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**CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES USED BY  
GRADE FOUR CHILDREN IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN  
THE UMLAZI DISTRICT**

by

**CLARA OLIVE MAHARAJ**

**Student Number: 8217625**

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Supervisor: Dr Visvaranie Jairam  
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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the dissertation titled CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES USED BY GRADE FOUR CHILDREN IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THE UMLAZI DISTRICT is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any degree at any other university.

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Date: -----

Date: -----

Clara Olive Maharaj

Dr Visvaranie Jairam

Student no: 8217625

Supervisor

## ABSTRACT

Children all over the world struggle to deal with conflict in their lives. The adults they come into contact with and the media often provide poor role models. Intervention through education and training may provide teenagers with better coping skills. In order to intervene, the strategies that children use to resolve conflict and the reasons why they use them should be understood. This understanding would provide the groundwork for any intervention or prevention programme.

In this study rich qualitative data were produced to answer the following two key questions:

1. What are the ways in which Grade four children resolve conflict in their lives?
2. Why do Grade four children resolve conflict in the ways that they do?

This case study was conducted in a primary school in the Umlazi District of Durban, South Africa. FGDs, semi-structured one-on-one in-depth interviews and document analysis were used to gather data from a sample of six Grade four children.

The results revealed that the most popular strategies used to resolve conflict were avoidance, seeking support, verbal strategies and fleeing. Submission, use of violence and crying were also among the strategies used. Proving oneself, escapism and teaching the other person a lesson were the least-used strategies. Social learning theory framed this study, and the sociocultural context strongly affected the manner in which the children dealt with conflict. Other influences in various combinations which affected the children's choice of conflict resolution strategies were personality, education and training, cognitive development and support structures. This study recommends that through education and training children should be guided to discover, create and choose conflict resolution strategies that are healthy, constructive and that lead to their own well-being as well as to the well-being of others.

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## **DEDICATION**

To children all over the world who struggle with emotional pain,  
And to God, our creator, who knows each one by name.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction to the study**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The focus of this study was to investigate conflict resolution strategies used by Grade four children in a selected primary school in the Umlazi District. The purpose was to produce data on the strategies that Grade four children use to resolve conflict, and the reasons why they use these strategies. This chapter presents the topic, critical questions and objectives of this study, the background to the research, a rationale for the study, the methodology used and finally the chapter delineation.

#### **1.2 The topic, objectives and critical questions**

The topic of this research is: Conflict resolution strategies used by Grade four children in a primary school in the Umlazi District. The objectives of this study were firstly to identify the strategies that Grade four children use to resolve conflict, and secondly to identify the reasons why Grade four children resolve conflict in the ways that they do. This study attempted to produce data on the following two research questions:

1. What are the ways in which Grade four children resolve conflict in their lives?
2. Why do Grade four children resolve conflict in the ways that they do?

#### **1.3 Location of the study**

This study was conducted in a Government primary school in the Umlazi District of Durban. The area that the school is situated in and the surrounding areas are riddled with social ills such as

poverty, child headed homes, drug and alcohol addiction, teenage pregnancy and domestic violence. These impact on the learners who attend the school. The learners face many different types of conflict in their lives, and are forced to deal with them daily.

#### **1.4 Rationale**

Locally and internationally, adolescents seem to have lost control of their lives. They seem to have no clue of how to cope with the demands they have to meet. Burton and Leoschut (2013, p. 11) state that 1,020,597 South African learners had been “violently victimized at school” during the period between “August 2011 and August 2012”. Commenting on the results of the 2012 National School Violence Study, Burton and Leoschut (2013, p. 12) concluded that:

Despite the growing attention that this subject has gained in the media over the past few years, studies on the nature and extent of school violence in South Africa are lacking – even in the face of grave costs to the country’s youth, and society as a whole, if the issue is not fully understood and addressed.

This study attempted to respond to the state of crisis that South African schoolchildren are in, by contributing data to the reasons why children of a school-going age respond to conflict in their lives in the ways that they do.

Prevention has proved to be effective in the medical world, where thousands of lives are saved daily through the use of immunisations. The concept of ‘immunisation against school violence’ as a preventive strategy may be applied to the crisis in South African schools. The optimum phase at which intervention is required would be pre-adolescence, since “Young people equipped with effective conflict resolution skills are less likely to resort to violence” (Sathiparsad, 2003, p. 109). This author draws attention to the fact that conflict resolution

intervention is being used widely internationally, but is lacking in South Africa, and that there is a need for indigenous conflict resolution programmes (Sathiparsad, 2003, p. 109). If children could become aware of why and how they deal with conflict, and review various conflict resolution strategies, they would be empowered to take charge of their lives. This knowledge and power will enable them to turn their lives around, and to live well.

My research contributes data on conflict resolution strategies practised by children in Umlazi District, and I also investigated the reasons behind the manner in which they deal with conflict. To my knowledge there is no study that has focused on conflict resolution strategies used by Grade four children in South Africa. This study addresses the lack of information in this area.

## **1.5 Methodology**

This study used a qualitative approach because rich open-ended data were sought. The research was framed by social learning theory. The design was a case study using a sample of six Grade four children from a selected primary school in Umlazi District. The tools used to gather data were focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth one-on-one interviews, and document analysis. Ethical considerations were followed when gathering data, which were viewed through the critical paradigm. The analysed data were compared to the literature reviewed.

## **1.6 Chapter delineation**

**Chapter One** introduces the study and presents the topic, objectives, critical questions, rationale, methodology and chapter delineation.

**Chapter Two** discusses the theoretical framework and interrogates the arguments presented by scholars in recent relevant literature.

**Chapter Three** describes and provides a justification for the methodology used. The methodology is outlined in the first section of this chapter.

**Chapter Four** presents and explains the data that were collected and analysed. It also presents a comparison of the data collected to the arguments expressed in the literature reviewed, as well as an analysis of the data through the lens of the theoretical framework.

**Chapter Five** contains a summary of the findings, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an introduction to and an overview of this study. It presents the topic under investigation and outlines how the research was conducted and reported on. In the next chapter recent and relevant literature on the topic of how children resolve conflict is interrogated.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature review and theoretical framework**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Researchers such as Avci and Gucray (2013), Churchman (2013), Kabasakal (2013) and Sathiparsad (2003) have discussed various influences on the strategies children use to resolve conflict. Some have pointed to internal or intrapersonal factors while others have studied external or contextual factors. I have grouped the sociocultural, educational, and interpersonal influences as external factors and the developmental and personal influences as internal factors. At the core of most of these studies are sociocultural influences. It is therefore logical to frame my study within a theory based on how children learn to resolve conflict from the society in which they grow up.

In this chapter I discuss why social learning theory is an appropriate framework for my study. I review recent literature on the following factors which affect how children resolve conflict: the sociocultural environment, development, education and training, personality and social support.

#### **2.2 Theoretical framework**

After reviewing literature on conflict resolution, I have taken a standpoint from which I view this research. A theoretical framework “reflects the stance the researcher adopts in her research” (Henning, 2004, p. 25). However, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2009, p. 14) explain that “A theory can never be

complete in the sense that it encompasses all that can be known or understood about the given phenomenon”. Taking into consideration that all theories have limitations, I have selected the theory that best suits this study. Since recent research has emphasised sociocultural influences on conflict resolution by children, the social learning theory should provide a solid framework for my study.

Shepherd (2010) explains that the social learning theory, as advocated by Albert Bandura, identifies the following ways in which children learn behaviour: they learn from a direct response to their own behaviour; they learn from watching responses to others' behaviour; and they behave according to their belief in their own abilities. Shepherd (2010, p. 49) identifies these behaviours as “self-reinforcement”, “modelling” and “self-efficacy” respectively. In social learning theory the expectation of a person's community is identified as a “barrier to self-efficacy” (Shepherd 2010, p. 49).

In my attempt to find out which conflict resolution strategies children use, and why they use the conflict resolution strategies that they do, I provided data on the extent to which children use those strategies which are learned socially. I examined the effect of positive and negative reinforcement, modelling, and community expectations on children's choice of conflict resolution strategies.

The social learning theory assumes that a person behaves according to what he has experienced directly or indirectly, from his belief in himself, and that societal expectations may interfere with this self-belief (Shepherd 2010). A limitation of social learning theory is that it does not account for the fact that children may behave according to a set of beliefs of what ought to be; that is, they may do what they think is the right thing to do, irrespective of their own abilities or the response of others. In my study I overcame this limitation by exploring the ideas of the participants concerning which strategies they believe are the right ones to choose.

### **2.3 Sociocultural environment**

From the studies of Avci and Guçray (2013), Churchman (2013), Jones (2007), Kabasakal (2013), Sathiparsad (2003), and Thornberg and Knutsen (2011), it can be seen that children learn conflict resolution strategies from their sociocultural environments.

Kabasakal (2013) conducted experiments using mother education programmes to assess and enhance conflict resolution skills in families of elementary schoolchildren who displayed violent behaviour. From Kabasakal's (2013, p. 13) research he concluded that "one of the most important precursors of violent behaviour in students is the anger management skills within the family". He emphasised that the family is ultimately responsible for teaching children how to respond to conflict (Kabasakal 2013, p. 3).

In a study on American children who have witnessed domestic violence, Jones (2007) adopts social learning theory as a valuable basis for understanding, describing and interpreting the coping and conflict resolution skills employed by the participants. The result – that some children displayed violent and low self-esteem attributes (learned behaviour) (Jones, 2007, p. 18) – supports the social learning theory.

Social learning theory was also useful in a local study conducted by Sathiparsad (2003), who implemented a conflict resolution programme in three primary schools in Durban, South Africa. She argues that "South African children, like other children, are not born to be violent. They have systematically been socialised by society to perceive violence as being the only viable means of asserting themselves or of resolving conflict" (Sathiparsad, 2003, p. 100). It can be seen here that Sathiparsad (2003) attributes the causes of violent behaviour to social learning. It is not only the causes, but also the strategies she implements that have evidence of a social learning approach. She

advocates providing “positive role models for learners” (Sathiparsad, 2003, p. 110). The tenets of social learning theory have been useful in this research.

Avci and Guçray (2013) used questionnaires, inventories and scales to determine the effect of parents, peers, the media and attitudes on violent behaviour in 2120 children with a mean age of 13 years in Adana, Turkey. Analysing their results from the viewpoint of Bandura’s social cognitive theory, they found that “adolescents’ exposure to violence from parents, peers and the media reinforces attitudes towards violence and this results in an increase in violence behaviour of the adolescent” (Avci & Guçray 2013, p. 2011).

Avci and Guçray (2013) argue that children entering adolescence may learn violence from their parents who are their role models, when they experience interparental conflict. However, children at this stage of development independently interpret the violent behaviours of their parents, and may not copy this pattern of behaviour if positive outcomes are not expected and if the children have a low level of self-efficacy to act violently (Avci & Guçray 2013, p. 2012).

Further, children who are entering adolescence are far more powerfully influenced by and far more accepting of the violent attitudes of their peers, rather than their parents (Avci & Guçray 2013, p.2011). When these children witness extreme violence, they perceive their environment as hostile, and this predisposes them to violent behaviour (Avci & Guçray 2013, p. 2012). Avci and Guçray (2013, p.2012) conclude that “Adopting violence based problem solving strategies in their cognitive scenarios, adolescents may view violence as an acceptable phenomenon according to their normative beliefs”.

Avci and Guçray’s (2013) study implies that a violent society breeds children who resolve conflict using violent strategies, because they have learned to view these strategies as being normal, acceptable and expected of them by their peers.

Leventhal (2007) conducted an in-depth study of 21 young children in Texas in the United States of America (USA) using interviews, observation and verbal responses to hypothetical scenarios. Leventhal (2007) claims that hegemony also plays a role in influencing children's conflict resolution strategies. Hegemony refers to influence or control over a group of people by a dominant group. Here, the child is influenced to conform to what adults and other children say. She states that "Children often do as other children and adults say without knowing why. Young children, in an attempt to be good, conform to the rules established by others" (Leventhal 2007, p. 6). She goes on to state that "conforming to the rules is good, when moral realism is viewed as heteronomous (during early childhood); not conforming to the rules is bad" (Leventhal 2007, p. 6). Heteronomous refers to the child being subject to external controls and impositions. The external controls here are the rules.

Leventhal (2007) also implies that heteronomy may be linked to social learning theory. During heteronomy immediate decisions based on reactions might be seen (e.g. if a child is hit, a reflexive response might be to simply hit back for retribution). This might result from little thought going into the conflict resolution process. Therefore children could exhibit behaviours which might have been encouraged by an adult (i.e. a father encouraging his son to react in order to defend himself), as opposed to thinking through all possible conflict resolution strategies that could be used. In opposition to boys possibly being told to fight back, girls might often be taught to be social and polite when resolving conflict. Those responses might be ingrained if parents have taught their heteronomous children to believe these ideas. Therefore children experiencing heteronomy might tend to obey their parents, which might include direction from the parents in how to resolve conflict (Leventhal 2007, p.6).

An analysis of Leventhal's (2007) results reveals that young children's choice of conflict resolution strategies may be attributed to hegemony and heteronomy, where young children conform

and obey without understanding why. This may be explained by social learning's tenets of modelling and behaving according to expectations.

Thornberg and Knutsen (2011) conducted a study in which 176 Grade 9 students in Sweden explained the causes of bullying using a questionnaire. Students claimed that amongst other causes, a bully may be "a product of his or her problematic family background, such as poor parenting, lots of quarrelling or conflicts at home"(Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011, p. 183), thus leading to situations where "conflicts often create bullying" (Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011, p. 184). These students believe that bullying is a conflict resolution strategy used by teenagers who experience family conflict (Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011, p. 184). Students explained that the peer group reinforces this bullying behaviour by giving the bully positive attention and respect; a student states "If they give you respect when you bully someone else, of course it will continue" (Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011, p. 184). According to social learning theory, this behaviour may be viewed as learned from a direct positive response to their bullying behaviour.

In his book Churchman (2013, p. 13) critically analyses theories, types and management of conflict, and agrees with social learning theorists that children may learn to resolve conflict from their families. Churchman (2013, p. 91) states that children first learn how to behave, communicate and socialise from their families. Here children may learn to deal with interpersonal conflict in a variety of ways, from "grudging obedience to outright violence" (Churchman 2013, p. 91). Although it is commonplace and natural for families to have conflict, each family will vary in the manner in which they perceive and respond to it, depending on the approach of the parents.

While Leventhal (2007) uses hegemony to explain why children often resolve conflict by conforming to what is expected of them, she offers no criticism of this pattern of behaviour. Churchman (2013, p.72), on the other hand, warns against hegemony, stating that "repression of

dissent is even more costly”, quoting the early proponents of Christianity, Islam, and “fascism, witch-hunts and teen fads”. He states that it is easy for people to make incorrect and destructive decisions instead of correct or constructive ones due to a lack of independent thought (Churchman, 2013, p. 72): “When early leaders are articulate, charismatic, and confident, they frame and control the debate”. This happens when “groupthink and peer pressure repress independent judgment” (Churchman, 2013, p. 72). Churchman’s (2013) criticism here should be remembered not only when analysing the reasons why children choose to resolve conflict in different ways, but should also be borne in mind when designing conflict resolution programmes, as these should encourage independent judgement and freedom of thought rather than blind conformity.

Churchman (2013) states that there is a gap in the knowledge of ethical and moral conflicts. He states that conflict theorists seldom study ethical and moral conflicts, especially where there is contention about what is right and where doing what is right is more difficult and may have harmful consequences than doing what is ethically wrong (Churchman, 2013, p. 13). Churchman, (2013, p. 13) hypothesises that inadequate research methods may have led to researchers avoiding studying ethical and moral conflicts. Ethical and moral conflict is a complex field of study, since the underlying rules may differ with culture, religion, nationality and individual conscience. Hence researchers may shy away from this area of study.

In my research I considered the role played by sociocultural influences such as hegemony, heteronomy, role models, the media, the family’s anger management skills, interparental conflict and bullying behaviour on how children resolve conflict. I also attempted to contribute to filling in the gap in the knowledge of ethical and moral conflicts by addressing the issue of the choices children make when what is right is questionable.

## 2.4 Development

Some researchers believe that the conflict resolution strategies chosen by children are determined by their age and stage of development. The studies of Kern (2012), Recchia, Wainryb and Pasupathi (2013) and Leventhal (2007) revealed that age and age-related cognitive abilities are strong indicators of the conflict resolution strategies that children use, and the reasons why they use them.

Unlike social learning theory, cognitive development theory, as explained by Piaget, proposes that children do not merely receive knowledge from social role models like parents or teachers, but that they actively and creatively construct their own ideas (Wood, Smith & Grossniklaus, 2001). According to Piaget's theory, Grade four learners, who are typically aged between 7 and 11 years, are in the concrete operational stage of cognitive development (Schunk, 2012, p. 237). In this stage children become less egocentric, they think logically, and become more aware of people and events in their environment (Wood et al., 2001).

When assessing conflict resolution education programmes, Kern (2012) found that these programmes were designed based on the knowledge gained from historical theorists like Piaget, Erikson and Vygotsky, which points to the idea that "children's cognitive abilities require them to be able to be empathetic to others in order to demonstrate problem-solving skills in conflict resolution" (Kern 2012, p. 265).

Recchia et al. (2013, p. 1462) analysed the narrative accounts of children's harm against friends and siblings, with participants aged from 7 to 17 years. They found that age was a factor which affected their treatment of friends and siblings. Recchia et al. (2013, p. 1462) claim that as children grow, they increasingly criticise their siblings and trust their friends. Their friendships are able to withstand conflict (Recchia et al., 2013, p. 1461). At school-going age children learn how to negotiate with others in their close relationships. Recchia et al. (2013, p. 1471) found that when young children

have conflicts with their friends, they become aware of their friends' needs, and conscious of the effect that their own words and actions have on the feelings and experiences of their friends. They also learn to understand and accept that their behaviour may result in negative experiences for their friends. With increasing age, they found that children become more comfortable with disagreeing with their friends and standing their own ground (Recchia et al., 2013, p. 1471).

Leventhal (2007, p. 5) bases her claim on Piaget's theories of child development, and explains that young children's egocentrism affects thought and moral reasoning, which determines how they resolve conflict. Leventhal (2007, p. 5) claims that "Egocentrism plays an important role in children's understanding of conflict and conflict resolution". Leventhal (2007, p. 5) explains that a young child who has been hurt by another may use this moral reasoning to punish the perpetrator by retaliating in an aggressive manner. The retaliator may view this act of punishment as morally correct, without realising that it would cause the perpetrator as much pain as he or she initially experienced. Leventhal (2007, p. 5) concludes that the cognitive level of development of young children allows them to focus mainly on their own needs; therefore their conflict resolution strategies would not be pro-social ones, where the needs of everyone concerned are considered, but the strategies would suit and meet their own needs. Leventhal (2007, p. 7) further states that when children reach the stage of development which Piaget called autonomy, they introspect and make independent decisions to resolve conflict.

In my research I investigated whether Grade four children's choice of conflict resolution strategies are logical and considerate of others rather than egocentric, and to what extent they are comfortable with disagreeing with their friends.

## 2.5 Education and training

Some educational institutions have adopted conflict resolution training programmes as an intervention strategy to teach children how to cope with conflict (Sathiparsad, 2003; Kern, 2012; Jones, 2007). The assumption underlying these programmes is that children can be taught and trained to resolve conflict in healthy ways. However, not many of these programmes have investigated the reasons why children choose specific conflict resolution strategies. Incorporating investigation of the causes of destructive as well as constructive conflict resolution strategies may inform these programmes and make them more effective.

Johnson and Johnson (1996) compiled a comprehensive review of research done on conflict resolution and peer mediation programmes in elementary and secondary schools from the 1960s up to 1995. Johnson and Johnson (1996, pp.483, 494, 474) found that before students could be trained in mediation programmes there was a lack of knowledge of resolutions to be used in the absence of a mediator, students left conflicts unresolved, they withdrew from or avoided conflicts, suppressed conflicts, and used aggression and coercion as strategies to resolve conflicts. They did not try to solve the problem which caused the conflict, and neither did they use constructive negotiation (Johnson & Johnson, 1996, p. 474). Johnson and Johnson (1996, p. 486) conclude that conflict resolution training programmes are in their infancy, and that their outcomes require further testing. They also conclude that peers successfully mediate their schoolmates' conflicts in peer mediation programmes (Johnson & Johnson, 1996, p. 485).

Kabasakal's (2013) training programmes differed from the programmes of other researchers in that he chose to educate and train mothers rather than children. Kabasakal (2013) conducted experiments using mother education programmes to assess and enhance conflict resolution skills in families of elementary schoolchildren who displayed violent behaviour. Kabasakal (2013, p. 3) found

that it is easier for children with effective communication, interpersonal conflict resolution and anger management skills to resolve conflicts at school, resulting in a decrease in the use of violence.

Although Kabasakal's (2013) discussion is aligned to social learning theory, he advocates that learning should be formalised into structured education and training programmes in order to ensure that vital conflict resolution skills are learned and used in family and school conflicts. His training programme includes communication skills which could be used not only to resolve conflict, but also to prevent it. From Kabasakal's experiments he found that "the education that the experimental group underwent was effective in decreasing conflict tendency" (Kabasakal, 2013, p. 14).

In my research I investigated whether any of the children in my study or their families or friends had undergone any conflict management training, and if so what effect it had on how they resolve conflict. This training could have been conducted by religious or community organisations, or by counselling psychologists.

## **2.6 Personality**

Some researchers have linked children's responses to conflict to their personalities. Domino and Domino (2006, p. 67) define personality as "a variety of characteristics whose unique organization define an individual, and to a certain degree, determine that person's interactions with himself or herself, with others, and with the environment". Domino and Domino (2006, p. 67) further explain that personality may include attitudes, values, interests, psychopathology such as depression, and positive functioning attributes such as creativity. It is reasonable to extend Domino and Domino's (2006, p. 67) definition to include feelings, since feelings are closely related to attitudes, values and interests.

Kern (2012, p. 264) states that in children “Negative feelings about school environment increase the likelihood that one will react aggressively”. Historically, scientists tried to divide the causes of behaviour as being a result of either internal factors (e.g. needs) or external factors (e.g. the situation); however, scientists are increasingly beginning to consider the “reciprocal interactions between person and situation” as determinants of behaviour (Domino & Domino, 2006, p. 67).

Foxcroft and Roodt (2008, p. 165) explain that structured personality assessment tools may be used to predict a person’s behaviour, but they do not explain the causes of that behaviour. Projective techniques, on the other hand, may be used to explain inner and unconscious personality aspects which point to the reasons for that behaviour.

The study by Field, Tobin and Reese-Weber (2014) illustrates Foxcroft and Roodt’s (2008, p. 165) claim. Field et al. (2014) used a multi-method approach of vignettes and questionnaires to determine the effects of the personality trait of agreeableness and the cognitive process of social self-efficacy on choice of conflict resolution strategies by university students. Social self-efficacy refers to the student’s ability to achieve the socially desired results. Field et al. (2014, p. 99) found that agreeableness was “positively related to socially supportive conflict resolution strategies” and that “social self-efficacy moderated the relation between agreeableness and negative conflict resolution strategies”. Field et al. (2014, p. 99) used structured assessments and confirmed that “individual differences in personality were related to conflict resolution strategies”, in that they could predict which strategies students would choose; however, they did not use projective techniques, and did not attempt to explain the reasons for the choices students made.

From the aforementioned studies it can be seen that personality traits may be used to predict choice of conflict resolution strategies, without explaining the reasons for those choices. Domino and

Domino (2006, p. 67) also warn that personality should not be used in isolation to predict behaviour, but the interaction between personality and the context should be considered.

In my study I considered to what extent agreeableness is an attribute of the children, and how this personality trait impacted on their ability to resolve conflict in a socially desirable manner.

## **2.7 Support**

When seeking answers to the questions of how children resolve conflict and why they do so in those chosen ways, I found that some recent studies pointed to children's interpersonal relationships in general and their friendships in particular (Salvas et al., 2014; Ladd et al., 2014; Avci & Guçray, 2013).

Salvas et al. (2014) studied 745 twins in their early school years in Canada, and investigated the role of friendship in these children's aggressive behaviour. The sample was assessed by teachers, the children themselves, their peers and their friends. Their findings revealed that "the emotions children feel during conflict with a friend may be related to the strategies they choose for managing their emotions and dealing with the conflict" (Salvas et al., 2014, p. 1803). Results of the investigations by Salvas et al. (2014, p. 1803) were:

- Children with good conflict resolution skills but who lack friendship may be withdrawn, and may use non-confrontational methods of defusing conflict situations.
- Children respond to conflicts in strong friendships with sadness rather than anger, because they are intent on preserving the friendship.
- Children respond with anger to conflicts in weak friendships where there is little emotional investment and reward.

- Children who resolve conflict well and have strong friendships may be more aware of the needs and feelings of others, and therefore resolve conflict in constructive ways.
- A higher level of friendship conflict was directly proportional to an increase in general physical aggression among children with weak friendships and inadequate conflict resolution skills.

The maxim “A problem shared is a problem halved” may hold some significance in dealing with conflict. When faced with conflict it may be common practice for people to talk about it with their peers. This is a natural and instinctive strategy that humans employ to cope with conflict. However, children who do not have healthy friendships may experience difficulty in doing this (Salvas et al., 2014).

Ladd et al. (2014) conducted a longitudinal study of 477 children aged 10–13 years from Grade five to Grade eight in mid-western USA. In her study of peer relations Ladd et al. (2014, p. 984) found that chronically withdrawn young adolescents perceive their peers as not being supportive of them. Ladd (2014, p. 984) explains that this may have been caused by withdrawn youth not having formed solid, intimate friendships where concerns are shared and support is offered. The withdrawn youth therefore lack peer confidantes and their “age-mates are unaware of their needs” (Ladd et al., 2014, p. 984). Correspondingly, peers may exclude withdrawn youth from their social groups, and thus be unaware of their needs and concerns (Ladd et al., 2014, p. 984). Ladd et al. (2014, p. 984) also states that peer rejection at an earlier stage of development may contribute to adolescents becoming chronically aggressive due to their having carried those negative views into their adolescence, even though they may no longer be maltreated. This perception of lack of friendship and support from friends during their childhood may have fed these adolescents’ chronic aggressive responses. These studies demonstrate that socially withdrawn adolescents or adolescents without friends may experience more difficulty than other children in resolving conflicts.

It is not only social isolation that encourages violent behaviour, but the support and encouragement of violent peer groups and friends that may lead to a child learning violent behaviour. Avci and Gucray (2013, p. 2012) claim that adolescents have intense interactions with peers during the period of entering adolescence, and as a result they learn violence from their peers' attitude towards violence. This is an example of adolescents modelling the behaviour of their peers.

I conclude from these studies that emotional and psychological support from peers and friends influences the strategies that children use to resolve conflict, and explains the reasons why they use them. In my study I attempted to evaluate the quality of friendships the children have, and to what extent the support of friends or lack thereof affects how they resolve conflict.

## **2.8 Interaction of influences**

Various influences on conflict resolution strategies used by children have been reviewed, some found within the child and some outside of the child. Although sociocultural influences play a defining role, every child is unique, and various influences may interact in a unique combination to cause a child to choose specific conflict resolution strategies. Churchman (2013, p. 91) claims that the interaction of "culture, personality, and resources ... determine conflict style". In my research I investigated how these various influences come together to determine and explain the conflict resolution strategies chosen by the children in my study.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter I discussed recent studies undertaken on the conflict resolution strategies used by children, together with factors that contributed to their choice of strategies. I found that factors both internal and external to the child influence how they resolve conflict. I conclude that children are complex beings, and that there is an interplay of various influences which affect children's choice of conflict resolution strategies.

In the following chapter I discuss the procedures I followed in my own study on how children resolve conflict and the reasons for their choices.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research design and methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I discuss my choice of research design and methodology for this study. I approached this study using the qualitative methodology, critical paradigm and case study design. The context of my study is described, and the selection procedure for sampling is outlined. I also discuss the methods of data production and analysis of data. I explain how I overcame the design limitations, and the reasons for my research being trustworthy, valid and reliable. I end the chapter with important ethical issues I had to consider in completing this study.

#### **3.2 The research design**

##### **3.2.1 The qualitative approach**

###### ***3.2.1.1 Open-ended data***

When selecting an inquiry style for my study I looked for the approach that would provide the best data to answer the critical questions of how children cope with conflict, and why they cope in that manner. Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p. 133) describe qualitative research as a methodology which studies phenomena in the “real world” and “in all their complexity”. I opted to approach my research using a qualitative methodology because I was studying children in their real contexts, it was an in-depth study, open-ended data were being collected, the participants were encouraged to respond freely, and the data I was collecting were comprehensive.

### ***3.2.1.2 The bias against qualitative inquiry***

In opposition to my choice of methodology, I found that many researchers, scholars, funders and policy makers are biased against qualitative inquiry. Viewing this bias using critical theory, I attribute this bias to the hegemony of science. In my literature review I identified hegemony as one of the sociocultural influences which affect how children resolve conflict. Here again I identify hegemony as an influence which affects how qualitative inquiry is viewed in research. The hegemony of science refers here to the influence or control of a dominant group of researchers, scholars, funders and policy makers who view quantitative scholarship as superior to qualitative inquiry.

When discussing educational research, Velez (2013, p. 4) states that “What is considered worthy of report and policy influence are quantitative data”. This implies that quantitative data may be used as evidence to support arguments in decision making. Qualitative inquiry is criticised for not having “enough hard evidence” (Velez, 2013, p. 5). Therefore quantitative data are seen as preferable to qualitative data.

### ***3.2.1.3 Methodology of choice***

In support of my choice of methodology for this study, qualitative inquiry gave me room to describe the conflict resolution strategies used and the contexts they were used in; to explain the strategy choices made by the children and to interpret the data that I found. Bhati, Hoyt and Huffman (2014, p. 110) argue that qualitative scholarship offers the reader a “vicarious, empathic connection to a world that is otherwise closed to her or him” and that “the best qualitative scholarship has a kinship with literature as well as science”. Velez (2013, p. 5) concurs, pointing

out that a weakness of quantitative inquiry is that it does not offer explanations which “are needed to understand the contexts in which the data are gathered”.

#### ***3.2.1.4 Subjectivity***

I acknowledge that although qualitative scholarship is my approach of choice for this study, it is not without challenges. Qualitative inquiry is commonly criticised for its vulnerability to subjectivity and bias. Henning (2004, p. 7) warn of the dangers of this vulnerability in their statements “the voices of the setting are lost” and “she biases the study to mean what she wants it to mean”. Cohen et al.(2009, p. 461) explain that “there are frequently multiple interpretations to be made of qualitative data – that is their glory and their headache”. To meet these challenges of biases and multiple interpretations I used credibility, transferability, plausibility, confirmability, trustworthiness, consistency and dependability as check points when analysing the data that I collected.

#### ***3.2.1.5 The researcher as a resource***

Another challenge of qualitative inquiry concerns the researcher as a resource in the research. Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p. 133) claim that “the researcher’s ability to interpret and make sense of what he or she sees is critical for understanding any social phenomenon”. Henning (2004, p. 10) agrees that “being a social researcher means that you will need specific sets of knowledge and competencies as well as an inquiring and dialogic mindset”. Collins and Cooper (2014, p. 89) concur, stating that “Qualitative inquiry is unique because it requires both emotional maturity and strong interpersonal skills”. Being a novice researcher I responded to these challenges by taking on the task of developing my emotionally intelligent skills of self-

awareness, self-regulation and empathy, as advocated by Collins and Cooper (2014, p. 94). I became aware of the impact of my identity on the children who participated, I practised withholding my assumptions and presuppositions, and I showed gratitude for the time the children spent in research.

### ***3.2.1.6 Hegemony***

A further challenge of qualitative inquiry as posed by critical theorists is hegemony. Hegemony is a recurrent theme in this study, and it refers here to the imbalance of power between the researcher and the children participating in the research. Collins and Cooper (2014, p. 93) argue that in qualitative research in social science “power and hierarchy are almost always present in some way because of the nature of participant-researcher relationships”. I met this challenge of hegemony by following the suggestions of Collins and Cooper (2014, p. 93) to be mindful of these power relations and to try to minimise them.

### ***3.2.1.7 A measure of social change***

For me personally the greatest challenge of this study was to make a contribution to society. Henning (2004, p. 11) challenge qualitative researchers to “communicate your craft in such a way that it may bring about a measure of social change”. I found fulfilment in helping the children who participated to become aware of their own behaviour when resolving conflict, and assisting them to explore and explain the causes behind the way they behave when resolving that conflict.

### ***3.2.1.8 Best approach***

The aim of my research is to gain an in-depth understanding of how Grade four children resolve conflict and of the reasons why they resolve conflict in the ways that they do. Creswell (2003, p.22) argues that “if a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach”. I have found that qualitative scholarship is the best approach for this study, and I have tried to meet the challenges that it presented.

## **3.2.2 Research paradigm**

### ***3.2.2.1 Emancipation***

As the children expressed their ideas, described their actions and explained their choices regarding conflict, they simultaneously reflected on and tried to make meaning of their experiences. Fry and Bjorkqvist (2013, p. 17) explain that the nature of knowledge interpreted critically is “a theoretical project seeking to radicalize the task of comprehension”. By comprehending and evaluating their own behaviour, the children empowered themselves and took ownership of their lives. Therein lies their emancipation.

As a researcher, I too, like Hadfield (2012), have made the tools of critical theory accessible to the children: “I have various tools to hand, drawn from critical social theory, and as an action researcher I believe that they need to be made available to others, whether or not they see themselves in the business of emancipation” (Hadfield, 2012, p. 584). Through this study the children have embraced the “emancipatory function of knowledge” (Scotland, 2012, p.12). The process of empowerment and emancipation is embraced by the critical paradigm. Therefore I viewed this study through the lenses of the critical paradigm. Scotland (2012, p. 13)

distinguishes between three different paradigms: “the scientific paradigm seeks to generalise, the interpretive paradigm seeks to understand and the critical paradigm seeks to emancipate”.

### ***3.2.2.2 Critical reflection***

Henning (2004, p. 23) explain that in critical research “People can design their own worlds. They can engineer their futures through action and critical reflection”. Insights and benefits gained by using the critical worldview have implications not only for theory and research, but also for the real lives of the children involved. Scotland (2012) emphasises that “Reality is alterable by human action”, that “Critical research has an agenda for change”, and that “Finding out is the means, change is the underlying aim” (Scotland, 2012, p. 12).

### ***3.2.2.3 Cultural sensitivity***

Self -knowledge, critical reflection, change, emancipation and empowerment could not be brought about in isolation, and without reference to the context of the children. Fry and Bjorkqvist (2013, p. 17), when commenting on the nature of social reality, explain that “critical hermeneutics reflects the many discrepancies that constitute our historical, social and cultural universe”. They claim that “Human conflict and conflict resolution are cultural phenomena. The ways that conflicts are perceived and handled reflect a culturally shared set of beliefs” (Fry & Bjorkqvist, 2013, p. 10). Ways in which these shared beliefs impact on the children’s conflict resolution strategies were explored from the standpoint of the social learning framework. Fry and Bjorkqvist (2013, p. 5) warn that in prevention and intervention programmes “One should exercise caution when attempting to apply conflict resolution techniques across cultural settings”. This implies that unlike in the scientific paradigm, the researcher has to be wary of

generalisations. Ramsbotham, Miall and Woodhouse (2011, p. 62) ask “can conflict resolution as a specialist field be made more culturally sensitive”? My response is that conflict resolution studies can, should and must be more culturally sensitive. If they are not, then these studies and programmes will carry the bias and domination of the researchers or leaders in whose hands the power and authority lie. The consequence would be ineffective results. Curtis (2012, p.13), when discussing the African Union’s commitment to dealing with conflict and violence at a meeting in Tripoli in August 2009, illustrates: “Other scholars are much more critical of these types of peacebuilding practices, seeing peacebuilding as reminiscent of previous forms of external domination in Africa, or as disguised imperialism”.

#### ***3.2.2.4 Empowerment and change.***

My research was viewed from the critical paradigm. The children explored conflict resolution strategies and the reasons why those strategies were used. They simultaneously reflected on and analysed their own behaviour, leading to a process of self-emancipation, empowerment and change, which are the goals of the critical paradigm. In this study I used a social learning framework, where the sociocultural context of the children was considered as an important influence on who they are and how they behave.

### **3.2.3 Case study**

#### ***3.2.3.1 Insight***

De Vans (2001, p. 10) describes case studies as qualitative studies which interpret the subjective meanings of people in their contexts. Stake (1994, p. 445) uses the term “instrumental case study if a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue”. Stake (1994,

p. 445) explains further that in the instrumental case study, the case “is looked at in depth, its context scrutinized and its ordinary activities detailed”. Murray and Beglar (2009, p. 48) agree that a case study is an “intensive, in-depth study”. In my research the instrumental case study design was used because it provided the scope to examine, gain an in-depth insight into and interpret data concerning which conflict resolution strategies are used by Grade four children in the context of their school in the Umlazi District, and to explain reasons why the children make those choices.

### ***3.2.3.2 Not generalisable***

Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p. 135) warn that the major weakness of the case study is that “we can’t be sure that the findings are generalisable to other situations”. This warning required no caution for my research as the aim of my study is not to generalise, but to understand, to explain, and to challenge the conflict resolution strategies used by children in this particular case.

### ***3.2.3.3 Real contexts***

In support of case studies, Cohen et al. (2009, p. 253) state that their strength is that they “observe effects in real contexts, recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects”. This strength of case studies allowed me to provide data on the context of my study, to show how the context affected the strategies that the children chose to resolve conflict, and to find what caused them to choose those strategies.

### **3.3 Context**

#### **3.3.1 Context as the foundation**

The context in which this study was undertaken forms the foundation of my research. Therefore its importance cannot be over-emphasised. The theory which framed this study was social learning theory, which examined the social context of the children studied. The major part of my literature review focused on sociocultural and environmental influences which form the matrix in which the children live. Physical contextual factors, for example the health of pregnant mothers, affects the cognitive development of children. Political and economic contextual factors affect accessibility to education and training. The emotional climate in which the children find themselves affects their values, attitudes, feelings and interests, which are integral aspects of their personalities. The social community in which the children live determines the quantity and quality of support that they receive. The combination of influences which affect how the children resolve conflict is inextricably linked to their context.

The qualitative methodology used in this study is a type of inquiry which studies people in the complexity of their real worlds (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 133). The critical paradigm used in this study emphasises the importance of local context. Ramsbotham et al. (2011, p. 61), who view conflict resolution critically, ask the question “whether the conflict resolution field constitutes a truly global enterprise, as its founders assumed, or whether it is based upon hidden cultural specifics which are not universal”. The design of my study, which was the instrumental case study, examines people in their context. The sample of children who participated cannot be isolated from their context, and I therefore analysed the data with context in mind.

### **3.3.2 Conflict in the community**

The context of my research is a primary school which I chose for convenience and ease of access, because it is the institution in which I work. This school is located in a busy suburb in Umlazi District. This suburb has a large number of low-cost flats and informal settlements, with some middle-income homes. The school services children from the surrounding areas as well as children from other townships within Ethekwini Municipality who travel to school in buses and taxis.

The communities that the children come from have inherited many ills from Apartheid. They still lack proper housing, electricity and water supplies and sporting and recreational facilities. They are plagued with the social and psychological ills of poverty, unemployment, crime, drug addiction, grandmother-headed homes, HIV and AIDS, political dissatisfaction, domestic violence, child abuse, rape, and the mentality of being victims. The challenges faced by these communities are complex, comprehensive, interwoven and deep. Therefore it is logical to infer that conflict is rife in these communities.

In February 2014 an organization called Operation Sukuma Sakhe, based on a document of the same name, was launched in Umlazi District by James Nxumalo, the Mayor of Ethekwini in partnership with schools, churches and the local community. The goal was to “overcome the issues that have destroyed the community, such as poverty, unemployment, crime, substance abuse, HIV and AIDS and TB” (Operation Sukuma Sakhe, 2012). This initiative is indicative of the seriousness of the problems in this area of Durban.

### **3.3.3 Sunshine Primary School**

I have called the school in which I conducted my research Sunshine Primary School for purposes of anonymity. This name was inspired by the ideology of the critical paradigm, which carries the hope that through self-knowledge and self-reflection the children can take ownership of and change their lives.

## **3.4 Selection of participants**

Robinson (2014, p. 38) lists the following four points which “holistically encompass the challenge of sampling in interview-based qualitative studies: defining the *sample universe*, deciding on a *sample size*, selecting a *sample strategy* and *sourcing cases*”. I used these four points as a guide to outline my procedure of selecting the participants for my study.

### **3.4.1 Sample universe**

Robinson (2014, pp. 25, 26) defines the sample universe as “the totality of persons from which cases may legitimately be sampled in an interview study”. The sample universe in my research consisted of all Grade four children who attend the selected primary school in Umlazi District.

### **3.4.2 Sample size**

Robinson (2014, p. 29) explains that “Interview research that has an *idiographic* aim typically seeks a sample size that is sufficiently small for individual cases to have a locatable voice within the study, and for an intensive analysis of each case to be conducted”. I selected six children as this small number allowed for in-depth, qualitative data to be collected.

### **3.4.3 Sampling strategy**

In selecting a sampling strategy I had to ask the question “How do I select cases for inclusion in the sample?” (Robinson, 2014, p.31). In selecting participants I used both purposive and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to “interpret, explore and understand the topic under investigation” (Carey, 2011, p. 41). The children were selected from Grade four classes, as the purpose of my study was to produce data on the methods that Grade four children use to resolve conflict, and the reasons why they choose these methods. Three girls and three boys were selected, not as part of a quota system but in order to eliminate gender bias in the results. To increase inclusivity and diversity a physically impaired child and a child from a foreign country were included in the sample.

I am an educator at Sunshine Primary School, where I teach both of the Grade four classes. It was convenient for me to choose children from those classes as they were accessible to me. Communicating with the participants was simple as I saw them every day. They were also in close proximity to me as I was the form teacher of one of the classes, and the other Grade four class was next door to mine. Finances and time for transportation were not needed. Cohen et al. (2009, p. 113) list the following advantages of using convenience sampling: “they are far less complicated to set up, are considerably less expensive, and can prove perfectly adequate where researchers do not intend to generalize their findings beyond the sample in question”. In my research I investigated particular participants, without aiming to generalise the results.

### **3.4.4 Sourcing the sample**

Concerning sourcing the sample, Robinson (2014, p. 35) recommends that “As well as practical and organizational skills, this stage of sampling requires ethical skills and sensitivity”. I obtained

ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee. I was granted permission to conduct my research in a Government (public) school by the Department of Education. I obtained permission from the Principal and School Governing Body of the selected school. The selected children and their parents consented to the study. All of these permissions and consents were granted in writing after I had given the relevant persons letters explaining the details of my study. These details are outlined in the ethics section of this chapter. The documents are attached in Appendices A, B, C, D and E. Voluntary participation began after all permissions and consents were received in writing.

### **3.4.5 Sampling validity**

The sampling procedure is important to qualitative inquiry. Robinson (2014, p. 37) confirms that addressing the four sampling issues, as I have done in this section, “is central to enhancing the validity of any particular interview study”. Sampling validity is discussed further in this chapter under sample coverage (point 3.7.2).

## **3.5 Data production and collection**

### **3.5.1 Research sessions**

Data were produced by and collected from the children during their break times. The school has two breaks per day. It is the policy of Sunshine Primary School that children should be kept in by teachers during the second break if necessary. Children should not be kept in during the first break, as this is the time during which they eat their lunch. Generally children are not kept in after school for safety reasons, and many of them travel by organised transport. As class contact time could also not be used, the only available time was during the second break. Data could not

be produced every day, as the researcher as educator had to attend staff meetings and be on ground duty and sports duty on certain days. The children were also involved in sports matches on certain days and a feeding scheme on Wednesdays. The second break is of 25 minutes' duration, and optimum use was made of this time on many different days. Three different instruments were used to collect data: focus group discussions (FGDs), interviews and document analysis.

### **3.5.2 Stimulus materials**

I used stories, poems and plays from Grade four readers as stimulus materials. I selected texts containing conflict themes to fuel responses in FGDs, interviews and document analysis. These stimulus materials were suitable because the content and language were at an academically appropriate level for the children. Furthermore, the children were able to tell their stories vicariously, via the characters in the texts. The texts provided a safe, comfortable, non-threatening and non-intimidating medium through which the children expressed themselves. Discussion centred on the nature of conflict in the texts, a description and evaluation of the strategies used by the characters who respond to the conflict, and explanations of possible reasons for their choices.

### **3.5.3 Data collection tools.**

I used three data collection tools: FGDs, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. I used different texts from Grade four readers as stimulus material for each of these tools. I chose these tools because they were able to provide data of very high quality. All three of these tools were semi-structured, which had the advantage of allowing free expression within a broad

outline. These tools were used to stimulate, encourage and guide expression of the children's ideas and feelings, rather than restrain them. This encouragement, probing and teasing out during discussion led to in-depth data being produced.

I used the data collection tools in conjunction with each other during the data collection period. The different tools catered for the different abilities as well as the different preferences of the participants; for example, some children were able to express their ideas and feelings in drawings better than in writing, and some felt more comfortable writing than speaking. Therefore the use of three tools covered any gaps in the responses of the children that might have been left if only one or two tools were used. Further to these three tools, I followed the suggestion of Ritchie et al. (2013, p. 182) and took note of non-verbal language, as "body language provides an indicator of participants' feelings relating to the group process at any particular time".

#### ***3.5.3.1 Focus Group Discussions***

FGDs were held with six Grade four children. The children yielded data by engaging with each other while empowering themselves. Carey (2011, p. 129) points out that FGDs are advantageous "because a considerable amount of information and other data can be collected during a brief meeting". This tool proved suitable for my study as research sessions were short, i.e. of 25 minutes' duration, as explained earlier.

#### ***3.5.3.2 Interviews***

I held one-on-one, in-depth semi-structured interviews with each of the children on different occasions. I used the in-depth semi-structured interview as a qualitative tool to gather detailed data from the children. Carey (2011, p. 59) claims that the interview "has been the most

common method used in critical theory”. The interview provided opportunities for the children to explain, elaborate and reflect on the data produced by the other two data collection tools used in this study.

### ***3.5.3.3 Document analysis***

I gave the children the selected texts to read and asked them to respond to the way in which the conflict in the texts was resolved, or to respond to any of the discussions on conflict resolution that were held during the study. I asked them to produce a piece of free writing and a drawing. The use of written and drawing expressions allowed for the different communication strengths of the children to be utilized.

## **3.6 Data analysis**

Data were first examined, then broken down into their component parts in order to make meaning of them. Henning (2004, p. 127) explain that in a qualitative study “The researcher uses comparisons to build up and refine categories, to define conceptual similarities and to discover patterns”. I sought similarities in the data and grouped such items together.

I viewed the data from the critical paradigm, and used the critical data analysis method. Carey (2011, p. 168) claims that critical analysis involves asking “How is knowledge produced and applied”?. Strategies that the children used to resolve conflict were identified, described and categorised in the analysis. The issue of why children use chosen strategies is closely related to how they acquired knowledge of these strategies and how they apply this knowledge when making choices.

### **3.7 Validity**

Ritchie et al. (2013, pp. 273-276) expound on various techniques to enhance the validity of a study. Of these techniques, I discuss internal validity, sample coverage, capture of the phenomena, identification and labelling of the responses, display and documentation, the constant comparative method, and triangulation of sources in the sections that follow.

#### **3.7.1 Internal validity**

This study makes no claim to external validity as it is case specific, and the extent to which it may have wider applicability or contribute to the enhancement of theory on conflict resolution is unknown. Its internal validity, however, is seen in the findings which reveal that this study correctly and precisely investigated what it claimed to investigate, viz. to answer the key questions of which strategies are used by Grade four children to resolve conflict, and why those strategies are used.

#### **3.7.2 Sample coverage**

Adequate sample coverage added to the validity of this study. The children who participated were all from grade four, therefore they were between nine and ten years of age. To eliminate gender bias I selected three female and three male children. For inclusivity and diversity of data, I included a child with a physical impairment and a child from a foreign country. Sunshine Primary School is a mainstream school which tries to include children with impairments who are able to cope with the school's physical structure and curriculum. Children from foreign countries are also part of the school population.

### **3.7.3 Capturing of data**

Initially I had planned to record the FGDs and interviews on tape, but one parent did not consent to the recording. This implied that I could not record the FGD sessions on tape. It also meant that I could not record interviews with one child on tape. I decided not to record the other five children's interviews on tape for the sake of equality and fairness. I had to rely on my transcription to collect data. This would have presented a problem with validity. To overcome this challenge, I asked the children to write down their responses to the questions in both the FGDs and the interviews. Although their written responses would only capture the essence of their verbal responses, it would serve to confirm and clarify what they had discussed.

I made every attempt to create a warm and relaxed environment in which the children were free to express their ideas without feeling self-conscious, intimidated or judged. This was not difficult to achieve, as the children already enjoyed a secure relationship with me as their teacher.

### **3.7.4 Identification and labelling of responses**

To ensure that the responses captured reflected the meanings which the children assigned to them, I repeated their responses during the discussions and interviews, and received confirmation from them.

### **3.7.5 Display and documentation.**

In the data analysis I displayed and documented key words in their raw form used by the children to allow readers “sufficient access” to cross-check the validity themselves (Ritchie et al. 2013, p. 274).

### **3.7.6 Constant comparative method.**

The questioning technique which I used allowed me to constantly check, compare and confirm that the data captured were accurate. Questions criss-crossed each other, providing the children with the opportunity to explain, give reasons for and confirm what was asked in other questions.

### **3.7.7 Triangulation of sources.**

Three data collection tools were used in this research, viz. focus group discussions, semi-structured one-on-one in-depth interviews and document analysis. Using different tools led to triangulation, where the different tools enhanced the validity of the research. Triangulation added to the credibility, confirmability and verification of the results (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p. 100) state that triangulation is used “to support the validity” of the researcher’s findings.

## **3.8 Reliability**

The hegemony of science, as explained in previous sections, has produced much scepticism on the reliability of qualitative research. However, “some authors have redefined the concepts that underpin reliability and validity so that they have greater resonance with the goals and values of qualitative research” (Ritchie et al., 2013, p. 285). Just as replicability is the mainstay of reliability in quantitative research, confirmability, trustworthiness, consistency and dependability

lie at the heart of reliability in qualitative studies (Ritchie et al., 2013, p. 271). Ritchie et al. (2013, p. 272) identify five crucial questions to be asked throughout the research process which assist the researcher to ensure reliability in the study. These questions check on sample design and selection, consistency and scope of fieldwork, the systematic analysis of data, interpretation based on evidence and adequate coverage of data in the design. These questions have guided me to consistently check that the processes I employed were reliable. For example, during data analysis I had to ensure that all perspectives were included and that there was nothing missing from the data coverage.

### **3.9 Design strengths and limitations**

A limitation of this study is that it is case specific, therefore the findings may not be universally applicable. However, the findings may offer insight into cases with similar content. I hope that this study will stimulate research with similar key questions in other contexts.

I am a novice researcher, and lack the wisdom that comes with experience. I am also a full-time educator and part-time scholar. This has constrained the time available for study. However, in order to minimise these challenges I have done my best to familiarise myself with the work of other scholars whose research relates to mine in content, context and methodology, and whose findings have continuously inspired me.

### **3.10 Ethical issues**

Consent and permission documents are attached in Appendices A, B, C and E. I applied for and was granted an ethical clearance certificate with full approval by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I also applied for and

was granted permission to conduct research in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education institutions. Access permission was granted to me in writing by the school Principal and Chairperson of the School Governing Body. Letters of explanation containing details of the research project were given to the parents of the selected children in English and IsiZulu, which is the home language of most of the children involved. These parents signed letters of informed consent. The details of the research project were explained to the children. They were also given letters of informed consent in English and IsiZulu, and these were signed by the children. The main conditions of participation were as follows:

- Participants and their parents had a choice to participate, not to participate, or to stop participation during the research process without penalisation.
- Confidentiality was guaranteed, as the names of the children and the school would not be mentioned in the dissertation.
- Participation was for academic purposes only, and there was no financial remuneration or reward.
- Non-teaching time would be used for research and there would be no disruption of the school curriculum.
- Participants and parents indicated if they were willing to be recorded by audio or video equipment during the research sessions.
- Information was to be kept in secure storage by the supervisor for five years, after which it would be destroyed by shredding.
- Participants would engage with age-appropriate texts selected from Grade four textbooks which were recommended by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have demonstrated how my use of qualitative inquiry, the critical paradigm and the case study design was appropriate for answering the key questions in this study. The context in which the research was conducted was described, as it forms the foundation for understanding the data that were produced. I discussed who my participants were, and how they were selected. I explained how I overcame the design limitations, and discussed the procedures I had to follow to ensure that this study was trustworthy, reliable and valid. I concluded this chapter by describing the processes I followed to achieve a practice which was ethically sound.

In the next chapter I will present and categorise the data that I collected . I will analyse the results critically and compare them to recent relevant literature.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Presentation and analysis of findings**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to present and analyse the data collected. It was guided by the following key research questions: What are the ways in which Grade four children resolve conflict in their lives?; and Why do Grade four children resolve conflict in the ways that they do?

In this chapter I discuss the three data collection tools used, and the data obtained by them. I identify strategies that the children use to resolve conflict, and I describe and categorise them. I discuss what influenced the use of these strategies and analyse the results critically. I end the chapter by comparing my findings to the literature reviewed and by analysing the data through the lens of the theoretical framework.

#### **4.2 Guiding principles during data collection**

Before data collection I had to ensure that the children were at ease. I pointed out the differences between my usual role as a teacher and my role as researcher in this study. I emphasised that in this study there would be no right or wrong answers, that marks would not be awarded for responses, that no rewards or punishment would be given, and that confidentiality would be maintained. I assured the children that they would not be judged by their responses. Instead, I would be attempting to understand what happens in a conflict situation, and why it happens. I consistently reminded the children of these guiding principles of the study in order to reassure them that they could be free to express themselves.

Six Grade four children participated in this study. For the purpose of confidentiality I have given the participating children the following pseudonyms: Lin, Mel, Toni, Lucky, Ged and Kay.

### **4.3. Clarification and confirmability**

In the FGDs and interviews, many questions overlap, are redundant, and tackle the same issue from a different angle or using different words. I deliberately included this strategy in the design, as a method of clarifying and confirming the children's responses.

### **4.4 FGDs**

FGDs were held on different occasions during the research. The children eagerly provided responses to the questions. However, for the greater part they relied heavily on me to control the discussion, instead of engaging with each other. It was only towards the end of the study that they began taking control of the discussion. Here, again, there was a problem. They sometimes lost focus, and I had to redirect them to the theme of the discussion. This tool proved advantageous in that the children felt comfortable being with their peers and therefore did not feel intimidated or self-conscious.

The children often responded to each question by discussing more than one strategy, sometimes naming up to four strategies. These strategies were often contradictory, which is indicative of the children's dilemmas concerning how to respond. I discuss all of the strategies offered during the discussion but, for the purpose of confirmability, have only taken direct quotations from their written responses. I have quoted them verbatim in order to capture the

children's thoughts as closely as possible, therefore the quotations include some spelling and grammatical errors made by the children.

#### **4.4.1 Stimulus material for FGDs**

A short story, 'Read for enjoyment' (Schnetler, 2013, p. 55) from a Grade four textbook was used as a stimulus for the FGD. A copy of this story is attached as Appendix F. The children read the story together, then dramatised it. Dramatising the story helped bring the script to life, enhanced meaning, emphasised key phrases and brought out the non-verbal nuances in the story. English is not the home language of most of the children in this study. Dramatising the story gave me the assurance that the children understood not only the words, but also the mood, attitudes and feelings in the story.

The story is about a boy, Robert, who is bullied by a bigger, Grade seven boy. The bully demands the packet of chips which Robert has just bought. Robert wonders what to do, then runs to the tuckshop owner for help.

Questions centred on evaluating the conflict resolution strategies used by Robert in the story, and extended to what the child's friend would do, and eventually to what the child would do in that situation. Reasons for the responses were also asked for.

#### **4.4.2 General questions for the FGDs**

The purpose of the introductory questions here is to provide a background for and to introduce the research questions. I also used the introductory questions to establish what is already known about the type of conflict which occurs here; for example, does the child understand the concept of bullying? The following questions were asked in this section:

- Did you enjoy this story? Why or why not?
- Could this story be true? How do you know?
- The Grade seven boy tried to bully Robert. What does bullying mean?

Since these are not key questions in this study, I do not interpret or analyse them. It would suffice to report that most of the children enjoyed the story, and indicated that this does happen in real life, and that they understood bullying to mean when a bigger child teases, threatens, hits, extorts from or abuses a smaller child.

#### **4.4.3. Evaluating the conflict resolution strategies used by Robert, the character in the story**

The following questions were interspersed with others during the FGDs. Here I have grouped them together for the purpose of analysis:

- Do you think Robert should have kicked the bully?
- Why or why not?
- Why didn't he kick the bully?
- Why didn't Robert shout at the bully?
- What could have happened if Robert had shouted at the bully?
- In the story Robert wondered what to do. Besides shouting and kicking, what else could Robert have said or done?
- What could have happened if he had said or done those other things?
- Did Robert's plan work?
- Was it a good plan?
- Give reasons for your answer.
- Why does Robert want to come to the tuckshop with his friends next time?

- How will that help him?

The following are some of the pertinent comments made by the children about the strategies used by Robert, the main character in the story:

**Ged:** “He might have a small voice and he might hate shouting.”

**Kay:** “He would get hurt and hungry because he shouted.”

**Lin:** “He was scared and he is not that boy who likes fighting.”

**Lucky:** “Because still the boy would take the chips.”

**Mel:** “He could’ve ran back to school or the nearest house or place to hide.”

**Toni:** “He would pick a stone and hit him. The bully was going to apologise and started to run away.”

The following is a summary of the conflict resolution strategies named and discussed by the children concerning Robert’s response to the bully. I have explained reasons for the choice of these strategies, drawn from the explanations offered by the children.

- All six children indicated that Robert should not retaliate and that he should avoid conflict. The reasons are that he would get hurt, lose his food and be left hungry; some of them perceive the bully as more powerful, believe that retaliation would not solve the problem, have no intention to fight, prefer not to fight, are afraid, and want to protect themselves.
- One child believes that Robert should submit and surrender his food. The reasons are that he lacks experience in fighting and perceives himself as inadequate.
- One child suggested that Robert seek support from a family member. The reason is that he would get solace and emotional support.

- Three children thought that Robert should pretend to be brave. They know that this would help him to defend and protect himself.
- One child thought that Robert should flee. The reasons for this are that he is afraid, in order to protect himself, and because he has a gentle and timid disposition.
- One child suggested that he seek a place of safety. This would keep him safe.
- One child mentioned that Robert should seek adult intervention. This is for self-protection.
- One child suggested that Robert should fight with a weapon. This would be a way to get assistance to even the odds that are against him, to scare the bully, and to get rid of the bully forever.

#### **4.4.4 Evaluating the conflict resolution strategies that a friend would use**

In this section the children projected what their friend would do if he/she was the bullied character in the story. The following questions relate to the friend's responses:

- If the Grade seven boy had tried to bully your friend, would your friend have kicked him?
- Why or why not?
- If the Grade seven boy had tried to bully your friend, would your friend have shouted at him?
- Why or why not?

The following are some of the pertinent comments made by the children about the strategies that their friend would use if confronted by the bully in this story:

**Ged:** “No he would run away like a chicken to a grown up to stop the bully.”

**Kay:** “Yes! My friend would have shouted at him.”

**Lin:** “Because the boy is older than her and she is a girl. She was going to run away.”

**Lucky:** “Because he would hit him.”

**Mel:** “Because I would not like it if it was me.”

**Toni:** “Because my friend is very brave and very hitting.”

The following is a summary of the conflict resolution strategies named and discussed by the children concerning how their friend would respond to the bully. I have explained reasons for the choice of these strategies, drawn from the explanations offered by the children.

- Two children claim that their friend would flee. The friend would do this for self-protection.
- Three children think that their friend would retaliate verbally. This is because the friend is brave and has rights.
- One child thinks that the friend would seek adult protection because of fear and the perception of self-inadequacy.
- One child believes that the friend would retaliate using violence because the friend is a brave character.
- One child believes that the friend would cry as the friend would feel afraid and helpless because as a girl, she is weaker than the boy, and smaller in size than the bully. This may possibly be learnt behaviour, that tears may evoke sympathy and a favourable response from the perpetrator.
- One child claimed that the friend would not retaliate for reasons of self-protection.

#### 4.4.5 Evaluating the child's own conflict resolution strategies

In this section the children discussed what they would do if they were the bullied character in the story. The following questions relate to their own responses:

- If you were Robert, what would you have done?
- Why would you have acted so?
- What would have happened in the end?

The following are some of the pertinent comments made by the children about the strategies that they would use if confronted by the bully in this story:

**Ged:** "I could walk away with my chips in my hand."

**Kay:** "I would have hit the boy from Grade 7 with the stone."

**Lin:** "To avoid fighting. Because I don't like fighting."

**Lucky:** "I have come with my friends."

**Mel:** "I would do like Robert and tell him it belongs to me not you. Because I'm tired of being bullied by people and children."

**Toni:** "I would have given him the chips because I don't want to get hurt."

The following is a summary of the conflict resolution strategies named and discussed by the children concerning how they would respond to the bully. I have explained reasons for the choice of these strategies, drawn from the explanations offered by the children.

- Three children would seek adult protection. This would be to avoid confrontation, and for self-protection.
- One child would flee to avoid confrontation.
- One child would retaliate with a weapon. He did not give a reason for this.
- Two children would surrender for self-protection and to avoid confrontation.

- One child would seek peer support because of having knowledge of safety in numbers.
- One child would use verbal confrontation as a strategy to assert her rights.

#### **4.4.6 Concluding questions**

Here again, just as in the introductory questions, no analysis of the responses is needed. The following questions were asked in order to round off the discussion:

- Why did the bully get frightened?
- What makes some people bully others?
- What did you learn from this story?
- What would you like to say about this story?

In answer to the question “What makes some people bully others?” one child made the following claim: “...some other were also bullied by other now they learnt how to be bullies”. In this case I made an exception, and analysed this response because it is rich with data. The victim copies the conflict resolution strategy used by the perpetrator. The perpetrator is a role model to the victim and the child has learnt this negative behaviour of bullying from the bully. This is an example of modeling, as discussed in social learning theory.

#### **4.5 Interviews**

Semi-structured in-depth individual interviews were held with each of the children, who participated separately on different occasions. The children knew me well because I taught them. This could have been disadvantageous in that they could have tried to impress me. However, I reassured them that they would not be judged by whatever was discussed. Therefore they were at ease and spoke freely. They sometimes related events and discussed issues surrounding conflict

which do not relate directly to the key questions of this study. I gave them the opportunity to relate their stories without interrupting them, as I did not want to have a clinical approach to the interviews. I did not, however, record this surplus information.

At the same time, I made sure that they provided sufficient relevant information. As in the FGDs, in the interviews the children indicated using different strategies on different occasions. All of these strategies were recorded during the interviews. The direct quotations are taken from the children's written responses for confirmability. In order to capture the children's thoughts as closely as possible, I have quoted them verbatim, and therefore the quotations include spelling and grammatical errors made by the children.

#### **4.5.1 Stimulus material for interviews**

A short play, *Good friends, problem friends* (Department of Basic Education, 2011, pp. 58-59) from a Grade four textbook was used as a stimulus for the semi-structured in-depth interviews. A copy of this play is attached as Appendix F. I asked the children to read, then dramatise the play together in a group session, to bring out the feelings in the script. As most of the children are second-language English speakers I also wanted to ensure that they understood the script well. The children were interviewed individually following the group dramatisation.

The play is about two children, Thandi and Ronnie, who are practising for a school concert. They get into an argument and both of them become very angry. Ronnie decides to walk out, but when Thandi confronts him about his reason for leaving, he decides to explain why he wants to quit.

Questions focused on evaluating the conflict resolution strategies that Ronnie and Thandi used in the play, and extended to what other children do in that situation, and eventually to what

the participating child would do in that situation. I also asked the children to explain why they chose those strategies.

#### **4.5.2 General questions for the interviews**

The purpose of general questions in the interviews was to get general feedback about the children's understanding of and views on the play. The following general questions were asked in this section:

- What happened in this play?
- What would you like to say about this play?

The questions do not provide data on the key questions in this study. Therefore I do not analyse or interpret them. The responses indicated that the children understood that there was an argument between the two children in the play, and that the argument began when Ronnie was late for practice once again. They enjoyed the play. One child said that he learnt that he should not allow someone to shout at him. Another child claimed that she learnt not to be bossy and not to fight with and shout at her friends.

#### **4.5.3 Evaluating the conflict resolution strategies used by Ronnie and Thandi, the characters in the play**

The following questions were asked during the interview to understand the children's response to the strategies used by Ronnie to resolve conflict:

- What do you think of the way Thandi spoke to Ronnie when he walked in?
- Why did she speak to him in this way?
- If you were Thandi, would you speak to Ronnie like that?

- Give a reason for your answer.
- Why did Ronnie decide to leave?
- How did he feel when he started to walk out?
- Ronnie explained why he wanted to leave. Was that a good thing to do?
- Give a reason for your answer.
- If you were Thandi and Ronnie’s friend, what would you advise them to do?
- How would this help them?

The following are some of the pertinent comments made by the children about the strategies used by Ronnie and Thandi:

**Ged:** “Yes. To show you feelings to tell them why are they saying that.”

**Kay:** “I must tell them to forgive each other or tell the both of them not to fight anymore or shout to each.”

**Lin:** “Yes. Because it was wrong that Just leaving without telling anyone what was the problem. Because he was cross about it.”

**Lucky:** “I would told them that they must work together.”

**Mel:** “Ronnie should have shown much more respect for the leader.”

**Toni:** “I would tell them to go to the owner of the concert.”

The following is a summary of the conflict resolution strategies named and discussed by the children concerning Ronnie’s response to Thandi during the argument. I have explained reasons for the choice of these strategies, drawn from the explanations offered by the children:

- Two children indicated that they would use verbal confrontation because they wanted to show their feelings.
- Three children spoke about apologising and forgiving as a way to stop the arguing.

- Two children said that the characters should speak gently in order to stop the arguing.
- One child suggested that Thandi should give Ronnie constructive criticism in order to solve the problem.
- One child emphasised working together. No reason was given.
- Two children said that Ronnie was right to walk out because you can't work with someone who is always shouting at you.
- One child advised Thandi to speak like a leader should, and not allow stress to make her angry.
- One child said that Ronnie should respect Thandi as a leader, because he is irresponsible and cannot lead.
- One child suggested that they should seek the counsel of the adult in charge, since the adult would act decisively.

#### **4.5.4 Evaluating the conflict resolution strategies that other children use**

In this section the children projected what another child would do if he or she was Ronnie or Thandi. The following questions relate to other children's responses:

- When children have problems like Thandi and Ronnie had, what should they do?
- What causes them to do and say those things?

The following are some of the pertinent comments made by the children about the strategies that other children use when involved in an argument:

**Ged:** "By saying how they feel to show your face."

**Kay:** "They could leave like Ronnie."

**Lin:** “They must not fight but do everything fast. They must explain the problem. Because they think it a good solution to solve the problem.”

**Lucky:** “They must work it out and be a team together and not fighting. Because they can’t be a team and work together.”

**Mel:** “Because maybe they have some problem of they own like maybe at home.”

**Toni:** “They must tell someone who is older so that they can sort it out.”

The following is a summary of the conflict resolution strategies named and discussed by the children concerning how other children respond in an argument like the one in the play:

- One child said that they say how they feel to show their true selves.
- One child said that they leave because they are wrong.
- One child said that they explain the problem so that they can stop fighting.
- Another child said that they work it out because they know they must work in a team.
- One child said that they apologise because they must not allow another problem at home to spoil their mood.
- Another child said that they would tell an adult because an adult will be able to solve the problem.

#### **4.5.5 Evaluating the conflict resolution strategies that participating children would use**

In this section the children discussed what they would do if they were involved in an argument like the one in the play. The following questions relate to what the children would do:

- If you were Ronnie, would you have left?
- Why or why not?
- Have you had a problem like this with someone?

- Explain what happened.
- What did you say and do?
- Why did you say and do those things?
- Do you become cross when you argue with a friend?
- How do you act when you are angry?
- What causes you to act in that way?
- What would you like to say about this play?

The following are some of the pertinent comments made by the children about the strategies that they would use when involved in an argument:

**Ged:** “We were playing a game by seen who goes to the bench first. He cheated. Then I said you won. Because a game is just a game.”

**Kay:** “My friend in the class we were writing and my other one said he’s gonna catch me in the break and he slap me and I hit him back. I said back off and watch in the front and don’t turn back again and now I will tell mam. Because I want to sort it out by myself and don’t let some do that to me.”

**Lin:** “I keep quiet and cry sometimes. I don’t like to shout back or to fight back. Because they will run and go tell they mothers to shout at me.”

**Lucky:** “My coach was teaching and I was late. I said I’m sorry and I trained. Because I was going to be fired then I said I’m sorry then he said I must train.”

**Mel:** “I just get mad feel and aggressive with everyone but sometimes I just ignore. Cause I am in a not good situation at the time of the day so I think it the best way.”

**Toni:** “Told them that I am taking them to the owner because I could not handle them. Because people when are fighting I can’t handle people when are fighting.”

The following is a summary of the conflict resolution strategies named and discussed by the children concerning how they would respond in an argument like the one in the play:

- Five of the children said that they would leave. One said that they would do this to show how they felt. Most of them said that they would not allow someone to continuously shout at them.
- One child said that he would surrender because winning is not important if it is just a game.
- One child said that he would sort it out by himself to defend himself.
- Two children indicated that they would hit back to defend themselves.
- One child said that he would threaten to tell an adult to get the other child to stop hitting him.
- One child said that he would tell the child hitting him to back off in an effort to protect himself.
- One child said that she would cry because she would not know what to do and she would feel helpless.
- Two children said that they would withdraw to avoid trouble.
- Two children said that they would apologise so that they could remain in the team/game.
- One child said that he would kick the dog out of anger.
- One child said that he would talk about it to avoid getting into trouble with parents.
- Two children said that they would get aggressive with their friends out of anger.

- One child said that she would ignore the problem to avoid getting into trouble with parents.
- One child said that she would take them to the adult in charge because she would not handle them on her own.

#### **4.6 Document analysis**

The children read and dramatised a play as a stimulus for writing and drawing. Although the stimulus material was used to provoke thought on conflict resolution, they were not restricted in their response. They could respond to their ideas, thoughts and feelings during the FGDs and interviews, or they could write a fantasy story. I asked them to produce two pieces of free writing and drawing on different occasions for confirmability and variety. I informed them that I was interested in what they were thinking. They were therefore to focus on writing what they thought and felt without worrying about spelling or grammar. I also informed them that I was interested in what they drew, rather than how they drew. They were therefore to focus on drawing what they thought and felt without worrying about drawing well.

##### **4.6.1 Stimulus material for document analysis**

The stimulus material used for document analysis was a play, *The blind men and the elephant* (Hofmeyr, 2012, pp. 53-58). Each man felt a part of the elephant and thought that he knew how the elephant looked. When they discussed their findings with each other, they began to fight as each man thought that he had possessed knowledge of the truth. They could not concede to each other, because their ideas were in opposition to those of the others. Eventually they learn that

each one had a piece of the puzzle, and that when they put their ideas together it formed the whole picture. The children enjoyed dramatising the play, and they understood its meaning.

#### **4.6.2 Analysing written documents and drawings**

In this analysis I have combined data from the two pieces of free writing and the two drawings, because they are closely related. In the first picture the children drew a series of about three small pictures showing how the story progressed. My analysis of data produced by each child follows.

##### ***4.6.2.1 Ged***

In the first story Ged was bullied by an older cousin. His parents did not believe this. One day he frightened his cousin, then she stopped troubling him. The two strategies he employed were that he sought adult intervention, and when this failed, he sorted the problem out himself by teaching his cousin a lesson.

In the second story there was a girl who always complained for nothing, so her teacher ignored her. One day her things got lost. When she started crying, her teacher believed her. The strategy of complaining to adults was used, but did not work because the girl had a reputation of complaining. Crying and showing emotion proved to be a successful strategy, because it got the adult's attention.

Ged also wrote about a fat boy who was always hungry. He was not accepted by his peers until he went to the clinic and got advice from the doctor. Then his peers accepted him. The strategy employed was to seek help from a professional because the professional gives correct advice which solves the problem.

Ged's first drawing shows how he used the strategy of frightening his cousin, and by doing so asserted his authority over her. This was a successful strategy because she realised his power, and backed down.

Ged's second drawing depicts the girl who constantly complains to her teacher. Her strategy is to seek attention for comfort, because she feels insecure. Ged points out that it is not a good idea to complain constantly, because just like in the story 'the boy who cried wolf', people get tired of complaints, and they won't help.

#### **4.6.2.2 Kay**

In Kay's first story a boy called Jerry is angry because his family and friends do not have time to attend to him. He decides to go away, but the thought of a tiger scared him and he returned home. He runs away again because his father wears a mask of a tiger to scare him. His father apologises and Jerry decides to forgive him only if he doesn't scare him again. Jerry uses escapism into fantasy as a coping mechanism for his extreme and recurring fear of his father. He does this because he does not get emotional support from family and friends. He projects and transfers his fear of his father onto the tiger.

In Kay's second story, a clever boy is teased by bullies because they are jealous that his parents are married, unlike theirs. He tells them to back off. The boy passes, the bullies fail, and the boy's father complains to the principal about the bullying. The boy's own intervention of standing up for himself did not work. Adult intervention helped, as the boy's father is perceived as having more authority. He also learnt that if you leave it to fate, justice will prevail.

Kay's first picture shows a boy standing in fear, with his hand on his face, pointing to a possible injury. It may depict a strategy of freezing because of fear, and asking for help because of feeling powerless to do anything himself.

The second picture shows the boy's father and the principal talking to the bully. The strategy here again is to seek adult protection because adults have authority over the bullies.

#### **4.6.2.3 Lin**

Lin's first story is about a girl, Zilla, who is ill-treated by her friends. She wants to save her dignity but does not want to use violence because she believes that violence is wrong. Zilla is clueless about what strategy to use because of her personal beliefs, her struggle to maintain her dignity and her desperation to be accepted by her friends.

In her second story Lin describes a girl who is overprotected by her granny. The children tease her for this and she realises that she has to learn to fight her own battles. She feels ashamed and helpless concerning how to start standing up for herself. The strategy that the girl was used to, namely seeking adult protection, is no longer viable because of peer pressure. She knows what strategy she should use – that she should fight her own battle – but she lacks the confidence to try.

Lin's first picture is a series of three scenes. The first shows Zilla being abused by her friends, the second shows Zilla standing alone and crying, and the third shows Zilla apologising unhappily, and her friend smiling in victory. The strategy she employs here is submission and surrender. She does this out of desperation to be included in their group.

Lin's second picture shows a boy, Zolani, whose granny comes to school to defend him. The teacher intervenes, stating that this is not the way to solve the problem. The strategy here is

the intervention of the authority figure – the teacher. The figure of the teacher dominates the page, showing her power. The reason for this strategy is that the child feels powerless to fight his own battles. The figure of the child is small and unhappy.

#### ***4.6.2.4 Lucky***

Lucky's first story is about a boy, Blessing, who is bullied at school and tells his parents, who talk to the principal. The principal speaks to the bullies, but the bullying continues. Blessing thinks of kicking the bullies, or going to another school, but realises that this would not take away the hurt he feels. The teacher asks the bullies to apologise. She asks Blessing to forgive them, but he never did. The strategy Blessing uses is adult intervention, after realising that violence and fleeing would not help his pain. Eventually the bullying stops, but it does not repair the hurt that Blessing feels. Although the external conflict is resolved, the internal turmoil it has caused remains unresolved.

Lucky's second story is about a boy who had a dilemma about taking the advice of his parents to be careful when he was sick, or to do what he really wanted to, which was to have fun. He was also embarrassed to show his friends that he had to be careful. He ended up more sick and hurt. The strategy that he used was to act in favour of his own pleasure against his better judgement and the advice of his parents. The reason he did this was to be accepted by his friends and to satisfy his own need for fun.

Lucky's first picture shows the bully harassing a boy, Blessing. The principal sees the bully doing this, and the teacher punishes the bully. The strategy here is adult intervention. It looks as if Blessing would have got into trouble with his teacher if he had tried to retaliate.

The second drawing by Lucky refers to his second story. Although he has been injured, is bleeding and crying, he still presents a bold, superhero-like figure called 'Thunder Boy'. This indicates a desire to still be active and adventurous while in pain. The strategy is to face danger fearlessly, in spite of the bleeding and tears. The strategy, which may involve wishful thinking, is to face danger with strength and power. He uses this strategy to be vicariously victorious.

#### ***4.6.2.5 Mel***

Mel's first story is about a girl who was being teased and hit. Nobody cared or helped, they just laughed. She cried. Then she became angry, but just ignored the problem out of fear of doing something wrong. One girl confessed that she was also being bullied. The teacher took the bullies to the principal. The girls told their parents, but they will never forget that day. There are many strategies employed here. The girl could have cried out of helplessness, self-pity or anger. She experienced these feelings because of a lack of support from onlookers. She chose to refrain from responding or reacting because she did not want to get into trouble for doing something wrong. She waited for and relied on outside intervention. The teacher came to her rescue. She reported to her parents in an attempt to feel happy again.

In her second story Mel describes a young drug addict whose family rejected him because of his lies and irresponsibility. She suggests that he seeks help from the Pastor and the church, gets involved in church activities and moves on with his life. The strategy of choice here is to seek help from a religious organisation which would teach good values, strengthen faith, give hope, and provide guidance to do what is right.

In Mel's first picture she draws the girl in her first story who cries because she is being teased. She smiles in the end. The drawing does not capture the strategies that were used to resolve the conflict.

Mel's second picture shows a boy with a thought bubble. He is deciding what to do. He decides not to listen to adults and go to hospital, but buys more drugs instead. The first strategy was to take advice from adults, maybe because it made sense to him. However, he decides to solve his problems by taking more drugs, perhaps because this was easier for him to do. He refuses to go to the hospital to get professional help, perhaps because he is not used to taking responsibility for his actions.

#### **4.6.2.6 Toni**

Toni's first story is about her little sister, Amahle, who was given less change by the tuckshop owner. Toni went back with Amahle to confront him. He took out a sjambok to hit them. Toni wanted to pick up a stick to hit him, but was afraid of getting marks on her body. They began running and screaming, threatening to go to the police. When he heard their threat, he apologised. Toni's first strategy was to confront the owner to seek justice. She then wanted to use a weapon to defend herself and her sister, but was afraid of getting badly hurt. She decided to flee to safety, and to threaten the owner with intervention by someone of higher authority than him. Another strategy she used was to scream, so as to alert people to help.

Toni's second story is of a girl called Mbali who was rejected by her peers because they thought she had no parents and was dirty. Mbali's parents lived in another province. Mbali was embarrassed and had to prove to her peers that she had parents. Her strategy was to provide

evidence, by getting her parents to reveal themselves. She did this to show that she was worthy of their acceptance.

The first picture shows Amahle and Toni running from the tuckshop owner. The strategies used here are the same as those used in Toni's first story.

The second picture shows an empty house. It also shows a girl demanding proof that Mbali has parents. The strategy Mbali uses is to defend herself verbally. The reason she did this is that she knows that it is difficult to get her parents to come to visit. They are not there to support her and make her feel secure, therefore she needs the acceptance of her peers.

#### ***4.6.2.7 Summary of conflict resolution strategies used in the documents***

In this section I summarise the conflict resolution strategies which the children named, wrote about and drew about. Often the reasons for using certain strategies had to be interpreted from clues in the story. The children described multiple strategies for dealing with conflict. This shows that they are aware that they have choices. The list of strategies follows, together with possible reasons for their use:

- Seeking adult intervention was mentioned eight times. The child may feel powerless to defend himself and the adult represents authority.
- Crying was used twice as a tool to get attention or to express anger, self-pity, helplessness and lack of support.
- Complaining regularly to get attention. This is probably due to feelings of insecurity.
- Seeking professional help to get correct advice.

- Two children described escaping into a fantasy world. One child did this out of extreme and recurring fear. The other child thought of himself as a superhero in order to gain vicarious power.
- Verbal defence was used on three occasions. This may have been used as it is seen as an acceptable way of handling conflict.
- Leaving it to fate, because of a belief that justice will prevail.
- Freezing out of fear.
- Not using violence because of a belief that it is wrong.
- No strategy, because of fear of standing up for yourself.
- Submission and surrender because the child is desperate to be included.
- The use of violence and a weapon in the hope that it would put a stop to the problem and for self-defence.
- Two children mentioned fleeing to get away from the problem.
- Not retaliating in order to avoid trouble.
- Seeking help from a religious organisation because it would provide support and guidance to do what is right.
- Use of drugs to avoid taking responsibility.
- Screaming to alert people to help.
- Proving yourself in order to gain acceptance.
- Teaching the other child a lesson and thus asserting your authority because other strategies did not work.

## **4.7 What strategies do Grade four children use to resolve conflict and why do they use those strategies?**

In this chapter of my study I have named, described, explained and summarised the data I collected from six Grade four children in a primary school in the Umlazi District in an attempt to determine which conflict resolution strategies children use, and why they use these strategies. I have grouped similar strategies together, resulting in ten basic strategies.

Of these ten, the most popular strategies named were avoidance, seeking support, verbal strategies and fleeing. Other strategies used were submission, the use of violence and crying. The least used strategies were proving oneself, escapism, and teaching the other person a lesson. Each strategy could have been used as a result of various influences. I have tried to identify these influences wherever possible. A summary of the strategies used, and reasons for their use follows. Although the reasons for using the named strategies were provided by the children, the children seemed unaware of the influences behind the reasons.

### **4.7.1 Avoidance**

Strategies in this category include avoiding conflict, withdrawing, not retaliating, freezing and allowing fate to take its course. Reasons given that may have had sociocultural and social learning influences were: to prevent getting hurt, to prevent the loss of possessions, and to avoid getting into trouble with parents and adults. Another interesting reason given was to prevent hunger. In this situation a child avoids conflict so that his food is not taken away from him. The following reasons may have been influenced by personality: fear, a belief that justice will prevail and non-violent beliefs. The child's cognitive development may also be responsible for the logical thoughts that it is sensible for self-protection to avoid trouble.

#### **4.7.2 Seeking support**

The children stated that they seek support mainly from adults, but also from professionals, religious organisations, places of safety and peers. They may have learnt socially that adults and professionals have the authority to resolve conflicts successfully, that adults can provide protection, that there is safety in numbers, and that religious organisations, places of safety and professions are well equipped to deal with conflict. Personality factors might also have influenced them to believe that they are inadequate and emotionally needy.

#### **4.7.3 Verbal strategies**

The children stated that they retaliate, negotiate, confront and express themselves verbally, they speak about the problem, scream, and pretend to be brave. They may have learnt socially that they can protect and defend themselves using these strategies. They may have learnt through their education at school that they can assert their rights verbally, that they have a right to be listened to, and that when they have a problem they should talk about it. Personality factors may also have affected choice, in that a particular child might be a good team worker or might prefer to express himself verbally.

#### **4.7.4 Fleeing**

Walking or running away could be a function of certain types of personality. A child who is timid, gentle or afraid may use this strategy, or a child might run away out of guilt if he is wrong. A child may also walk out as a sign of protest, to assert his rights not to be treated badly.

#### **4.7.5 Submission**

Children named submitting, surrendering and apologising even if you are right as strategies to deal with conflict. Personality factors may be responsible for their feelings of inadequacy, their desperation to be included and their preference to avoid confrontation. Developmental factors may be responsible for logical thinking that winning is not important because it was just a game that was being played, that fighting is not preferable because of inexperience, or to apologise in order to remain in the team. The child might also have learned socially to submit in order to be protected from harm.

#### **4.7.6 Use of violence**

The children spoke about using violence, using a weapon and becoming aggressive. It may be an instinctive response to hit back, and personality factors might predispose the child to anger or bravery. The child may have learnt socially that violence will stop the problem, or that using a weapon to threaten or scare someone is a successful strategy.

#### **4.7.7 Crying**

Personality factors may have contributed to a child expressing fear, anger, disappointment at lack of support and helplessness through tears. She could have learnt socially that she has no hope because she is weaker than the boy who is harassing her, and that she can get attention and evoke sympathy or a favourable response through her tears.

#### **4.7.8 Escapism**

Two children used escapism into a fantasy world as a coping mechanism; one to escape intense and recurring fear, and the other to vicariously gain the power of a superhero. Personality factors may have predisposed them to use these coping strategies. The use of drugs was also mentioned as a coping strategy to escape taking responsibility. The use of drugs could be a behaviour learnt socially from peers or community members.

#### **4.7.9 Proving oneself**

This was not a popular strategy. The child needed to provide proof of what was required by her peer group in order to gain their acceptance. It was probably personality factors that contributed to her feeling desperate for their acceptance.

#### **4.7.10 Teaching someone a lesson**

This was also not a popular strategy. The child used this non-violent strategy to assert his authority by teaching the offender that he was stronger than her. The reason he chose this strategy was that other strategies of choice failed. He may have used his cognitive abilities to create a unique strategy that suited him well and proved successful.

### **4.8 A critical analysis**

I have viewed this study through the critical paradigm. Scotland (2012, p. 13) states that “the critical paradigm seeks to emancipate”. Henning (2004, p. 23) explains that in critical research “People can design their own worlds. They can engineer their futures through action and critical reflection”. Emancipation and empowerment are important concepts in critical theory. I have

examined the data with these two concepts in mind. I have asked the question: “How do the strategies employed by Grade four children emancipate and empower them when they face conflict?” I have also asked the question: “‘Whose peace’ is served when children resolve conflict using different strategies?” (Curtis, 2012, p. 13). Another question I have asked is: “Which cultural factors need to be considered in evaluating these strategies?” (Fry & Bjorkqvist, 2013, p. 17). It is not simple to classify the strategies used as empowering or disempowering, emancipating or enslaving, as each strategy cannot be analysed in isolation. The context and reasons why the strategy was used are among the important factors to consider. A critical analysis of the dominating strategy used by each of the six children follows.

### **Ged**

When Ged’s friend started fighting with him, claiming that he won the game when he had actually cheated, Ged’s strategy was to surrender his victory. The reason he did this was to maintain peace. He is a victim of the hegemony that order should be maintained at all costs. He rationalises that it was nothing serious, just a game. This act disempowers Ged as he hands over his victory. The peace that was obtained here is tainted with immorality. Therefore this strategy cannot be considered a constructive one.

### **Kay**

Kay stated that he would flee if a bully was trying to extort his chips. He would do this to protect his chips because he was very hungry. Although fleeing generally may be considered a strategy that does not empower, in this case Ged’s socio-economic conditions, which led to his hunger, change the way we view and understand his action.

**Lin**

Lin cries because she feels helpless when her friends fight with her. By doing this she is disempowering herself. Verbal confrontation would be a better alternative, but Lin first needs to improve her personality by starting to believe in herself. Lin may be a victim of the hegemony that girls are not strong, and that standing up for yourself is not desirable.

**Lucky**

Lucky uses verbal strategies to negotiate a settlement with his coach because he is desperate to stay in the team. He uses an empowering strategy to meet his needs. The peace that follows is agreeable to all.

**Mel**

Mel believes in her own authority as a leader. In the dispute she believes that the other child should recognise her position, and accept her leadership. She uses verbal strategies to settle the conflict. She also engages in self-reflection, and realises that as a leader she must not allow problems at home to affect her mood. Mel is already in a position of power. She does well to ensure that she maintains her position through constant self-reflection. She uses heteronomy to assert her authority as a leader.

**Toni**

Toni seeks the intervention, protection and support of authoritative adults. She does this when she is threatened with violence by another adult. This is a wise decision, as she realises that she cannot match the force that confronts her. Seeking help under these circumstances empowers her.

**4.9 A comparison of this study to the literature reviewed**

In chapter two of this study I reviewed recent literature to establish the arguments that other scholars have put forward concerning the strategies that children use to resolve conflict and the reasons why they use those strategies. I viewed the literature using the social learning theory framework and identified various other influences that affect children's choices of conflict resolution strategies. These influences are the sociocultural environment, development, education and training, personality and support, and form a unique combination in every child and act as precursors of their behaviour. A comparison of the literature reviewed and the data collected in this study follows.

**4.9.1 Sociocultural influences**

Avci and Gucray (2013), Churchman (2013), Jones (2007), Kabasakal (2013), Sathiparsad (2003) and Thornberg and Knutsen (2011) argue that children can learn conflict resolution strategies like violence, conforming to the rules, and girls using polite strategies from their sociocultural environments. Collectively they attribute the reasons for these strategies being used to the influence of hegemony, heteronomy, role models, the media, interparental conflict, the family's anger management skills, and bullying behaviour.

The data in this study concur with the argument that the sociocultural environment and social learning strongly influence the strategies that children use to resolve conflict. However, while the scholars mentioned above focused on a few destructive strategies, this study shows that sociocultural factors impact greatly on children using a variety of strategies, both constructive and destructive, like avoidance, seeking support, verbal strategies, fleeing, submission, violence, crying and escapism by taking drugs.

While these scholars emphasised social learning, they excluded the very important aspect of socio-economic conditions. In one of the stories used in my study, when a child was confronted by a bully who threatened to take his chips, some of the children indicated that he should hold onto his chips and flee. The reasons given for this was that he was hungry and would do anything to protect his chips. It must be noted that scholars need to consider socio-economic conditions when viewing social and cultural influences on behavior during conflicts.

Churchman (2013, p. 13) argues that there is a gap in the knowledge of ethical and moral conflict due to inadequate research methods. The FGDs, one-on-one in-depth interviews and document analysis used in this study have created avenues of collecting data that can fill the gap in this area of research. For example, Ged, a participant in this study, claimed that he allowed his friend to win a game even though he knew that his friend was cheating. This was not an ethical strategy to resolve his conflict, he did this in order to preserve his friendship and maintain a false sense of peace. While I agree with Churchman (2013) that there is a lack of information on ethical and moral conflicts, I have shown here that by investigating reasons for choosing specific conflict resolution strategies, using collection tools that gather in-depth data, information in this area of study may be obtained.

### **4.9.2 Development**

Kern (2012), Recchia et al. (2013) and Leventhal (2007) argue that age-related cognitive abilities strongly indicate which conflict resolution strategies children use and the reasons why they use them. Piaget's theory of cognitive development forms the core of their arguments. These scholars claim that children can use their cognitive abilities to negotiate, disagree with their peers, and stand up for themselves.

Data collected in this study concur, revealing that children in Grade four used verbal strategies to defend themselves, to negotiate and to be comfortable with disagreeing with their friends. However, data in this study show that Grade four children also used logical thinking to avoid conflict, and to submit. Lucky, a participant in this study, used logical thinking to submit by apologising to the coach in order to achieve his aim of remaining on the team.

### **4.9.3 Education and training**

Sathiparsad (2003), Kern (2012) and Jones (2007) advocate conflict resolution training programmes as an intervention strategy to resolve and prevent conflicts. These programmes focused on and promoted the use of strategies like constructive negotiation and communication skills. While these programmes are commendable for what they were trying to achieve, they neglected to investigate and report on the reasons why some of their trainees chose strategies such as avoidance, suppression, aggression and coercion, and why some left their conflict unresolved.

Data collected in this study concur that education and training have a vital role to play in resolving and preventing conflict. Although none of the participants or their families received formal conflict management training, the school curriculum in general and the Life Skills and

Social Sciences syllabi in particular offer guidance in this regard. Kay, a participant in this study, states that he would walk out in protest if someone kept shouting at him, because he will not accept being spoken to badly. This indicates that he is aware of his rights, and Children's Rights is a prescribed topic in the Grade four Life Skills syllabus.

#### **4.9.4 Personality**

Field et al. (2014, p. 99) argue that personality factors could be used to predict which conflict resolution strategies students would use. Although this study shows that there are patterns of behaviour which could be attributed to personality style, the participants also named multiple strategies that they use for a specific type of conflict, depending on the situation. In this regard my study concurs with that of Domino and Domino (2006, p. 67), who warn that personality alone should not be regarded as a predictor of behaviour, but that the interaction between personality and context must be given consideration.

#### **4.9.5 Support**

Salvas (2014), Ladd et al. (2014), and Avci and Guçray (2013) argue that the support a child gets from friends and peers affects how that child resolves conflict. My data concur; Zilla, a character described by Lin, lacked peer support, felt helpless and began crying as a way to get attention and evoke sympathy from others. However, while the literature reviewed focused almost entirely on the support of peers and friends, the data I collected reveal that children relied hugely on the support of adults to assist them in resolving their conflicts. Toni, a participant in this study, sought the help of a police officer in one of her stories, and the help of her parents in another.

Sandile, a character in Kay's story, sought the help of his parents, the class teacher and the principal to rescue him from his situation of conflict.

#### **4.9.6 Interaction of influences**

Various scholars have discussed various strategies that children use to resolve conflict. The scholars have generally focused on one or two factors which influence the reasons why children use these strategies. Based on the data collected in this study, I concur that each factor put forward in the argument of each scholar contributes to the manner in which children resolve conflict. However, this study refutes the argument of most of the scholars that one or two influences like personality or social learning can define, control and predict which conflict resolution strategies are used by children, and the reasons why they are used. Instead, data collected in this study concur with the findings of Churchman (2013, p. 91), who claims that it is an interaction of various influences that determines conflict style.

#### **4.10 Conclusion**

In this chapter I analysed the data collected from FGDs and interviews with and documents produced by six Grade four children. I found that avoidance, seeking support, verbal strategies, fleeing, the use of violence, submission, crying, escapism, proving oneself and teaching someone a lesson were strategies that were used in conflict resolution. I discussed reasons for the use of these strategies as provided by the children, and commented on the various factors which could have influenced their choice. A critical analysis of the dominant strategies used by each child followed. I ended the chapter with a comparison of the arguments offered in the literature review and the findings of my study.

In the next chapter I discuss the findings, make recommendations and offer suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter five**

### **Summary of findings and recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter I presented and critically analysed the data which I collected from FGDs and one-on-one in-depth interviews with and documents produced by the children. I have done this in order to answer the two key questions in this study: What strategies do Grade four children use to resolve conflict?, and Why do they choose those strategies? I have compared the data I collected to the arguments presented by scholars in recent literature. In this chapter I present a summary of the findings of this study, make recommendations which are based on my findings, and make suggestions for further research in areas where it is needed.

#### **5.2 Summary of findings**

The following is a summary of my findings from the data analysed in this study.

##### **5.2.1 Strategies used**

I identified ten strategies which were used by the children, which I combined into the following groups, listed here according to their popularity:

- The most popular strategies used were avoidance, seeking support, verbal strategies and fleeing.
- Submission, the use of violence and crying were also among the strategies used.
- Proving oneself, escapism and teaching the other person a lesson were the least used strategies.

### **5.2.2 Reasons for choosing strategies**

The following five influences in various combinations affected the children's choice of conflict resolution strategies: the sociocultural context, personality, education and training, cognitive development and support structures.

### **5.2.3 Matching strategies to the reasons for their use**

In this study the three tools used to obtain data produced similar outcomes. Similar strategies were identified, and similar factors influenced the reasons why they were used. Each situation was unique, and therefore a child who used one strategy in one situation did not necessarily use the same strategy in a different situation. However, the children's personalities did emerge from the rich data produced, which contributed to basic patterns in their choice of strategies.

### **5.2.4 A social learning framework**

It was appropriate to use the social learning framework in this study as sociocultural factors emerged from the data as a strong influence in a large number of the strategies used.

### **5.2.5 A critical view**

This study was viewed from the critical paradigm. I found that hegemony and heteronomy were sociocultural factors which influenced how the children resolved conflict. I have analysed the conflict resolution strategies used by the children and commented on how these strategies empowered or disempowered them. Viewing the strategies that children use to resolve conflict critically may contribute to the knowledge of how children can take charge of their lives and, by using empowering strategies, turn their lives around for the better.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

This study found that the conflict resolution strategies used by children are not always the best ones available. I recommend that children be assisted to discover, create and choose conflict resolution strategies that are healthy, constructive and lead to their own well-being as well as to the well-being of others.

This may be done firstly by running more awareness campaigns on conflict resolution. Children do not generally actively think about how they resolve conflict and what alternatives they may use. These campaigns would encourage self-reflection and promote better choices. Secondly, more training programmes should be conducted on conflict resolution. My suggestions concerning how these campaigns and programmes may be run follow.

#### **5.3.1 Schools and educational institutions**

Greater awareness of conflict resolution strategies should be included in the school and teacher training curricula. More conflict resolution training programmes should be run in schools and in other educational institutions. This may be done in the following ways:

- Intensify the focus on conflict resolution strategies during Life Skills lessons.
- Review methods of teaching conflict resolution strategies in the Life Skills curriculum.
- Incorporate awareness of conflict resolution strategies into the literature during language teaching, in Social Sciences, in Creative Arts and in other subjects wherever possible.
- Include more group work in all subjects and monitor and encourage constructive conflict resolution strategies during these sessions.
- Monitor and encourage constructive conflict resolution strategies within and between teams in physical education and sports.

### **5.3.2 The family**

A large number of parents of the children at Sunshine Primary School also have children in the neighbouring high schools. Many of the children at these high schools resort to violence, bullying, truancy and the taking of alcohol and drugs as ways to resolve their conflicts. Many parents struggle to help their teenage children, and would welcome solutions to their difficulties. The School Governing Body may assist them by arranging conflict resolution awareness campaigns and training programmes for them. Parents would then be able to reflect on strategies used by their family members. They would be in a position to observe and guide their teenagers concerning their choice of conflict resolution strategies. They would also be able to train their primary school children to choose constructive conflict resolution strategies.

### **5.3.3 The community**

The leaders of non-governmental organisations, religious groups, sports clubs and other community organisations should arrange for conflict resolution awareness campaigns and training programmes to be conducted in their neighbourhoods. In this way children may receive guidance on how to resolve conflict through Sunday school classes, book clubs, drama clubs, etc.

### **5.3.4 The medical field**

Medical practitioners like doctors, nurses and psychiatrists often treat the symptoms of poorly chosen conflict resolution strategies. Children come to them with physical ailments triggered by fear, anxiety and emotional trauma. They also come with physical wounds resulting from violent conflict. Together with medical treatment, these practitioners should also make children aware that they should consider better choices when resolving conflict.

### **5.3.5 The commercial world**

It is likely that children who use poor conflict resolution strategies struggle to resolve conflict later when they enter employment. This would impact negatively on the company that he or she works for. It would benefit employers to invest in financing and sponsoring conflict resolution awareness campaigns and training programmes for children in their towns and cities.

### **5.3.6 Ongoing projects**

Conflict resolution awareness campaigns and training programmes for children should be ongoing projects so that knowledge may spread and children may be empowered to take control of their destinies. Through self-reflection and positive action, children may be brought up from a young age to deal with conflict in healthy ways that benefit not only themselves, but their families and communities as well.

## **5.4 Suggestions for further research**

Some of the consequences of unresolved or poorly resolved conflict in children may be violence, bullying, alcohol and drug abuse, depression and suicide. As an intervention and a prevention strategy, I suggest that further research of the kinds outlined below be conducted on how children resolve conflict.

### **5.4.1 Case studies**

This study and its findings are case specific. Similar cases in other contexts will add to the rich data gathered here. Findings of those studies may be compared to the findings in this study. This will broaden the body of knowledge on conflict resolution.

### **5.4.2 Direct observation**

The data in this study were collected from FGDs, interviews and documents. Other instruments may be used to widen the scope of data collection. In her thesis Leventhal (2007) questions whether children resolve conflict in the ways that they say, and she found that they do not always do so. Therefore, further studies using direct observation should provide reliable data on the strategies actually used.

### **5.4.3 Long-term studies**

Evaluating conflict resolution strategies is not simple, as a number of factors such as the context and history as well as the consequences for the different people involved have to be considered. A strategy used in one situation may not be suitable in another. Therefore it would be informative to investigate the long-term consequences of using selected strategies in specific situations. Long-term studies would be beneficial for this purpose.

### **5.4.4 The feasibility of awareness campaigns and training programmes**

Studies conducted by Sathiparsad (2003), Kern (2012, pp. 263-270), and Jones (2007) have found that conflict resolution training programmes have been beneficial. However, these studies lack information on the reasons why children choose specific strategies to resolve conflict. In this chapter I have recommended that conflict resolution awareness campaigns and training programmes be conducted for children. Research investigating the feasibility of these programmes and when, where and how they should be conducted and the details of the courses offered will be helpful in setting these programmes in motion. Promoting the use of empowering strategies to resolve conflict may help children to become proactive and conquer their difficulties.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to identify strategies that Grade four children use to resolve conflict, and to investigate the reasons why they use those strategies. The social learning theory formed the framework for this study. The approach was qualitative inquiry and a case study design was used, with a sample consisting of six Grade four children selected to participate in this study. The context in which the research took place was a primary school in the Umlazi District in Durban. FGDs, one-on-one in-depth interviews and document analysis were the tools used to gather data. Ethical practices were used during data collection. Data were collected and analysed using the critical paradigm, which investigates how knowledge is produced and applied.

The findings were reported on, recommendations were made and suggestions were offered for further research. The six children who participated in this study have been made aware of how they resolve conflict, and the reasons for their use of those strategies. They have had the opportunity to reflect on their own behaviour and the factors which influence their behaviour. In doing so, they have empowered themselves to make better choices in future. Such awareness through education and training can and should be made available to every child.

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## Appendix A



education

Department:  
Education  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref:2/4/8/212

Mrs C.O. Maharaj  
18 Abelia Road  
Asherville  
DURBAN  
4091

Dear Mrs Maharaj

#### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES USED BY GRADE FOUR CHILDREN IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THE UMLAZI DISTRICT", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 August 2014 to 30 June 2015.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (Umlazi district).

**Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD**  
Head of Department: Education  
Date: 06 August 2014

#### KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa  
 PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004  
 EMAIL ADDRESS: [keholoqile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:keholoqile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za); CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363;  
 WEBSITE: [WWW.kzmeducation.gov.za](http://WWW.kzmeducation.gov.za)

## Appendix B



## Appendix C

Department of Educational Psychology  
 School of Education  
 Edgewood College  
 University of KwaZulu-Natal  
 10 May 2014

The Principal, SGB Chairperson

Dear Sirs

**LETTER OF ACCESS PERMISSION : (Principal and SGB Chairperson)**

I, Mrs C. O. Maharaj, the Educator of Grade 4 B at \_\_\_\_\_ Primary School, am doing research as part of the M. Ed degree at UKZN. I am interested in finding out how children deal with conflict, and why they respond to conflict in the ways that they do. Making children aware of how they deal with conflict may help them to reflect on their own actions. It is hoped that this self awareness will lead to children making better choices to deal with conflict in positive ways.

With your permission, I would like to work with six grade four children to gather information. The following guiding principles will be followed:

- An 'Application for Permission to Conduct Research in KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions' form will be submitted during May 2014.
- Ethical clearance by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee will be applied for during May 2014.
- Consent forms signed by participants and their parents / guardians will be filed.
- Confidentiality is guaranteed as names of participants or the school will not be mentioned.
- Information given will not be used against the participants or the school.
- Information will only be used for this research study, and may be used by the KZ-N Department of Education, should they so wish.
- Information will be stored in secure storage by the supervisor for 5 years, after which it will be destroyed by shredding.
- Participants and parents have a choice to participate, not to participate, or to stop participating during the research. Nobody will be penalized for their choice.
- Participation is purely for academic purposes only, and there is no financial remuneration or reward.
- The study will be conducted during June and July 2014. There will be no disruption of teaching or learning time. Non-teaching time e.g. the second lunch break may be used for the research. Participants will not be kept in school after school hours.
- Participants will be asked to read, dramatize, discuss, answer questions, write responses and draw in response to stories and plays.
- The texts that participants will engage with will be age appropriate grade 4 text books recommended by the Department of Education.
- Parents and participants will indicate if they are willing to be recorded by audio / video equipment during the research sessions.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact me, my supervisor, or the research office.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Researcher: Mrs C.O.Maharaj

Qualifications: B.Paed. B.Ed (Honours)

E-mail: clara.olive.m@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr V. Jairam.

Qualifications: B.Paed. - B.A.(Honours) - M.Ed.(Ed. Psych.) - PhD-UKZN.

Registered Educational Psychologist (HPSCA)

She may be contacted at:

Office no: CS133, Edgewood College, University of KwaZulu-Natal

E-mail: jairam@ukzn.ac.za

Tel: 0827700509 / 0312601438

The Research Office: Mr P.Mohun

HSSREC Research Office

Tel: 0312604557. Fax: 0312604609.

E-Mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

**An official letter of Access Permission is required by the Ethics Committee from the school, bearing the school letterhead, stamp and signatures of the Principal and SGB Chairperson. It would be appreciated if you could provide me with the same.**

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Yours faithfully

.....

Researcher: Mrs C.O.Maharaj

## Appendix D

Department of Educational Psychology  
 School of Education  
 Edgewood College  
 University of KwaZulu-Natal

Dear Parent / Guardian

**LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT : (Parent)**

I, Mrs C. O. Maharaj, am the Educator of Grade 4 B at \_\_\_\_\_ Primary School. I am doing research as part of the M. Ed degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

I am interested in finding out how children deal with conflict, and why they respond to conflict in the ways that they do. Making children aware of how they deal with conflict may help them to reflect on their own actions. It is hoped that this self awareness will lead to children making better choices to deal with conflict in positive ways.

With your permission, I would like to work with your child / ward, to gather information. The following guiding principles will be followed:

- Confidentiality is guaranteed as your child's/ ward's name will not be mentioned.
- Information given will not be used against the child.
- Information will only be used for this research study, and may be used by the KZ-N Department of Education, should they so wish.
- Information will be stored in secure storage by the Supervisor for 5 years, after which it will be destroyed by shredding.
- The child has a choice to participate, not to participate, or to stop participating during the research. The child will not be penalized for his / her choice.
- Should the child feel stressed during the study, the session will be stopped, and, if necessary, I will counsel the child. If further intervention is required, the Supervisor, who is a registered educational psychologist will be contacted.
- The child's participation is purely for academic purposes only, and there is no financial remuneration or reward.
- The study will be conducted during June and July 2014. There will be no disruption of the child's learning time. Non-teaching time e.g. the second lunch break may be used for the research. The child will not be kept in school after school hours.
- The child will be asked to read, dramatize, discuss, answer questions, write responses and draw in response to stories and plays.
- The texts that the child will engage with will be age appropriate grade 4 text books recommended by the Department of Education.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact me, my supervisor, or the research office.

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

Researcher: Mrs C.O.Maharaj

Qualifications: B.Paed. B.Ed (Honours)

E-mail: clara.olive.m@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr V. Jairam.  
 Qualifications: B.Paed. - B.A.(Honours) - M.Ed.(Ed. Psych.) - PhD-UKZN.  
 Registered Educational Psychologist (HPSCA)  
 She may be contacted at:  
 Office no: CS133, Edgewood College, University of KwaZulu-Natal  
 E-mail: jairam@ukzn.ac.za  
 Tel: 0827700509 / 0312601438

The Research Office: Mr P. Mohun  
 HSSREC Research Office  
 Tel: 0312604557. Fax: 0312604609.  
 E-Mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Please indicate if you are willing to allow your child to be recorded in the following ways during the study sessions.

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Video equipment		

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

#### DECLARATION

I, .....

(full names of parent / guardian) hereby confirm that :

- I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project,
- I understand that my child / ward is at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should he / she so desire without any negative consequences,
- I have received a copy of this document and
- I consent to my child / ward participating in this research project.

Signature of participant's parent / guardian:

Date:

.....

.....

Department of Educational Psychology

School of Education

Edgewood College

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Mzali/Mbheki wengane othandekayo

### **INCWADI YEMVUME: (yomzali)**

Mina, uNkk. C.O. Maharaj, nginguthisha webanga lesine esikoleni samabanga aphansi  
Ngenza ucwaningo njengengxenywe yomsebenzi wami we M.Ed eNyuvesi  
yaKwaZulu-Natali.

Ngalolu cwano ngifisa ukwazi ukuthi izingane ziziphatha kanjani ezimweni zengxabano futhi kungani ziziphatha ngaleyo ndlela. Ukwenza izingane zazi ukuthi zibhekana kanjani nengxabano kungazisiza ukuthi zibhekisise izenzo zazo kulezi zimo. Ngiyethemba ukuthi loku kuyozisiza ukuthi zithathe izinqumo ezifanele, ukubhekana nezimo zengxabano.

Ngemvume yakho, ngingathanda ukusebenza nengane yakho ukuqokelela ulwazi. Nansi imigudu ezolandelwa:

- Konke kuzoba yimfihlo, igama lengane yakho alisoze ladalulwa.
- Ulwazi olunikeziwe alusoze lwasetshenziswa kabi enganeni yakho.
- Lolu lwazi luzosetshenziselwa ucwaningo kodwa kungenzeka lusetshenziswe nawuMnyango wezeMfundo KwaZulu-Natali, uma loMnyango unesifiso sokwenza loku.
- Ulwazi luyogcinwa endaweni ephephile nguMphathi wami iminyaka emihlanu, emva kwalokho luyobe selulahlwa ngemuva kokuklejulwa kwamaphepha aqukethe lona.
- Ingane ingazikhethela ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwano, noma ingalibambi, ingayeka phakathi nocwano. Ngeke ijeziswe ngesinqumo esithathile.
- Uma kwenzeka ingane izwa ingcindezi ngesikhathi socwano, kungamiswa loko okwenziwayo bese ngiyeluleka uma kunesidingo. Uma kumele kungenelele abanye, uMphathi wami, ongumeluleki osemthethweni uyokwaziswa ngalolu daba.
- Ukubamba iqhaza kwengane kumayelana nokufunda kuphela, ngeke kube khona nkokhelo noma imiklomele.

- Lolu cwaningo luzokwenzeka ngamaholide kaJuni no Julayi ku-2014. Ngeke ingane iphazamiseke ezifundweni zayo. Isikhathi sekhefu lesibili esikoleni kungenzeka sisetshenziselwe ucwaningo. Ingane ngeke ihlaliswe esikoleni uma isikole sesiphumile.
- Ingane iyocelwa ukuthi ifunde, ilingise, ixoxe, iphendule imibuzo, ibhale izimpendulo noma idwebe imibono yayo ngezi ndaba nemidlalo.
- Izindaba, ingane ezosebenza ngazo, ziyoba sezingeni leminyaka yengane kanti futhi kuyosetshenziswa izincwadi zebanga lesine ezinconwa uMnyango wezeMfundo.

Uma unemibuzo, ungakhululeka uxhumane nami, uMphathi wami noma ihhovisi locwaningo.

### IMININGWANE YOKUXHUMANA

UMcwaningi	: Nkk C.O. Maharaj
Iziqu	: B.Paed kanye B.Ed.(Honours)
i-email	: <a href="mailto:clara.olive.m@gmail.com">clara.olive.m@gmail.com</a>
Ucingo	
Umphathi wami	: Dkt. V. Jairam
Iziqu	: B.Paed. B.A (Honours)-M.Ed (Ed Psych.) – PhD-UKZN
UMeluleki osemthethweni wezeMfundo (HPSCA) utholakala lapha:	
Ihhovisi	: CS 133 Edgewood College, UKZN
i-email	: <a href="mailto:jairam@ukzn.ac.za">jairam@ukzn.ac.za</a>
ucingo	: 082 770 0509 noma (031)260-1438
Ihhovisi lezocwaningo	: Mnu. P. Mohun - HSSREC Research Office
Ucingo	: (031) 260-4557

Ifeksi : (031) 260-4609  
 i-email : [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

Ngicela ukhombise uma ungathanda ingane yakho iqoshwe ngalezi zindlela ezilandelayo ngesikhathi socwaningo.

	Ngingathanda	Angithandi
isiqophamazwi		
ividiyo		

Ngiyabonga ngokufaka kwakho isandla kulolu cwaningo.

### ISIBOPHEZELO

**Mina, .....**

**(amagama aphelele omzali)**

**Ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi :**

- ngiqonda konke okuqukethwe yilo mqulu kanye nohlobo locwaningo,
- ngiqonda ukuthi ingane yami ikhululekile ukuhoxa kulolu hlelo noma ngasiphi isikhathi uma ithanda ngaphandle kwemiphumela emibi kuyona,
- ngiyitholile ikhophi yalo mqulu futhi
- ngiyayivumela ingane yami ukuthi ibambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo.

**Ukusayina komzali / umbheki wengane :**

.....

**Usuku:**

.....

## Appendix E

Department of Educational Psychology  
 School of Education  
 Edgewood College  
 University of KwaZulu-Natal

Dear Participant

**LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT : (Participant)**

I, Mrs C. O. Maharaj, am the Educator of Grade 4 B at \_\_\_\_\_ Primary School. I am doing research as part of the M. Ed degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am interested in finding out how children deal with conflict, and why they respond to conflict in the ways that they do. Making children aware of how they deal with conflict may help them to reflect on their own actions. It is hoped that this self awareness will lead to children making better choices to deal with conflict in positive ways.

With your permission, I would like to work with you to gather information. The following guiding principles will be followed:

- Confidentiality is guaranteed as your name will not be mentioned.
- Information given will not be used against you.
- Information will only be used for this research study, and may be used by the KZ-N Department of Education, should they so wish.
- Information will be stored in secure storage by the supervisor for 5 years, after which it will be destroyed by shredding.
- You have a choice to participate, not to participate, or to stop participating during the research. You will not be penalized for your choice.
- Should you feel stressed during the study, the session will be stopped, and, if necessary, I will counsel you. If further intervention is required, the Supervisor, who is a registered educational psychologist will be contacted.
- Your participation is purely for academic purposes only, and there is no financial remuneration or reward.
- The study will be conducted during June and July 2014. There will be no disruption of your learning time. Non-teaching time e.g. the second lunch break may be used for the research. You will not be kept in school after school hours.
- You will be asked to read, dramatize, discuss, answer questions, write responses and draw in response to stories and plays.
- The texts that you will engage with will be age appropriate grade 4 text books recommended by the Department of Education.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact me, my supervisor, or the research office.

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

Researcher: Mrs C.O.Maharaj  
 Qualifications: B.Paed. B.Ed (Honours)  
 E-mail: clara.olive.m@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr V. Jairam.

Qualifications: B.Paed. - B.A.(Honours) - M.Ed.(Ed. Psych.) - PhD-UKZN.

Registered Educational Psychologist (HPSCA)

She may be contacted at:

Office no: CS133, Edgewood College, University of KwaZulu-Natal

E-mail: jairam@ukzn.ac.za

Tel: 0827700509 / 0312601438

The Research Office: Mr P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office

Tel: 0312604557. Fax: 0312604609.

E-Mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Please indicate if you are willing to be recorded in the following ways during the research sessions.

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Video equipment		

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

### DECLARATION

I, .....

**(full names of the child) hereby confirm that :**

- I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project,
- I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire without any negative consequences,
- I have received a copy of this document and
- I consent to participating in this research project.

**Signature of participant :**

**Date:**

.....

.....

Department of Educational Psychology  
 School of Education  
 Edgewood College  
 University of KwaZulu-Natal

Mfundu Othandekayo

**INCWADI YEMVUME: (ozobamba iqhaza)**

Mina. uNkk. C.O.Maharaj, nginguthisha webanga lesine esikoleni samabanga aphantsi Ngenza ucwaningo njengengxenye yomsebenzi wami we M.Ed eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natali.

Ngalolu cwano ngifisa ukwazi ukuthi izingane ziziphatha kanjani ezimweni zengxabano futhi kungani ziziphatha ngaleyo ndlela. Ukwenza izingane zazi ukuthi zibhekana kanjani nengxabano kungazisiza ukuthi zibhekisise izenzo zazo kulezi zimo. Ngiyethemba ukuthi loku kuyozisiza ukuthi zithathe izinqumo ezifanele, ukubhekana nezimo zengxabano.

Ngemvume yakho, ngingathanda ukusebenza nawe ukuqokelela ulwazi. Nansi imigudu ezolandelwa.:

- Konke kuzoba yimfihlo, igama lakho alisoze ladalulwa.
- Ulwazi olunikeziwe alusoze lwasetshenziswa kabi kuwena.
- Lolu lwazi luzosetshenziselwa ucwaningo kodwa kungenzeka lusetshenziswe nawuMnyango wezeMfundo KwaZulu-Natali, uma loMnyango unesifiso sokwenza loku.
- Ulwazi luyogcinwa endaweni ephaphile nguMphathi wami iminyaka emihlanu, emva kwalokho luyobe selulahlwa ngemuva kokuklejulwa kwamaphepha aqukethe lona.
- Ungazikhethela ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwano, noma ungalibambi, ungayeka phakathi nocwano. Ngeke ujeziswe ngesinqumo osithathile.
- Uma kwenzeka uzwa ingcindezi ngesikhathi socwano, kungamiswa loko okwenziwayo bese ngikweluleka uma kunesidingo. Uma kumele kungenelele abanye, uMphathi wami, ongumeluleki osemthethweni ayokwaziswa ngalolu daba.
- Ukubamba iqhaza kwakho kumayelana nokufunda kuphela, ngeke kube khona nkokhelo noma imiklomelo.
- Lolu cwano luzokwenzeka ngamaholide kaJuni no Julayi ku-2014. Ngeke uphazamiseke ezifundweni zakho. Isikhathi sekhefu lesibili esikoleni kungenzeka sisetshenziselwe ucwano. Ngeke uhlaliswe esikoleni uma isikole sesiphumile.

- Uyocelwa ukuthi ufunde, ulingise, uxoxe, uphendule imibuzo, ubhale izimpendulo noma udwebe imibono yakho ngezindaba nemidlalo.
- Izindaba, ozosebenza ngazo, ziyoba sezingeni leminyaka yakho kanti futhi kuyosetshenziswa izincwadi zebanga lesine ezinconywa uMnyango wezeMfundo.

Uma unemibuzo, ungakhululeka uxhumane nami, uMphathi wami noma ihhovisi locwaningo.

### IMINININGWANE YOKUXHUMANA

UMcwaningi : Nkk. C.O. Maharaj  
 Iziqu : B.Paed kanye B.Ed. (Honours)  
 i-email : [clara.olive.m@gmail.com](mailto:clara.olive.m@gmail.com)  
 Ucingo :

Umphathi wami : Dkt. V. Jairam  
 Iziqu : B.Paed. B.A. (Honours)-M.Ed  
 (Ed Psych.) – PhD-UKZN

UMeluleki osemthethweni wezeMfundo (HPSCA) utholakala lapha:

Ihhovisi : CS 133 Edgewood College, UKZN  
 i-email : [jairam@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:jairam@ukzn.ac.za)  
 ucingo : 082 770 0509 noma (031)260-1438

Ihhovisi lezocwaningo : Mnu. P. Mohun - HSSREC Research Office  
 Ucingo : (031) 260-4557  
 Ifeksi : (031) 260-4609  
 i-email : [mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

Ngicela ukhombise uma ungathanda ukuthi uqoshwe ngalezi zindlela ezilandelayo ngesikhathi socwaningo.

	Ngingathanda	Angithandi
isiqophamazwi		
ividiyo		

Ngiyabonga ngokufaka kwakho isandla kulolu cwaningo.

### ISIBOPHEZELO

**Mina,** .....

**(amagama aphelele alowo ozobamba iqhaza)**

**Nginyaqinisekisa ukuthi :**

- **ngiqonda konke okuqukethwe yilo mqulu kanye nohlobo locwaningo,**
- **ngiqonda ukuthi ngikhululekile ukuhoxa kulolu hlelo noma ngasiphi isikhathi uma ngithanda ngaphandle kwemiphumela emibi kimina,**
- **ngiyitholile ikhophi yalo mqulu futhi**
- **ngiyavuma ukuthi ngibambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo.**

**Ukusayina kwalowo ozobamba iqhaza :**

.....

**Usuku:**

.....

## Appendix F

**Focus group discussion**

Read and then dramatize the story with narration. Read for enjoyment (Schnetler, J. 2013, p.55).

**Read for enjoyment**

Robert had a terrible day. What do you think of his plan?

On Friday, Robert walked home from school as he did every day. However, this time, he had some money in his pocket. When he passed Sam's Tuck Shop, he stopped.

"May I have a packet of salt and vinegar chips, Uncle Sam? My aunt gave me six rand yesterday," he explained. His mouth watered as he walked out the shop with his chips in his hand.

As he passed the big tree on the corner, he heard a shout: "Hey! Give the chips to me." It was a big boy from Grade 7. Robert was afraid. Should he kick the boy? Should he shout at him? What should he do?

He ran back to the tuck shop. He could hear the boy's pounding footsteps behind him. "Help me!" he shouted loudly.

Uncle Sam heard Robert's call. He shouted at the boy: "Leave the young child alone. Do not come near my shop again." He laughed at the big boy's frightened face and picked Robert up and hugged him. "I should have kicked him," cried Robert. "Why didn't you hit him?"

"You did the right thing," Uncle Sam smiled. "Look, you still have your chips in your hand. If you tried to stop him, he could have hurt you – you would be both sore and hungry! I will see that he doesn't come near my shop again."

Robert agreed. "Yes, I'm glad I ran to you. I think I will come to the tuck shop with my friends next time. Thank you, Uncle Sam. I will put my chips in my bag and eat them peacefully at home."

**Semi-structured questions for discussion:**

1. Did you enjoy this story?
  - Why or why not?
2. Could this story be true?
  - How do you know?
3. The grade 7 boy tried to bully Robert. What does bullying mean?
4. Do you think Robert should have kicked the bully?
  - Why or why not?
  - What could have happened if Robert had kicked the bully?
  - Why didn't he kick the bully?
  - If the grade 7 boy had tried to bully your friend, would your friend have kicked him?
  - Why or why not?
5. Why didn't Robert shout at the bully?
  - What could have happened if Robert had shouted at the bully?
  - If the grade 7 boy had tried to bully your friend, would your friend have shouted at him?
  - Why or why not?
6. In the story Robert wondered what to do.
  - Besides shouting and kicking, what else could Robert have said or done?
  - What could have happened if he had said or done those other things?
7. Did Robert's plan work?
  - Was it a good plan?
  - Give reasons for your answer.
8. Why did the bully get frightened?
  - What makes some people bully others?
9. Why does Robert want to come to the tuck shop with his friends next time?
  - How will that help him?
10. If you were Robert, what would you have done?
  - Why would you have acted so?
  - What would have happened in the end?
11. What did you learn from this story?
12. What would you like to say about this story?

**One on one in depth semi structured interview.**

Read and dramatize the play Good friends, problem friends (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 58,59)

Good friends, problem friends

Act 1 - Scene 1



Thandi: Ronnie, why are you late? This is the third time that you are late for practice. You know the concert is next week. You are so irresponsible!



Ronnie picks up his bag and starts walking towards the door.



Thandi: Hey, where are you going?  
Ronnie: I'm getting out of the play.




Thandi: But I thought you enjoyed acting.  
Ronnie: I do, but I don't like the way you are always picking on me.

**Interview questions for discussion:**

1. What happened in this story?
2. What do you think of the way in which Thandi spoke to Ronnie when he walked in?
  - Why did she speak to him in this way?
  - If you were Thandi, would you speak to Ronnie like that?
  - Give a reason for your answer.
3. Why did Ronnie decide to leave?
  - How did he feel when he started to walk out?
  - If you were Ronnie, would you have left?
  - Why or why not?
4. Ronnie explained why he wanted to leave.
  - Was that a good thing to do?
  - Give a reason for your answer.
5. When children have problems like Thandi and Ronnie had, what should they do?
  - What causes them to say and do those things?
6. If you were Thandi and Ronnie's friend, what would you advise them to do?
  - How would this help them?
7. Have you had a problem like this with someone?
  - Explain what happened.
  - What did you say and do?
  - Why did you say and do those things?
  - Do you become cross when you argue with a friend?
  - How do you act when you are angry?
  - What causes you to act in that way?
8. What would you like to say about this play?

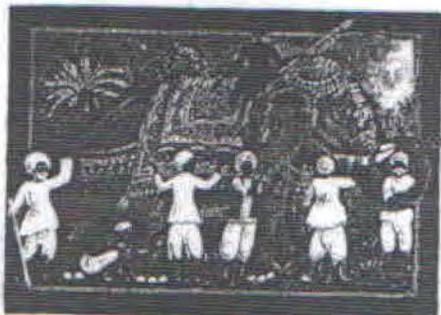
**Document analysis: Creative writing and drawing.**

## Instructions:

1. Read and dramatize the short play *The blind men and the elephant* (Hofmeyr, L. 2012, p. 53-58).
2. The men in this play were fighting because each of them thought that they had the truth. In the end they found out that each of them had a part of the truth, and that the others were also partly right. Write your own story about a child who had a problem with other children or adults. Use the following questions as guidelines.
3. Give the child a name.
4. State what the child said to the others about the problem.
5. What made the child say those things?
6. Write what the child did about the problem.
7. What made the child do those things?
8. Explain what the child thought and felt before, during and after the problem.
9. Do you think that the child said or did the right things?
10. If you answered 'yes', why were those the right things to say and do?
11. If you answered 'no', what should the child have said or done?
12. If you were the child, what would you have said and done?
13. What would have caused you to speak and act in that way?
14. Draw three pictures to show what happened before, during and after the problem.

1.

### 9. The blind men and the elephant (short play)



#### Characters

Boy  
Blind man 1  
Blind man 2  
Blind man 3  
Blind man 4  
Blind man 5  
Blind man 6  
Guide

2.

*Setting: Somewhere in Asia where an elephant is passing by.*

**Boy:** *(Enters stage running and yelling)* An elephant! Everybody, come see it, it's coming, it's coming. Everybody come out, come and see the elephant... An elephant!

*(The blind men enter stage walking slowly with their canes.)*

**BLIND MAN 1:** I don't know what an elephant looks like.

**BLIND MAN 2:** Me neither.

**BLIND MAN 3:** Me neither.

**BLIND MAN 4:** I would like to know what an elephant looks like.

**BLIND MAN 5:** Let's wait so we can touch it.

**BLIND MAN 6:** We will touch it with our own hands. Our fingers are our eyes.

**GUIDE:** *(Enters with the elephant)* Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, this big elephant needs to walk through here. Be careful.



3.

**BLIND MAN 1:** *(Walking)* Good man, please let these poor blind men touch your elephant. We want to know what it looks like.

**GUIDE:** Ok. Get near one by one. He's not dangerous. Don't be afraid.

**BLIND MAN 1:** *(Touches the elephant's body)* Mmm, I see, the elephant is like a rough wall.

**BLIND MAN 2:** *(Touches the elephant's leg)* No, you are wrong. The elephant is like a tree.

**BLIND MAN 3:** *(Touches the elephant's tusk)* That's a lie, that's a lie! My hands tell me clearly that the elephant is like a spear.

**BLIND MAN 4:** *(Touches the elephant's ear)* You are completely wrong. I also touched it and I am sure that it's like a hand fan, and my fingers don't lie to me.

**BLIND MAN 5:** *(Touches the elephant's trunk)* Nobody lies to me. The elephant is like a snake.

**BLIND MAN 6:** *(Touches the elephant's tail)* None of you knows what an elephant looks like. I think that the elephant looks like a rope to tie packages.



4.

**BLIND MAN 1:** How do you dare to insult me? I am sure that it looks like a wall!

**BLIND MAN 2:** I am telling you that it looks like a tree!

**BLIND MAN 5:** No, it's like a snake!

**BLIND MAN 3:** Snake? Not at all! I am sure it looks like a spear.

**BLIND MAN 4:** That's a lie. It looks like a hand fan.

**BLIND MAN 6:** It's a rope! It's a rope!

*(The blind men start fighting with each other. There's great confusion and everybody is talking at the same time.)*

**ALL BLIND MEN:** No one will say that I am wrong... Take this! Ouch, ouch... but I am right... It's a rope... It's a wall... It's a spear... No, I am telling you that it's a hand fan... A tree, it's a tree... Who hit me? Ouch, my back!

**GUIDE:** Calm down, calm down! Be quiet! Listen... listen... I will explain everything.

*(There's silence on stage.)*



5.

**ALL BLIND MEN:** Why? ... Why?

**GUIDE:** *(Gets on the elephant)* Because each of you only touched one part of the elephant, the one who touched the body thought it was a wall. The one who touched the leg thought it was a tree. The one who touched the tusk imagined a spear. The one who felt the ear thought it was a hand fan. The one who touched the trunk remembered the snake, and the shortest one, who could only touch the tail, was sure that the elephant was like a rope.

**BLIND MAN 5:** Now I understand. Yes, that's what happened and we all got angry.

**GUIDE:** You got so angry that you started fighting with each other.

**BLIND MAN 1:** We behaved like fools.

**BLIND MAN 2:** We are wrong.

**BLIND MAN 3:** We got so furious.

**BLIND MAN 4:** Because all of us thought we were right.



6.

**BLIND MAN 5:** But none of us were completely right.

**BLIND MAN 6:** Instead of trying to understand.

**GUIDE:** Of course, to know the truth we have to know every part.

**BLIND MAN 1:** We thank you, and the elephant too, for teaching us that it's better to agree with each other and try to know the truth. Now we know that reality is different depending on how we see it.

**BLIND MAN 2:** Let's be friends again.

**BLIND MAN 3:** Let's get to know the elephant.

*(The blind men walk around the elephant touching it at the same time.)*



## Appendix G

11/5/2014

DISSERTATION

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Part 1: conflict resolution	467744627	22/10/14, 15:51	3%	-/100		(0)	
<b>Dare, Sunday</b> - (0 Submissions)							
<b>Mantshongo, Lungisile</b> - (0 Submissions)							
<b>Naidoo, Treisha</b> - (0 Submissions)							
<b>Ngcobo, Dorah</b> - (0 Submissions)							
<b>Naicker, Yeshodene</b> - (0 Submissions)							
<b>Msomi, Veronica</b> - (0 Submissions)							
<b>Manilal, Rubaina</b> - (0 Submissions)							
<b>Jiyane, Zakhokuhle</b> - (0 Submissions)							
<b>Shezi, Sindiswa</b> - (0 Submissions)							

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**Appendix H**

Leverne Gething, t/a [WHIZZ@WORDS](mailto:WHIZZ@WORDS)  
PO Box 1155, Milnerton 7435; tel. 021 552 1515; cell 072 212 5417  
e-mail: [leverne@eject.co.za](mailto:leverne@eject.co.za)

30 October 2014

**Declaration of Editing of dissertation for partial fulfilment of M.Ed.:**  
**Conflict resolution strategies used by Grade four children in a primary school**  
**in the Umlazi District.**

I hereby declare that I carried out language editing of the above dissertation on behalf of Clara Olive Maharaj.

I am a professional writer and editor with many years of experience (e.g. 5 years on *SA Medical Journal*, 10 years heading the corporate communication division at the SA Medical Research Council), who specialises in Science and Technology editing - but am adept at editing in many different subject areas. I have previously edited much work for various faculties at UKZN, including Education. I am a full member of the South African Freelancers' Association as well as of the Professional Editors' Association.

Yours sincerely

LEVERNE GETHING      [leverne@eject.co.za](mailto:leverne@eject.co.za)