and triangulation of data sources as part of the process of data verification

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

- All interviews and group sessions will be conducted at times suitable to the participants.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

- The respective study holds many advantages for teachers' within the South African school context.
- The study aims to identify various factors that may influence teacher resilience, which could ultimately help you gain more insight in managing learner behaviour.
- The information gained from this basic qualitative study could be used to assist future intervention studies.
- The study could also provide teachers with various intervention methods in how to manage challenging learner behavior which could contribute towards improved teacher-learner relations.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

- Participation in this study is optional and thus no remuneration would be provided to any of the research subjects.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of inductive category coding of information obtained. The information obtained during this research study will also be kept safe in a locked cabinet at my house and only me (the researcher), the subject and Dr. M. Oswald (my supervisor) would have access to these documents.

Information gathered during the research study will be made available to Dr. M Oswald (Supervisor) from the Educational Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University. The disclosure of information is for educational purposes only.

All interviews conducted during this study will be recorded for educational purposes. The respective subject is within his/her right to review the audio material that relates to him/her. All information obtained during this study will be erased after completion of the respective study

During this research study the identity of all subjects would be protected by using Pseudo names. This would contribute towards the protection of the identity of all parties involved.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. These circumstances may include suspension or termination of services by the WCED.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me Timothy Cornelissen (principal investigator) at [REDACTED], or contact Dr. M. Oswald (Supervisor) at 021802037 or (mmoswald@sun.ac.za).

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Mrs Maléne Fouché (mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622) at the Unit for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Mr. Timothy Cornelissen in [Afrikaans/English] and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____ 

Name of Subject/Participant



Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to . He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [Afrikaans/English].

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix E

Individual Interview Schedule

- 1: Wanneer het jy met jou onderwysloopbaan begin?
- 2: Wat het jou gemotiveer om by die navorsing skool te werk?
- 3: Hoe sal jy inklusiwiteit definieer?
- 4: Hoe voel jy oor inklusiwiteit?
- 5: What is die huidige onderwyser-leerder verhouding in jou klas? En hoe ondervind jy hierdie situasie?
- 6: Beskryf die konteks van die leerders wat die skool bywoon?
- 7: Beskryf die vaardighede wat 'n onderwyser nodig om 'n diverse groep leerders te onderrig
- 8: Wat is U gevoel met betrekking tot die kurrikulum beleid veranderinge?
- 9: Hoe beïnvloed die opvoedkundige beleid en kurrikulum U onderrig in die klas?
- 10: Hoe het U en die personeel aangepas teenoor hierdie veranderinge?
- 11: Hoe sien U uitdagende gedrag binne U klaskamer?
- 12: In watter manier dink U sal leerders se konteks hulle leer proses en gedrag beïnvloed?
- 13: Hoe hanteer U die uitdagende gedrag van leerders op die skoolgrond en in die klaskamer?
- 14: Wat verstaan U van ADHD?
- 15: Beskryf die kennis, vaardighede en vermoëns en wat U nodig om die huidige uitdagende gedrag binne U klaskamer te hanteer?
- 16: Wat is U opinie met betrekking tot die wegneem van lyfstraf binne skole?
- 17: Beskryf vorige situasies waar U lyfstraf gebruik het as deel van die hantering van uitdagende gedrag?
- 18: Wat is die huidige areas van kommer binne die skool?
- 19: Beskryf die ondersteuning wat U van die WKOD ontvang om moeilike situasies binne die skool te hanteer.
- 20: Beskryf asseblief die ondersteuning wat U by die skool ontvang om moeilike situasies te hanteer.
- 21: Hoe sal U die verhouding tussen U en kollegas beskryf? Brei uit
- 22: Beskryf asseblief die ondersteuning wat U van die ouers ontvang?
- 23: Beskryf asseblief die tipe ondersteuning wat U van kollegas ontvang?
- 24: Beskryf die voordele wat personeel ontwikkeling vir onderwysers in hou
- 25: Wat verstaan U onder veerkragtigheid?

26 Hoe sal jy 'n veerkragtige persoon beskryf?

27: Met betrekking tot jou as onderwyser, watter faktore dink U sal 'n onderwyser se veerkragtigheid beïnvloed?

28: In watter manier dink U kan persoonlike teleurstelling 'n impak hê op 'n onderwyser se vermoë om leerders op te voed?

29: Hoe sien jy "woede uitbarstings van leerders"? sien jy dit as 'n vorm van veerkragtigheid of uitdagende gedrag en verduidelik.

30: Beskryf jou emotionele en geestelike toestand na elke dag by die skool?

31: Wat doen jy om te onspan en om te help met die bestuur van geestelike uitputting?

32: Watter aspekte glo jy kan help dat 'n onderwyser gemotiveerd bly om onderwys te gee?

33: In U opinie, is U tyd die moeite werd?

Appendix F

Focus Group Interview Schedule

<i>Fokus Groep</i>	
<i>Deelnemer 1:</i>	<i>Deelnemer 4:</i>
<i>Deelnemer 2:</i>	<i>Deelnemer 5:</i>
<i>Deelnemer 3:</i>	<i>Deelnemer 6:</i>

Vraag 1: Wat is u ervaring van leerdergedrag in u klaskamer en die skool?

Vraag 2: Wat doen u om moeilike leerdergedrag suksesvol te hanteer?

Vraag 3: Wat stel u voor kan in die skool gedoen word om onderwysers te ondersteun om moeilike leerdergedrag suksesvol te hanteer?

Vraag 4: Wat stel u voor kan gedoen word om onderwysers beter voor te berei om moeilike leerdergedrag te hanteer?

Vraag 5: Wat verstaan u onder die term ‘inklusiewe onderwys’?

Vraag 6: Watter KENNIS en vaardighede benodig u as onderwysers om ‘n groep diverse leerders te onderrig?

Vraag 7: Op hoe ‘n wyse kan u hierdie kennis en vaardighede verwerf?

Vraag 8: Watter waarde, dink u, sal die verwerwing van nuwe teoretiese kennis (anders as praktiese kennis en resepte) tot u onderwyspraktyk toevoeg?

Vraag 9: Watter bydrae maak die personeelontwikkelingsessies wat in die skool aangebied word tot u onderwyspraktyk?

Vraag 10: Watter kurrikulum word tans binne die skool gevolg en hoe voel u daaroor?

Vraag 11: Het u enige voorstelle oor hoe om die kurrikulum tot voordeel van die leerders se toekoms aan te pas?

Vraag 12: Wat verstaan u onder die term Veerkrachtigheid (Resilience)?

Vraag 13: Hoe sou u ‘n veerkragtige onderwyser beskryf?

Vraag 14: Wat dink u mag ‘n negatiewe invloed op ‘n onderwyser se veerkrachtigheid hê?

Vraag 15: Wat dink u sal ‘n positiewe invloed op ‘n onderwyser se veerkrachtigheid hê?

Vraag 16: Hoekom volhard u met 'n loopbaan binne die spesifieke skool?

Vraag 17: Hoekom volhard u met 'n loopbaan binne die onderwys?

Vraag 18: Wat stel u voor sal bydra tot die verhoogde motivering en welstand van onderwysers?

Vraag 19: Wat kan onderwysers self doen om eie welstand en motivering positief aan te spreek?

Appendix G

Observation Schedule

Observation Schedule	
Name: Participant 1 Learners: 1:22	
Year :Level 2 Date: / /	
WHAT TO OBSERVE	COMMENTS:
Classroom setup/Organisation	
MEDIATION STRATEGIES	
Tools:	
Planning and Preparation:	
Interpersonal Communication:	
Learning activity:	
Support:	
Group work:	
CHALLENGING LEARNER BEHAVIOUR	
Talking out of turn:	
Challenging teacher:	
Concentration:	
Teasing:	
MANAGEMENT OF CHALLENGING LEARNER BEHAVIOUR	
Teacher Behaviour:	
Teacher interaction:	
Method used:	
RESILLIENCE	
Emotional well-being:	
Ability to adapt:	
Overcoming barriers:	

Appendix H

Interview Coding Example

P4		63:29 minute
	Data Chunks	Codes
<p>Timothy: Ok meneer die 1ste vragie, wanneer het jy met jou onderwysloopbaan begin?</p> <p>P4: [REDACTED]</p> <p>Timothy: [REDACTED] en wat het het jou gemotiveer om by die navorsingskool te kom werk?</p> <p>P4: Ek was nog altyd, toe ek in [REDACTED] skool gehou het was ek in die tegniese afdeling gewees, begin heel onder daardie tyd nog std. 6, basiese tegnieke en toe ek in [REDACTED] klaar gemaak het, het ek daardie tyd pas en draai vir matrieks skool gehou en tegniese tekening, daardie tyd was dit nog matriek gewees en ook departementshoof gewees, tegnies, so my hele rigting was maar tegnies gewees en soos ek gesê het ek was 'n gekwalifiseerde vliegtuigmonteerder wat ook tegnies was.</p> <p>Timothy: En hoekom werk jy dan huidiglik by [REDACTED] Wat het jou gemotiveer om na [REDACTED] oe te kom?</p> <p>P4: Ek het nie 'n werk gehad nie en ek het gesoek vir 'n werk en dit was die pos wat opgekom het wat ek toe gekry het, hulle het my gekontak.</p> <p>Timothy: Hoe sou jy inklusiwiteit defineer?</p> <p>P4: Gee vir my nog 'n, wat bedoel jy inklusiwiteit vir jou?</p> <p>Timothy: Huidiglik in die skoolkonteks sit 'n mens met verskillende kinders en ek neem aan by [REDACTED] is dit ook miskien so dat daar is verskillende kinders in jou klas met verskillende agtergronde, my vraag aan jou is wat sien jy onder inklusiwiteit binne die skool konteks?</p> <p>P4: Ek gaan met jou eerlik wees ek verstaan nie die vraag nie?</p> <p>Timothy: Ok kyk in [REDACTED] of in 'n skool konteks het jy kinders wat moet kan, of kinders kom met verskillende agtergronde, verskillende rasse, verskillende tale, verskillende intellectual abilities uhm...</p> <p>P4:</p> <p>Timothy: nê en so nou is dit jou verantwoordelikheid as onderwyser om, jy sit met al hierdie kinders in jou klas en nou word daar verwag van jou om al hierdie kinders te akkommodeer en dit is wat</p>		

<p>hulle basies sê, kyk in vandag se tyd as 'n onderwyser jy moet kan adapt aanpas</p> <p>P4: O ek moet vir hulle almal kan skoolhou</p>		
<p>Timothy: ja</p> <p>P4: op hulle vlak?</p> <p>Timothy: ja</p> <p>P4: ok, vra weer jou vraag?</p> <p>Timothy: So wat sal jy of hoe sal jy inklusiwiteit definieer binne-in die skool konteks?</p> <p>P4: Ag ek kan seker maar net in my werkswinkel is, ek dink 'n ou probeer die studente leer ken van wie hy is en van waar af hy kom, soos byvoorbeeld kinders wat - kan ek die woord gebruik? Wat dom is wat dit net nie het nie versus kinders wat dit het, wat jy amper wil sê behoort nie in ons skool nie hy is te slim vir ons skool so 'n ou probeer dit leer ken en jy probeer hulle verstaan plus kinders wat uit meer gegoede areas uit kom of kinders wat uit nie uit so seer gegoede areas nie maar wat kinders wat swaar kry omdat hulle nie die backing het van ouers wat noem jy die? uhm support system by die huis het nie wat jy sommer half weet hierdie kind kry swaar, hy het nie sokker skoene nie of hy kan nie, hulle kan nie 'n oorpak bekostig nie, so ja 'n ou vat, ek hanteer dit op 'n one on one waar jy vir die een moontlik 'n oorpak sal gee en daai een anders sal behandel oor sy agtergrond. So die bottom line is ek probeer maar my kinders leer ken soos wat 'n ou deur die jaar gaan.</p> <p>Timothy: En hoe voel jy oor inklusiwiteit?</p> <p>P4: Sjoue ons het nie 'n keuse nie, daar is nie, dit is of dit inklusiwiteit by ons skool is wat, jy weet in 'n swak area inklusiwiteit is, daardie elemente is daar maak nie saak waar jy gaan nie.</p> <p>Timothy: Voel jy dat dit is iets wat werk of voel jy dat dit nie werk nie?</p> <p>P4: Jy as onderwyser moet dit laat werk want my kurrikulum is nie opgestel vir die slim kind en die dom kind nie, in ons veld nie, die kurrikulum is opgestel dat jy moet a, b en c doen</p> <p>Timothy: Uhm</p> <p>P4: en van die kinders kom by die c baie makliker uit as ander kinders maar ek moet vir hulle skool hou, so ja ek gaan aan, partykeer kom 'n student nie by punt c uit nie maar b is eintlik vir hom goed genoeg.</p> <p>Timothy: En jou huidige onderwyser/leerder ratio in jou werkswinkel wat is dit en hoe voel jy daarvoor?</p> <p>P4: My ratio is nou 20 studente en een onderwyser.</p> <p>Timothy: Twintig teenoor een</p> <p>P4: ja</p>		

Appendix I

Interview Example with DATA chunks and preliminary CODES

P4		63:29 minute
	Data Chunks	Codes
<p>Timothy: Ok meneer die 1ste fragie, wanneer het jy met jou onderwysloopbaan begin?</p> <p>P4: [REDACTED]</p> <p>Timothy: [REDACTED] en wat het jou gemotiveer om by die navorsingskool te kom werk?</p> <p>P4: Ek was nog altyd, toe ek in [REDACTED] skool gehou het was ek in die tegniese afdeling gewees, begin heel onder daardie tyd nog std. 6, basiese tegnieke en toe ek in [REDACTED] klaar gemaak het, het ek daardie tyd pas en draai vir matrieks skool gehou en tegniese tekening, daardie tyd was dit nog matriek gewees en ook departementshoof gewees, tegnies, so my hele rigting was maar tegnies gewees en soos ek gesê het ek was 'n gekwalifiseerde vliegtuigmonteerder wat ook tegnies was.</p> <p>Timothy: En hoekom werk jy dan huidiglik by [REDACTED]? Wat het jou gemotiveer om na [REDACTED] toe te kom?</p> <p>P4: Ek het nie 'n werk gehad nie en ek het gesoek vir 'n werk en dit was die pos wat opgekom het wat ek toe gekry het, hulle het my gekontak.</p> <p>Timothy: Hoe sou jy inklusiwiteit definieer?</p> <p>P4: Gee vir my nog 'n, wat bedoel jy inklusiwiteit vir jou?</p> <p>Timothy: Huidiglik in die skoolkonteks sit 'n mens met verskillende kinders en ek neem aan by [REDACTED] is dit ook miskien so dat daar is verskillende kinders in jou klas met verskillende agtergronde, my vraag aan jou is wat sien jy onder inklusiwiteit binne die skool konteks?</p> <p>P4: Ek gaan met jou eerlik wees ek verstaan nie die vraag nie?</p> <p>Timothy: Ok kyk in [REDACTED] of in 'n skool konteks het jy kinders wat moet kan, of kinders kom met verskillende agtergronde, verskillende rasse, verskillende tale, verskillende intellectual abilities uhm...</p> <p>P4:</p> <p>Timothy: nê en so nou is dit jou verantwoordelikheid as onderwyser om, jy sit met al hierdie kinders in jou klas en nou word daar verwag van jou om al hierdie</p>	<p>Motivering vir in skool werk: Werk gesoek</p> <p>Inclusion: Geen idee van wat inclusion behels nie. Verlies van kennis met [REDACTED] betrekking to die term.</p>	<p>Internal Stressor (IS) Lack of knowledge regarding inclusion</p>

<p>kinders te akkommodeer en dit is wat hulle basies sê, kyk in vandag se tyd as 'n onderwyser jy moet kan adapt aanpas</p> <p>P4: O ek moet vir hulle almal kan skoolhou</p>		
<p>Timothy: ja</p> <p>P4: op hulle vlak?</p> <p>Timothy: ja</p> <p>P4: ok, vra weer jou vraag?</p> <p>Timothy: So wat sal jy of hoe sal jy inklusiwiteit definieer binne-in die skool konteks?</p> <p>P4: Ag ek kan seker maar net in my werkswinkel is, ek dink 'n ou probeer die studente leer ken van wie hy is en van waar af hy kom, soos byvoorbeeld kinders wat - kan ek die woord gebruik? Wat dom is wat dit net nie het nie versus kinders wat dit het, wat jy amper wil sê behoort nie in ons skool nie hy is te slim vir ons skool so 'n ou probeer dit leer ken en jy probeer hulle verstaan plus kinders wat uit meer goeie areas uit kom of kinders wat uit nie uit so seer goeie areas nie maar wat kinders wat swaar kry omdat hulle nie die backing het van ouers wat noem jy die? uhm support system by die huis het nie wat jy sommer half weet hierdie kind kry swaar, hy het nie sokker skoene nie of hy kan nie, hulle kan nie 'n oorpak bekostig nie, so ja 'n ou vat, ek hanteer dit op 'n one on one waar jy vir die een moontlik 'n oorpak sal gee en daai een anders sal behandel oor sy agtergrond. So die bottom line is ek probeer maar my kinders leer ken soos wat 'n ou deur die jaar gaan.</p> <p>Timothy: En hoe voel jy oor inklusiwiteit?</p> <p>P4: Sjoue ons het nie 'n keuse nie, daar is nie, dit is of dit inklusiwiteit by ons skool is wat, jy weet in 'n swak area inklusiwiteit is, daardie elemente is daar maak nie saak waar jy gaan nie.</p> <p>Timothy: Voel jy dat dit is iets wat werk of voel jy dat dit nie werk nie?</p> <p>P4: Jy as onderwyser moet dit laat werk want my kurrikulum is nie opgestel vir die slim kind en die dom kind nie, in ons veld nie, die kurrikulum is opgestel dat jy moet a, b en c doen</p> <p>Timothy: Uhm</p> <p>P4: en van die kinders kom by die c baie makliker uit as ander kinders maar ek moet vir hulle skool hou, so ja ek gaan aan, partykeer kom 'n student nie by punt c uit nie maar b is eintlik vir hom goed genoeg.</p> <p>Timothy: En jou huidige onderwyser/leerder ratio in jou werkswinkel wat is dit en hoe voel jy daarvoor?</p> <p>P4: My ratio is nou 20 studente en een onderwyser.</p> <p>Timothy: Twintig teenoor een</p> <p>P4: ja</p>	<p>Inclusivity: As onderwyser moet jy die agtergrond van leerders ken. Dom kinders teenoor slim kinders</p> <p>Probeer kinders van arm en goeie areas leer ken. You have to come to know the learners: ability, rich versus poor,</p> <p>Handle learners on a one to one basis.</p> <p>How do you feel about inclusion: You as teacher do not have a choice</p> <p>Does inclusion work? You have to make it work, curriculum is not developed for individual ability, you have to achieve the same outcomes. Teacher has to differentiate curriculum to be able to reach all children.</p> <p>Some learners achieve outcomes quicker: bordem?</p> <p>Teacher-learner Ratio 20:1</p>	<p>Protective factor: (PF) Knowledge regarding learners context, ability and their names-acknowledge uniquenesses.</p> <p>Protective factor (PF) Teachers have to accept learner differences and manage diversity in the classroom</p> <p>Risk factor, RF (Classroom) Teacher learner Ratio</p>

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Appendix J

Individual interviews and Focus Group Themes Merged

Theme	Categories	Risk factors
Risk Factors	<p><u>Classroom</u></p> <p>Learner Behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners portray challenging and defiant behaviour, mock and backchat teachers, show disrespect towards authority, have anger outbursts, learners are childish, throw papers in class and write on desks, play on cell phones, they are irresponsible, selfish and impatient, unmotivated and show a lack of interest - Learners who portray challenging learner behaviour influence their peers - learners are not kept busy. - Learners don't achieve success, they feel stupid, and have a low self esteem and low confidence. - Learners portray challenging behaviour when you change routine - Learners don't care to get punished - Teachers feel corporal punishment has a place in schools as long as it is administered correctly and used to manage challenging behaviour - Taking away corporal punishment has led to a lack of discipline and learners not caring about consequences - Old behaviour management methods does not work in current school context - Substance abuse in school influences learner behaviour - Learners where excluded in the past and become withdrawn in order to protect themselves and their behaviour change when placed in unfamiliar situations - Unemployment, an insecure future, corruption, politics and lack of trust in country affects motivation of learners - Teachers portray negative behaviour toward challenging learner behaviour - Negative behaviour receives more attention than good behaviour - Learners are being spoon fed and can be absent from school and still manage to pass their year. - Interaction between male and female learners influence their behaviour negatively - Male learners do not respect females and there is a lack of understanding of what is acceptable behaviour <p>Learning challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher learner ration to high to give individual support and learners get lost. Learners need individual attention. - Class periods are too long - Learners' ability has dropped, they can't read or write, some are academically too weak to be in school and the language ability of learners is a problem. - Learners are placed in school incorrectly (some learners are academically too strong and some learners are too weak and they become bored and frustrated) 	

- Learners perform better in workshops but workshops can be dangerous for some learners as well
- Work material too difficult
- Learners leaving school are not at grade 9 level academically, some learners have the ability to do high quality work, but have to do low level work.
- Learners have a lack of understanding regarding their future

School

Behaviour School context

- The school has not adapted well to inclusion since work material is not adapted according to curriculum and the physical environment not adapted to form an inclusive environment
- Detention, code of conducts and management of discipline at school does not work, too much attention is given to negative behaviour and focus not on good behaviour
- Learners receive too many second chances.

Challenges of the staff

- Lack of support for teachers at school, a lack of leadership at school, work responsibilities not divided equally and management that does not do their work (teachers opinions, concerns and complaints not listened to)
- Teachers do not receive enough recognition, appreciation, acceptance and support from peers and learners and feel they are not taken care of.
- Staff argue and become irritated with each other when things become difficult and stressful
- Older staff do what they want, they are unwilling to accept change and to adapt and they pick and take out their frustration on younger teachers
- Younger teachers are also unqualified to work with learners at school and there is a lack of knowledge regarding policies
- Teachers are unmotivated and don't care and substance abuse and incorrect classroom placement also influences them negatively
- School is under illusion that staff supports each other and works together, a lot of back stabbing takes place, Staff also feels that principal and management staff is responsible to manage challenging behaviour.
- Teachers are unmotivated and rely on other teachers to maintain discipline, some teachers do not accept mistakes and do the bare minimum
- Teachers expect learners to behave like adults, and they often feel blamed for learner behaviour.
- Teachers feel they are not heard, they are afraid to express themselves and do not want to develop new material
- A lot of skilled teachers are leaving the profession and there is not enough quality replacements
- There is a lack of control in the skills sector and some teachers pick on learners which anger them
- Curriculum has to change and causes some frustration amongst teachers

Staff development:

- Teachers require more knowledge regarding disorders and disabilities
- Changes in school context make teachers moody (accommodating differing learners places strain on teachers)
- Staff development that is held on Fridays has little value and does not have relevant topics (teachers feel unmotivated and forced to attend and 50% is useless)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no guidance at school, older teachers need to allow younger staff member to take over. - Teachers need to stop making excuses, attend workshops so that they could keep up with current developments - <u>Community</u> Learner environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harsh and chaotic environments, poverty, substance abuse, no parental support or caring parents, rape, abuse, neglect, gangsterism (shooting) and risky behaviour, and some learners live in children homes. A lack of role models and father figures. - Teachers need more knowledge regarding learners backgrounds to understand why they behave in a certain way - 20% of learners are in the school due to their learning disability and 80% of learners are attending the school due to their challenging behaviour. - Parents have a big influence on learner behaviour and there is a lack of involvement, care and love - Parents have no control over their children since they easily backchat their parents and parents seem to turn situations in order to make parents the wrong one - <u>Government</u> Education Department: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indecision in education department and curriculum constantly changes - Education department does not recognize the school, there is no support to teachers, teacher concerns not listened to and teachers feel the education department wait for teachers to make mistakes. - Education department has a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the kind of learners who attend the school (Lack of knowledge regarding level of functioning) - Education department is losing skilled personal - Workshop that are held on Saturdays and workshops that have no value to teachers cause frustration and negativity. - No example set by government - No school available to accommodate learners who are too weak or too strong to attend school of skills - <u>Curriculum:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curriculum should be developed according to learner needs and everyone is looking for a more standardised curriculum. (Learning material underestimates learner potential) - Individuals who write curriculum do not know what is happening on ground level and what is written in theory does not always apply in reality - Teachers have to develop the work material every year but they are unsure whether it is the appropriate standard and they want accredited textbooks. - Teachers feel let down by the education department because learners are put through every year - Teachers feel government does not set a good example - There are no set syllabus or text books available in school and schools also follow different curriculums. - IQMS causes negativity amongst teachers
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners work material is not accredited to national level and learners find it difficult to find work after leaving school
<p>Internal Stressors</p>	<p><u>Personal influences:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal disappointment, personal problems, - Teachers are emotionally and physically tired, - Feelings of sadness, they feel they are wasting their time, - Frustration and feelings of hopelessness - Easily upset, loses their cool and wants to stop. - Some teachers never relax and is constantly involved in school work - External aspects like personal disappointment, lack of sleep also negatively influences teachers - Financial difficulty causes negativity amongst teachers - Emotional state amongst teachers are influenced by the time of term <p><u>School environment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenging learner behaviour make teachers negative - Feeling work is not worthwhile and challenging learner behaviour that cannot successfully be addressed causes frustration - Unsuccessful job applications make teachers negative - Younger teachers find the inability of older staff members to adapt and to set an example frustrating. - Emotional state of teachers are influenced by the day of the week and experiences during the day. -
<p>Theme</p>	<p>Categories Protective factors</p>
<p>Protective Factors</p>	<p><u>Classroom</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective Communication: - Speak to learners outside classroom on one on one basis or you could address the whole class (be respectful, speak calmly, don't shout or argue, read body language, understand learner language, be able to relate and be fair) - Learners need to be protected and treated equally, with care, respect and there must be a mutual respect between teacher and learner - Having a good relationship with learners or praising them or showing interest helps to improve respect and learners would handle discipline or challenging behaviour between themselves in the classroom - Encourage and reward good behaviour - Teachers need to be role models <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of learners: - You must be streetwise and have knowledge of challenging behaviour, inclusion, resilience, ADHD and anger outburst as a protective factor. - Understand that each child learns differently - Corporal punishment does not solve the problem, other methods should be used to manage challenging learner behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom context: - Accommodate learners in class (Using different strategies to manage ADHD and challenging learner behaviour like ignoring or handling behaviour in a light hearted manner) - Learners need structure and should be kept busy in class

- Work material should be kept interesting
- Allow learners the opportunity to rectify unacceptable behaviour
- Discipline easier maintained in workshops
- Scribes and reading assistance as well as adapted assessment is used to suite learners needs.
- 7 pillars should be discussed on a daily basis with learners
- Classes must be smaller where there is enough space for learners and where they can feel included
- The more work you put in the more positive reaction you get
- Teachers learn through experience

School

Staff

- Good relationship amongst staff, they support each other and work collaboratively together
- Younger staff members are more motivated and teachers should realize the important role they play in the management of challenging learner behaviour
- Participating in extra curricular activities help to build relationships
- Teachers should focus on learners who want to learn and be consistent in managing challenging learner behaviour
- Experience would help teachers to manage their own disciplinary issues
- Teachers need to realize everyday is different and be able to manage a diverse group of learners
- Staff adapted well to policy changes and GGBS (IQMS) helps to monitor teacher progress
- Teachers need to be vigilant

Management:

- The principal and school management supports the staff and manages challenging learner behaviour.
- Staff development and group discussions should be held where opinions can be shared and new knowledge could be gained
- Assemblies should be held separately where challenging learner behaviour could be address

Parents:

- Parents should be invited to school where they could be educated on effective parenting and management of challenging learner behaviour

Community

- Have received some support from parents
- Have knowledge of learner context

Government

- Never had the need to contact the department
- Some topics at staff development is relevant to curriculum
- Should compile a list of relevant topics which should be discussed at workshops presented by department and at staff development
- CAPS is good and grade specific and teacher are now allowed to write curriculum
- Theoretical knowledge would help teachers manage challenging learner behaviour.
- More control and relevant work material is needed in academic sector

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WCED better organized than other departments -
<p>Internal Strenghts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resilient Person: - Adaptable, knowledge of people, education experience, communicate directly, honest person, must evolve, does not over react, manages difficult circumstances, positive mindset, be passionate, good emotional state and think out of the box - Have compassion, calmness, be gentle, show love, empathy and affection, self motivate and understanding you can affect change and make a difference, commitment, be prepared, self control and willingness to express feelings. - Don't allow environment of circumstances to affect you, have inner peace and being thankful will help keep you motivated - Willingness to assist learners who want to work even if they have a low level of functioning - Challenging learner behaviour should not determine teachers determination - Have a positive mindset (change negative into positive) and focusing on positives - Need to be able to sum up learners and not look down on them. - Positive stories for example learners achieving success help to motivate teachers - Work is worthwhile when learners show appreciation and making a difference contribute towards improved teacher motivation - Improved financial reward will help to motivate teachers - - Maintaining Personal Well-Being - Watch TV and talk to family - Rest on couch and speak to other people - Do woodwork at home and walk on beach to relax - Spend time with wife, do activities and go away for the weekend to relax - Do physical activities like riding bike to relax - Do running to relax

Appendix K

Final THEMES

THEME 1	CATEGORIES
Risk Factors	Classroom
	School
	Community
	Government
THEME 2	CATEGORIES
Internal Stressors	
THEME 3	CATEGORIES
Protective Factors	Classroom
	School
THEME 4	CATEGORIES
Internal Strengths	Resilience
	Personal Well-being